

Roundtable on International Divorce in Japan

February 10th, 2022, 9am – 11am JST



Join us for a roundtable discussion on international divorce in Japan. We will explore the complexities of international divorces in Japan and available solutions through the perspective of foreign spouses, academics, human rights specialists and government officials. The rate of divorce for international couples is higher than for endogamous Japanese marriages. Reasons behind international divorces include interpersonal and intercultural issues, which are further complicated by multifaceted structural hardships that spouses and their families face on a daily basis. However, no matter the reason for marriage dissolution, there are many individuals who are affected by marital discord, including spouses, their children and extended family members. Our roundtable will bring together foreign spouses facing divorce, human rights and political activists, as well as scholars working in different areas to stimulate a multilateral and multidisciplinary conversation. We will outline issues that couples face in the process of separation and divorce; discuss the extent to which the state is involved in such private matters as marriage and divorce; and discuss the difficulties international couples face when it comes to divorce procedures, alimony and child support, as well as children's custody issues. Furthermore, this roundtable will be an opportunity to reflect on the current problems of international divorce and possible solutions.

Our panelists are:

Vincent Fichot and **Karina Kakhiani**, who are both parents of children abducted by their spouses. Vincent Fichot has been actively lobbying and advocating to put an end to child abduction in Japan as well as for introducing joint child custody.

Yasuyuki Watanabe holds an M.A. in Law from Keio University and M.A. in International Public Policy from Columbia University. He is a former government official of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, visiting professor at the Tama University (Japan).

Jefferson R. Plantilla is a researcher at the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA). He prepares and writes articles for HURIGHTS OSAKA publications (*Human Rights Education in Asia-Pacific*, *FOCUS Asia-Pacific*), leads multi-country research projects on human rights issues in relation to social development, culture, education, law and business.

Allison Alexy is an associate professor at the University of Michigan (USA). Her publications include *Intimate Disconnections: Divorce and the Romance of Independence in Contemporary Japan* (University of Chicago Press, 2020). She is currently writing a new book, *Family Law in a Family Nation: Parental Abductions and Activism in Contemporary Japan*.

Miloš Debnár is a lecturer at the Faculty of International Studies, Ryukoku University (Japan). His main research interest is migration, ethnicity, and race issues regarding contemporary European migration to Japan. He is an author of *Migration, Whiteness, and Cosmopolitanism: Europeans in Japan* (Palgrave, 2016).

Aleksandra Babović, an Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University. She is an Affiliated Scholar at the Research Institute for Indo-Pacific Affairs. Her research interests include Japan's foreign policy and security. She is the author of *The Tokyo Trial, Justice, and the Postwar International Order* (Palgrave, 2019).

Organizer/moderator:

Viktoriya Kim, a specially appointed associate professor at the Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University is a co-author of *The Politics of International Marriage in Japan* (Rutgers University Press, 2021). She specializes in international marriage migration, multicultural policies, and integration issues of migrants in Japan.

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