

About *SPRING IN DESERT*,
The book and Yokohama Triennale 2001

Told by Toshiaki Tomita
Written by Akihiko Takami

This book titled “Spring in Desert” by Toshiaki Tomita is to be published along with his works for the exhibition at Yokohama Triennale 2001 (from September 2 through November 11, 2001.) However, this book is not exactly the same as the catalogue with the same title for the works exhibited.

As the explanation goes, a fieldwork was done for publishing a book. The place around Oonodai, Sagamihara-Shi, Kanagawa-Ken is the author’s hometown, and I returned there from time to time when I was a college student. I found things quite changed after a long absence, and at the same time, I found old scenery such as the remains of copses and irrigation streams where I used to catch insects or make sketches. They are now green belt and walking promenade to remind us of good old days.

I returned to Japan from the States where I was studying to prepare for the exhibition and for publishing the book. When I was taking a walk around my house and came near the primary school, I happened to hit an idea that I could create some work with children living in the same place now.

The stories folks and parents tell children from their own memories are the common voices from the past to the future. Then, the children living in the same place where I used to live can be the other self of mine in the past and in the future. How wonderful it will be if I could relate the memories of their land and the vision and let them make sure that there is a ring to connect the world not only passing through by the experience of drawing nearby scenery and images!

The teachers at Sagamihara Shiritsu Oonodai Primary School were very friendly and cooperative when I asked them to help with my idea. They were also preparing a new program to study and cooperate with their local society. We had a chance to discuss together to create our works with the third graders before the summer vacation.

Thus, “Spring in Desert” (Yokohama Triennale 2001) has been realized. In our exhibition space there are a painting titled “A Spring in the Desert” by Kyoko Sawanobori, which is the clue to create this work, several paintings by Toshiaki Tomita to show children legends and geography of the land, pictures by the students at Oonodai Primary School after they listened to the story of “Spring in Desert”. They chose places they liked around them and freely painted their pictures. Also there is a corner in the exhibition where you can hear the live recording of the interview from the hearings for “Searching For The Spring”, the second part of this book.

When you visit this long and narrow space like the passage of memory, you can hear the voices telling you times and memories from generation to generation, walking along and stopping by the places where various visions meet beyond the layers of time. Thus you will be invited deep into the land of human life and into the spring named “story”.