



Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Lecture Series 2011

Organized by [ICC Research Unit on Globalization, food and social identity in the Asia Pacific](#)

Political Purpose and National Identity: Representations of the Food Education Campaign in Japan

Dr. Stephanie Assmann (Akita University)

18:15-19:45

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Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University Yotsuya Campus



Unbalanced eating habits including leaving home without breakfast and consuming fatty food and ready-made meals have become a matter of serious concern in Japan. Weight problems, such as obesity but also skinniness, diabetes, coronary heart diseases, and high blood pressure are among prevalent lifestyle-related diseases supposedly caused by unbalanced nutritional habits. In 2005, the Japanese government initiated a nationwide food education campaign, termed *shokuiku* in order to counterbalance this trend and advocate a return to supposedly healthier Japanese staple foods such as rice and *miso*. This campaign also encourages the consumption of regional food products. Based on a qualitative analysis of media representations of the *shokuiku* campaign such as online content and public advertisements, this presentation argues that a state campaign has developed into a political campaign, which uses pressing health concerns to address national and regional identities expressed through food.

Stephanie Assmann is Associate Professor for Comparative Culture and Language Education at Akita University. She holds a PhD in Sociology of Japan from the University of Hamburg, Germany. Her research interests include the analysis of consumer behavior in Japan, in particular traditional fashion and food. Recent publications include *Japanese Foodways, Past and Present*, co-edited with Eric C. Rath (University of Illinois Press, 2010) and [Food Action Nippon and Slow Food Japan: The Role of Two Citizen Movements in the Rediscovery of Local Foodways](#) in: [Globalization, Food and Social Identities in the Asia Pacific Region](#) (Sophia University, 2010).

Lecture in English/No registration necessary

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