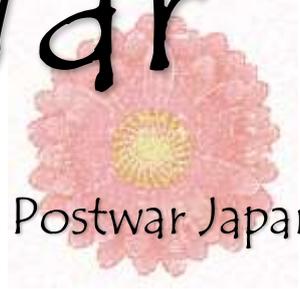


"Mothers

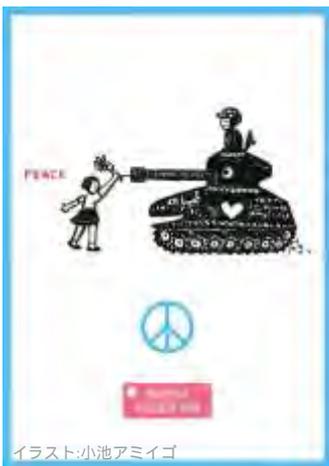
Against War"



Gender, Motherhood, and Peace Activism in Postwar Japan

Akiko Takenaka

Friday, 29th June, 2018, 19:00-20:30
Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University



Mothers have consistently been central to peace activism in Japan and elsewhere. Women-based anti-war organizations have often tended to highlight maternal qualities—e.g. women as creators and nurturers of life—in order to ground messages of peace. In times of war, however, women also have sent off their sons to the battlefield with the knowledge that they will most likely not return. As many scholars have argued, motherhood as a concept—or its Japanese counterpart *bosei*—is not inherent to the female sex, but rather, a social construct. Accordingly, many women have attempted to utilize varied renditions of *bosei* in order to establish a platform for social engagement. My presentation examines the ways that the concept of motherhood has been mobilized in postwar Japan through a critical analysis of women-based peace activist organizations. The presentation will focus on three groups that organized in 1955, 1970, and 2015. They are, respectively: “Mothers’ Congress,” “Asian Women’s Committee Who Fight Discrimination=Aggression,” and “Mothers Against War.”

Akiko Takenaka is an associate professor of Japanese history at the University of Kentucky. She is currently in Tokyo on a Fulbright fellowship working on her second book manuscript entitled *Mothers*

Against War: Gender, Motherhood, and Grassroots Peace Activism in Postwar Japan. Her first book *Yasukuni Shrine: History, Memory, and Japan’s Unending Postwar* (University of Hawaii Press, 2015) is the only book-length work in English that critically examines the controversial war memorial. She has published in journals including *Gender and History*, *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*, *The Public Historian*, *The Pacific Historical Review*, and *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, as well as a wide range of edited volumes on topics from war memory and mass dictatorship to aesthetics and visual culture. She is currently affiliated with Sophia University.

This talk is organized by Professor David H. Slater (FLA)
Lecture in English / No RSVP required