

Washoku on the World Stage:

UNESCO and the Promotion of Japanese Cuisine



Theodore Bestor

(Harvard University, currently a Visiting Fellow at ICC)

June 2nd (Tue), 18:30-20:00

Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University Yotsuya Campus

Lecture in English / No RSVP required

In December 2013, UNESCO added washoku, traditional Japanese cuisine, to its register of Intangible Cultural Heritage, signaling that it is a culinary tradition of global significance. Only a handful of other culinary traditions or singular dishes have previously received such recognition from UNESCO, and the Japanese government as well as prominent chefs and others had pursued a long campaign to ensure that Japanese cuisine would be included on this list. This lecture will examine some of the domestic background that contributed to the UNESCO recognition, as well as ways in which the recognition has been received in Japan as well as abroad.

Professor Theodore Bestor is a specialist on contemporary Japanese society and culture, focusing much of his research on Tokyo. At Harvard he is the Director of the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies. He is currently in Japan as a Fulbright senior scholar, carrying out research about washoku and its recognition by UNESCO. Professor Bestor is the co-editor of *Doing Fieldwork in Japan* (Hawai'i, 2003, with Victoria Bestor and Patricia Steinhoff) and the *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society* (Routledge, 2011, with Victoria Lyon and Akiko Yamagata). Professor Bestor's book, *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World* (California, 2004), is based on at the world's largest marketplace for seafood and the center of Japan's sushi trade. The book is ethnography of market life, and examines Tsukiji both historically and contemporarily as a case study in the interaction between cultural patterns and institutional structures that frame complex economic organization. He is working on a book tentatively entitled *Global Sushi* that will look at globalization via culinary fashions and the international food trade.

