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The Resurgence of Okinawan Language Through Contemporary Okinawan Literature

a talk by

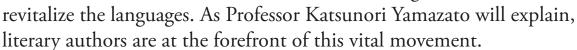
Professor Katsunori Yamazato

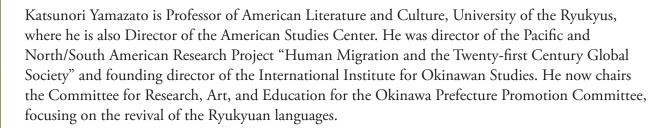
University of the Ryukyus

November 16, 2012, 3 to 4 p.m. • Tokioka Room, Moore 319

In the Meiji Era, the Japanese central government began forcing the Japanese language on the people of the former Ryukyuan Kingdom. Seeking to unify Japan through a single language (kokugo), the government disaparaged Ryukyuan languages as mere dialects (hōgen). In Okinawan schools, children were educated to identify themselves as culturally Japanese and were forbidden to speak their own languages.

The prejudice against Ryukyuan languages as inferior forms of Japanese became commonplace in Okinawa and persists to this day. However, a new generation of scholars, citizens, writers, and educators is working to





Professor Yamazato has published almost forty books, including translations from English into Japanese of such American writers as Gary Snyder. His recent books include *Human Migration and Literature* and *Living Spirit: Literature and Resurgence in Okinawa*.

This lecture is made possible by the late Dr. Dai Ho Chun through his estate gift, which established the Dai Ho Chun Endowment for Distinguished Lecturers at the UH-Mānoa Colleges of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Chun was a distinguished and visionary educator. This lecture is also sponsored by the UHM Colleges of Arts and Sciences; the UHM College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature; the UHM Center for Okinawan Studies; and *Mānoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing*.





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