

# When Japanese were migrants: Insights to the Contemporary Japanese Society

In recent years, international migration has become a highly politicized in many nations, and Japan is no exception. In this lecture, I will revisit the pre-war period, when Japanese people themselves were international labor migrants in Hawai'i. The great majority of them moved to the islands to work on the sugar plantations. Although Japanese laborers were an indispensable workforce in sugarcane production, the host society often failed to recognize their contributions and instead subjected them to discrimination and marginalization. By examining the experiences of these Japanese workers, this lecture revisits the time when Japanese were migrants and encourages reflection on the current Japanese society, which is now accepting an increasing number of international migrants.



## IIJIMA Mariko

**Vice President for Global Academic Affairs**

Mariko Iijima is a professor of Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University. After completing her BA at Sophia, she received her MPhil and DPhil in Modern History from the University of Oxford in the UK. She specializes in global history, food, Japanese migration history, and the history of coffee and sugar production in the Asia-Pacific region. Her recent single-authored book, *A Global History of Kona Coffee: Multi-layered Migrations in the Pacific* (Kyoto University Press, 2025), received the Shimizu Hiroshi Prize from the Japanese Association of American Studies in 2026.

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## 1:40PM - 3:10PM

### Taki Plaza 2F 201 A • B • C

The special lecture is exclusive to the “ocha summer program” participants.  
No registration is required.

