

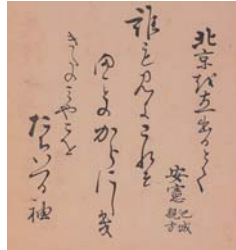


CENTER FOR Okinawan Studies

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Lecture Series

“Who would compose a Japanese poem in Beijing?!”



This was the rhetorical question that one 18th century Japanese poet put, with some apparent dismay, when he heard about a 31-syllable waka poem that a high-ranking Ryukyuan envoy had composed as a gesture of gratitude to his Chinese hosts. The poem, its context, and its reception reveal many of the ambiguities and nuances of Ryukyu's position in East Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries.

From long before this time, the Ryukyu Kingdom had maintained formal, stylized relationships with its two largest neighbors, Japan and China, in addition to informal interactions. The more successful the Ryukyuan were in mastering the cultural capital, particularly literature, of these two countries, the more they were able to maintain an unusual sort of independence.

Several Ryukyuan government officials left behind skillful writings in “classical” Japanese, including prose and poetry. Interestingly, there was also a growing interest in mainland Japan in writing waka poetry, as well as prose works in pseudoclassical style (*gikobun*), and these became signifiers for “national learning” (*kokugaku*). However, Ryukyu evidently did not feel compelled to buy into all the ideologies Japanese elite arts ostensibly carried with them. In this presentation, Professor Huey will look at how certain elements of elite Japanese culture, especially poetry and tea ceremony, found their way into the Ryukyu royal court and government and what role these arts played there.

Speaker: Dr. Robert N. Huey, East Asian Languages & Literatures
Date: September 6, 2013 (Friday)
Time: 3:00-4:30 pm
Location: Moore Hall 319 (Tokioka Room)

**Co-sponsored with: East Asian Languages & Literatures and
Center for Japanese Studies**

Event is free and open to the public.

**For more information or disability access, please contact:
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