The Size of History
Small Worlds, Big Worlds, and the People Caught in Between

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Is there a right size to history? How large does an event or a person must be in order to be included in a history book? Do we need to uncover the small worlds of individuals whose inconsequential actions did not change the historical process? This talk will reflect on the historiographical and methodological debate that pits “large-scale” versus “small-scale” history—global history and microhistory. Using the example of Kurosawa Tokiko (1806-1890), an unknown teacher, fortuneteller, poet, and political activist from Mito domain who attempted to alter the course of late-Tokugawa history and failed, I will make a case for the inclusion of unrepresentative and obscure historical actors in the history books. Caught between small and big history, these characters change our understanding of individual agency and shed new light on the creative process whereby those at the margins imagined a central role for themselves.

Prior registration required (Admission Free)
Closed Seminar, Ochadai students only
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Date Tuesday, July 18, 16:40-18:10
Venue Room 135 (本館135室), Main Building, Ochanomizu University

* igs is Institute for Gender Studies, Ochanomizu University

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