



# Finding Echigo in Edo: Snow Country Migrants and their Urban Worlds

FEB  
**28**  
WED

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The Echigo province migrant was a familiar type in nineteenth-century Edo. Every year in the tenth month, snow country peasants would come down the mountains on the Nakasendō Highway and enter the city through Itabashi Station. They wandered down the main street in Hongō, where they were met by labor scouts who had learned to recognize their bewildered expressions and country accents. Many ended up in the city's notorious boarding houses for laborers, where they were dispatched to rice polishers and bathhouses. Others found work in service with the help of migrants who had come before. Most went home eventually, but others stayed on in the city to become shop owners, peddlers, and even low-ranking samurai. This talk delineates the importance of regional connections and rural-urban migration in the

development of Japan's largest city, and considers how documents kept in far-flung places can illuminate urban space.

Amy Stanley is associate professor in the History Department at Northwestern University, where she teaches early modern and modern Japanese and global history. She is author of *Selling Women: Prostitution, Households, and the Market in Early Modern Japan* (UC Press, 2012) and "Maid servants' Tales: Narrating Domestic and Global History in Eurasia, 1500-1800" (AHR, 2016).

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