

## Special Issue and Discussions

### Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm

The series of articles were published in [The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus](#) as a first effort to capture the on-the-ground effects of the Covid-19 in Japan. Here is a Special Discussion Series, sponsored by Sophia University, Institute of Comparative Culture and hosted by David H. Slater. In this Special Lecture Series, we discuss the published articles with the authors, look behind the scenes of the writing of the article and give an update on the lives of those most deeply affected by the corona virus in Japan.

### **Vulnerable Populations in Japan under COVID-19**

Special Lecture Series  
**Hosted by David H. Slater**  
Institute of Comparative Culture  
Sophia University

*The links to the original articles and video discussions are here. Abstracts and additional links below.*

An introduction to the whole collection

**[Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#)**

by David H. Slater

[Introduction by David](#)

**[How are Tokyo's Independent Restauranteurs Surviving the Pandemic?](#)**

James Farrer, Sophia University

Wednesday, October 7, 5-6pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**[The Coronavirus Crisis: Disability Politics and Activism in Contemporary Japan](#)**

Mark Bookman, University of Pennsylvania

Wednesday, October 14, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**[Domestic Violence and Japan's COVID-19 pandemic](#)**

Rei Ando, Sophia University and Nakajima Sachi, Resilience

Wednesday, October 21, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author and expert](#)

**[In the Age of COVID-19 – Indian restaurants and the Indian cooks in Japan](#)**

Megha Wadhwa, Sophia University

Wednesday, October 28, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author and short film](#)

**[Japanese Freelance Workers Struggle during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Social Media, Critique, and Political Resistance](#)**

Satsuki Uno, Global Marketer and localizer for a Japanese Gaming Company

Robin O'Day, University of North Georgia

Wednesday, November 4, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**[Resilient Japanese Local Food Systems Thrive during COVID-19: Ten Groups, Ten Outcomes \(十人十色, jyu-nin-to-iro\)](#)**

Jack Lichten, Tokyo University and Chika Kondo, Kyoto University

Wednesday, November 25, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**[Isolated Together: Amplified vulnerabilities in Japan's Children's Homes](#)**

Sarajeen Rossitto, Tokyo-based social impact architect and

Kozue Oka, Executive Director, Mirai no Mori

Tuesday, December 2, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**Limitations of Social Protections of Migrant Families in Japan Exposed by COVID-19:  
The Case of Nepalese Women**

Masako Tanaka, Sophia University  
Wednesday, December 3, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**COVID-19 in Japan: A Nighttime Disease**

Valentina Giammaria, Sophia University  
Wednesday, December 9, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**Food Crisis for the Homeless and others during COVID-19**

Charles E. McJilton, Sophia University  
Wednesday, January 27, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author and expert](#)

**Vietnamese Technical Trainees in Japan Voice Concerns Amidst COVID-19**

Ban Quyen Tran, Sophia University, February 17, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author](#)

**The Whole Block Goes Down: Refugees in Japan's detention centers during the  
pandemic**

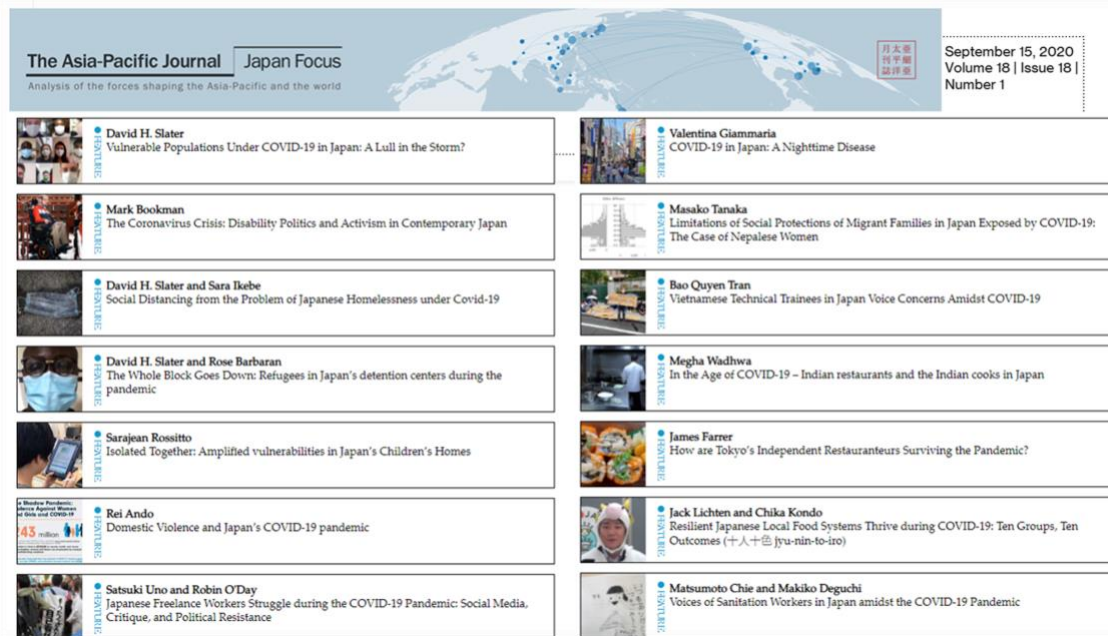
David H. Slater, Sophia University and Rose Barbaran, Filmmaker of refugee life and politics  
in Tokyo, March 3, 7-8pm

[Discussion with author and short film](#)

An introduction to the whole collection

**Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm**

by David H. Slater



*This is a collection of original articles on diverse vulnerable populations in Japan in the wake of the new coronavirus pandemic. The effects of COVID-19 are felt differently, with some among us at much greater risk of infection due to preexisting health and welfare conditions. For others, perhaps more than the risk of infection, it is the precautions taken to mitigate the risk for the whole population, such as lockdowns and business closures, that have pulled away the already fragile safety net of state and civil society organization (CSO) support, leading to increased marginalization and social exclusion. The goal of this set of papers is to document the conditions of those that have been most directly affected by the virus and to provide background on the conditions that made them vulnerable in the first place, notably chronic conditions that are brought into more obvious relief in light of emergency measures. Each of the authors had a pre-established relationship with those affected populations and employed various ethnographic approaches, some face to face, others digitally via Zoom interviews and SNS exchanges. In this moment of what appears to be relative calm, we hope that our collection, quickly compiled in an attempt to capture the ever-changing situation, will give some insight into how those most vulnerable are faring in this time of crisis and provide information that will allow us to prepare better before the next wave comes our way.*

(Read more: <https://apjif.org/2020/18/Slater.html>)

## [How are Tokyo's Independent Restauranteurs Surviving the Pandemic?](#)

James Farrer, Sophia University

*Globally, independent restaurants have been dealt a double blow by COVID-19. Restaurant staff face the risk of infection, and restaurants have been among the businesses hardest hit by urban lockdowns. With fewer resources than corporate chains, small independent restaurants are particularly vulnerable to an extended economic downturn. Both government and community support have been key to sustaining these small businesses and their employees during this crisis. How do things look moving forward?*

(Read more: <https://apjff.org/2020/18/Farrer.html>)

**James Farrer** is Professor of Sociology and Global Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo. His research focuses on the contact zones of global cities, including ethnographic studies of sexuality, nightlife, migration, and food. His recent publications include: [International Migrants in China's Global City: The New Shanghailanders](#) (Routledge 2019); [Shanghai Nightscapes: A Nocturnal Biography of a Global City](#) (with Andrew Field, University of Chicago Press, 2015); and [Globalization and Asian Cuisines: Transnational Networks and Contact Zones](#) (editor, Palgrave, 2015). His ongoing study of a Tokyo restaurant community is documented in his webpage [Nishiogicho-gaku \(Nishiogiology\)](#).



Sophia University, Institute of Comparative Culture  
Special Lecture series

Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19  
Hosted by David H. Slater

A discussion with  
**James Farrer, Sophia University**

October 7, 2020 5-6pm

[“How are Tokyo's Independent Restauranteurs Surviving the Pandemic”](#)

An introduction to the whole collection : [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#)

Connecting Sophia to the World

**Video Link for the ‘Special Discussion Series’ – James Farrer discusses his paper here:**  
<https://youtu.be/AxbdX3eVaU0>

## [The Coronavirus Crisis: Disability Politics and Activism in Contemporary Japan](#)

Mark Bookman, University of Pennsylvania

*The spread of COVID-19 across Japan has exacerbated accessibility issues born out of the nation's past, creating difficulties for disabled people in the present and anxieties about the future. In this article, I consider some of the historical contingencies and geopolitical circumstances that have fueled a precarious pipeline to risk and institutionalization for many disabled individuals. My analysis reveals how inadequate installation and inappropriate use of accommodations like ramps and elevators in various public venues has prevented disabled people from obtaining key supplies. It suggests that some disabled people have survived the current moment by relying on professional caregivers, but others have been unable to do so due to service cancellations and fear of contagion. For individuals without support networks, assisted living facilities have offered a means of survival. However, many assisted living facilities have long grappled with funding issues and lack of willing workers. Accordingly, their residents have been exposed to neglect, abuse, and now, viral infection. Aware of the situation, government officials have instituted emergency policies to provide disabled people and assisted living facilities with personal protective equipment and flexible financing. And yet, as activists have argued, those policies have often failed to pan out in practice. The future of disability in Japan remains uncertain. But as I suggest, the current crisis is our chance to intervene. I contend that we must use this opportunity to identify and resolve barriers to accessibility in Japan and build an inclusive society for domestic and international populations of disabled individuals.*

(Read more: <https://apjif.org/2020/18/Bookman.html>)

**Mark Bookman** is a PhD Candidate in East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania. His research examines the history and politics of disability in Japan. Outside of the academy, Mark also works as an accessibility consultant. He has collaborated with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), the United States Embassy in Tokyo, and the United Nations. Mark's publications can be found in *The Japan Times* and on websites such as *Accessible Japan*. For additional information, see Mark's [homepage](#).



**Video Link for the ‘Special Lecture Series’ – Mark Bookman discusses his paper:**

<https://youtu.be/lbZxEKVJHKI>

## [Domestic Violence and Japan's COVID-19 pandemic](#)

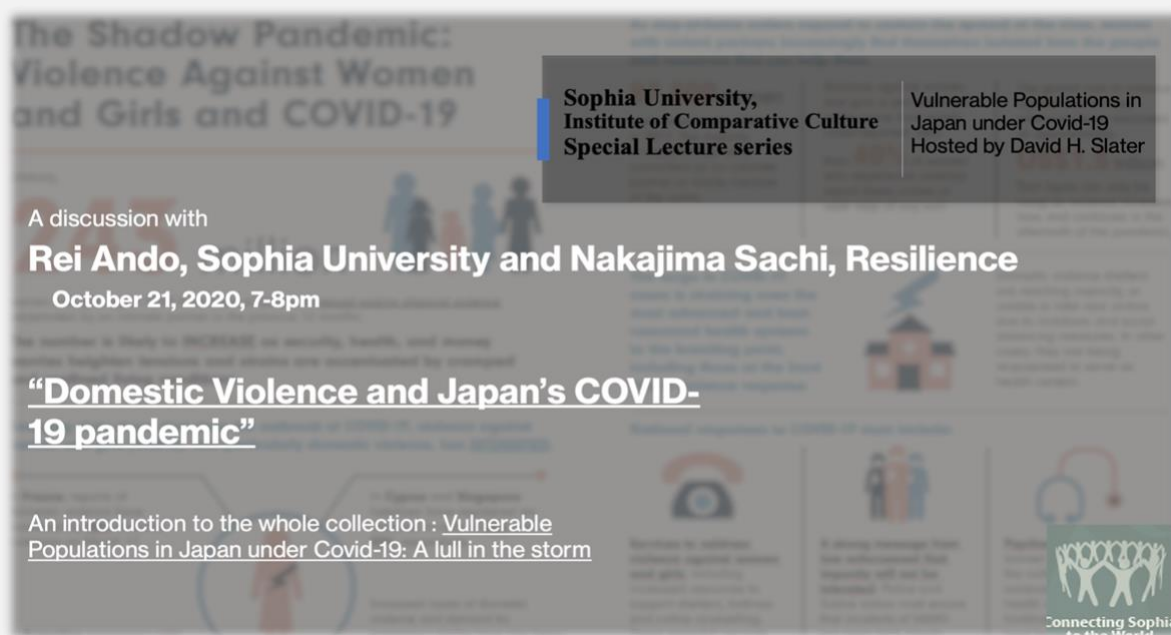
Rei Ando, Sophia University

*In the unfolding of a global pandemic that has wreaked havoc worldwide, another less obvious pandemic hovers overhead. This is what the United Nations is calling a 'Shadow Pandemic.' A rise in domestic violence within households has been noted in Japan and other countries. The stay-at-home measures to prevent the spread of the infection have essentially kept victims trapped with abusive partners and few means of escaping to the often-closed manga cafes or women's shelters. In this dire time, Japanese laws offer only minimal protection. This article draws on insights from Nakajima Sachiko of NPO Resilience, which aims to spread awareness of domestic violence and the effects of this trauma. She shares her expertise in the field and experiences as a survivor herself on the mechanisms that exist in Japanese laws and society that have created increased vulnerability among victims. Domestic violence in Japan is an area needing stronger attention from the government and legal system.*

(Read more: <https://apjif.org/2020/18/Ando.html>)

**Rei Ando** is a student at Sophia University in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, majoring in Anthropology and Sociology with a minor in Political Science. She has channelled her passion for raising awareness on social issues through writing articles in *The Japan Times* and most recently on *Metropolis Magazine*. She has also been involved in organizing fundraising events for the [Sophia Refugee Support Group](#), as well as being the first campus director for the Hult Prize in 2019.

**Sachi Nakajima (MSW JD)** is the Founding Director of the Japan-based NPO Resilience, which supports women affected by violence. As Sachi is a survivor of violence, she combines perspectives she has earned through her personal experience with her knowledge on the subject of trauma. Themes for her presentations and trainings range from domestic violence, sexual violence to effects of trauma and dissociation.



**Video Link for the 'Special Lecture Series' – Rei Ando and Sachi Nakajima discuss Rei's paper:** <https://youtu.be/ho8qS8umkUE>

*Resilience was founded in 2003 to offer classes to women who have been affected by abuse or violence. These classes continue to be offered today in six locations. Resilience also conducts 200 to 300 workshops/presentations/trainings every year. The year 2020 has been different because of COVID-19 and they are offering many of the trainings online. Aside from offering classes for survivors and trainings for professionals, Sachi also works with youths in juvenile prisons across Japan.*

## [In the Age of COVID-19 – Indian restaurants and the Indian cooks in Japan](#)

Megha Wadhwa, Sophia University

*This article explores the impact of COVID-19 on restaurants owned by Indian migrants in Japan as they struggle with financial and occupational risks. The owners try to balance their business interests with their relationships and with the Indian community in Tokyo and their desire to be good citizens by complying with pandemic guidelines. The cooks, who were brought to Japan by the owners, are in a more precarious position, having lost work hours and income, but without the ability to look elsewhere for work. Through the voices of both owners and cooks, I try to document these different experiences within a single ethnic community, and even a single enterprise, that has been tested by the virus.*

(Read more: <https://apjif.org/2020/18/Wadhwa.html>)

**Megha Wadhwa** is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Institute of Comparative Culture, Sophia University. Her research since 2013 has focused on the Indian Diaspora in Japan. She has written several articles on the Indian Community for *The Japan Times* and is also the author of *Indian Migrants in Tokyo: A Study of Socio-Cultural, Religious and Working Worlds*. She has been conducting research about Indian migrant restaurateurs and cooks since 2017 as part of the Sophia Research Project on Priority Areas ‘Refugees and new migrant support: the role of the Church, other religious groups, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the sustainable social integration of the displaced population into Japan’.



Sophia University, Institute of Comparative Culture  
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Hosted by David H. Slater

A discussion with  
**Megha Wadhwa, Sophia University**

October 28, 2020, 7-8pm

[“In the Age of COVID-19 – Indian restaurants and the Indian cooks in Japan”](#)

An introduction to the whole collection : [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#)

Connecting Sophia to the World

**Video Link for the ‘Special Lecture Series’ – Megha discusses her paper:**

<https://youtu.be/WKBICNm8WN0>



## [Japanese Freelance Workers Struggle during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Social Media, Critique, and Political Resistance](#)

Satsuki Uno, Global Marketer and localizer for a Japanese Gaming Company  
Robin O'Day, University of North Georgia

*Freelance work has proliferated in Japan over the last decade due in part to the Abe administration's encouragement of work style reform to reinvigorate the economy. However, freelancers have heavily criticized the government for treating them unequally in their compensation program for workers affected by the coronavirus. The COVID-19 pandemic and emergency declaration have exposed freelancers' employment insecurity and lack of access to a social safety net during an economic crisis. Intense debates have erupted on social media about how much companies and the government should be responsible for freelance workers' welfare. Defenders of providing lower levels of compensation to freelancers draw on pre-existing neoliberal arguments that freelancers, like other irregular workers, are personally responsible (jiko sekinin) for themselves. However, many freelancers have pushed back by arguing that freelance work has become so mainstream that it no longer makes sense to treat it as some unique and separate work category. Being technologically savvy, freelancers have quickly leveraged their familiarity with social media platforms to criticize the unequal economic compensation and to demand increased benefits and recognition for their work in a surprising act of political defiance.*

(Read more: <https://apjif.org/2020/18/Uno-ODay.html>)

**Satsuki Uno** is currently a global marketer and localizer for a Japanese gaming company. MA graduate of ITASIA program at the University of Tokyo. Her main research projects include the Japanese Millennial generation's work cultures and social media analysis. Publications include "[SEALDs \(Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy\): Research Note on Contemporary Youth Politics in Japan](#)" in the Asia-Pacific Journal (2015) (with Slater et al.) and "[Mothers, and Radical Women](#)" in Anthropology News (2015) (with Haruka Danzuka and Maya Hauser).

**Robin O'Day** is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of North Georgia. He is a cultural anthropologist who focuses on contemporary Japanese civil society, social movements, political protest, and activism. Publications include "[Differentiating SEALDs from Freeters and Precariats: The politics of youth movements in contemporary Japan](#)" in the Asia-Pacific Journal (2015) and "Mass Media Representations of Youth Social Movements in Japan" (with David H. Slater and Satsuki Uno) in [Social Movements and Political Activism in Contemporary Japan: Re-emerging from Invisibility](#) edited by David Chiavacci and Julia Obinger from Routledge Press.

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A discussion with  
**Satsuki Uno, Global Marketer and localizer for a Japanese Gaming Company, Robin O'Day, University of North Georgia**  
**November 4, 2020, 7pm-8pm**

**["Japanese Freelance Workers Struggle during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Social Media, Critique, and Political Resistance"](#)**

An introduction to the whole collection : [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#)

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**Video Link for the 'Special Lecture Series' – Satsuki and Robin discuss their paper:**  
<https://youtu.be/mjQ6GDBlqX8>

## **Resilient Japanese Local Food Systems Thrive during COVID-19: Ten Groups, Ten Outcomes (十人十色 jyu-nin-to-iro)**

Jack Lichten, Tokyo University and Chika Kondo, Kyoto University

*This paper examines responses to the COVID-19 pandemic from farmers in Japan. Because COVID-19 was most prevalent in Japanese urban centers and especially the Tokyo metropolitan area, farmers in rural communities in Kansai expressed less concern over infection compared to Kanto-area farmers who were more concerned with risk of infection. While some farmers expressed concern over economic losses from the closure of restaurants and schools, many interviewees had pre-established diverse market channels and thus could pivot their distribution streams during the pandemic. Farmers diverted produce typically for restaurants towards direct sales such as chokubaijyos (direct sales markets) or engaged in online platforms. Because of a lack of single stream distribution infrastructure set up for organic farmers as compared to conventional farmers, many of the interviewees already have robust distribution networks and tend to hold strong community ties with consumers and buyers in their region. We argue that the activities of these farmers demonstrate the resilience of local-scale food systems in Japan, because these networks help maintain food security and community relationships during times of crisis.*

(Read more: <https://apjff.org/2020/18/Kondo-Lichten.html>)

**Chika Kondo** is a PhD doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Agriculture at Kyoto University. Her research interests lie in the field of critical food studies and rural sociology, where she is currently examining the socio-political shifts in producer-consumer relationships centered on alternative agriculture since the height of Japan's organic teikei movement. Her other research interests center on how new and beginning farmers create viable livelihoods and how solidarity and mutual aid are developed and maintained to keep strong connections between producers and consumers.

**Jack Lichten** is a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Frontier Science at Tokyo University, specializing in the fields of environmental sociology & ethics. His research focuses on how agricultural community groups prioritize productive and ecological strategies in urbanizing fringe areas of the Tokyo metropolitan area.

Sophia University, Institute of Comparative Culture  
Special Lecture series

Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19  
Hosted by David H. Slater

A discussion with  
**Jack Lichten, Tokyo University and  
Chika Kondo, Kyoto University**

November 25, 2020, 7pm-8pm

**“Resilient Japanese Local Food  
Systems Thrive during  
COVID-19: Ten Groups, Ten  
Outcomes (十人十色 jyu-nin-to-iro)”**

An introduction to the whole collection : [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#)

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to the World

**Video Link for the ‘Special Lecture Series’ – Jack and Chika discuss their paper:**  
<https://youtu.be/tw0OcJP0EII>

## [Isolated Together: Amplified vulnerabilities in Japan's Children's Homes](#)

Sarajejan Rossitto, Tokyo-based social impact architect and Kozue Oka, Executive Director, Mirai no Mori

*There are 608 “children’s homes” (児童養護施設 jidō yōgo shisetsu) across Japan that care for children and adolescents whose parents are unable to care for them (even though in many cases, their parents are known and still in contact with them). The causes for separation vary, including financial or psychological pressures, often taking the form of neglect or abuse. Institutionalization of any kind is always difficult for both children and their caretakers. Inside the children’s homes, the situation is difficult due to limited staff and tight budgets. The onset of COVID-19 has meant a dramatic decrease in the support services, staff, and resources that these institutions can provide, putting an already vulnerable population at added risk. Based on interviews with administrators at some of the leading nonprofits working with these children, this article lays out both the immediate difficulties within children’s homes during this difficult time, and the longer-term challenges they face in providing support for these young people. (Read more: <https://apjif.org/2020/18/Rossitto.html>)*

**Sarajejan Rossitto** is a Tokyo-based social impact architect, providing project, event and training program coordination, facilitation, and advisory services for educational institutions, international organizations, nonprofit organizations, and corporations to better tackle social needs and have a positive social impact. Her work centers on developing skills, knowledge, and effective partnerships between organizations and across borders. She has worked with Japanese grassroots and international organizations on disaster response and preparation, gender, poverty, inclusion, human rights, conflict mediation, community health, at-risk youth, gender-based violence, persons with different abilities, and HIV/AIDS. Sarajejan has served as the Tokyo representative for international organizations including Give2Asia Foundation and the IE3 Global Internship Program. For more than 10 years, she has run workshops and courses on NGO management, sustainable development, Japanese civil society, global social movements, and project management at Sophia University and Temple University, Japan Campus. She has served as board member or advisor to a number of nonprofits such as [FEW \(For Empowering Women, Japan\)](#), The [Asian Rural Institute \(ARI\)](#), [Mirai no Mori](#), and [A Place to Grow](#).

Sophia University, Institute of Comparative Culture  
Special Lecture series  
**Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19**  
Hosted by David H. Slater

A discussion with  
**Sarajejan Rossitto, Tokyo-based social impact architect**  
and **Kozue Oka, Executive Director, Mirai no Mori**

**December 2, 2020, 7pm-8pm**

**[“Isolated Together: Amplified vulnerabilities in Japan’s Children’s Homes”](#)**

An introduction to the whole collection : [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#)



*Sarajejan Rossitto has worked with non-profit NGOs in Japan for 20 years, conducting skill-based trainings such as project development and management, fundraising, grant proposal writing and volunteer management. She has coordinated programs including experts in humanitarian response and HIV/AIDS in Japan and has also helped corporations develop effective community engagement, CSR and philanthropy programs. Sarajejan has worked with multinationals such as Morgan Stanley and Facebook, and international agencies such as JICA, Japan Platform and Give2Asia. She has taught university classes at Sophia University and Temple University Japan Campus and serves as an Advisor to The Asian Rural Institute, A Place to Grow and Mirai no Mori. She holds a Columbia University Masters of International Affairs degree with a focus on human rights in East Asia, and completed her undergraduate degree in sociology focusing on social movements at SUNY Purchase.*



*Kozue Oka is the Executive Director at Mirai no Mori. Born and raised in Japan, she has always believed in the power of nature. After studying Environment/Outdoor Education in Sweden for a year, she joined Mirai no Mori to share her experiences and to create an environment in which youth can be steered toward a positive cycle of self-actualization and creativity by discovering new possibilities and develop into confident individuals.*



**Video Link for the ‘Special Lecture Series’ – Sarajejan and Kozue discuss Sarajejan’s paper:** <https://youtu.be/00OGNGkLsbk>

**Limitations of Social Protections of Migrant Families in Japan Exposed by COVID-19:  
The Case of Nepalese Women**

Masako Tanaka, Sophia University Wednesday

*The right to protection from violence should be conferred upon all people regardless of their nationality. However, migrant women in Japan face exceptional risks, including that of domestic violence. This paper focuses on the vulnerability of Nepalese women, most often in Japan as dependents of their husbands, who are engaged as cooks in the ubiquitous Indo-Nepali restaurants. Shut out of the male-dominated support networks within the Nepalese community, they are forced to rely on Japanese state support in a time of crisis. Yet, despite the fact that most of these women are working and paying taxes in Japan, many are unable to effectively access the state support system, leaving them particularly at risk in times of calamity, as we are seeing now with COVID-19. This paper outlines their vulnerability and calls upon the state to recognize that these migrants are not free riders, but residents entitled to equal rights and protection under the law. At a time when we often hear about the national imperative to "Build Back Better" in the post-COVID-19 period, I hope that these vulnerable populations are included in such building. Read more (<https://apjif.org/2020/18/Tanaka.html>)*

**Masako Tanaka** is a professor of Gender Studies and South Asian Studies at Sophia University. As a certified social worker, she serves on the Information Dissemination Network for Nepalese Migrants in Japan. As an activist, she has been involved in various civil society movements both in Japan and in Nepal. She researches migrants and trafficking survivors and the role of civil society organizations in migrants' 'social integration processes. One of her recent related articles is "Roles of migrant organizations as transnational civil societies in their residential communities: A case study of Nepalese organizations in Japan," in *Japan Review of Cultural Anthropology*.

SOPHIA UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF COMPARATIVE CULTURE  
SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES

A discussion with  
**Masako Tanaka, Sophia University**

December 37pm-8pm (Tokyo time)

**"Limitations of Social Protections of Migrant Families in Japan Exposed by COVID-19: The Case of Nepalese Women"**

An introduction to the whole collection : Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm

**Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19**  
Hosted by David H. Slater

Connecting Sophia to the World

**Video Link for the 'Special Lecture Series' – Masako discusses her paper:**

<https://youtu.be/AfRhOhGL7Bk>

## [Food Crisis for the Homeless and others during COVID-19](#)

Charles E. McJilton, Sophia University

*This session will begin with an introduction to the article by Slater and Ikebe, "[Social Distancing from the Problem of Japanese Homeless Under Covid-19](#)". Without shelter, having to do without personal protective equipment, often without health insurance and unable to limit contact with strangers, homeless people face a high risk of infection. With the withdrawal of governmental and NPO support, including food support, their vulnerability increased. From here, we will expand our discussion to focus on the larger issues of food shortage, where Charles McJilton will share his experience as Director of Second Harvest, the largest food bank in Japan. As one of the support groups that remained active and effective in their activities, McJilton has an unique perspective on the Tokyo scene. Together we will talk about the levels and types of support during and since the Covid-19 first wave: what went well, what did not work, and are we in any way more prepared for the next wave?*

Read more: (<https://apjif.org/2020/18/Slater-Ikebe.html>)

**Charles E. McJilton** first came to Asia in 1984 with the US military and returned to Japan in 1991 to conduct research at Sophia University. At that time he lived in a religious community in one of the poorest sections of Tokyo (Sanya) where day-laborers and homeless lived. It was this experience that set him on his current trajectory. In 1995 he founded "Let's Build," a self-help center dedicated to providing tools for those living on the streets to either help themselves or die with dignity. While he felt he understood many of the issues of those in his community, he felt something lacking. So from January 1997 to April 1998 he lived in a cardboard house among the homeless along the Sumida River in Tokyo. This experience radically changed his worldview and deeply influences his approach to providing aid and developing organizations. He has founded four organizations in Asia that deal with food security. In 2002 he incorporated the first food bank in Japan (Second Harvest Japan). In 2010 he created a 501(c)3, Second Harvest Asia, to promote food banking in Asia. In 2012 he incorporated the first food bank in the Philippines (Salu-Salo: Food Bank Philippines). And in 2013 he established a public-interest foundation registered at the Japanese Cabinet Office Alliance of Japan Foodbanks (formerly Second Harvest Japan Alliance) to develop a national network of food banks in Japan. He taught NGO Management at Sophia University, 2009 – to present. He is married with four children.



SOPHIA UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF COMPARATIVE CULTURE  
SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES

A discussion with  
**Charles E. McJilton, Sophia University**

Wednesday, January 27  
Time: 7pm-8pm (Tokyo time)

**“Food Crisis for the Homeless and others”**

An introduction to the whole collection : Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm

**Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19**  
Hosted by David H. Slater

  
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to the World

**Video Link for the ‘Special Lecture Series’– Charles discusses his research:**

<https://youtu.be/7OGOfCEljfl>

## [COVID-19 in Japan: A Nighttime Disease](#)

Valentina Giammaria, Sophia University Wednesday

*When the state of emergency was declared in Tokyo, it was less a mandatory order than a request for cooperation and for jishuku (self-restraint). Along with the ambiguous status of such a request in a time of pandemic, this confusion was further compounded by uneven enforcement. While wealthier, middle class areas were left relatively unpatrolled, the areas around the redlight district of Kabuki-chō in Shinjuku, Tokyo, were very strictly monitored despite the lack of any conclusive data at that time regarding the infection patterns or rates. In targeting workers in the “night business,” the Tokyo Metropolitan Government reenacted centuries old prejudices against those working the sex trades. This paper focuses on how the advent of COVID-19 affected the lives of people working in the settai (business entertainment) industry, in particular hostesses in hostess bars, kyabajō (hostesses in clubs), and male hosts. Their voices tell us how, through the government’s actions as well as mass media and social media discourse surrounding their work, these laborers were stigmatized, resulting in a worsening of their already precarious positions as they have been expected to do difficult and increasingly dangerous work, almost always without any contract or insurance protection, in a time of pandemic.*

Read more : (<https://apjff.org/2020/18/Giammaria.html>)

**Valentina Giammaria** is a PhD Candidate in Japanese Studies in the Graduate Program of Global Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo. Giammaria is also a research assistant in the same graduate program. As a PhD candidate majoring in Japanese Premodern and Modern Literature, her research focuses on the depictions of Kabukichō in Modern Japanese literary works, with particular attention to the analysis of the literary space. Giammaria is the organizer of the symposium “Crossing Over to the Other Side - Perspectives on Postwar and Contemporary Japanese Art and Literature” (Sophia University, Jan 2020) and participated to the international conference “Murakami Haruki’s 9th International Symposium” (Hokkaido University, Jul 2020) and to “The 22nd Annual Asian Studies Conference Japan” (ICU, Jun 2018).



SOPHIA UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF COMPARATIVE CULTURE  
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**Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19**  
Hosted by David H. Slater

A discussion with  
**Valentina Giammaria, Sophia University**

December 9, 2020, 7pm-8pm

**“COVID-19 in Japan: A Nighttime Disease”**

An introduction to the whole collection : Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm

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**Video Link for the ‘Special Lecture Series’ –Valentina discusses her paper:**

<https://youtu.be/WTjF0bIx7VM>

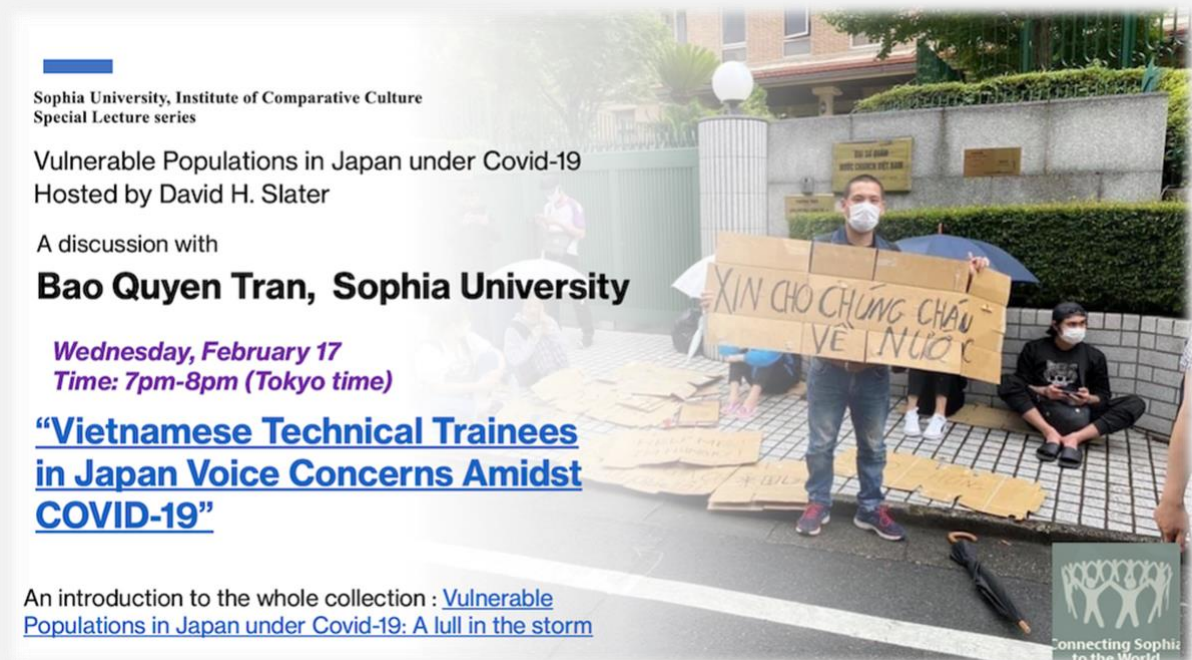
## Vietnamese Technical Trainees in Japan Voice Concerns Amidst COVID-19

Ban Quyen Tran, Sophia University

*The Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) – a short-term labor rotation system that originated in 1993 – brings young and middle-aged workers from developing countries to Japan with a stated objective to transfer Japanese vocational skills and techniques to these workers. However, the program faced criticism for doing little more than covering the chronic labor shortage in unskilled blue-collar jobs that are regarded unfavorably by many Japanese in recent years. This paper highlights the heightened vulnerability of the technical intern trainees as cheap and disposable sources of labor, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on digital communications with 16 Vietnamese technical trainees and an analysis of the content on media platforms since the outbreak of the pandemic, the paper extends my previous work on the challenges faced by technical intern trainees, analyzing the handling of Japanese governments and the accepting companies. The article also introduces the roles of support groups in Japan devoted to protecting vulnerable technical intern trainees. At a moment when the Japanese government is reforming and promoting the TITP, this analysis of Vietnamese technical trainees during the COVID-19 crisis is particularly timely.*

Read more: (<https://apjif.org/2020/18/Tran.html>)

**Bảo Quyên Trần** graduated from Sophia University in Fall 2020 with a Master degree in Japanese Studies. Her research interest lies in the changing patterns of inbound migration in contemporary Japanese society. For her M.A. dissertation, she focuses on the Technical Intern Training program, examining its actual role and challenges through a study of current Vietnamese technical intern trainees.



Sophia University, Institute of Comparative Culture  
Special Lecture series

Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19  
Hosted by David H. Slater

A discussion with  
**Bao Quyen Tran, Sophia University**

Wednesday, February 17  
Time: 7pm-8pm (Tokyo time)

**“Vietnamese Technical Trainees  
in Japan Voice Concerns Amidst  
COVID-19”**

An introduction to the whole collection : [Vulnerable Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm](#)

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**Video Link for the ‘Special Lecture Series’ – Bao discusses her paper:**

<https://youtu.be/pjxOFO89gsE>

## [The Whole Block Goes Down: Refugees in Japan's detention centers during the pandemic](#)

David H. Slater, Sophia University and Rose Barbaran, Filmmaker of refugee life and politics in Tokyo

*In the context of the global increase in displaced people, spiking to nearly 80 million in these corona times, Japan has also seen a dramatic increase in the number of applications for refugee asylum since 2010. Despite increasing numbers of applications, Japan has not increased its refugee recognition rate. Unable to return home to sure persecution when rejected, many refugees end up in Japanese detention centers once their visa expires. Like jails, hospitals and detention centers everywhere, detention centers in Japan are crowded and dangerous and unable to protect the detainees inside. Japan has been slower than many other countries to take precautions, including temporary release. This paper outlines some of the policy shifts that have led to this dangerous situation, the conditions of anxiety inside the detention centers themselves in Tokyo and Ibaraki and the problematic situation of "provisional release" of some detainees into a corona-infested Japan without any safety net or protection. We hope to not only point out the immediate danger of infection under COVID-19, but also the larger dynamic of using detention to manage a refugee asylum system that has proven to be ineffective and unjust.*

Read more: (<https://apjif.org/2020/18/Slater-Barbaran.html>)

**David H. Slater** is professor of cultural anthropology at Sophia University. He has worked on youth and labor, capitalism, and urban space. Since 2011, he has been working on oral narrative, first of disaster and survival in *Voices from Tohoku*, then of mothers displaced from Fukushima, of youth activists and of homeless men in Tokyo. Currently, he is working on a related oral narrative project, *Voices from Japan*, that is focusing on foreign refugees seeking asylum in Tokyo through the collection of oral narratives and support efforts through the [Sophia Refugee Support Group](#).

**Rosa Barbaran** graduated from Sophia University, a major in anthropology, where she led the research group on refugees and migrants. At that time, she presented research work on the role of religion in the detention center in Japan. She was a founding member of [Sophia Refugee Support Group](#) and after graduating, she worked in Melbourne as a curriculum designer for refugee children. Currently she is working as a filmmaker of refugee life and politics in Tokyo.

SOPHIA UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE OF COMPARATIVE CULTURE  
SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN JAPAN UNDER COVID-19  
HOSTED BY DAVID H. SLATER

A discussion with  
**David H. Slater, Sophia University and Rose Barbaran,**  
Filmmaker of refugee life and politics in Tokyo

Wednesday, March 3rd  
Time: 7pm-8pm (Tokyo time)

**The Whole Block Goes Down:  
Refugees in Japan's detention  
centers during the pandemic**

An introduction to the whole collection : **Vulnerable  
Populations in Japan under Covid-19: A lull in the storm**

Connecting Sophia  
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**Video Link for the 'Special Lecture Series' – David and Rosa discuss their paper:**

<https://youtu.be/P-6jY9xnOjM>