



# DIJ Forum

Thursday, 7 December 2023, 18.30 – 20.00 (JST)

## Japanese Politics – What Keeps Women Out?

**Emma Dalton**, La Trobe University, Melbourne

**Naoko Oki**, Sugiyama Jogakuen University, Aichi

Japanese politics has a woman problem. Not only are women relatively absent from legislative assemblies; when they run for elections, and even after they've won, they are often faced with sexual harassment. These issues seem particularly acute in local level assemblies, and even more so in rural areas. In Japan, 15.6% of local assembly seats are occupied by women, and only 2 of the 47 governors are women. This is in spite of the enactment in 2018 of a gender parity law, the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field. Moreover, the 2020 Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality set a numerical target that at least 35% of all political candidates at all levels of politics be female by 2025. There was, however, only a small increase in the number of women who ran for office in the 2023 Unified Local Elections. This presentation explores the causes of women's under-representation in local politics and highlights the sexism experienced by women who campaign for and get elected to office. By considering institutional and cultural barriers like the electoral system and sexual harassment, it presents a big-picture analysis of the problem of male-dominated politics in Japan.

**Emma DALTON** is lecturer in Japanese Studies in the Department of Languages and Cultures at La Trobe University in Melbourne. She is the co-author of *Voices from the Contemporary Feminist Movement in Japan* (2022), and author of *Sexual Harassment in Japanese Politics* (2021) and *Women and Politics in Contemporary Japan* (2015). In November and December, she is a Scholar in Residence at the DIJ.

**Naoko OKI** is lecturer at the School of Human Science, Sugiyama Jogakuen University in Aichi. She received her Ph.D. in Gender and Politics at Ochanomizu University. Her current research interests include women's under-representation and political recruitment in local politics. From 2018 to 2023, she was the principal investigator of the research project "Seiji Juku (Politics Academies) in the Candidate Recruitment Process: Implications for Women's Political Participation" funded by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C), JSPS. Her recent academic articles are "How Women Increase in Prefectural Assemblies in Japan: Analysis of Career Paths of Newcomer Female Candidates in 2019" and "An Analysis on Programs of Political Academies for Training Women Candidates in Local Elections", both published in 2023.

The event will be held in English, admission is free. To participate **onsite** please register via email to [forum@dijtokyo.org](mailto:forum@dijtokyo.org), for **online** participation please register via our [website](#).

**Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien – German Institute for Japanese Studies**

Jochi Kioizaka Bld. 2F, 7-1 Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0094

Tel: 03 3222 5198, Fax: 03 3222 5420