

October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## On the Refusal to Appoint Nominees as New Council Members to the Science Council of Japan

The Japan Federation of Societies for the Study of Religions  
Susumu Shimazono, President

On October 1, the prime minister blocked the nominations of six humanities and social science candidates out of the 105 newly appointed to the Science Council of Japan. As an organization engaged in advancing academic activities, we can never accept this political interference.

The candidate who was expected to join the Committee on Philosophy in the Humanities and Social Sciences Section had served for many years as a director of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies. In light of his academic achievements and erudition, we confirm that he is most qualified to represent religious studies in Japan. Without clear and sufficient reason, we cannot accept the exclusion of these six scholars, nominated based on academic evaluation in their respective fields.

The Science Council of Japan was established to “contribute to the peaceful reconstruction of Japan, to the well-being of human society, and to scientific progress in partnership with the world’s academic societies, standing on the conviction that science is the foundation of a cultured nation.” We are gravely concerned that the prime minister’s unexplained rejection of academic nominees undermines this founding ideal, violates the independence of the Science Council of Japan, and threatens academic freedom and autonomy in Japan.

We petition the prime minister to confirm the appointment of these six scholars as council members immediately, in accord with the Science Council of Japan’s “Request for Appointment of New Members for the 25<sup>th</sup> Term.”

Member associations which have supported the statement by November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

(in the order of the date of signature)

The Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Board of Directors)

University of Tsukuba Philosophical Association (Board of Councilors)

Japanese Association for Religious Studies (Board of Directors)

Nishida Philosophy Association (Board of Directors)

Society for Philosophy of Religion in Japan (Board of Directors)

Japanese Association of Religion and Ethics (Board of Councilors)

The Association for the Study of Japanese Mountain Religion (Board of Directors/Councilors)

The Japanese Society of Christian Studies (Board of Directors)

Japan Society of Taoistic Research (President Maruyama Hiroshi)

Society for the Study of Modern Japanese Buddhist History (Steering Committee)

The Association for Indology and Study of Religion (President Kimura Toshiaki)

The Japanese Association for the Study of Religion and Society (Standing Committee)

Komazawa Religious Study Institute (Board of Directors)

The Society for Old Testament Study in Japan (Board of Directors/President Tsukimoto Akio)

Japan Society of New Testament Studies (Board of Directors/President Onuki Takashi)

Society for the Study of Pali and Buddhist Culture (Board of Directors)

The Society of Historical Studies of Christianity, Japan (Board of Directors)

Association for the Interdisciplinary Studies of Japanese Buddhism (Board of Directors)

Association of Buddhist Philosophy (Board of Directors)