

Support Program for Improving Graduate School Education
The Center for Comparative Japanese Studies
Education for Women As Leaders Program
THE 5th PUBLIC LECTURE in 2009

Speaker	AOYAMA, Tomoko (Professor, University of Queensland, Australia)
Topic	Food and Gender in the Manga of Yoshinaga Fumi
Time	December 11 th (Friday), 2009 17:00~18:30
Place	Faculty of Letters & Education, Building 1, 1 st Floor, Large Conference Room
Moderator	KAN, Satoko (Professor, Ochanomizu University)

The fifth Public Lecture invited as a guest speaker Professor AOYAMA, Tomoko from the University of Queensland. We had a large audience from inside and outside the campus community, and a very stimulating moment. Having graduated Ochanomizu University, Professor AOYAMA now teaches Japanese, Japanese literature and Japanese culture at the University of Queensland. She leads Japanese Studies in Australia.

The topic of the lecture was “Food and Gender in the Manga of Yoshinaga Fumi.” Starting with the analysis of the representations of “food” found in modern and contemporary Japanese literature, Professor AOYAMA focused on *What Did you Eat Today?* written by a cartoonist, YOSHINAGA Fumi, who has now become quite popular by depicting most radically and attractively “queer characters” in Japan, and then explained how the representations of “food” highlight gender issues of contemporary Japanese society.

It was obvious that many of the audience were fans of the cartoonist YOSHINAGA. Professor AOYAMA's remark generated a new interest among them all the more — a remark made in the first half of her lecture that it was men who had the right to speak of “food” in modern and contemporary Japanese literature. While the theme of women and meals reminds us of ISHIGAKI, Rin's *A Pot, a Kettle and Burning Fire in front of Me*, the meals that women in literary works are allowed to prepare are those of “*ke*” (the ordinary time or everyday), that is, everyday meals — even on that occasion, women are expected to eat later. ISHIGAKI's poems certainly are the paeans for the work of “*ke*” done by those women who serve meals every single day. The discourse or display of gourmet experiences, by contrast, remain to be the privilege of men; the representations of “food” clearly presupposes gender allocation.

Unlike the genealogy of modern and contemporary Japanese literature, in the representations of “food” shown in YOSHINAGA's cartoon we see many crossings by men (and gays) over the gender line drawn in everyday meals. *What Did you Eat Today?*, in particular, lightly depicts with a great sense of humor many serious issues of contemporary Japanese society (such as discrimination against homosexuals, domestic violence), giving its readers some moments to reflect on these issues. With a good analysis of some visual images from the cartoon and a wide reference to scholars such as Roland Barthes and Deborah Lupton, the lecture greatly promoted the audience's interest in these issues. To prove that, after the lecture there were many questions and remarks made from the floor, and lively discussions in the question session. The meeting was fruitful in that the audience obtained a new perspective for modern and contemporary Japanese literature.

(Professor, Ochanomizu University, KAN, Satoko)