Japanese politics has a woman problem. Not only are women relatively absent from legislative assemblies; when they run for elections, and even after they've won, they are often faced with sexual harassment. These issues seem particularly acute in local level assemblies, and even more so in rural areas. In Japan, 15.6% of local assembly seats are occupied by women, and only 2 of the 47 governors are women. This is in spite of the enactment in 2018 of a gender parity law, the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field. Moreover, the 2020 Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality set a numerical target that at least 35% of all political candidates at all levels of politics be female by 2025. There was, however, only a small increase in the number of women who ran for office in the 2023 Unified Local Elections. This presentation explores the causes of women's under-representation in local politics and highlights the sexism experienced by women who campaign for and get elected to office. By considering institutional and cultural barriers like the electoral system and sexual harassment, it presents a big-picture analysis of the problem of male-dominated politics in Japan.

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The event will be held in English, admission is free. To participate onsite please register via email to forum@dijtokyo.org, for online participation please register via our website.