



October 16, 2014, 10:15-12:00 PLH 105

***Beowulf's* Japanese contemporaries**
Semiotic analysis of old Japanese poetic texts:
A case of *chōka* (long poem) and *tanka* (short poem)

A workshop with

Prof. Dr. Masako Hiraga, Rikkyo University

The workshop will look at Japanese poetic texts contemporary to *Beowulf* and analyse them from the perspective of semiotic stylistics. We will specifically look at the interplay of form and meaning with reference to sound repetition, lexical and syntactic parallelism, and metaphor, to explore how the archetypal themes are represented in these works.

Two texts are chosen for illustration. The first one by Kakinomoto Hitomaro is the longest verse (148 lines) in *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*, 347-759, A.D.), and in part concerns an epic theme, i.e., the battle fought by the prince, somewhat comparable to *Beowulf*. The second text, a short poem (5 lines) on falling cherry blossoms by Ki no Tomonori in *Kokin Wakashū* (*Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, 905, A.D.), is one of the most famous *tanka* in Japanese literature, which illustrates an archetypal theme of the unison of nature and humans.

Prof. Dr. Olga Timofeeva

Prof. Dr. Christina Ljungberg