



RCAPS

Ritsumeikan Center for Asia Pacific Studies



Onigiri Seminar

**"Welcome to Washington Heights:
America Towns and Americanization
in Occupied Japan"**



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From the 1950s, Japanese are said to have embraced the so-called "bright life"-that is, a middle class social ideal inspired by the bright lives led by Americans in the postwar era. As the story has been told up to now, the Japanese longing for the "bright life" owed to the American magazines, movies, and TV programs that flooded Japan with images of middle class American life during and after the Occupation. Yet, American middle class life could also be seen within Japan itself at the time, in places called Washington Heights, Lincoln Center, and Grant Heights. These were the ubiquitous communities of "dependent housing" for Occupation troops and their families that went up all across Japan from the late 1940s. Notably, these "America towns" were not set up simply to provide the Occupiers with comfortable suburban digs for their lives abroad, but as the "forerunner" to a "a new way of living for the Japanese people." The surprising story of these communities-from their design and construction in the late 1940s to their reinvention in early 2000s-is the focus of this presentation.

Date: Monday, May 20, 2019

Time: 14:15 – 15:50 p.m.

Venue: RCAPS Room A (2F, Bldg. B)

Chair: Associate Prof. BUI, Thanh Huong APU-APS

Discussant: Prof. YOSHIDA, Kaori APU-APS

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