

Kyoto University Global COE

“Reconstruction of the Intimate and Public Spheres in 21st Century Asia”

Asian ERASMUS Pilot Program for Teaching Staff from Overseas Partner Institutions

Name (First, Middle, Last)	Mire Koikari	City/Country of the Home Organization
		Honolulu, HI U.S.A.
Home Organization (University/Institute, Dept./Faculty, Position/Title)	University of Hawaii at Manoa, Women’s Studies	
Invitation Period	From June 1, 2012 to June 30, 2012	
Counterpart Graduate School/Center at Kyoto University	Counterpart Professor: Professor Emiko Ochiai Counterpart Graduate School/Center: Sociology	
Title of Research	Making Home, Building Bases: The Politics of Cold War Domesticity in the US Occupation of Okinawa	
<p>1) Title of the lecture(s) if you gave any:</p> <p>Four lectures under the title of: Rethinking Nation, Culture, and Domesticity in Asia and the Pacific</p> <p>2) Title of your presentation(s) if you gave any at seminars/symposium/conference; Date and Place; Number of participants (approx.); Organizer</p> <p>“Making Cold War Homes: The Politics of Domesticity in the US Military Occupation of Okinawa, June 20, 2012, 京都大学文学部 新館 5階 社会学共同研究室 (attendance = approx. 12), organized by Department of Sociology</p>		

Please attach a written report evaluating your results/achievements from our GCOE Asian Erasmus

Pilot Program.

(1) Please submit two separate reports, of approx. 350 words each, written from the aspects of “Education” and “Research”. (2) Attach reference materials if any. (3) Please email this report with a digital photo showing your education or research activities if available. (Photos should not infringe privacy right or copyright.)

The submitted materials will be posted on the web page of this program.

Education

My lectures explored the historical, cultural, and geopolitical dimensions of domesticity in order to deepen and complicate students’ understandings of the public vs. private spheres. The first week provided overviews of gender and feminist theories of domesticity. Drawing on insights offered by a number of feminist scholars, it highlighted how the intimate and presumably private sphere of domesticity is currently being re-conceptualized as an entity inseparable from and indeed permeable to the public sphere of nation and empire building. The second week applied analytical insights identified in the first week to a concrete historical case study, i.e., Japan’s nation and empire building in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Examining home economics education and life improvement movement in pre-1945 Japan, the lecture illuminated how Japan’s modern domesticity was deeply transnational in its nature, how the private sphere of home became a chief terrain of national mobilization, and how women’s quotidian activities of homemaking constituted an indispensable part of colonial expansionism. The third week expanded the themes and questions generated in the second week by examining a new, post-1945 historical context, i.e. the Cold War. Examining Cold War cult of domesticity, the lectures illuminated how pre-1945 dynamics of nation, culture, and domesticity were refitted to the post-1945 context of Cold War struggles between the US and the USSR. The final week connected the previous weeks’ discussions to the current, 21st century dynamics of public vs private by focusing on one domestic object of iconic power, i.e., SPAM, luncheon meat. Originally invented as a portable food item for American military, the canned meat has spread across the US, Pacific, and Asia through the WWII, Cold War, and post-Cold War eras, enjoying immense popularity in militarized zones such as Okinawa, Hawai’i, Guam, and Korea. The lecture illuminated how a seemingly innocuous food item and its consumption at home take on complex meanings in terms of gender, race, class, and nation.

Research

During my residency, I pursued two interrelated activities in order to make progress in my current research project, titled “Making Homes, Building Bases: The Politics of Cold War Domesticity in the United States Occupation of Okinawa, 1945 – 1972.” One was to utilize the library resources at the Kyoto University and another was to network with scholars in the region whose research interests and activities involve Okinawa. I was extremely successful in both of these activities. The Kyoto University Library has a wealth of materials on topics of my concern, including Japan’s modern nation building, Okinawa, gender, domesticity and the cold war. My research was substantively aided by the availability of numerous books that shed critical light on these issues. Kyoto also turned out to be an ideal place to network with scholars whose academic and research interests overlap with mine. Not only was I able to meet with Profs. Ochiai, Ito, and Matsuda at the Kyoto University. I was also fortunate to have a chance to meet with Prof. Ichiro Tomiyama at the Doshisha University and attended his talk which focused on Okinawa and its modern history. My meetings with these scholars resulted in new ideas, insights, as well as questions which continue to inform my research agendas and activities. Altogether Kyoto provided an excellent environment to pursue my project.