

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Research Unit [“Visual Studies and Displacement in/to Japan”](#) presents an international conference on

# Foreign Workers, Precarity, and the Changing Social Laborscapes of Contemporary Japan

**June 19 (Friday) ~ June 21 (Sunday) 2026**  
**Room L-812, 8F**  
**Sophia University Central Library**

## Organizers:

- David Slater (Sophia University)
- Megha Wadhwa (Sophia University)
- Hee Eun Kwon (University of Tokyo)

**Open to all; no registration necessary**

**Language: English. In person only**

## Overall abstract

This interdisciplinary conference brings together scholars from anthropology, sociology, law, political science, economics, and migration and refugee studies to examine the rapidly changing landscape of foreign labor in contemporary Japan. Japan has entered a new and consequential phase in its relationship with migration: foreign workers, technical interns, specified skilled workers, international students, and working refugees now sustain essential sectors of the economy, yet their presence unfolds amid deep policy ambiguity, intensifying nativist sentiment, and widening gaps between economic necessity, public discourse, and lived experience. Over three days, presenters will address questions of labor precarity, legal status, racialization, community formation, migrant agency, and governance—combining ethnographic, policy, historical, and comparative perspectives to interrogate not only current transformations but the assumptions and institutions shaping Japan’s emerging migration regime.

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Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture: <https://www.icc-sophia.com/>



# Program

## Day one: Friday, June 19

### 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

#### Panel 1: Policy and Worker Experience

- **Maximilien Xavier Rehm** (Doshisha University): “Incremental Change, for the Better? Japan’s Evolving Pathways for Lower Skilled Foreign Workers” (ZOOM)
- **Yunchen Tian** (Kyoto University): “Local-level Migration Policymaking in the Era of the ‘Orderly Coexistence Society’”
- **Naho Yoshikawa** (University of Zurich): “Vietnamese TITP Trainees’ Perceptions in Japan’s Transnational Total Institution: Implications for the Employment for Skill Development (ESD)”
- **Mi Moe Thuzar** (Hashimoto Foundation, Okayama): “Expectation, Precarity, and the Changing Laborscape of Japan: Myanmar Workers under TITP and the SSW Regime”

## Day two: Saturday, June 20

### 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

#### Panel 2: The Architecture of Precarity: Brokerage, Debt, and Structural Vulnerability

- **Huynh Vu Hong Vy** (Waseda University): “Collaborative Falsification: The Making of ‘Fake Engineers’ in Japan”
- **Büşra Kuplay** (University of Zurich): “Community Resilience in Layered Precarity: Migrant-Owned Businesses and Non-Standard Employment among Immigrants from Turkey in Japan”
- **Yahya Aoyagi** (Almasri) & **Saddam Khalid** (Kwansei Gakuin University / University of Hyogo): “Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Rooted in Faith: Mosques and Muslim Migrant Entrepreneurship in Japan”
- **Anh Phuong Le** (Waseda University): “The Gambling Infrastructure of the Part-Time Job Market for International Students in Japan”
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### 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

#### Panel 3: Belonging, Mobility, and Everyday Labor

- **Anggy Wira Pambudi & Livia Shintiarani** (Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang / Independent Scholar): “Indonesian Migrant Workers Mobility: Brokerage and Structured Precarity in Japan’s Evolving Laborscape” (ZOOM)
- **Hee Eun Kwon** (University of Tokyo): “Commodified Difference: Ethnic Capital and the Reconfiguration of Koreanness in Japan’s Labor Economy”
- **Oscar Wrenn** (Kobe University): “Everyday Movement and Techniques for ‘Keeping Going’ for Agricultural Technical Intern Trainees in Upland Japan”
- **Yu Ai** (Tohoku University): “From Campus to the Labor Market: Muslim Women and the Uneven Path to Professional Inclusion in Japan”

## Day three: Sunday, June 21

### 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

#### Panel 4: Exclusion, Race, and Legal Vulnerability

- **Naoto Higuchi** (Waseda University) and **Nanao Inaba** (Sophia University): “Pathways and Barriers to Mobility: Human Capital, Social Networks, and Labor Segregation among Peruvians in Japan”
- **Nanako Inaba** (Sophia University): “Paradoxical Experience of Undocumented Migrant Youth”
- **Francis Peddie** (Nagoya University): “Beyond the TITP: Evidence of Visa Change and Mobility among Blue-Collar Migrant Workers”
- **Kirara Biyanwila** (University of Tokyo): “Racial Experiences of Sri Lankan Migrants in Japan: Intersecting Colonial Complexes and Racial Formation in Asia”

### 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM -

#### Panel 5: Care, Aspiration, and Migrant Agency

- **Rhacel Salazar Parreñas & Sachi Takaya** (Princeton University / University of Tokyo): “The Paradox of Care: How Filipino Caregivers in Japan Experience Precarity as Dignity and Skill”
- **Jackie J. Kim-Wachutka & Hoang Khanh Linh** (Ritsumeikan University / JICA-Vietnam): “Young Vietnamese Women Careworkers in Japan: Migratory Aspirations and Strategies of Transnational Mobility” (Hoang Khanh Linh on ZOOM)
- **Shah Sardar Ahmed & Yusy Widarahesty** (University of Hyogo / Ritsumeikan University): “Between Labor Force and Entrepreneurship: Understanding the Diverging Pathways Among Indonesian and Pakistani Communities in Japan”
- **Megha Wadhwa** (Sophia University): “Care Across Borders: Indian Migrants as Caregivers in Japan’s Ageing Society”