Opening Ceremony and Keynote Address

Wednesday, March 16, 2016
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s
Center for Korean Studies Auditorium

Keynote Address by Dr. Theodore C. Bestor
Reischauer Institute Professor of Social Anthropology;
Director, Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies Harvard University

“What in the World is Washoku?”

Theodore C. Bestor is the Director of the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies and Reischauer Professor of Social Anthropology at Harvard University. He is a specialist on contemporary Japanese society and culture; much of his research focuses on Tokyo, and he has written widely on urban culture and history, local neighborhood society and identity, markets and economic organization, food culture, and popular culture as a defining aspect of urban Japanese life.

Currently his research focuses on Japanese food culture and, in particular, on the globalization of Japanese cuisine and its intense popularity throughout the world, as well as in UNESCO’s recognition of Japan’s traditional cuisine (washoku) as an item of Global Intangible Cultural Heritage. He conducted research on this topic as a recipient of a Fulbright Senior Fellowship in Japan in the Spring of 2015.

His publications include: Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World, published in 2003 (with a second edition in preparation) based on Bestor’s research over the past 20 years on Tokyo’s vast seafood market and its role in Japan’s sushi trade. He is the co-editor, with Victoria Lyon Bestor, of the recent Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society, a collection of essays ranging widely over history, arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Bestor received his PhD and MA from Stanford University, and his BA from Fairhaven College of Western Washington University. He began his professional career as Program Director for Japanese and Korean Studies at the Social Science Research Council. After teaching at Columbia and Cornell universities, he joined the Harvard faculty in 2001.

He is the Past President of the Association for Asian Studies (2012-13), and the founding president of the Society for East Asian Anthropology. In June 2013 Bestor received the Commissioner’s Award for the Promotion of Japanese Culture, from the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Japanese government.

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