

Sakano Toru 坂野徹, ed., *Teikoku wo shiraberu: Shokuminchi firudowāku no kagakushi* 帝国を調べる: 植民地フィールドワークの科学史 [*Investigating the Empire: A History of Science of Colonial Fieldwork*]

Tokyo: Keisō Shobō 勁草書房, 2016. 256 pp. ¥3,400

Jung Lee

© 2018 Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan

For an empire, some kind of fieldwork to obtain knowledge about newly acquired territories is crucial. So it is a welcome addition to the history of science in Japan that we have this edited volume with six individual works dedicated to the relationship between fieldwork and empire. Its editor, Sakano Toru, notes that *Investigating the Empire* is “the first work to look into various cross-disciplinary fieldworks and their relationships to the empire” in Japan and beyond (3). This book covers fieldwork in China; Japan; Korea; Palau, in Japanese Micronesia; the Seto Inland Sea; Hokkaido; and Okinawa. The disciplines investigated include not just the obvious field sciences, such as archaeology, ethnography, geography, cultural anthropology, and marine biology, but also history and pharmacology. The time span is from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s, the last two chapters dealing with the “post-imperial” era. Notably, the editor properly sees Japanese cultural anthropologists’ fieldwork in Hokkaido’s Ainu regions and a US geologist’s fieldwork in Japanese Okinawa and Korea, both in the “post-imperial” era, also as “colonial fieldwork.”

This collection of diverse studies on colonial fieldwork originally stemmed from a collective study by Japanese scholars interested in the history of colonial/imperial knowledge practices. A collective study can have varying aims, and the contributors clarify that it is not their aim to provide a synthesis or an in-depth analysis of the topic. The six have different ideas about fieldwork and use varying approaches. By simply presenting various forms of fieldwork, they hope to enhance readers’ understanding of the topic (even to the degree of helping the practical task of improving the methodology of fieldwork). So, what do they offer?

Kikuchi Akira’s “Ethnographer Mizuno Seiichi: Or, Ethnography and Archeology as ‘New History’” deals with the work of archaeologist Mizuno Seiichi (水野清一, 1905–71), known for his groundbreaking archaeological survey of the Yungang

J. Lee
Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Germany
e-mail: jung.km.lee@gmail.com

Grottoes. The specifics of Mizuno's archaeological fieldwork, however, are not the focus here. Instead, Kikuchi wants to illuminate Mizuno's ethnographer side, which he sees as being shadowed by Mizuno's success in archaeology as well as by the crystallized disciplinary boundaries in the postwar era. To do so, Kikuchi looks into the unique intellectual milieu at the Kyoto Imperial University, where Mizuno began his historical, ethnographical, and archaeological training, his continued collaborations with ethnographers and historians, and his interest in everyday life through his archaeological fieldwork. He claims that Mizuno's intellectual paths were shaped by Kyoto's search for the "new cultural history" that would set it apart from Tokyo's emphasis on political history. Archaeology and ethnography, through often collaborative fieldwork in China and Japan, became a ready part of that pursuit of cultural history by providing nontextual sources illuminating past lives.

Arnaud Nanta's "Colonial Archaeology, History, and Museums: Studies on Ancient History and the Korean Peninsula" also connects archaeology with history, in the context of colonial Korea. Nanta observes how Japanese interest in Korean history predated colonization in 1910, with an expected focus on its colonial relationship with Japan, and how it came to strongly integrate archaeological discoveries of historic remnants, artifacts, and buildings, not so much for new facts but mostly to confirm what Japanese scholars already "knew" through philological investigations, in his assessment. He notes several colonial elements of this archaeologically oriented Japanese study of Korean history: exploitation and destruction of historic treasures, books, and artistic artifacts, involving the familiar tomb robberies by private Japanese dealers; ideological legitimization of Japanese rule through museums and illustrated English-language works displaying Japan's enlightened discovery of the colony; and its colonial and postcolonial legacy in both North and South Korean historical scholarship regarding the idea of "the nation" and their interest in antiquity in pursuit of national history.

In a sense, Shin Chang-Geon's "Fusion of Fieldwork and the Experimental Laboratory: Pharmacological Research in Keijo [the name of Seoul in the colonial era]" again discusses fieldwork that provides materials for a different type of research. His case, pharmacological research in colonial Korea, has its emphasis on laboratory analyses of traditional medicines identified by field and textual investigations. Shin criticizes the tendency to depict this colonial research program, established in the Pharmacological Section of the Medical School of Keijo Imperial University in 1926, merely as colonial, that is, as an independent program by colonial Japanese researchers or the colonial government. He shows that it was part of an empire-wide disciplinary development of Japanese pharmacology that combined fieldwork in colonial mountain regions and in markets with laboratory work developed both on the Japanese mainland and in Manchuria. On this successful fusion of colonial fieldwork and imperial research traditions, the Keijo Pharmacological Section "actively expanded its research [into China and other areas of imperial development] through political involvement," displaying "ideologically and institutionally strong colonial characteristics" (107), Shin concludes.

Sakano Toru's "Coral Reef, Travels, and the Island People: The 'Nanyo Experience' of the Researchers at the Palau Tropical Biological Station" seeks to expand our notion of fieldwork by discussing the entire life experiences in a colonial laboratory as a case. The Palau Tropical Biological Station, which provided Japanese biologists with the

chance to study tropical marine life, existed between 1934 and 1943 on Palau, the administrative center of Japanese Micronesia, under a new funding scheme made available through the establishment of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science in 1932. In this marine biological lab, neither the division between field and lab nor between research and life was clear. For those mostly youthful Japanese researchers who applied for this unique research opportunity, the entirety of colonial life became a vivid “Nanyo experience,” shared and then much reproduced through their alumni magazines. Sakano shows that these researchers’ leisurely swims at the beach, their dinners with other Japanese residents such as ethnographers and artists, and their conversations with indigenous children (in Japanese, as some of these began to go to Japanese school) indeed became their fieldwork by providing sources for their biological research.

Kinase Takashi’s “What Was ‘The Comprehensive Research on the Ainu Ethnic Group’? Seiichi Izumi’s ‘Frustration’ and Post-War Japan’s Cultural Anthropology” shows the startling transformation that the constant reconstruction of such fieldwork experiences could make, by analyzing the works of cultural anthropologist Seiichi Izumi (泉靖一, 1915–70). This pioneer in Japanese cultural anthropology at Tokyo University, who led the ambitious research project on the Ainu people in 1951–54, belatedly invented his pain and frustration in doing fieldwork with this poor indigenous people, which had not existed in his original field notes, in the changing milieu of both his discipline engaged in reflective criticism and the Japanese student movement of the 1960s. Kinase learned about this invention from one of Seiichi’s local assistants in his Hokkaido fieldwork, who in turn guided Kinase to correct his earlier interpretation of Seiichi’s painful “incidents” as one of the reasons Seiichi left behind his study of the Ainu for a UNESCO-funded study of Japanese immigrants in Brazil. As it turns out, Seiichi did not stop his fieldwork with the Ainu people in 1953, despite the allegedly painful realization that he was a helpless scholar being suspected and criticized by frustrated Ainu. He not only carried it through until the end of his ambitious project in 1954, but he also managed to get sponsorship for another Ainu research project in the late 1950s, in spite of the not-so-impressive results of his previous comprehensive research, according to Kinase. The pain Seiichi had suffered was not the least of the hurdles he had to overcome, because it came to exist only in the 1960s. Kinase sees that Seiichi worked comfortably in that power structure where a metropolitan scholar like himself, with the theoretical framework obtained from his international training, could easily exploit the expertise of regional scholars and native informants.

Sensui Hidekazu’s “The Cold War Era Field Investigation in East Asia by an American Geographer: F. R. Pitts’s Connecting of the Seto Inland Sea, Okinawa, and Korea” looks at the fieldwork of a US geographer, focusing on his ability to move around and connect different fieldwork sites. F. R. Pitts, a human geographer and later Korean studies pioneer at the University of Hawai’i, began his study of Japanese under and for the US Navy intelligence program during the war, and afterward he joined the Japanese studies program at the University of Michigan. Building on the program’s village studies expertise in Okayama, Pitts assumed fieldwork in Okinawa for the US Army that was establishing military bases there. Pitts then found himself in rural Korean villages in the 1960s, realizing his long interest in Korea, testified to by his self-taught Korean, through the US foreign aid program. Pitts, appreciating the values of Okinawan culture, the self-initiated rural development schemes of Okayamans, and Korean

officials' wish for farm mechanization, obviously had his own political agenda that was not identical with that of his powerful sponsors; nonetheless, Sensui notes that the US dominance in the area and its Cold War agenda strongly shaped not just Pitts's exceptional mobility but also how his research would be presented, understood, and used.

These are, indeed, diverse approaches and notions about fieldwork. Although the lack of synthesizing effort is an acknowledged limit, it is a weakness of this volume that so many chances for cross-fertilization are missed. For example, as Sakano also notes, no other work considers Sensui's theme of mobility, which he highlights to touch on the asymmetric power relations that privileged imperial researchers like Pitts. Despite its close link to their alleged common concerns—the asymmetric relations between investigator and investigated in colonial fieldwork, and the various agencies shaping fieldwork beyond fieldworkers—they do not analyze privileged mobilities in Mizuno's travels to China, in Japanese archaeologist-cum-historians' excavations in Korea, in the Keijo pharmacologists' expansion into China, in Japanese biologists' relocation to a tropical island, and in Seiichi's travels to Hokkaido and Brazil. Interestingly, Sakano dwells on the mobility of Japanese marine biologists rather to remark on how they lost their freedom to remain in that promising research site in a changed imperial power structure after the war, making them look like victims. Also, Kinase's probing analysis into the power dynamics between privileged metropolitan or imperial researchers and regional and native assistants and informants remains an exception. While Shin and Nanta pay more attention to colonial tensions and the roles of colonized Koreans, they hardly take full advantage of unique Korean sources that reveal the complex dynamics of colonial collaboration.

By simply allowing each work to have a different focus other than fieldwork, this collection, instead of becoming a source to enhance our understanding of fieldwork per se, appears to be a collection of variously interesting colonial researches that involve particular fieldwork. Yet, it is certainly a good addition for enhancing our understanding of imperial knowledge practices in colonial and postcolonial Japan, and later the United States and East Asia, and I hope it will prove a good base for further collective engagement with colonial fieldwork and many more important topics surrounding Japanese imperial knowledge practices.

Jung Lee is an assistant professor at the Institute for the Humanities, Ewha Womans University, Seoul. She is the author of several articles, including "Invention without Science" and "Between Universalism and Regionalism." She is preparing a book tentatively titled "Rooted Plants, Connected Modernities: Botanizing in Japanese Colonial Korea (1910–1945)."