

○ Association for Modern Japanese Literary Studies, The Association for the Study of Showa Literature, Association for Japanese Social Literature, Japanese Literature Association

We Oppose Political Intervention in the Science Council of Japan and Demand Retraction of the Refusal to Appoint Council Members

On October 1, it was reported in all mass media simultaneously that Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga had excluded six humanities and social science scholars out of those nominated as candidates to become new members of the Science Council of Japan. The Science Council of Japan, established in January 1949 as a special institution operating independently of the government while being under the jurisdiction of the prime minister, has the purpose of “having science reflected in and permeated into administration, industries and people’s lives.” The Science Council of Japan is an organization that represents approximately 870,000 scholars in all fields of from humanities and social science to natural science and engineering, and its 210 council members and approximately 2,000 associate members bear the duties of “policy recommendations to the government,” “the construction of networks between scholars,” and “the promotion of scientific literacy.” The exclusion of candidates, albeit a part of them, who have been nominated based on their achievements in various academic fields, from the appointments by the prime minister and his advisers without indicating a reason can only be said to be an anomalous political intervention that erodes the “academic freedom” guaranteed by the Constitution of Japan. In addition, there are misgivings that due to this measure a situation may arise in the future whereby it becomes difficult to make proposals that constructively critique government policies. The reason why “academic freedom” must be guaranteed is for the inquiry into truth and facts free from the distortions of temporary policies, and through this to contribute to the wider development of humankind. We, who are engaged in or aspire to academic pursuits, strongly oppose this violation of the significance of scholarship and demand the retraction of the refusal to appoint the Science Council of Japan members as well as an explanation of the background and reasons for the refusal.

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