



Memories of Cinema-Going in Postwar Japan: An Ethno-history

Jennifer Coates

Jan 25, 2023 05:30 PM – 07:00 PM (Osaka, Sapporo, Tokyo)

Hybrid (In-person and on Zoom)

For venue info and zoom link **please register from here:**

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From the beginning of the Allied Occupation of Japan (1945-1952), the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP GHQ) identified the cinema as a means to reshape popular attitudes, re-educating Japanese citizens away from the nationalist ideologies that had characterized wartime. This talk presents material from an ethnographic study of cinema-going in postwar Japan that began with the simple question, “Can cinema content change social attitudes?” Over four years of fieldwork in the Kansai region of Western Japan (2014-2018), this study evolved into a consideration of the role of cinema-going and film viewership, broadly conceived, on the formation of a sense of self in the generation that grew up under Occupation. Focusing on the discourse around cinema, rather than a close reading of cinema texts, this project reveals the usefulness of taking talking about cinema seriously as a mode of exploring difficult historical issues.

Jennifer Coates is Professor of Japanese Studies at the School of East Asian Studies, University of Sheffield. She is the author of *Making Icons: Repetition and the Female Image in Japanese Cinema, 1945-1964* (Hong Kong University Press 2016) and *Film Viewing in Postwar Japan, 1945-1968: An Ethnographic Study* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022) as well as a number of journal articles and book chapters on cinema and audiences in postwar and contemporary Japan. Jennifer is a AHRC Innovation Scholar and recipient of the 2021 Philip Leverhulme Prize for Visual and Performing Arts.

This talk is organized by David H. Slater (Professor, FLA).

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Background photo: Nichigeki Theater in 1952