



The Department of Asian and Asian American Studies Colloquium Series presents a talk in Collaboration with the Wang Center's Asian/American Programs:

Eat Like a Bird: The Cultural Symbolism of Chopsticks

Eva Nagase

Asian and Asian American Studies, Stony Brook University

Thursday, April 23

4:00-5:15 PM

Wang Center Lecture Hall 1

What we call chopsticks in English have been used in many Asian societies for centuries. However, for the Japanese, the use of *Hashi* extends beyond the mere utilitarian. This lecture demonstrates and examines *Ohashi*'s (*hashi* with the honorific prefix "o") multiple dimensions and cultural symbolism. The use of *Hashi* is interwoven with the Japanese attitude toward nature, sense of aesthetics, sense of cleanliness, and their affinity for elaborate rituals. They are also used as an instrument to create distance from others and to construct Japanese cultural identity. *Hashi* reflect the relationship between society and nature, between humans and nature, as well as symbol of the Japaneseness.

Eva Nagase is a faculty member of Asian and Asian American Studies at Stony Brook University. She teaches different levels of Japanese language as well as American Studies. She has degrees on Museum Studies and Anthropology in addition to Japanese Pedagogy. She is currently working on a Ph.D in Cultural Studies. Her area of interest is in material culture, Japanese in particular. She is the Program Director for the Summer Study Abroad Japan, advisor for in-coming Japanese students, and faculty advisor and an instructor for the Taiko Tides, Japanese Drumming group.