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."UNITED STATES-JAPAN FOUNDATION SCHOLAR" AWARD *LAUDATIO*  
AUGUST 2025

Dr. Qiaoyan Li Rosenberg's doctoral dissertation on "Labor Migration Programs in Japan: A Three-Step Pathway to Permanent Residence, but Precarious Labor for All" is a timely and vital contribution to the debate about a major challenge for Japan and other advanced economies: how to integrate migrant workers that are sorely needed in the context of a declining and aging population. Based on an impressive data collected through 14 months of fieldwork and more than 100 in-depth interviews with migrant workers, the dissertation offers a rigorous analysis of the arduous process for foreign labor to move up the legal status hierarchy. The pathways to permanent residence are open in theory but even well-meaning policies often get abused or derailed in reality, leading to some tragic cases of criminalization and deportation. The sophisticated theoretical accounts and rich empirical data culminate in a final chapter on migrant workers' reproductive rights that discusses a well-publicized case that captured national attention in Japan. The award committee members unanimously agreed that Dr. Rosenberg's work stood out, even within a sizable group of intellectually compelling and empirically rich dissertations nominated from a wide array of disciplines and fields, as a contribution that expertly drew from Japanese sources while speaking to key debates and concerns in the social sciences.

Dr. Rosenberg addresses the complex relations between skill and labor mobility and migrant laborers' persistent and systemic vulnerabilities across technical intern training programs and specified skilled worker systems. Echoing the global migration trend of tightened access to permanent settlement and protracted temporariness, she demonstrates how workers' agency in Japan is in continuous dialectical tension with the control of their mobility, ultimately highlighting the substantial discrepancies between such programs' intentions and their implementation outcomes.

Committee members:

- **Sabine Frühstück**, (Committee Chair) Distinguished Professor and Koichi Takashima Chair in Japanese Cultural Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.
- **David Leheny**, Professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Waseda University.
- **Kiyoteru Tsutsui**, Henri H. and Tomoye Takahashi Professor of Japanese Studies, Professor of Sociology, and Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University.