

**AAWH 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference  
“Creating World Histories from Asian Perspectives”**

**Date: Saturday, 5th –Sunday, 6th January 2019**

**Venue: Nakanoshima-Center, Osaka University, Japan**



Welcome to Osaka University!

In October 2014, Osaka University, on the initiative of its President, established the Institute for Open and Transdisciplinary Research Initiatives (OTRI). ‘Global history’ became one of nine principal research areas incorporated in this new organizational framework. The global history division proposes to

explore, among others, ‘global history’ from Asian perspectives through interdisciplinary research embracing a wide range of academic fields: history, international relations, economics, the arts and social sciences, and cultural studies. In addition, Osaka University can draw on a wide range of expertise in area studies and Asian studies which it inherited from the previous Osaka University of Foreign Studies. The global history division consists of three research groups focusing on: (a) the supra-regional history of networks and interactions in ancient Central Eurasia and early-modern maritime Asia; (b) the micro-history of medieval Kansai (Japan) and modern China; and (c) global economic history and the Modern World System. As the host of the 4<sup>th</sup> AAWH conference at Osaka University, the Osaka research group will build on these academic foundations.

At the turn of the second millennium in 2000, new research trends in world and global history attracted increasing attention, mainly focusing on the reevaluation of Asia’s position in the world. Two studies have given a strong impetus to the so-called ‘global turn’: Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: a millennial perspective* (OECD, 2001), and, in a

provocative manner, Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence—China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, 2000). The publication of these two books led to the reconsideration of the ‘early-modern period’ or the ‘long eighteenth century’ based on reciprocal comparisons between Europe and Asia. Nonetheless, the exchange of views between experts of ‘global history’ and ‘local’ histories is still limited. Even after the ‘California School’ presented revisionist views challenging the Eurocentrism of the received approaches to globalism, the latter continued to adhere to an analysis along the lines of an East-West binary.

In the last ten years since the establishment of AAWH at Tianjin/Osaka, the association has continued to explore new interpretations of world and global histories from Asian perspectives. As stated in the AAWH Charter at its foundation, ‘the concepts and methods of world/global history differ considerably from country to country in this region’. We still need more time before we can present a grand alternative vision and interpretation of world and global history from Asian perspectives. However, the Osaka conference will serve to explore and present new interpretations based on **trans-regional** or **trans-national** analyses. This framework combines a vertical historical perspective of the *longue-durée* from the ancient to the contemporary period with a horizontal analysis encompassing a range of specific regional studies beyond the purview of national histories.

The conference is anchored by three plenary lectures by distinguished Asian historians. Prof. Li presents an analysis of Central and Eastern Eurasian history based on the study of global economic history. Prof. Mitani reconsiders the historical significance of the Meiji Revolution on the occasion of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and Prof. Mukherjee examines the modern and contemporary development of the world economy and globalization from perspectives of the ‘Global South’. These keynote lectures together with 17 large panels and 30 individual papers promise to offer valuable insights and perspectives for creating world and global histories from Asian perspectives.

By drawing on the expertise of our participants, the AAWH Osaka conference will explore perspectives on a long historical period from ancient to contemporary times within a **trans-regional framework**. In doing so, the conference hopes to promote the study of world and global histories from Asian perspectives.

In addition, our aim is to make a lasting contribution to society by collaborating with senior high-school teachers and journalists in view of reforming world history education in Japan and Asia through the publication of several text books. Collaborations with prominent senior-high school teachers are arguably the most promising outreach activities that allow historians to demonstrate the usefulness of their research for society.

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