



LAWS MATTER

Enshrining Women's Rights in the Japanese Constitution: Beate Sirota Gordon's Legacy and Its Implications for Other Countries

Monday, March 16, 2020. 6:15 pm --7:45pm Church of the United Nations
777 United Nations Plaza (44th St. off 1st Ave.) 2d fl. New York, NY
Attendance is free and open to the public; seating is on a first-come, first-served basis

The Women's Rights Clause, Article 24, of the Japanese Constitution, was drafted in 1946 by 22-year-old, Japanese-speaking Beate Sirota Gordon. Born in Vienna and raised in Japan, she was at Mills College in California when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Unable to communicate with her parents who spent the war interned in Japan, she returned to Japan to look for them in late 1945 as a junior member of General MacArthur's staff in the occupation. Fortuitously, she was assigned to work on the Japanese Constitution...

Drawn from constitutions around the world and her childhood experience in Japan, it is a model for women's rights. The panel addresses the history and current status of the Japanese Constitution, Sirota Gordon's role in its creation, and ensuring women's rights in Japan and in countries around the world.

Speakers

Professor Carol Gluck, George Sansom Professor of History, Columbia University
**"Marriage Shall Be Based on Mutual Consent: Beate Sirota Gordon and
the Japanese Constitution"**

Reiko Aoki, Visiting Researcher, National Women's Education Center of Japan
"The Impact of Article 24 (Women's Rights) on Japanese Women Today"

Dr. Elizabeth L. Hillman, President, Mills College
"How the Law Matters to Women, Girls, and the Rest of Us"

Nicole Gordon, *Moderator*, Distinguished Lecturer, Baruch College
(Daughter of Beate Sirota Gordon)
"Serendipity and Opportunity"

Sponsors: National Women's Education Center of Japan, Saitama, Japan
Mills College, Oakland, CA The Japan Society, New York, NY

In conjunction with **The 64th Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women (2020)**

Beate Sirota Gordon's story is recounted in "The Only Woman in the Room" (U. Chicago Press)

<https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/O/bo18058488.html>

see <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/02/world/asia/beate-gordon-feminist-heroine-in-japan-dies-at-89.html>