

The "History Wars" in the "Main Battleground" and Beyond:

Revisionism, the Right-wing and the "Comfort Woman" Issue
in Japan and the U.S.

Tomomi Yamaguchi (Montana State University)



7:15-8:45 PM, July 10th, 2019

Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University

As "comfort woman" monuments and statues have been built in the U.S. during the last decade, they have also become the target of attacks from the Japanese government and Japanese right-wingers. Right-wing media and intellectuals in Japan have been using the term "history wars" to refer to these conflicts. They consider the United States to be the major "battleground" on the "comfort woman" issue, which has now spread to some other countries as well as to the United Nations. Based on my fieldwork on Japanese right-wing activities in Japan and the U.S., as well as on the people involved in the making of the "comfort women" memorials in the U.S., I will highlight how the acts of remembering and commemorating the survivors' experiences of wartime violence against women has become such a contentious political issue that has mobilized the Japanese right-wing and the Japanese government so intensely. I will also touch on the recent documentary film *Shusenjo* on the issue and critically assess the critics' and audience' responses to it.

Tomomi Yamaguchi is an associate professor of Anthropology and the director of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies program at Montana State University. Yamaguchi earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Michigan in 2004, and she currently serves as an editor of the *Asia-Pacific Journal, Japan Focus*. Her research interests are feminism and the right-wing movements in contemporary Japan. She is a co-author (with Nogawa Motokazu, Tessa Morris-Suzuki and Emi Koyama) of *Umi wo Wataru Ianfu Mondai: Uha no Rekishisen wo Tou* [The "Comfort Women" Issue Goes Overseas: Questioning the Right-wing "History Wars"], Iwanami Shoten, 2016, and her latest article is "Revisionism, Ultrationalism, Sexism: Relations Between the Far Right and the Establishment Over the 'Comfort Women' Issue". *Social Science Japan Journal*. Vol. 21, Issue 2, 2018: 219-238.

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