

44th KUASS (Kyoto University African Studies Seminar)

Date and Time: 26 November 2015 (Thursday), 15:00-17:00

Venue: Kyoto University Inamori Memorial Building, 3rd floor, #318 Seminar Room

Title

The Graves of Wrath: A Malagasy Sacred Kingship in the Age of Globalization

Speaker

Dr. Laurent Berger (Associate Professor at EHESS, Paris-School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences)

Abstract: This paper tackles the land-grabbing issue from the scope of global anthropology. On the basis of a Malagasy case-study, it highlights the theoretical and methodological tools which can be used to define, describe and analyze globalization on the ground. First, it focuses on the main adjustments of participant observation to global ethnography (extended case method, multi-sited ethnography, collective survey, ethno-historiography/archaeology). Second, it puts forward the common issue in social sciences dealing with globalization (how to analyze the rhythms and modalities of structural changes associated with the growth and transfers of wealth, knowledge and populations). Third, it deals with the three main problems to resolve (demarcating the field – which practices, which sites, which populations-, extending participant observation through durations and games of scale, comparing the diversity of case studies). This triple development is illustrated through the way I had to sketch the articulation of factual episodes of the negotiation between the Gujarati diaspora, the Malagasy State, the World Bank and the Antankaraha sacred Kingship to implement a shrimp aquaculture project with the structural time of the social reproduction of this Antankaraha polity, as well as the successive cyclical times of the slave trade, the Merina imperialism, the French colonization, the postcolonial independence and the end of the cold War marked by the economic and political liberalization of the Malagasy island.