

“Can’t Go Native?” and Long Field Engagements

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In 1961 as a graduate student in the University of Chicago, Keith Brown went to the Tohoku for dissertation research. Out of his total immersion in village life grew friendships and family-like bonds that have perdured for two generations. Keith has returned every year since 1961 to continue his field studies in that community. He and the people of Mizusawa-ku have grown older together for five decades. Is it research? friendship? or both at the same time?

Can't Go Native? is a media portrait of Keith's ongoing involvement in the evolution of a Japanese community. Handy as the internet is for capturing snapshots of activity we need extended fieldwork in order to apprehend those rhythms of human relations that anchor Japanese society in the tidal surges of global change. We present a Japanese case study that addresses the emerging anthropological discourse on the values of longitudinal research.

The presentation will begin with a film segment of approximately 60 minutes, followed by discussion.