

Support Program for Improving Graduate School Education
The Center for Comparative Japanese Studies
Education for Women As Leaders Program
THE 1st PUBLIC LECTURE in 2009

Speaker	Eileen B. MIKALS-ADACHI (Assistant Professor, Eckerd College)
Topic	Romantic Elements in Japanese Love Stories ~Where are the 'Happy' Endings~
Time	June 5 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)

This lecture presented an interesting analysis of the category of “Renai-Shosetsu (romantic fiction)” comparing Japanese and US novels. In the US, the phrase “romantic fiction” first reminds them of “romance novels” represented by Harlequin Romance series and composes one complete category of literature. In “romance novel,” its typical conversational styles have to abide by category rules, and all the narrative developments that accord with the rules can be called “romance novel.”

On the other hand, the concept of “Renai-Shosetsu” in Japan is not a category. If you think about literary genres or categories, such as science-fiction novel and historical novel, you would realize that the concept of “Renai-Shosetsu” rather concerns a theme of novels. Unlike American “romance novels,” Japanese “Renai-Shosetsu” does not necessarily follow its path from a passionate love to a marriage — a rare process in the Japanese version. In particular, the recent “Renai-Shosetsu” favors tragedy, such as the death of a loved one; that makes us reflect on the happy endings in Japanese “Renai-Shosetsu.”

There was a large attendance in the conference room including the students from our school and people from outside. There were many questions from the floor on the notion of “Renai-Shosetsu.”

I hope the Japan-US comparative research on the notion of “Renai-Shosetsu” will lead to a new study of female culture, in particular a study from the viewpoint of the acceptance by female readers.

(Professor, Ochanomizu University, KAN, Satoko)