

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture presents a workshop on

SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF LOW BIRTH: WORK LIFE BALANCE IN JAPAN

This workshop examines the sources and consequences of Japan's declining birth rate, using work-life balance as its central analytical lens. Drawing on comparative perspectives from Japan, the United States, and Taiwan, it brings together scholars, legal practitioners, journalists, and filmmakers to explore how labor conditions, gender norms, family law, and immigration policy intersect in an aging society. Session 1 addresses family law as a revealing site of these tensions, bringing together judges and attorneys from Japan, the United States, and Taiwan to examine how legal systems shape, and are shaped by, the demands of caregiving and professional life. Session 2 examines immigration directly, asking what the presence of migrants in Japan's workforce reveals about the limits of current policy and what a more just approach to migration might look like in a society defined by demographic decline.

Date: May 23, 2026, 9:00AM – 2:15 PM

Venue: Room 309, 3F, Building 2, Sophia University

Language: English (No translation)

In person only / No registration required

Organizers:

- **Kay Shimizu** (University of Pittsburgh)
- **Gabriella Lukacs** (University of Pittsburgh)
- **Hisayo M. Maitani** (Shizuoka University)
- **David Slater** (Sophia University)

Schedule:

9:00 – 9:15 AM

- Welcome: **David Slater** (Sophia University)
- Opening Remarks: **Kay Shimizu** (University of Pittsburgh)

9:15–10:45 AM (Session 1)

Panel Discussion: “Work–Life Balance and Family Law Practice in Japan, the United States, and Taiwan: A Comparative Study of Systems, Culture, and Judicial Realities”

(Chair - **Hisayo M. Maitani**)

- **Sabina A. Helton** (Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court)
- **Hsin Mei Chang** (Judge, Taiwan)
- **Yuka Hashigaya** (Lawyer, Houterasu Chiba)

10:45–11:00 AM

Coffee break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM (Session 2)

Paper Presentations: “Beyond Work–Life Balance: Immigration, Compensation Scale, and Japan’s Social Contract”

(Chair- **David Slater**)

- **Tatsuya Yokohama** (Shizuoka University): *Policy Effectiveness for “Irregular migrants.”*
- **Megha Wadhwa** (Sophia University): *Embodied Costs of Mobility: Indian Migrant Labour and Work–Life Balance in Japan*
- **David Slater** (Sophia University): *The Hidden Foundation: Migrant Labor and the Limits of Japan’s Demographic Fix*

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch break

12:45–1:30 PM

Lunchtime talk: **Yuka Mizoue** (Journalist, TV Asahi): “*The Effects of Gender (In)Balance in Japanese Media*”

1:30–2:00PM

Q&A and Discussion

2:00–2:15PM

Closing Remarks: Gabriella Lukacs & Hisayo M. Maitani

This event is hosted by [Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture](#)

IN COLLABORATION WITH

[University of Pittsburgh Asian Studies Center](#)
[the Japan Foundation](#)

