



Center for Japanese Studies Seminar Series

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“Recruit the Women:” The Life and Career of Lt. Ethel B. Weed in Post-WWII Japan



Wed., February 6, 2019 / 12:00 - 1:30 PM / Tokioka Room (Moore 319)

Following WWII, the United States occupied Japan from 1945-1952. America’s primary goals were to demilitarize and democratize its former enemy. As head of the occupation, General Douglas MacArthur instituted women’s suffrage because he believed Japanese women to be likely supporters of the American agenda. He then tasked Lt. Ethel Weed, a low-ranking officer with the job of ensuring broad-based female political participation throughout the nation. With only four months of training in Japanese language and culture the 39-year-old American could do little on her own. Aware of her limitations, Weed recruited a cadre of internationally-known Japanese feminists who had been silenced by Japan’s wartime leadership to advise her. These women included the birth control activist Katô Shidzue, the female education pioneer Motoko Hani and the novelist Miyamoto Yuriko. Weed thus served as a lynchpin who brought together unlikely allies. This talk is based on archival materials not previously available in the U.S. or Japan.

Co-sponsored with:

There will be light refreshments.

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