

A Review of *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon ni okeru chi to kenryoku*

Cross-referencing and Knowledge of the Empire

Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon ni okeru chi to kenryoku 植民地帝国日本における知と権力 [Knowledge and Power of the Colonial Empire Japan], edited by Matsuda Toshihiko 松田利彦編. Kyōtō: Shibunkaku shuppan, 2019, 980 pp., ¥ 16,500, ISBN: 978-4-784-21965-0 (paperback)

“History of Japan as Empire” and Joint Research Conducted by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies

Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon ni okeru chi to kenryoku is the culmination of a collaborative research project on the “history of Japan as empire” that was led by Matsuda Toshihiko and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

Research on the “history of Japan as empire” among Japanese historians started in earnest with the publication of Komagome Takeshi’s *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no bunka tōgō* (*Cultural Integration by the Colonial Empire Japan*) in 1996. The book announced that it “aimed to not simply add the histories of Taiwan or Joseon to the framework of the ‘history of Japan’ but look at East Asia as one geographical zone in itself and question how the ruling systems of the so-called ‘metropole’ and the colonies and territories influenced each other” (Komagome 1996, 3). The book also led to the widespread use of the term “colonial empire Japan.” In an article, Komagome (2000, 224) defined research of the “history of Japan as empire” as the “new trend of colonial studies these days” and presented its four following characteristics: 1) Moving beyond a binary understanding of the relationship between Japan and Joseon or Taiwan to reach a cross-sectional understanding of how the situation of “Japan proper” and the multiple colonies and territories were structurally related; 2) Elucidating not only how “Japan proper” defined colonial rule but also the impact the colonies had on “Japan proper”; 3) Building on the achievements of previous historical research on imperialism that focused on economic history while also emphasizing political or cultural history (or cultural history as part of political history); and 4) Destabilizing the seemingly self-evident categories of “Japanese

people,” “Japanese language,” and “Japanese culture” to focus on the historical process of their formation and transformation. Komagome (ibid.) warned that “if research on the ‘history of Japan as empire’ does not take the question ‘what did colonial rule mean to the people of Joseon or Taiwan?’ seriously enough, it will only produce a ‘history of Joseon’ or a ‘history of Taiwan’ by ‘the Japanese’ for ‘the Japanese.’” He also observed, however, that “the perspective of the research on the history of Japan as empire may be valid insofar as it serves as a transitional linking step” (ibid. 225).

In 2003, *Teikoku no kenkyū: genri ruikei kankei* (*A Study of Empire: Principles, Forms, Relationships*), a significant text in the research of history of Japan as empire edited by Yamamoto Yūzō, was published. In explaining how the collaborative research came about, Yamamoto (2003, i) alluded to the experience of being reminded of “memories of the ‘empire’ of the past as a soft form of a union of nations” while watching the “bloody conflicts between nations and religions” after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The article in the book that garnered the most attention was Yamamuro Shin’ichi’s “Kokumin teikoku ron no shatei” (The Range of the Nation-empire Theory). Yamamuro looked at modern history not through the previous framework of “world empire” or “dynastic or patrimonial empire” but as a “competitive coexistence” system in which multiple “nation-empires” “fight and hold hands with each other,” that is, compete as they coexist (ibid. 114).

There has also been criticism. Yoshizawa Seiichirō (2004, 37) pointed out that he “often felt disconcerted by the inconsiderate way of using” the “popular” term “empire.” The angle through which scholars see “Japan as empire,” he criticized, “is actually being dominated by arguments reinforcing the Japan-centered framework instead of deconstructing it” and he went on to argue that “if the idea of nation-state has almost never been realized in the strictest sense, dealing with elements that cannot be explained through nation-state as being merely ‘imperial’ is in fact a complacent solution” (ibid.). However, he also added that “the proposal of a ‘nation-empire theory,’ which accurately points to how the nation-state and modern empire emerged in a (contradictory) but inseparable relationship, is interesting” (ibid.).

On the other hand, how to formulate theoretical or methodological interest in “history of Japan as empire” into actual historical narrative presents a different set of challenges. The series of joint research led by Matsuda Toshihiko and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyōtō is a good

example of the specific way this research has unfolded. The research makes clear its pursuit of a “history of Japan as empire” and has made ceaseless efforts to articulate a historical narrative based on historical evidence.

In 2009, *Nihon no Chōsen, Taiwan shihai to shokuminchi kanryō* (*Study of Japan's Rule of Joseon and Taiwan and the Bureaucracy of the Japanese Colonial Empire*), edited by Matsuda Toshihiko and Yamada Atsushi, was published. Matsuda (2009, 3) pointed out the “absence of self-aware reflection on the fact that Japan, which was severed from its colonies after losing the war, had been a colonial ‘empire’ early on” in the introduction and expressed his hope that “the focus on colonial bureaucracy will be a breakthrough for comparative research on colonial Joseon and Taiwan” (ibid. 7).

2013 saw the publication of *Chiiki shakai kara miru Teikoku Nihon to shokuminchi: Chōsen, Taiwan, Manshū* (*Japan as Empire and its Colonies Seen from Local Societies: Joseon, Taiwan, Manchuria*), edited by Matsuda Toshihiko and Jin Jungwon. One of the problems Matsuda raised of previous collaborative research was that “it did not sufficiently delve into the problem of how the policies adopted by colonial bureaucrats became integrated with local societies.” He explained the current book as aiming to “build a dialogue in which research on colonial policies does not end by simply doing a policy analysis but involves the side that was ruled as well.” Matsuda (2013, 5-6) places this book as the “end product of a hard struggle to combine two problems that are at different levels—‘history of Japan as empire’ and ‘local society.’”

And consequently in 2019, *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon ni okeru chi to kenryoku* is published.

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Due to space limits, this section will be used to summarize mainly the articles that deal with Korea based on Matsuda Toshihiko's introductions.

In Part 1, Matsuda and Jin Jungwon each outlines past trends and future tasks of research on knowledge and power from the fields of Korean and Taiwanese history, respectively.

Part 2 reviews how the intellectual landscape and customs that existed in Taiwan and Joseon before colonization were observed, surveyed, and reorganized by modern knowledge and discusses how traditional knowledge and former customs of a colony were related to knowledge of the empire.

Okazaki Mayumi examines how the dual legal structure of the Ordinance on Civil Matters in Korea (Chōsen minjirei), in which both the civil law system of Japan proper and the family-centered customary law were respected, influenced the research trends of legal scholars studying civil law at Keijō Imperial University. For these scholars, whose research took place within an extension of the academic space of Japan proper, the interpretation of traditional Korean customs was valid only within the jurisdiction of Joseon and therefore did not hold much attraction for them as an object of study. Academic interest was thus directed at family law of Japan proper. Although Korean family law was studied by some scholars, it was merely dismissed as backward. Their desire to become integrated into the legal circles of Japan proper is apparent in the way they treated the interpretation of a civil case of the High Court of Joseon and a judicial precedent of the Supreme Court of Japan proper, two areas that in reality would not meet, as comparable. This way of thinking that unconsciously sought to integrate Joseon with Japan proper was shared with civil law studies of Japan proper as well as post-war Japan.

Part 3 looks at colonial bureaucrats and the Japanese that resided in the colonies, who practiced "knowledge" beyond "scholarly knowledge." The examination of colonial bureaucrats focuses on technical bureaucrats such as those who worked in agricultural administration or civil engineering, a topic that has seen a considerable amount of research recently. The study of Japanese residents in the colonies, on the other hand, looks mainly at their relationship with the press, revealing how these Japanese played a role in maintaining the power dynamics in the colony.

Honma Chikage's piece looks at the ideology behind the policies of Yahiro Ikuo, who worked in agricultural administration in Joseon right after the annexation of Korea and throughout the war. Honma deals with the Rural Revitalization Campaign of the 1930s and focuses on how related policies and ideologies were different from the Rural Economy Rehabilitation Campaign that took place within Japan proper. The unit of the Rural Revitalization Campaign Yahiro designed and implemented was each farming household, which entailed the problem of a high rate of illiteracy, a problem unique to

Joseon at that time. The principle Yahiro put forth “matter and mind are one” (*bushin ichinyo* 物心一如), which, according to Honma, espoused a Confucian worldview instead of emphasizing the mindset as a subject of the Japanese empire such as Yamazaki Nobukichi did, even as Yahiro showed an interest in the right way peasants should practice (*nōmindō* 農民道) advocated by Yamazaki.

Kawase Takaya reads the negotiation and conflict between Japanese and Korean Buddhism during the late 1920s from the magazine *Chōsen bukkyō* (*Korean Buddhism*). During the period of “cultural politics” of the 1920s, the Association of Korean Buddhism (Joseon bulgyo daehoe) was formed in 1922 as part of the policy to create an agency unifying Japanese and Korean Buddhism. *Chōsen bukkyō* was the bulletin of the association. Initially, the newsletter spoke from a binary framework that pitted a popular and advanced Japanese Buddhism against a hermetic and backward Korean Buddhism, with the Japanese asserting the superiority of their Buddhism over that of Joseon. Active discussion of the practice of “eating meat and having a wife” (*nikujiki saitai* 肉食帶妻) that Japanese Buddhism introduced to Korean Buddhism took place on paper. While many Buddhist monks of Joseon opposed this practice, some, including Han Yong-un, did not, affirming it instead as part of the modernization of Buddhism. Kawase’s work thus highlights the issue of what the “modern Buddhism” imported into Joseon actually was.

Part 4 features arguments that examine the relationship between the knowledge of the colonial empire Japan and the Western world. Most of the knowledge Japan utilized to rule its colonies originated from the West, as did the tools to criticize such knowledge.

Katō Michiya focuses on three colonial bureaucrats, Ōuchi Ushinosuke, Yoshimura Gentaro, and Tokinaga Urazō, and looks at their ideological backgrounds. Beginning in 1901, Ōuchi served as Counselor of the Government-General of Taiwan and the Government-General of Guandong for 18 years and inspected the colonial ruling policies of Germany onsite. Yoshimura served as President of External Affairs of the Government-General of Guandong from 1911. He was commissioned by the Bureau of Colonization in 1917 to study British rule of Ireland and India, and left behind many reports. Tokinaga worked at the Government-General of Joseon for 22 years starting from 1910. After the March First Movement, he went to Europe and America to present on the issue of Ireland. All three bureaucrats experienced the

systems of Europe and America; Yoshimura and Tokinaga appear to have been influenced ideologically as well. Over time, colonial rule by Europe and America was viewed more negatively and changed from being an object of study to an object of critique.

Matsuda Toshihiko traces the negotiation that took place between Shiga Kiyoshi, Head of the School of Medicine at Keijō Imperial University during the late 1920s, and the Rockefeller Foundation of the United States over aid for the School of Medicine and the hospital of the Government-General of Joseon. The Rockefeller Foundation considered providing aid to the Severance Medical School, a North American missionary school, after the annexation of Korea, but gradually inclined toward providing aid to the Government-General after the March First Movement. Shiga demanded the reform of the hospital of the Government-General of Joseon, refurbishing the facilities of public health (preventative medicine) research and supporting individuals well-learned in American medical science. With the exception of sending individuals to America for study or research such as Mizushima Haruo, however, almost none of these demands come to fruition. The series of negotiations that took place, however, reflect the rise of American medicine against the backdrop of the international cooperation system after World War I and the response taken by colonial Joseon.

Nagasawa Kazue examines the early academic interest of Ukai Nobunari, who was a scholar of constitutional law and administrative law during his years at Keijō Imperial University, and traces his experience studying abroad in America, which became the turning point of his pre-war research. Ukai graduated the School of Law at Tōkyō Imperial University and was appointed at the School of Law and Liberal Arts, Keijō Imperial University in 1931. In his early years there, Ukai was interested in the theory of rule of law, explored the concept of “surrendering public rights” 公權 as he studied modern German law, and argued for limiting the expansion of state power. Ukai also wrote numerous pieces on administrative law. Unlike the stance of the Home Ministry, he argued for the guarantee of the rights of people in need of assistance in his discussion of “social administrative law.” Between 1939 and 1941, he was sent to study overseas by the Government-General of Joseon and encountered legal realism of America during the New Deal. He closely watched how the concept of “natural law” changed among progressive judges who were interested in tackling social problems, such as Oliver Holmes Jr. and Louis Brandeis, showing signs of the

pioneering legal scholar of American law he would become post war.

Part 5 focuses on the knowledge of the colonized nations of the colonial empire. The people of Joseon and Taiwan, who acquired modern knowledge by coming into contact with Japanese people or Japanese media or by studying abroad in Japan, imitated the knowledge of the metropole, at times reading it differently and using it to their advantage. Part 5 analyzes the complexities of the ruled nations as they simultaneously resisted colonial rule while at times also acting as an accomplice.

Yamamoto Jōhō takes up Yun Ung-nyeol, an official of the Enlightenment Group during the last years of the Joseon dynasty and the father of Yun Chi-ho, and narrates his background, view of Japan, and activities. Yun Ung-nyeol was born in a formerly prestigious *yangban* household that had fallen into decline. As part of the second diplomatic mission to Japan (*susinsa* 修信使) in 1880, he formed relationships with people while in Japan, including the early figures of Japanese pan-Asianism, the reformist monk Yi Dong-in, and Sir Ernest Mason, which strengthened his belief in reform and enlightenment. The following year, he was given the position of running the Special Skills Force, which was the modern military force, but was forced to seek asylum temporarily in Japan due to the military uprising of 1882. During the Coup d'Etat of 1884, he was critical toward the radical reformist group, arguing that modern reform required the people's consent. After being appointment in 1896 as the governor of Jeollanamdo province, he supported the Gwangju vocational school founded by Okumura Ioko. Yun cooperated under the belief that establishing and maintaining ties with Japan would be beneficial for the modernization of Korea but inadvertently ended up collaborating with the colonizing intentions of Japan.

Ono Yasuteru traces the footsteps of Yi Dal, a Korean independence activist who worked mainly in Japan during the 1910s. Yi Dal founded the Eastern Youth Comrades Society in 1917 and began publishing *Tōa jiron* (*The East Asian Times*)—the title was changed to *Kakushin jihō* (*Reformation Times*) the following year, a magazine in Japanese. After the February 8th Declaration of Independence in 1919, he shifted directions, become involved in the independence movement, and published *Sin Joseon* (*New Joseon*). Yi Dal, importantly, read the pan-Asianism Japan proclaimed differently. Specifically, he used the pan-Asianism during WWI to argue for better treating Koreans, who were being discriminated against. Another noteworthy aspect is his exchange

with contemporary East Asian intellectuals. His arguments that used pan-Asianism to his advantage was not supported by Chinese or Korean students who were studying abroad in Japan, but his demands to change discriminatory policies were along similar lines with the Taiwanese students studying abroad. He also actively sought exchange with the Japanese such as the lawyer Fuse Tatsuji.

Part 6 deals with issues of decolonization/deimperialization, namely, how Japan, who lost its colonies after losing the war, reconstructed and attempted to remember the knowledge of the empire; and how the formerly colonized nations, who had now became agents of this knowledge, confronted the colonial knowledge that was engraved in themselves.

Yi Hyeong-sik looks at the Association of Friendly Nations (Yūhō Association), which was established by the officials of the former Government-General of Joseon after the war, and examines how it came to be founded, its financial base, its executive members, and the compilation of historical sources it carried out. Those associated with the former Government-General argued over the requisition of the property of the former Association of Koreans Residing in Japan, which was forcefully dissolved in 1949; the discussion was concluded with the founding of the Association of Friendly Nations in 1952 as an institution that collected material related to the ruling of Joseon and was not subject to the confiscation of property. The Association, which was led by the “born and bred bureaucrats” of the Government-General of Joseon, fought against criticism of the ruling of Joseon that was being voiced by intellectuals and the press during then and set to work compiling historical sources in order to argue that colonial rule had been beneficial. In the beginning the Association reprinted and published the original documents of the Government-General, but after the signing of the Republic of Korea-Japan Normalization Treaty in 1965, it published records of the colonial experience of the officials of the Government-General of Joseon.

Tsudō Ayumi reveals the reality of the post-war conferral of the Doctor of Medicine degree from the Manchuria Medical College, which was established in Fengtian by the South Manchuria Railway Company. Tsudō begins by verifying the total number of medical degrees conferred by the Manchuria Medical College, the number of degrees conferred after the war, and the procedures to submit papers related to degree conferral to the then Ministry of Education and Culture of Japan (Monbushō). Tsudō then compares the cases of Keijō Imperial

University and Taihoku Imperial University, and reveals that even if the person in charge at the university (the Minister of Guandong and the Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary residing in Manchuria) was dissolved by the defeat of Japan, the Manchuria Medical College dealt directly with the Ministry of Education and Culture of Japan as a university of the Japanese empire and kept its role of degree conferral. To put it differently, they were allowed to maintain the conferral of degree not by an organized process on the part of the university but because of the efforts and negotiations put in by individual teaching staff of certain universities.

Jeong Jong-hyeon investigates where the Koreans, who had studied abroad at Imperial Universities, stood in the knowledge of North and South Korea after liberation. After Korea was liberated, the graduates of Imperial Universities constituted the majority of the Korean Academy of Sciences, which was inaugurated in August 1945 after liberation, and the National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, which was founded in 1954, and the Academy of Sciences of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was founded in 1952, both of which were established after the division into North and South Korea. Choe Eung-seok, a graduate of Tōkyō Imperial University who had been involved in the Survey of Rural Societies of *Dal-ri* of Gyeongsangnamdo province in 1936, reinterpreted this survey as a socialist practice after liberation. On the other hand, Yi Man-gap judged the sociology he had studied before the war as deficient in its lack of scientific method, and implemented social research based on American sociology he had studied after the war. Both examples provide a clue as to how to think through the issue of continuity/discontinuity of the knowledge of the empire.

Park Yun-jae follows the life of Baek In-jae, who studied medicine under colonial rule and later founded Baek Hospital after liberation, focusing particularly on his liberalism and acceptance of modernity. Upon graduating the Keijō Medical School in 1921, Baek aligned himself with modernity, symbolized by Western medicine, and took a critical stance against traditional Korean medicine. He accepted Japanese modernity, but he was also clearly aware of the discrimination against Korean students in the school. After liberation, he was involved in the Right's political campaign to nominate Soh Jaipil as president and the establishment of Suseonsa, a publisher. Such activities were significant as liberalist praxis, which was the ideology of Young Korean Academy (Heungsadan) of which Baek was a member. In 1948 he went on to run in the

constitutional assembly elections held separately in South Korea, indicating his affirmation of the anti-communist state system or the capitalist health system. However, as the conversion of his Baek Hospital into a foundation suggests, he ultimately pursued public interest within a capitalist society based on the spirit of devoting the individual for the greater good that was embraced by the Young Korean Academy and Ahn Changho.

Song Byeong-gwon examines Choe Ho-jin, who studied at Kyūshū Imperial University before the war and laid the groundwork of economics in Korea after the war, focusing on his understanding of the Asiatic mode of production. During the late years of colonial rule, Choe proposed an argument that found stagnation in the feudalistic society of late Joseon. After liberation, Choe determined the cause of feudalistic stagnation of the Korean society and predicted that it would arrive at a socialist revolution by way of capitalization. He had no choice but to remain silent, however, as the Korean society became increasingly anti-communistic. He still argued that the Korean society possessed the buds of capitalism. However, he believed that the feudal system was disbanded not by Koreans on its own but by capitalism Japan transplanted to Korea, so he could not assume the Korean people as the agents of change. Choe Ho-jin's socioeconomics was led by a sense of duty to explain and eliminate the stagnation of the society of Joseon, but it failed to clarify who the agents of change were.

Hong Jong-wook traces Kim Gwangji-jin, who became a prominent figure of Marxist economics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Kim Gwang-jin was also the teacher of the abovementioned Choe Ho-jin. Kim studied at the Tōkyō University of Commerce under colonial rule and served as an assistant at Keijō Imperial University and professor at Boseong College. Such active work in the field of economic history was confined by "colonial academism" including repression, censorship, and the issue surrounding the hierarchy of the Japanese and Korean languages. Kim played an important role in the founding of Kim Il-sung University after liberation. He slowly shifted his argument, which had initially emphasized the particularity of Joseon—the absence of slavery—based on the Asiatic stagnation theory, and adopted the dominant position of North Korean historians, namely that the principle of the development of world history was also being carried out in Joseon.

Cross-referencing and Knowledge of the Empire

Finally, I will briefly draw attention to two aspects of *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon ni okeru chi to kenryoku* and the collaborative research on history of Japan as empire that would benefit further consideration.

The first is its methodology of “cross-referencing.” Matsuda Toshihiko defines cross-referencing in the afterword “not as a way to jump directly to a comparative study of colonial Taiwan and Joseon but as a moderate methodology where the view of history and critical awareness each Taiwanese and Korean researcher brings to the table is relativized.” However, as Matsuda point out himself by referring to the “high wall between the histories of Taiwan and Joseon (and Japan),” the research in Taiwan and Korea unfortunately do not manage to join or reach deep into one another in the book. The impression is more of a mediation between the histories of the two former colonies via the metropolis. A more direct and radical comparative study between Joseon and Taiwan may be required to overcome this divide. Cross-referencing and comparative colonial studies are complementary.

The second is the issue of knowledge and violence. The introduction of the book writes that “it seeks to gain a broader understanding of the range of violence contained in colonial rule by raising again the question of the kind of violence brought by Japan’s attempt to seize hegemony in the realm of knowledge by introducing ‘modernity’ into its colonies.” This is an accurate critique of the suspicion that the pursuit of academic knowledge conceals the violence within colonial rule. At the same time, I fear that unless the larger framework through which knowledge from the West spread to Joseon and Taiwan via Japan itself is reexamined, the fatalistic attitude that regards colonialism or violence as problematic but ultimately inevitable will continue. More attention should be paid on the adverse reactions from the colonies and the interaction between the metropole and its colonies. In particular, questions should be asked about how the vigilance of the colonizer toward the knowledge of the colonized changed the knowledge of the empire, or how the hierarchy of language between colonizer and colonized influenced the knowledge of the empire.

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