

# *Tonan Talk* *on Mindanao Studies*

## **Date & Time**

September 5th (Thurs.) 2019, 15:00 - 18:30

## **Venue**

Tonan-tei (Room no. 201) on the second floor of Inamori Foundation Memorial Building, CSEAS, Kyoto University

### ■ 15:00-16:30

**Speaker:** Dr. Patricio Abinales, Professor at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Hawaii-Manoa

**Title :** American Soft Power and the Peace Process in Muslim Mindanao

### **Abstract:**

This presentation examines the factors behind the relative success of the United States' rehabilitation program in Muslim Mindanao after the signing of the 1996 peace agreement between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippine government. It looks at the origins behind this exercise of "soft power," its initial implementation and challenges, and the means by which the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was able to overcome these obstacles. It will then account for the longevity of the project (15 years) which is an unusual status given that American aid is often a short-term endeavor. The presentation will be based on the primary documents that USAID staff shared with me and oral interviews with some of the ex-MNLF beneficiaries of the program.

### **About the speaker:**

Patricio N. Abinales is professor at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Hawaii-Manoa. His current research is on fraternity violence in Philippine schools

### ■ 16:30-18:00

**Speaker:** Dr. Akiko Watanabe, associate professor at Faculty of International Studies, Bunkyo University

**Title :** Living with the Ethnic and Religious Demarcations in the Philippines: Migration, Marriage and Identities among ordinary Muslims in the Greater Manila Area

### **Abstract:**

This study tries to highlight on dynamism of lives of ordinary Philippine Muslims in the Greater Manila Area, especially on marriage and identity, which conduce more personal and collective involvement with Christian population. Previous literatures on the Philippine Muslim have tended to view the religious and ethnic boundaries as identical. On the whole, I agree with this argument but would like to draw attention to an additional point of significance, particularly migration from homeland and

marriages with people of different religious-cultural backgrounds. It is crucial to acknowledge the roles of economic migration and internal displacement of ethnic Muslims in expanding the Islamic landscape, and intermarriage that might have fostered relativizing the ethnic demarcation of the Philippine Muslims.

As a case study, the focus is drawn on a Muslim enclave in Manila, a stepping stone for international migration as well as a destination of job seekers and educational attainment today. Muslim Residents who have lived there for many years have begun to despair of or despise the separatist movements. Now that they are second or third generation, they regard themselves as Manila Muslims. This phenomenon may be caused by the fluctuation of ethnic demarcations. Some children of inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriages have started to acknowledge their identity as ‘mix’, ‘half’, or ‘mestizo’, blending together different cultures, and viewing themselves as Muslims who are not strictly bound by the customs of their hometowns. These terms are the opposite of the prideful ‘pure.’ In Muslim communities in the southern Philippines, where endogamy among the same ethnic group is particularly preferred, members regarded themselves as being pure (of blood), putting the others beneath.

Yet, as living in Manila, they are imposed to adopt flexible attire and behaviour to get along with Christians in their work places and schools. Some parents give Christian names to their new-born babies, so that they won’t be discriminated against for employment or in doing business. Others even disguise themselves by holding Christian identification cards. If they live as Muslims, they will most likely work in the Arab or neighbouring Muslim countries. Becoming successful as a Philippine Muslim, in sum, is still a difficult proposition.

The expansion of life worlds of Muslim from the southern Philippines has led to its diversity in Greater Manila, the central part of the country. The seemingly homogenous Muslim populations and their practices of Islam are being negotiated and contested in everyday lives. These dynamism are given less attention where prospects on Bangsamoro secessionist movements and internationally-linked terrorism are of full concern among the global society. Rather, this study tried to put light on the Muslim people who are constrained to get through in the Philippine society, and form their own shape of identities and survival practices concurred with the surrounding environments.

### **About the speaker:**

Akiko Watanabe (Ph.D. in Area Studies) is an associate professor at Faculty of International Studies, Bunkyo University, Japan. Based on ethnographic researches in Manila and the Gulf, she has written several articles on the migration of Muslim Philippines, religious conversions, family strategies, politics of minorities in urban settings, and rural empowerment in fair trade.

■ **18:00-18:30**

**Discussion**

**Moderator:** Dr. Hau Caroline, Professor, CSEAS

