

At Your Konbini: Small Stores, Large Chains, and Livelihood in Contemporary Japan

Date & Time

Monday, 5 March 2012

4:00pm - 5:30pm

Venue

Auditorium (AS7-01-02)

Shaw Foundation Building

Speaker

Associate Professor Gavin Hamilton Whitelaw

Anthropology, International Christian University, Tokyo

Abstract

In Japan, the convenience stores or *konbini*, sets the standard for fast mass customer service and “localized” global retail. Formally introduced to the island nation in the 1970s, the American convenience store franchise model and associated distribution system have restructured Japanese retail, transforming the neighborhood corner shop into a competitive commercial force with global ties and mass appeal. Examining the convenience store from an anthropological perspective, I will explore the ways this everyday place offers new perspectives on the study of Japan and globalization.

About Speaker

Dr Gavin Hamilton Whitelaw is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the International Christian University, Tokyo. In 2001, he graduated with a A.M. in Regional Studies - East Asia at Harvard University. This was followed by a M.Phil in Sociological Anthropology in 2004 and a PhD. in Sociocultural Anthropology in 2007, both at Yale University. Dr Whitelaw's keen interest in *konbini* has led to a specialization in the topic. As part of his research he has worked at a convenience store in Japan for a considerable period of time.

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