



# Doing History in Partnership: The Academic and the Public in Contemporary Japan

Programme Event

International Committee of Historical Sciences | 26–30 August 2026 | Leipzig, Germany

DATE 26 Aug 2026, 14:00 - 15:30	LOCATION House 1 - T-1001
THEME B - Teaching History and Public History	CONFERENCE International Committee of Historical Sciences

## Overview

How should historical academic research relate to the public? This issue has recently attracted increasing attention. On the one hand, there is always a gap between academic history and what may be called popular history, which is widely circulating among the non-academic public. On the other hand, academic history cannot be practiced regardless of the social context. For instance, in post-war Japan, historiography played a significant role in shaping national identity, presenting directions for progress, and suggesting social change. Faced with various new questions raised in the contemporary world, we should reconsider how academic historical research relates to society. It is obvious that historical research within the national framework is not as relevant as it used to be.

As such examples, this panel will focus on the following three topics: (1) historical practices in the local community, (2) activities to preserve local historical materials, and (3) the potential of migration history in Japan. The panel is expected to provide clues to obtain relevant perspectives for the future.

MATSUBARA Hiro discusses the possibilities and difficulties of public history based on historical practices in the Tateishi District of Tokyo in 2024. This presentation introduces the trial-and-error process of conducting fieldwork on-site and engaging with the historical perceptions held by local residents. Various practical and theoretical issues were presented in this process.

ONOZUKA Koichi will discuss the significance of preserving and utilizing local historical materials. Many regions in Japan have suffered severe human casualties due to earthquakes, tsunamis, and floods. Unfortunately, historical materials have also suffered severe damage during these disasters. Moreover, the declining birthrate, aging population, and depopulation have heightened the risk of historical materials being disposed of or scattered, even during normal times. This presentation introduces historical researchers' efforts to address how to preserve and utilize these materials, which are related to local identity, and reconsiders the implications of these practices.

OKUBO Yuri aims to reevaluate the historiography of modern Japan from the perspective of migration. There are many examples of migrants who were deeply involved in shaping the modern Japanese empire. By focusing on migration, this presentation reflects on the current state of Japanese historical research and considers the meaning of the history of migration in today's context. This reflection is significant in connecting historical practices in Japan from a global perspective.

## Participants

### Convenor

- Asada Shinji (Komazawa University)

### Commentator

- Chelsea S. Schieder (Aoyama Gakuin University)
- You Jae Lee (University of Tübingen)

### Panelists

- Matsubara Hiro (Rikkyo University)
- Okubo Yuri (University of Tokyo)
- Onozuka Koichi (National Museum of Japanese History)

## Papers

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### **Let History Flow: A Public History Experiment of Rekiken, Japan**

Hiro Matsubara (Rikkyo University)

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### **On Migration: Japanese History as a Post-Colonial History**

Okubo Yuri (University of Tokyo)

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### **Historiography and the Spread of Activities Aimed at the Protection of Cultural Properties in Japan**

Onozuka Koichi (National Museum of Japanese History)

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