

The Politics of Voice and Silence:

Panel Discussion on Media Openness and Historical Revisionism in Contemporary Japan

June 28th, 2015, 3:00 PM-5:30 PM

Sophia University, Yotsuya Campus, bldg. 2, room 508

In the last five years, Japan has plummeted 50 places in a global ranking of media freedom and is now ranked 61 out of 180 nations, according to "Reporters Without Borders." The group cites incomplete coverage of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster and the passing of the "state secrets" act in 2014. Today, reporters for Japan's biggest news organizations are regularly subject to censorship, and increasingly engage in self-censorship for fear of retribution. In addition, there are growing disputes over the representation of the past; textbook companies are being asked to rewrite the history of World War II that have generated public protests in many countries. Most prominent are disputes around the so-called "comfort women" issue. Echoing a public statement, "A Critique of the Japanese Government's Stance on the Wartime "Comfort Women" Issue and its Coverage in the Media," written by Japanese historians in the Historical Science Society of Japan, in May 2015, a group of historians and other Japan-studies scholars working mainly in the West issued an unprecedented Open Letter in Support of Historians in Japan to the Japanese government and the media, calling for "as full and unbiased an accounting of past wrongs as possible" in this 70th anniversary year of the end of World War II. Our panel participants include journalists, scholars, teachers, and activists, both in Japan and abroad, and we will try to address some of these issues.

No prior registration necessary / Discussion will be in English

Panelists:

- ✚ **Andrew Gordon** (Professor of History, Harvard University)
- ✚ **David McNeill** (Journalist and Lecturer, Sophia University)
- ✚ **Koichi Nakano** (Professor of Political Science, Sophia University)
- ✚ **Takashi Uemura** (Journalist and Lecturer, Hokusei Gakuen University)
- ✚ **Mina Watanabe** (Secretary General, Women's Active Museum for War and Peace)
- ✚ **Tomomi Yamaguchi** (Associate Professor of Anthropology, Montana State University)

Moderator:

- ✚ **David H. Slater** (Director of the Institute of Comparative Culture, Sophia University)

This event is co-organized by the Institute of Global Concern and the Institute of Comparative Culture