

THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY-J. F. OBERLIN UNIVERSITY  
COMMEMORATIVE LECTURE SERIES

(共催:グローバル・コミュニケーション学群・大学院国際学研究科・国際学研究所)

TWELFTH LECTURE

# *The Legitimatization of Silence*

*Engaging with Buraku Issues in Contemporary Japan*

**Dr. Christopher Bondy**

Associate Professor of Sociology &  
Coordinator of Japan Studies

International Christian University

Friday, Nov. 25, 16:10–17:40

Meimeikan A204, Machida Campus

(Lecture in English—Q&A may be in Japanese)



How do we decide what to talk about and what to silence? Using the case of the *burakumin*, an “invisible” minority in Japan, I examine how silence on the existence and the experiences of *burakumin* is reproduced and challenged at the individual and institutional levels. Based on over a decade of longitudinal ethnographic research, including participant observations in two public junior high schools, I explore the experiences of forty *burakumin* youth in two different communities. I consider the overall cultural values of each community, shaped by differing social movement organizations advocating for *burakumin*, and the ways in which they affected how youth present themselves in different contexts. Further, I examine the two contrasting approaches the youth take within the community, following the locally dominant form of engagement: openly voicing their background or wrapping *buraku* issues in silence. Finally, I show how the youth act in ways that intentionally and unintentionally reproduce silence surrounding *buraku* issues in Japan.

Christopher Bondy is an Associate Professor of Sociology and the Coordinator for Japan Studies at International Christian University, Tokyo, where he began teaching in 2012. His areas of interest include the relationship between education and various forms of capital and changing approaches of social movements. His research centers on contemporary *buraku* issues, with an emphasis on the day-to-day experiences of *burakumin*, highlighted in his book *Voice, Silence and Self: Negotiations of Buraku Identity* (Harvard University Press, 2015). In addition, he conducts research and has published on the gap between policies on and implementation of minority education. His current research project is a comparative study on the representations of minorities in textbooks and the manner in which schools with large minority populations respond to those portrayals. Bondy has been a post-doctoral fellow at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard University and a visiting professor at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Education.

This lecture series was established under the auspices of an Agreement of Academic Cooperation between J. F. Oberlin University and Stanford University. Speakers are non-Japanese scholars who studied, earlier in their careers, at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies (IUC) or who are alumni or faculty of Stanford. The IUC, founded in 1963 and administered by Stanford University on behalf of sixteen U.S. and Canadian universities, is located in the Minato Mirai district of Yokohama.