

Center for Japanese Studies Seminar Series

Co-sponsored by the Center for Chinese Studies and the Department of Anthropology

Liberated or Leftover?: Single Women in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Tokyo



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With the rising age of marriage, the numbers of single women in East Asia's major cities have risen to an unprecedented degree. Political leaders, social commentators, and the media have responded with alarm, resulting in the circulation of pejorative vocabulary such as "leftovers" in China and "loser dogs" in Japan. These terms reflect the anxieties in society about the

changing roles of women. This talk examines the social and economic conditions that shape the lives of single women in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Tokyo, and discusses the strategies employed by single women to live meaningfully in these three cities. The speaker argues that single women are expected to compete in two markets in which their value declines as they age; the marriage and employment markets. The speaker argues that if they could not or would not "win" in the marriage market, single women turned to other goals and values such as self-fulfillment, self-respect, personal achievement, and contribution to family and society.



Tokioka Room (Moore Hall 319)
Friday, February 21 (3:00 - 4:30 pm)