Sonja Arntzen, Professor Emerita, University of Toronto will present on this new translation of Sarashina nikki, produced with Professor Moriyuki Itō of Gakushūin Women’s University. The Sarashina Diary: A Woman’s Life in Eleventh-Century Japan (Columbia University Press, 2014) recounts the life of Japanese noblewoman over a forty-year period, offers a portrait of the writer as reader, and explores the power of reading to shape one’s expectations and aspirations. This talk will discuss the diary itself and the process of collaboration that produced this new translation and study.

“This sparkling new version of the Sarashina Diary opens out an eleventh-century classic for twenty-first-century readers. Sonja Arntzen and Itō Moriyuki situate the diary culturally and historically, and their translation conveys both the vivid realism of Takasue no Musume’s prose and the haunting melancholy of her poems. As the author herself says of Mount Fuji, this unique work ‘looks like nothing else in the world.’”

—David Damrosch, Harvard University

Sonja Arntzen is Professor Emerita of literature at the University of Toronto and the University of Alberta. Sonja Arntzen, born in Canada, started her studies in French and Fine Arts, but then received her MA (1970) and Ph.D (1979) in Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia. Her monographs include: Ikkyū and the Crazy Cloud Anthology (Tokyo University Press, 1986), The Kagerō Diary (University of Michigan, 1997) and The Sarashina Diary: A Woman’s Life in Eleventh Century Japan, (Columbia University Press, 2014). She has taught at the University of Alberta and the University of Toronto. Retired in 2005, she continues her research in pre-modern Japanese women’s literature and classical Chinese poetry by Japanese Zen monks.

The talk is open to the public, and light refreshments will be served.
For further information, please contact DongKwan Kong (dongkwan@hawaii.edu) or L. Julie Jiang (lijiang@hawaii.edu).