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JAPAN AND ITS REGION: FROM TARTARY TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW AREA STUDIES

In May 2018, indigenous people from Australia, New Zealand, North America, Hawai'i and Japan gathered in Canberra to share knowledge and ideas about an issue of profound concern to all of them: the task of reclaiming and repatriating the remains of the dead, dug up by colonial scholars or trophy collectors and removed to museums and universities around the world. The European imperial knowledge system, in its nineteenth- and twentieth-century search for the raw materials to build theories of race and progress, profoundly affected not only ways of life of colonised societies, but also their ways of death. Skeleton-gathering became a scientific tool practised by scholars and trophy hunters alike in all corners of the globe, and evolved into a global network of trade in human remains. As a result, for example, the National Museum of Australia and at least one other Australian institution hold skulls of Ainu people, which appear to have been excavated in Hokkaido and traded to Australia by the Japanese anthropologist Koganei Yoshikiyo in the first half of the twentieth century, while the University of Tokyo and other Japanese institutions hold Australian Aboriginal remains that Japanese scholars received in return. The repatriation of such remains to their places of origin is now an important issue, not only for the communities

where the dead once lived and for the institutions that hold their mortal remains, but also for governments and international organisations around the world.¹

In Japan, intense debate about the return of indigenous remains was sparked in 1995, when a group of academics and students, while clearing out a storeroom at Hokkaido University, came upon cardboard boxes containing six human skulls. Three of these were labelled ‘Orok aerial burial, Otasu village’ and had evidently been removed by an unknown visitor to Otasu (the indigenous village in Sakhalin discussed in the previous chapter). Another box held the skull of a Korean participant in the Donghak uprising of 1894, which was suppressed with the participation of Japanese troops. Reports of this discovery sparked protests by indigenous activists and an investigation by the university, and after a prolonged struggle by indigenous rights groups, in 2003 the skulls from Otasu were returned to Sakhalin for reburial. A memorial was also erected on the site, and the university authorities apologised for the actions of the researchers who had removed the remains.² But Hokkaido University remained in possession of over 900 other Ainu remains, while many hundreds more were still held in museums and universities around Japan, and indeed around the globe. After prolonged campaigns and court cases by Ainu community leaders, a small number of these began to be returned to the communities from which they were taken in 2017.³ But, although similar repatriation processes in Australia, Canada and the United States began in the late 1980s to 1990s, the process in Japan has barely begun, and remains the subject of intense controversy.

The Ainu participants in the 2018 meeting, all of whom had been actively involved in the repatriation of the Ainu remains from Hokkaido University, discovered that their stories shared many common threads with those of the indigenous speakers from places such as the Kimberley region of Western Australia, the Torres Strait Islands, the Waikato region of New Zealand and the island of Molokai in Hawai‘i. One particular

1 See Brigit Katz, ‘Australia to Return Remains of Japan’s Indigenous Ainu People’, *Smithsonian.com*, 15 June 2017, www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/australia-return-remains-indigenous-japanese-group-180963697/ (accessed 3 January 2019).

2 See Tanaka Ryō, ‘Hokudai “Jinkotsu Mondai” Chōsa Iinkai: “Ninkichū ni Hōkokusho o Otokoke suru” to Mochizuki Bungakubuchō’, *Aldo* 41 (December 2009): pp. 4–5.

3 For further information, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, ‘Performing Ethnic Harmony: The Japanese Government’s Plans for a New Ainu Law’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 16, no. 2 (1 November 2018).

shared concern was to find ways of returning the dead to their homelands with dignity and proper ceremony, despite the fact that there are, of course, no 'traditional' ways to welcome home the remains of the dead that have been stolen from their resting places and removed to alien and distant locations.

Discussions of Japan and its region, or of Japan's regional role, often focus exclusively on the grand narratives of interstate relations or of regional institution-building. The agendas of debate encompass items such as the power relationship between Japan and China, the contribution of Japan to regional economic integration, or the successes and failures of Japan's negotiations on border disputes with its neighbours. These are all important issues. But the grand narratives of regionalism often neglect a complex underlying social fabric that political scientist TJ Pempel calls 'regionalization', the mass of fine intertwined threads that bind particular localities and groups within Japan across national frontiers to places and people throughout Asia and beyond.⁴ The stories told at the meeting in Canberra rediscovered the threads created by the journeys of the indigenous dead, while creating new threads of knowledge between those seeking their repatriation.

One important feature of this example is the way that it connects unexpected points on the map. There is nothing in physical or political geography that would have enabled us to predict the existence of a link between places such as Hokkaido, the Torres Strait Islands and Molokai. The thread has been spun by a gradually accumulating history of human movement and action, and the relationships of power and suffering these have forged. It is, in its small way, (I think) an example of the 'architecture' that Arjun Appadurai had in mind when he wrote that 'we need an architecture for area studies that is based on process geographies'; based, in other words, not on visions of great blocks of shared territory or 'civilisations', but on the social and cultural 'precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction and motion – trade, travel, pilgrimage, warfare, proselytization, colonization, exile, and the like'.⁵ In this chapter,

4 TJ Pempel, 'Remapping Asia: Competing Patterns of Regionalization and Regionalism', in *A Changing Korea in Regional and Global Contexts*, ed. Lee-Jay Cho, Ching-Si Ahn and Choong Nam Kim (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2004), pp. 363–400.

5 Arjun Appadurai, 'Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination', in *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 7–8.

I should like to explore the possibilities of such alternative architectures for understanding the many societies of Japan and its multiple regions in a time of far-reaching and sometimes disorienting change.

Transforming Area Studies: Geopolitics and Chronopolitics

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, East Asia has been in the midst of profound transformation. The rise of China, the economic and social problems that beset Japan, tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and the United States' changing relationship to the region are all elements in this moment of change. One way of describing the current moment is to say that, whereas the Cold War on the Atlantic side of the globe ended in the period from the late 1980s to early 1990s, in Northeast Asia the Cold War has never truly ended. The region is therefore still in the process of a transition to a post-Cold War era, and the outcome of this process will help determine the nature of the global post-Cold War order. Despite all the changes of the past two decades, China and North Korea remain one-party states; Cold War treaties still underpin the security policies of Japan and South Korea; and Korea remains divided. Efforts to move forward towards new forms of regional cooperation and integration have produced some results over the past two decades, but progress has been slow and Northeast Asia is still repeatedly described by observers as 'one of the most dangerous places in the world'.⁶

My purpose in this chapter is not to analyse this moment of transformation itself, but rather to ask: what does it mean for the study of Japan, and more broadly for East Asian studies? How has the study of Japan and its region been shaped by the changing nature of the regional order? How should area studies be responding to the challenges posed by the profound changes underway in the region? How might Japan's relationship with its region be reimagined? Since my main focus of research is Japanese history, I am particularly interested in the changing ways in which historians of Japan and of East Asia have conceptualised their area of study, and how they have been influenced by, and responded to, contemporary shifts in

6 See for example, Kent Calder, 'Northeast Asia: The "Organizational Gap" and Beyond', in Cho et al., *A Changing Korea*, pp. 27–74, quotation from p. 27; Li Xing and Zhang Shengjun, 'One Mountain with Two Tigers: China and the United States in East Asian Regionalism', *Perspectives on Federalism* 2, no. 3 (2010): pp. 111–29, quotation from p. 125.

the regional order. In tracing this story, I draw some inspiration from the postwar Japanese scholar of world history, Uehara Senroku, whose vision of history always revolved around a search for the meaning of ‘the present era’ (*gendai*).⁷ How does the ever-moving, ever-changing ‘present era’ influence the frameworks of time and space that are applied to the study of Japan’s past? Of course, the literature on Japanese and East Asian history is vast and multilingual, and here all I attempt to do is to look at a few examples of writings (mostly in English, some in Japanese) that suggest some answers to that question. But I hope that even a limited attempt to address the question may be a useful starting point for reflection about our own role as students of Japan and its region in an age of transformation.

As we saw in Chapter 1, the rise of area studies was largely a mid-twentieth-century phenomenon. Indeed, some scholars have argued that area studies were both a product of the Cold War era and deeply permeated by the politics of the Cold War world. As the Cold War in Europe came to an end, area studies too came to be subject to growing criticism, not only for its ideological connections but also for its vision of geographical and social space. So, for example, Willem van Schendel, drawing on the work of Lewis and Wigen, Appadurai and others, reimagines areas as the product of human interaction, so that a ‘region’, rather than being fixed in the unchanging bedrock of physical geography, may start to assume ‘unfamiliar spatial forms – lattices, archipelagos, hollow rings, patchworks’.⁸

But the foundations that sustained the architecture of postwar Japanese studies and East Asian studies are deeply embedded in our patterns of thought, and rethinking them is a challenging task that involves the excavation of subterranean assumptions that underpin the very language that we use in our discussion of areas and regions. Those foundations, moreover, were laid well before the Asia-Pacific War, and I would suggest that any rethinking of East Asian and Japanese studies needs to go back at least a hundred years, to an age of an earlier transformation that convulsed the East Asia from the last decade of the nineteenth century to the first decade of the twentieth. So here I will start with some thoughts on the emergence of Japan and East Asia as fields of historical research in the

7 Uehara Senroku, ‘Gendai wa donna Jidai ka’, *Sekai*, August 1950; Uehara Senroku, *Sekaishi ni okeru Gendai no Ajia* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1961).

8 Willem van Schendel, ‘Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20, no. 6 (2002): pp. 647–68, quotation from p. 664, doi.org/10.1068/d16s.

English-speaking world, before going on to consider more recent and alternative ways of approaching Japanese history. I shall reflect on the way in which the distinctive vision of space embodied in twentieth-century area studies is interwoven with a distinctive vision of time: borrowing Johannes Fabian's term, to consider not only the implicit geopolitics but also its implicit chronopolitics of studies of Japan and its region.⁹

From Tartary to the Far East

When he published the fifth edition of his bestseller *Things Japanese* in 1905, the famous British Japanologist Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1935) ended his entry on 'History and Mythology' with the tart comment 'it is not possible to conclude this sketch of Japanese history with the usual formula "books recommended" – for the reason that there are no general histories of Japan to recommend'.¹⁰ In Chamberlain's view, as late as the end of the Russo–Japanese War 'a trustworthy history of Japan remains to be written – a work which should do for every century what Mr. Aston has done for the earliest centuries only, and Mr. Murdoch for the single century from 1542 to 1651'.¹¹ Chamberlain was of course referring to works in English, and he was well aware of the historical information contained in classic Western accounts of Japan by Siebold and other travellers, and of the English-language compilations put together from these accounts by more recent authors (such as Charles MacFarlane and Richard Hildreth).¹²

9 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other, How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 144. Original published in 1983.

10 Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan for the Use of Travelers and Others*, facsimile of the 1905 5th ed. (Teddington: Wildhern Press, 2009), p. 242.

11 Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 243.

12 Charles MacFarlane, *Japan: An Account Geographical and Historical* (London: George Routledge and Co., 1852); Richard Hildreth, *Japan as it Was and Is* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Co., 1856). Chamberlain describes Hildreth's work as 'an excellent book' but 'now difficult to obtain'; Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 73.



Figure 8.1. Illustration from Charles MacFarlane's *Japan*.

Source: Charles MacFarlane, *Japan: An Account Geographical and Historical* (London: George Routledge and Co., 1852).

But his comment is a reminder of the fact that academic work on Japanese history in the English-speaking world was still in its early formative stage during the crucial years from the late nineteenth century to the first decade of the twentieth, when Japan's political and economic dominance of 'the Far East' (as it was then called) became internationally recognised. In fact, these years were also the period when the very idea of 'the Far East' was in formation, shifting from being a vaguely defined world on

the horizons of European vision to being a much more clearly bounded 'area', and Japan's growing dominance in the region was a key factor in that formation. This context, I shall argue, had a deep structural impact on the way in which Japanese studies, Far Eastern studies and later East Asian studies came to be envisaged and practised.

The term 'Far East' was widely popularised in nineteenth-century English-language travel writings, but was at first very hazily delineated. For most Europeans of the early to mid-nineteenth century, 'the East began where the Ottoman Empire began' – that is, in Belgrade, and almost anything east of Turkey might therefore be labelled the 'Far East'.¹³ Daniel H Mackinnon's account of his *Military Service and Adventures in the Far East*, published in London in 1849, for example, dealt largely with Afghanistan and India, while GF Davidson's 1846 *Trade and Travel in the Far East* focused on Java, Singapore, China and Australia.¹⁴ Area terms indeed remained fluid and malleable well into the twentieth century – one of my favourite examples being Arnold Wright and TH Reid's study of British colonialism in Malaya, published in 1912, which is entitled *The Malay Peninsula* and subtitled *A Record of British Progress in the Middle East*.¹⁵ The elasticity of the terms 'Far East' and 'Middle East' resembles that of the term 'Orient', which, as Edward Said and others have pointed out, was most often applied by Europeans to the region immediately to the east of Europe, and was laden with images of exoticism and ancient origins, while the North American 'Orient' more often referred to China and Japan and surrounding regions, and was 'less dense' in the richness of its imagery.¹⁶

Between the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, though, a subtle but significant shift in European and American visions of the world was beginning to become evident. The terms 'the Near East' and 'the

13 Roderic H Davison, 'Where is the Middle East?' *Foreign Affairs* 38, no. 4 (1960): pp 665–75, citation from p. 666.

14 Daniel H Mackinnon, *Military Service and Adventures in the Far East, including Sketches of the Campaigns against the Afghans in 1839 and against the Sikhs in 1845–46* (London: John Ollivier, 1849), doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139178730; GF Davidson, *Trade and Travel in the Far East* (London: Madden and Malcolm, 1846).

15 Arnold Wright and TH Reid, *The Malay Peninsula: A Record of British Achievement in the Middle East* (London: Unwin, 1912); on changing geographical depictions of the 'Middle East', see also Daniel Follard, *Dislocating the Orient: British Maps and the Making of the Middle East, 1854–1921* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226451473.001.0001.

16 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 9–10.

Middle East' appeared for the first time in geopolitical debates, and 'the Far East' began to acquire more precisely delineated frontiers, embracing Japan, China and Korea, and sometimes also extending to Indo-China, the Philippines and other parts of what would later be labelled 'Southeast Asia'.¹⁷ Behind this redefined vision of the Far East lay seismic shifts in regional politics. Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) was seen as 'proclaiming to an astonished world the birth of the New Far East', centred no longer on China but on Japan.¹⁸ The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 was even more intensively covered by the Western press, and resulted in an outpouring of publications on 'the New Far East', most of them focusing on Japan's growing dominance over a region encompassing eastern China and Korea.¹⁹ A pair of maps of the 'Far East' published by the famous Scottish map publishing company Bartholomew's at the time of the Russo-Japanese war illustrates the processes of focusing in from the broader to the narrower definition of the 'Far East'.

The emerging infrastructure of empire, developed by the expanding Japanese state from the 1890s onward, helped to weave together this integrated Far East centred on Japan. The Korean and South Manchurian railways, over which Japan had assumed control by 1905, carried local and foreign journalists, scholars and tourists on routes linking the southern Korean port of Pusan via Northeast China to the Trans-Siberian Railway. Japanese shipping lines extended these links to the ports of Japan, and southwards to the British colony of Hong Kong and to Manila, which from 1898 became the administrative centre of the first US colony in Asia: the Philippines. Although the outer limits of 'the Far East' continued to vary according to the perspectives of the author, one commonly used framework was defined by Alexis Krausse's *The Far East: Its History and its Question*, published in 1900. This envisaged the region as divided into two spheres – the 'indigenous kingdoms of the Far East' – China, Korea and Japan – and, surrounding these, the 'outlying bulwarks of Western empires' – Far Eastern Russia, French Indo-China and the Philippines.²⁰

17 Davison, 'Where is the Middle East?' pp. 666–67.

18 Arthur Diósy, *The New Far East* (London: Cassell and Co., 1898), quotation from p. 1.

19 For example, Thomas F Millard, *The New Far East* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906); BL Putnam Weale, *The Re-Shaping of the Far East*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan and Co. 1905); Ernest FG Hatch, *Far Eastern Impressions* (London: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1905).

20 Alexis Krausse, *The Far East: Its History and its Question* (London: Grant Richards, 1900).

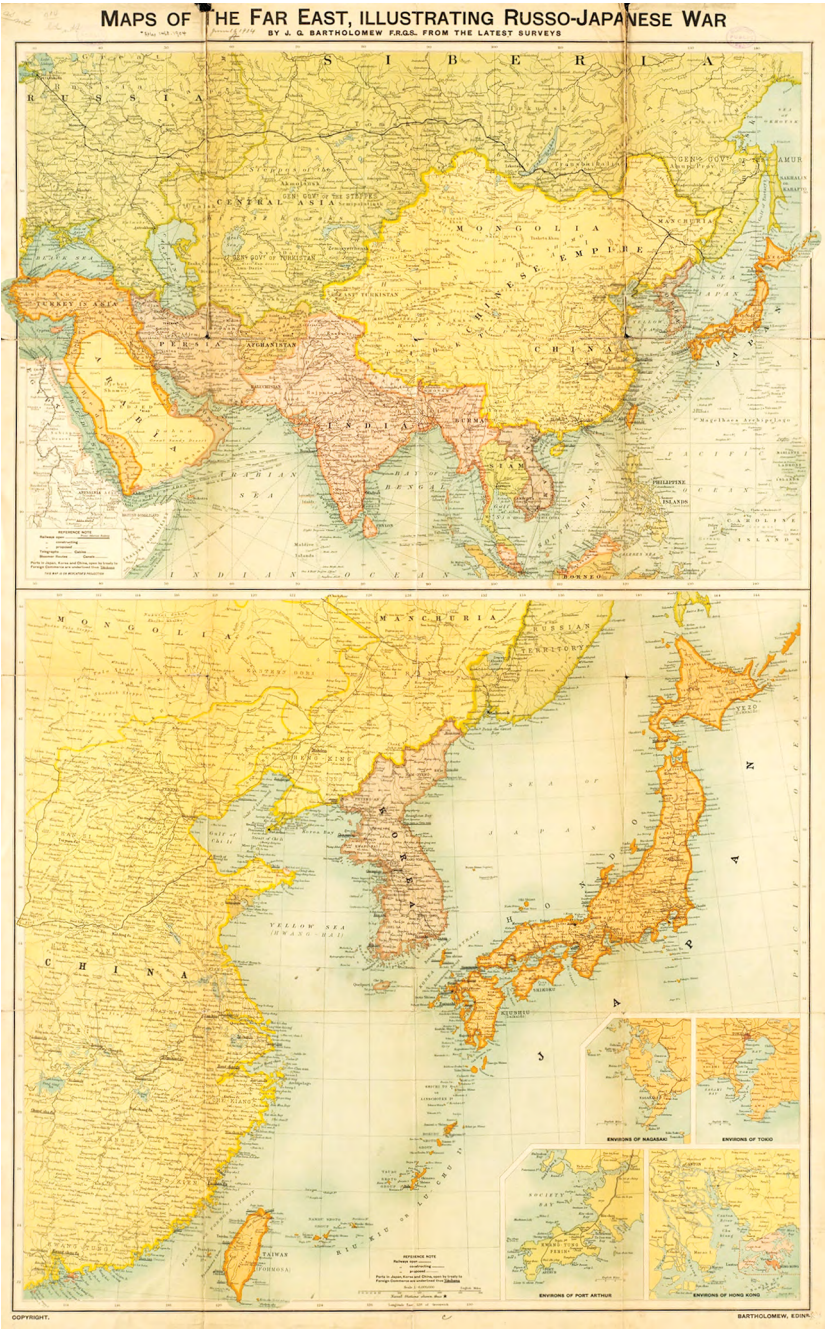


Figure 8.2. John George Bartholomew, 'Maps of the Far East, Illustrating Russo-Japanese War', 1905.

Source: Boston Public Library, Digital Commonwealth, Massachusetts Collections Online.

As the 'Far East' emerged – like a photograph in developing fluid, taking on clear outlines and colours – so it displaced other older European regional concepts, most notably the idea of 'Tartary'. In seventeenth-, eighteenth- and even early nineteenth-century English-language writings, as we have seen, Tartary was a vast realm that extended from the Caspian Sea to the frontiers of Japan itself. For example, eighteenth-century Scottish writer Thomas Salmon's fascinating and encyclopedic *Modern History, or the Present State of All Nations* (1739) – written at a time when the very notion of 'modern history' was assuming its 'modern' form²¹ – concludes its section on the 'Present State of Japan' with a discussion of 'the Land of Jesso, Said to be a Tributary to Japan, and of the Various Opinions Concerning its Joining to America'. This notes of Jesso (Ezo, present-day Hokkaido and the northern islands beyond): 'whether it doth not join to the north part of Japan, which is but little known to the Japanese themselves, is not yet determined ... Neither does it as yet clearly appear, whether this land of Jesso is a part of Tartary, or whether by an arm of the sea divided from it'.²²

Salmon, of course, only had access to a potpourri of second-hand knowledge about Japan and the surrounding countries (which contains surprisingly accurate details on some issues, side by side with fascinating confusions and misapprehensions on others²³). But the difference between his work and those of early twentieth-century writers on the Far East is not just a gap in access to accurate information, nor is the difference between Tartary and the Far East simply a matter of the redrawing of geographical boundaries between regions. There is also (I think) an important qualitative difference between these two regional concepts. 'Tartary' was not a realm occupied by nation-states; indeed, the 'nations' of Thomas Salmon's modern history are not necessarily *nation-states* at all. Rather, they are a miscellany of 'peoples' who are variously described as tribes, kingdoms, principalities, etc.

21 Reinhard Koselleck notes that 'modern' or '*neue Zeit*' shifts during the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries from being a purely chronological marker of recent times to having a particular content associated (as it is in the writings of Salmon) with the Western voyages of exploration, the spread of the printed word and the new intellectual currents of the Reformation. See Reinhard Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 224–36.

22 Thomas Salmon, *Modern History; or, The Present State of All Nations*, vol. 1 (Dublin: George Grierson, 1727), p. 65.

23 On the practice of *seppuku* in Japan, for example, 'when a great man makes an entertainment, 'tis usual at the end of the feast to call his servants together, 'tis said, and demand which of them will kill themselves before the guests; and that thereupon they contend who shall first rip up their bowels'. Salmon, *Modern History*, p. 57.

Tartary, in other words, was a fluid world where a whole range of societies – which might or might not have identifiable political structures – intermingled, exchanged goods and ideas, did battle and migrated across the face of the land. This of course reflects the fact that in the eighteenth century the authority of centralised states such as China, Korea, Japan and Russia only extended across limited parts of the area we call ‘East Asia’. Between were wide realms occupied by very small kingdoms (such as the Ryukyu Kingdom) or by non-state societies such as those of the Ainu, Nivkh, Uilta, Nanai and other indigenous groups of the north-eastern parts of the Asian continent.

By the time we come to early twentieth-century writings on ‘the New Far East’, though, these regions had almost entirely been incorporated into states, and the Far East was therefore envisaged as a space entirely occupied by state-controlled territories, even if some of these were colonised states and others are colonising states. The bounds of Tartary could only be described by reference to physical features – mountains, rivers and seas – and its peoples were described largely through ethnographic accounts of their customs. The twentieth-century Far East, on the other hand (as in Krausse’s work), was defined by a catalogue of clearly bounded states, and the narratives that described the Far East were overwhelmingly state-centred narratives. Importantly, this state-centred vision of the region then came to be projected backward onto history: the history of the Far East became the history of its major states, and many of the peoples of ‘Tartary’ and beyond lost their place in history except to the extent that they impinged (because of wars, invasions, etc.) on the historical narratives of those states.

While states provided the spatial architecture for the early twentieth-century ‘Far East’, its temporal architecture was provided by narratives of progress. Of course, ideas of civilisation, barbarism and progress were present to some extent in pre-nineteenth-century works like Salmon’s *Modern History*, but they played a different and more limited role. In this eighteenth-century ‘modern history’, true civilisation is the prerogative of Protestant Western Europe, while, at the other end of the scale, some extremely unfamiliar social forms are identified as survivals from the archaic past. When he deals with nations outside Europe, however, Salmon is much more likely to judge them in ethical or aesthetic terms than to rank them in terms of progress.

The twentieth-century narratives of the New Far East, on the other hand, focused on the struggle of nation-states to obtain temporal, as well as spatial, superiority over others by becoming if possible larger and stronger, but above all more *advanced*. The rank ordering of nations on the ladder of progress, and the task of explaining their position on the ladder, had become the core task of Far Eastern history, and this was of course reflected not only in studies of the region as a whole, but also in the first major European and American scholarly histories of Japan.

Japan in the Far East: Time and Space in the Prewar Region

In 1917 Scottish migrant to Australia James Murdoch (1856–1921) completed the third volume of his *History of Japan* (a history whose narrative covers the span from the ancient origins of the Japanese to the fall of the Tokugawa Bakufu). The work, which runs to over 2,000 pages and was completed with the help of Japanese collaborators including Murdoch's wife Takeko, is in many ways as remarkable as its author, a radical teacher and journalist who, among other things, taught English to the renowned Japanese novelist Natsume Sōseki, wrote novels set in Japan, and participated in the unsuccessful utopian 'New Australia' commune in Paraguay.²⁴ His book is very much a product of its time. By the time it was written, Japan was a recognised world power that controlled Hokkaido in the north, Okinawa in the south and colonial territories beyond. China was fragmented and struggling, but it was nonetheless a modern state with clearly defined national boundaries, and a participant in the global interstate system. Korea, on the other hand, was a Japanese colony. Murdoch's fourth volume, which would have covered the years from the Meiji Restoration onward, remained unfinished on his death in 1921. But, even though his work does not address 'contemporary history', its narrative is framed by contemporary concerns.

24 David Sissons, 'James Murdoch (1856–1921): Historian, Teacher and Much Else Besides', in *Bridging Australia and Japan: The Writings of David Sissons, Historian and Political Scientist*, ed. Arthur Stockwin and Keiko Tamura, vol. 1 (Canberra: ANU Press, 2016), pp. 319–77. Original published in 1987.

For Murdoch, and for most of his contemporaries, the big historical issue was to explain:

the sudden, the almost meteor-like rise of an Empire with such a strange and peculiar culture to the proud position of by no means the least among the Great Powers of the modern world.²⁵

This rise was made particularly intriguing, in Murdoch's eyes, because it had been accomplished by a 'Non-Aryan' people to whom 'most of what is considered to be most distinctive in the common heritage of Western Culture was utterly alien'.²⁶ In the search for answers to the enigma, Murdoch drew up a balance sheet of the pre-existing strengths and weaknesses that underpinned Japan's rise as a modern state: on the credit side, a large population, a stable social system, a 'keen sense of honour and of conduct',²⁷ the 'alertness and receptivity of the Japanese intellect',²⁸ and 'a seemingly inherent capacity for organization';²⁹ on the debit side, resource poverty and the 'mosaic patchwork' of the Tokugawa political system of a mass of domains linked by the overarching power of the Shogunate.³⁰ The overall message, though, is not simply that credits outweighed the debits, but also that the credits were very deeply embedded in many centuries of Japanese history and culture. So, for example, discussing the Meiji Restoration, Murdoch is at pains to emphasise how little it relied on borrowing from the West and how much it drew on organisational ideas that could be traced back to the Taika Reforms of the seventh century CE.³¹ A similar view was expressed even more strongly by the aristocratic French historian Antoine Rous de la Mazelière, whose monumental eight-volume *Japon: Histoire et Civilisation* was published between 1907 and 1923.³²

25 James Murdoch, *A History of Japan*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1925), p. 2. The work is in many ways as remarkable as its author: a radical journalist and teacher who (among other things) wrote fierce critiques of the working conditions of Japanese miners and of Australia's race-based immigration policies, lived for 27 years in Japan, married a Japanese wife, participated briefly in an unsuccessful utopian community in Paraguay, and taught English to Natsume Sôseki.

26 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, p. 1.

27 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, p. 5.

28 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, p. 6.

29 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, p. 14.

30 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, pp. 17–20.

31 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, pp. 20–21.

32 De la Mazelière aimed to show his French readers that 'in broad outline, the history of Japan is no different from that of the West. Like them, the Japanese cultivated themselves, while accepting the morals and arts of already cultivated nations; like them, they were able to transform and render original an assumed civilization'. He also stressed that 'before appreciating the originality of the Japanese, it is necessary for us to distinguish their distinctive spirit from that of the Chinese ... To those who study it, the political, economic and social history of Japan shows no relationship to the history of China, whereas the various peoples of Europe seem to have experienced a shared evolution'. See AR de la Mazelière, *Essai sur l'Histoire du Japon* (Paris: Librairie Plom, 1899), pp. vii and 452.

James Murdoch's Japanese friends, it should be said, did not universally share his positive assessment of their country's recent history. Natsume Sōseki expressed affection and admiration for his former English teacher, but wrote a response to Volume One of Murdoch's history in which he stressed the social and psychological burdens imposed on the Japanese people by the nation's rapid industrial modernisation.³³ Murdoch's history has also had bad press from subsequent generations of historians. George Sansom, who wrote one of the most enduring of prewar English-language histories of Japan – *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (1937) – respected Murdoch's prodigious researches, but felt repelled by his sweeping generalisations and cumbersome prose, and accused of him of depicting Japan 'as seen through spectacles made in Aberdeen about 1880'.³⁴ Sansom wrote in clear and elegant prose, and was very wary of generalisation and theorising: he described himself as a 'convinced empiricist'.³⁵ Yet Sansom's own careful scholarly narratives of Japan's history in fact contain implicit (and occasionally explicit) judgements on the factors that had contributed to Japan's economic strength and political power. For example, Sansom suggests that the 'absence of a universalist tradition' allowed pragmatic responses to new challenges and was therefore 'one of the factors that made for a rapid change in the nature of the Japanese state in the nineteenth century'.³⁶

The general histories of the Far East that appeared from the 1920s to the 1940s often (like Murdoch's history of Japan) incorporated balance sheets of the factors that promoted or held back progress. They used contemporary political units to provide their spatial frameworks, and their narrative arcs frequently highlighted contrasts in progress, particularly between the region's two largest nation-states – China and Japan. I shall look more closely at one example of this narrative structure in a moment, but first it is important to remind ourselves that the 'the Far East' was of course not the *only* spatial framework for early twentieth-century understandings of the region's history.

33 See Sukehiro Hirakawa, *Japan's Love–Hate Relationship with the West* (Folkstone: Global Oriental, 2005), pp. 268–69.

34 Quoted in Marius Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, reprint (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 769.

35 George B Sansom, *Japan in World History* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle and Co. 1977), p. 83. Original published in 1951.

36 Sansom, *Japan in World History*, p. 36.

Within Japan itself, from the 1890s onward history had come to be institutionalised around the tripartite divide between *Tōyōshi* (Oriental – in practice, overwhelmingly Chinese – history) *Seiyōshi* (Western history), and *Kokushi* (national – i.e. Japanese – history). In this partitioning of space and time, ‘Japan’ was treated separately from ‘the Orient’ (which in fact lay to the geographical west of Japan), and tended to be temporally suspended between a *Tōyō*, identified with the past, and a *Seiyō*, which represented the modernity to which Japan aspired, and by whose standards it would be judged.³⁷ Some English-language writings also drew on different visions of regional space. Owen Lattimore’s work viewed the region from the perspective of the borderlands of China, in a way that contained echoes of earlier narratives of the ebb and flow of the peoples of Tartary.³⁸ Robert Kerner, approaching the region from his perspective as a scholar of Russia, promoted a vision of ‘Northeast (or Northeastern) Asia’ (a previously unfamiliar term) in which Russia was a key player.³⁹ Kerner also produced a remarkable multilingual bibliography of works in and on the region – a valuable reminder of the ways in which Chinese and Russian historians were participating in debates on the changing nature of the region.⁴⁰ Neither Lattimore’s nor Kerner’s regional vision, however, seriously challenged the place of ‘the Far East’ as the most widely accepted English-language framework for understanding the region in the first half of the twentieth century.

37 See, for example, Jie-Hyun Lim, ‘The Configuration of Orient and Occident in the Global Chain of National Histories: Writing National Histories in Northeast Asia’, in *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, ed. Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 290–308, particularly pp. 295–97; the distinction between *Tōyōshi* and *Seiyōshi* seems to have been introduced into Japanese history teaching in 1894 at the suggestion of historian Naka Michiyo (1851–1908), who hoped the correct the Eurocentric bias introduced by too great a reliance on translated European histories. See Stephan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 48–49.

38 For example, Owen Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict* (New York: Macmillan, 1932).

39 Stephen Kotkin, ‘Robert Kerner and the Northeast Asia Seminar’, *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 15 (1997): src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicatn/acta/15/kotokin/kotokin.html (accessed 25 November 2018).

40 Robert Kerner, *Northeastern Asia: A Selected Bibliography*, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939).

Japan in East Asia: The Development of Postwar Area Studies

The impact of these prewar legacies on postwar area studies can be glimpsed by considering one of the first histories of the Far East to appear after Japan's defeat in the Asia-Pacific War. Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A Short History of the Far East* was first published in 1946, and was in its fourth edition and still being widely used as a college text in the mid-1960s.⁴¹ It was, in other words, an influential force in the burgeoning world of postwar area studies. But at the same time, it was the summation of the author's career as a prewar scholar, particularly of China and Japan. Like many of the first generation of European and American academic scholars of East Asia, Latourette (1884–1968) had a Christian missionary background: he had worked in the missions in China before becoming an academic, taking up the position of Professor of Missions and Oriental History at Yale University from 1949 to 1953. He had been among the first authors of general English-language histories of modern China and Japan, publishing *The Development of China* in 1917 and *The Development of Japan* in 1918. Latourette's *Short History* is in this sense a bridge between prewar Far Eastern studies and postwar area studies of East Asia.

In *A Short History of the Far East*, the great watershed in Asian history is the coming of the Western powers. The book is therefore divided into two parts: the Far East before and after the West. Each part begins with a chapter on India, which is treated not as part of the Far East, but as a crucial influence upon it. In part one, India provides the seeds of the culture and philosophy of lands to the east; in part two, it is the gateway through which the West enters the Far East. The discussions of India are followed by relatively detailed accounts of Chinese and Japanese political, cultural and social history, placed side by side and divided into several chronological chapters, and one chapter in each section on 'The Lesser Lands', stretching from Mongolia and Korea to the Philippines, Burma and Ceylon, all of which receive fairly short shrift: 'All played minor roles in Far Eastern history. None developed a strikingly original advanced culture'.⁴² Pre-Western Korea is covered in two and half pages, and

41 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A Short History of the Far East* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).

42 Latourette, *Short History of the Far East*, p. 290.

Mongolia in half a page. In the post-Western Far East, the binary presence of China and Japan again dominate, and Korea is subsumed into the colonial history of Japan.

This story is framed, from the very beginning, by 'the present predominance of Japan', and much of the narrative of Chinese and Japanese history is implicitly a search for explanations for that predominance. This in itself is interesting, when we consider that the book was first published at a moment when Japan lay in ruins, and future predominance can hardly have seemed assured. Like James Murdoch 30 years earlier, Latourette begins with a list of Japanese assets: in this case, 'the ability, the initiative, the perseverance, the industry, and the self-confidence of the Japanese'; Japan's strategic island position, which protected it from invasion; Japan's commercial experience and skills; its temperate climate; its natural beauty (which promotes aesthetic sensibility); and the role of Japan's compact and insular landscape in promoting national consciousness and patriotism.⁴³

By the time that Latourette published his *Short History*, the region was in the midst of its second great modern convulsion: the collapse of the Japanese empire, revolutions in China and elsewhere, the Korean War and the emergence of the Cold War order. But in important respects, I would argue, this new regional order, rather than prompting a radical rethinking of scholarly visions of the region, instead served to reinforce some of the tendencies that had already become apparent in prewar Far Eastern studies. It is true that the term 'the Far East' gradually fell out of fashion, to be replaced by the ambiguous term 'East Asia' (which sometimes includes and sometimes excludes 'Southeast Asia'). But the underlying spatial and temporal architecture of postwar East Asian studies was not radically different from that of its prewar precursors. Cold War divisions, superimposed on mid-twentieth-century nationalisms, intensified the tendency to see the region as sharply divided along nation-state lines. Interaction between scholars and others in the various countries of East Asia became restricted, limiting scope for exploring common themes and ideas. For European, American and other foreign scholars of the region too, movement between the various countries of Northeast Asia became difficult.

43 Latourette, *Short History of the Far East*, pp. 25–27.

In this respect, East Asia's experience of the Cold War was very different from Europe's. While both were divided, Europe west of the so-called 'iron curtain' quickly became relatively integrated, allowing a new wave of postwar interactions between the countries of the region, and promoting the flourishing of European history as a field that sought out commonalities between the pasts of nation-states of Europe (particularly Western Europe). Northeast Asia, on the other hand, was divided by multiple Cold War fissures. Not only did the Sino-Soviet split draw a new dividing line across the region, the legacy of war and colonialism, combined with Cold War security concerns, imposed restrictions on human contact even between Japan, South Korea and Taiwan – countries on the same side of the ideological divide.

Meanwhile, Japan's postwar recovery and the 'economic miracle' of the 1960s once again focused academic attention on the developmental gap between Japan and China, and between Japan and other countries of the region. Postwar area studies grew and flourished alongside modernisation theory, which provided the temporal vector for the work of many leading scholars of the region, including Edwin Reischauer, Robert Bellah, Ronald Dore, Marius Jansen and others. All of this intensified the tendency towards comparative studies, which sought to divine the 'secrets of Japan's success', and (often) to derive lessons of that success for other Asian countries. Some sense of the continuities and shifts in postwar area studies can be gained by placing Latourette's *Short History* alongside those two area studies classics, Fairbank and Reischauer's *East Asia: The Great Tradition* (1958)⁴⁴ and Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig's *East Asia: The Modern Transformation* (1965).⁴⁵ For Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig, as for Latourette, the great historical watershed is the coming of the West, which marks the end of 'the Great Tradition' and the beginning of 'The Modern Transformation'. In *East Asia*, Korea has made a comeback – redeemed from its position as a 'Lesser Land' or 'an Outerlying Dependency of the Japanese Empire', the independent (if divided) Korea now has a 'Great Tradition' of its own, even though this tradition is covered in one chapter as against the three devoted to Japan and the eight devoted to China.

44 Edwin O Reischauer and John K Fairbank, *East Asia: The Great Tradition* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958).

45 John K Fairbank, Edwin O Reischauer and Albert M Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965).

Fairbank and Reischauer's *East Asia* changes shape and expands over time. The first volume – *The Great Tradition* – is confined to 'China, Japan, Korea and, to a lesser extent, Vietnam',⁴⁶ while the second – *The Modern Transformation* – embraces Southeast Asia:

that area has become more and more closely involved with China and Japan. We have therefore included in this volume a survey of the recent history of the various countries of Southeast Asia, together with some background on their traditional cultures.⁴⁷

The changing scope is justified by the historical role of Western imperialism in linking this wider region (though more recent scholars like Hamashita Takeshi would emphasise that it was already linked well before the coming of the Western powers).⁴⁸ But it also fits comfortably with the contemporary context in which the authors were writing. By the mid-1960s close economic ties were being re-established between Japan and Southeast Asia, and area studies – focused strongly on the Southeast Asian region – were beginning to flourish in Japan itself. The two *East Asia* volumes are relatively cautious in making explicit comparisons between Japan's 'advance' and China's 'stagnation'. There is no balance sheet of assets and liabilities here. Yet the whole framework is a national comparative one. The histories of the nation-states of the region are set side by side, allowing the reader to observe their commonalities and trace the points where their trajectories diverge.⁴⁹ In this framework, the pre-modern interstate world largely disappears from view. I shall also argue that this 'nation-state comparative' structure for understanding the region, which is carried forward into the final chapter on the postwar decades, tends to obscure some important inter-society interactions and cross-border historical processes.

46 Reischauer and Fairbank, *East Asia: The Great Tradition*, p. 3. Mongolia, which is defined as 'Central Asia', and Russia are both excluded.

47 Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation*, p. 4.

48 See, for example, Takeshi Hamashita, *China, East Asia and the Global Economy: Regional and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Linda Grove and Mark Selden (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

49 This nation-state focus in postwar Asian studies was later highlighted by Harry Harootunian, who wrote of the US Association for Asian Studies that 'although the association's committees are divided along area lines, its membership and officers serve as metonyms – stand-ins – because they are, at bottom, not specialists of Northeast Asia, South Asia, or Inner Asia but of nation-states'. See Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 26.

History Across Frontiers

The most visible fruit of the flourishing of area studies in postwar Europe and North America was, of course, an enormous expansion and deepening of research on the region. A whole generation of scholars of Japan, many of them trained during the war, took up teaching posts in universities, and they and their students – figures like Edwin Reischauer, Donald Keene, Edward Seidensticker, Ronald Dore, Marius Jansen, Carmen Blacker and many others – generated a wealth of scholarship on Japanese history and society that would have been unimaginable two or three decades earlier. But the deep structures of postwar area studies continued to have some limiting effects. Partly because of linguistic barriers, but also very much because of historical legacies and contemporary political circumstances, area studies in East Asia became highly compartmentalised on national lines. Japanese studies flourished, as did studies that placed Japan's experience side by side with that of China or other Asian countries for comparative purposes. But throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s there were relatively few scholars of East Asia who were able to do what scholars such as Benedict Anderson and Anthony Reid have done for Southeast Asian studies⁵⁰ – move comfortably across national borders to draw out common region-wide themes for debate and theorisation.

In this respect, one exception was Marius Jansen. Deeply immersed both in Japanese and Chinese history, Jansen was able to write not only on the state-to-state relationship between the two neighbours, but also on their profound cultural and social interrelationships. His work on *The Japanese and Sun Yat-Sen* in particular suggests a way of looking at regional history very different from the comparative ranking of nation-states on the scale of modernisation.⁵¹ Here, Jansen explored the twisting and interweaving of ideas that came about as Japanese and Chinese intellectuals and activists came together in the search for national power and regional collaboration. Rather than comparing and contrasting the modern development processes of Japan and China, this work exposes

50 See, for example, Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, vol. 1, *The Lands below the Winds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, vol. 2, *Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London: Verso, 1998).

51 Marius B Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-Sen* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954).

the complex ways in which, at the level of society and ideas, the processes were intertwined across national boundaries, at the same time illustrating the paradoxes of Pan-Asianism and the difficulty, in the turbulent context of prewar East Asia, of distinguishing nationalism from regionalism and internationalism. Published in the first half of the 1950s, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-Sen* seems in retrospect a pioneering work that prefigures the more recent upsurge of research on the cross-regional sharing of ideas and culture – for example, on the regional spread of 1920s socialism and feminism, and the simultaneous emergence in Japan, China and colonial Korea of the New Woman and the Modern Girl, and the social response to the spread of consumerism in various parts of East Asia from the 1920s onward.⁵²

Also in retrospect, though, it seems a little surprising that there was so little research of this type between the publication of *The Japanese and Sun Yat-Sen* in 1954 and the revived interest in research on the social history of the Japanese empire and of East Asian cross-border interactions that began around the mid-1990s. Jansen himself of course returned to the topic of connections between the modern history of Japan and China several times, particularly in his larger study of *China and Japan: From War to Peace, 1894–1972*, written at the time of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the People's Republic in the early 1970s. Other than this, however, only a handful of books spring to mind: among them Gavan McCormack's pioneering study of Zhang Zuolin and Japan, published in the 1970s⁵³ and Ramon Myers' research on Japan's economic role in Manchuria, which was carried out as part of his doctoral program in the 1950s but not published in book form until the 1980s.⁵⁴ Whole swathes of fascinating and important history concerning intellectual and cultural connections between Japan and East Asia since the nineteenth century, the social and cultural history of the Japanese

52 For example, Tani E Barlow, ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in Modern East Asia* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997); Barbara Molony, Janet Theiss and Hyaewool Choi, *Gender in Modern East Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

53 Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-Lin in Northeast China: China, Japan and the Manchurian Idea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977).

54 Myers' *The Japanese Economic Development of Manchuria, 1932–1945* was completed as a PhD thesis at the University of Washington in 1959, and published by Garland Publishing (New York) in 1982; research examining cross-border linkages between Japanese and Korean history is even rarer. Works like James W Morley's *Japan and Korea: America's Allies in the Pacific* (New York: Walker, 1965) is not only brief but focuses centrally on a comparative study of political developments set in the context of US strategic interests at the time of the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea.

empire, and histories of the multiple migrations within and across the borders of that empire remained largely unexplored, leaving open wide fields of research that have only begun to be actively cultivated by English-speaking researchers of Japan in the past 25 years.

The relative neglect of these regional connections is all the more surprising when we consider that some aspects at least – particularly the intellectual and social connections between Japan and China – were the subject of intense research and debate by Japanese scholars (most famously by the Japanese Sinologist Takeuchi Yoshimi [1910–77]) in the postwar decades.⁵⁵ The underlying spatial architecture of postwar East Asian studies is also, I would argue, reflected in the relative neglect of the long pre-modern history of the region's non-state areas. Area specialists, for example, directed almost no attention to the history of the Ainu and other indigenous peoples of the north (research on whom was largely confined to the fields of anthropology and folklore). The one exception here was the history of the Ryukyu Kingdom/Okinawa – generally marginalised by European and American scholars of Japan and of East Asia in the prewar decades, but suddenly given new prominence on the context of the identity debates that accompanied the US occupation of Okinawa from 1945–72.⁵⁶

Japan–China Reversal and the New Area Studies

Go into any bookshop in Japan today and you will find yourself confronted by shelves of works – ranging from the scholarly to the sensational – on Japan's relationship with its surrounding region, and particularly on the China–Japan relationship. The more lurid titles, such as *This Troublesome Country – China* [*Kono Yakkai na Kuni, Chūgoku*] or *Japan Will Become an 'Autonomous Region' of China* [*Nihon wa Chūgoku no 'Jichiku' ni Naru*]⁵⁷ convey the flavour of anxiety, alarm, confusion and sometimes paranoia evoked the apparent inversion of the fates of Japan and China. Some more sober works, meanwhile, express the issue directly and succinctly – most succinct of all, perhaps, a work published by the Nihon Keizai Shinbun in

55 See, for example, Takeuchi Yoshimi, *Nihon to Chūgoku no aida* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjūsha, 1977).

56 See, for example, George Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle, 1958).

57 Okuda Hidehiro, *Kono Yakkai na Kuni, Chūgoku* (Tokyo: Wakkū Bunkō, 2001); Bandō Tadanobu, *Nihon wa Chūgoku no 'Jichiku' to naru* (Tokyo: Sankei Shinbun Shuppan, 2010).

2010 and entitled *Japan–China Reversal* [*Nitchū Gyakuten*].⁵⁸ For at least the past decade, it has been China's remarkable economic growth that has attracted the headlines, while Japan's ongoing economic stagnation – the 'lost decade' that extended into a 'lost twenty years' – has sent theorists both within Japan and abroad back to the analyses of the 'Japanese economic miracle' in search of the hidden flaws that might explain the subsequent loss of momentum.⁵⁹

The message of the books that have resulted is not, of course, a simple story of China's rise and Japan's decline. Many writers point to potential risks and weaknesses in the economic and political order of the new Chinese superpower, and many also emphasise residual sources of strength in the Japanese system. But the underlying premise is certainly the notion of a reversal of power relations in Asia. The big issue is no longer the 'secret of Japan's success', but rather the secret sources of relative failure, or sometimes simply the stark question 'what went wrong?' Of course, the reasons for China's expanding power and Japan's relative decline are important issues that warrant serious research, but for many researchers of Japan's modern history, the 'what went wrong?' question is not only a rather depressing and unappealing one, but one that obscures a host of fascinating aspects of the recent history of Japan's relationship with its region. The problem, in other words, is that the fascination with the 'Japan–China Reversal' employs precisely the same conceptual architecture for examining the region that was used by most prewar studies of the Far East and much postwar area studies, but simply inverts the positions of China and Japan. The region is still seen as a geographical block occupied by nation-states, in which the main task of the historian is to rank the position of the nations on a scale of progress, development or power, and explain the reasons for their ranking.

While the Japan–China reversal has been taking place, however, new approaches (referred to in Chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter) were challenging the conceptual frameworks through which we study regions, whether East Asia or elsewhere. Intense debate about globalisation and about area studies versus disciplines has given rise to what may be called

58 Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, ed., *Nitchū Gyakuten: Bōchō suru Chūgoku no Shinjutsu* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 2010).

59 For example, WR Garside, *Japan's Great Stagnation: Forging Ahead, Falling Behind* (London: Edward Elgar, 2012); Yoichi Funabashi and Barak Kushner, eds, *Examining Japan's Lost Decades* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

‘the new area studies’.⁶⁰ The new area studies approach continues to emphasise the value of in-depth research on particular places, grounded in knowledge of local languages and ways of life, and developed through work in the ‘field’, but takes a fresh approach to spatial boundaries. Vincent Houben suggests that the new forms of area studies emerging in the twenty-first century focus on the relationship between theme and area, in which ‘the determination of area depends on its relevance for the research theme chosen, and can have any size, location or temporality’.⁶¹

This new approach, in other words, can be seen differing from traditional postwar Asian studies in three main respects. First, traditional area studies generally accepts the ‘area’ as a geographical or cultural given. Studies of the Far East or of East Asia normally begin by providing their own definition of the boundaries of the regions, but whatever the definition, they accept the premise that the region has some form of inherent cultural coherence that makes it a meaningful framework for study. By contrast, as reflected in Arjun Appandurai’s notion of ‘process geographies’, new area studies sees ‘regions’ not as fixed in physical or cultural geography, but as constantly created and re-created through human interaction and experience. Consequently, regions are multiple, overlapping and can take the range of unusual shapes – a vivid example being the concept of ‘Zomia’, put forward by geographer Willem van Schendel as a region of mainland Southeast Asia, which makes sense in terms of social history but was never viewed as a region by political scientists and political historians because it lacked strong state centres.⁶² A second and related point is that new area studies tends to treat the ‘area’ not as an independent variable – a fixed frame within which history is studied – but rather as a dependent variable. A core object of research is to examine how historical events and forces have created and shaped the spatial system.

Third, new area studies raise questions not only about the geographical framing of the ‘area’, but also about the politics of knowledge creation. In other words, they pose the questions: ‘Who is an area scholar?’

60 Also sometimes referred to as ‘Third Wave’ Area Studies – the first two waves being nineteenth- to early twentieth-century colonial area studies and the Cold War area studies of the second half of the twentieth century – see James D Siddaway, ‘Foreword: A Third Wave of Area Studies’, in *Area Studies at the Crossroads: Knowledge Production after the Mobility Turn*, ed. Katja Mielke and Anna-Katharina Hornidge (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017), pp. v–vii.

61 Vincent Houben, ‘New Area Studies, Translation and Mid-Range Concepts’ in Mielke and Hornidge, *Area Studies at the Crossroads*, pp. 195–211, quotation from p. 202.

62 Van Schendel, ‘Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance’, pp. 647–68.

‘Who creates knowledge, and for whom?’ One facet of the problem is the question very directly posed by Ariel Heryanto in the title of his 2002 article ‘Can There be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies?’⁶³ In other words, area studies was developed largely in Europe and North America to research other areas of the world. What does this mean for Asians, Latin Americans or Africans who research the societies in which they themselves live? How are local voices heard in global (often English-language dominated) area studies? This question has perhaps not been as vexed in the case of Japan as in the case of some other parts of the world. Japan, as one of the richest Asian nations with its own strong postwar tradition of area studies, and Japanese are (and have long been) very active participants in international debates on East Asia’s past and future. However, important debates still surround the distinctive position of those who study areas from within; and the problem of ‘who creates knowledge for whom’ has further dimension that are becoming increasingly visible with the rapid transformation of communications media and of education systems as a whole.

Thinking While Walking: *Bananas and the Japanese* and *The Eye of the Sea Cucumber*

‘New area studies’ largely took shape in the 1990s, with the spread of debates on postcolonialism and the emergence of a ‘post–Cold War’ order in Europe, and has continued to be discussed, developed, criticised and reworked into the twenty-first century. The alternative approaches to space and society that new area studies embody are not entirely new, though. In fact, by the 1970s and 1980s, various strands in Japanese social thought were already exploring new approaches to ‘regionalisation’ very different from those of mainstream postwar area studies. I would therefore like to conclude by looking at a couple of examples of these earlier rethinkings of the space of ‘the region’, because I believe that they contain valuable suggestions of future directions for new area studies in a rapidly changing East Asia.

63 Ariel Heryanto, ‘Can there be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian Studies?’, *Moussons* 5 (2002): pp. 1–30, doi.org/10.4000/moussons.2658.

My first example comes from the work of a Japanese scholar who was not a historian but is generally regarded as an anthropologist, sociologist or Asian studies (*Ajiagaku*) scholar, though his work and career defy simple categorisation. The life trajectory of Tsurumi Yoshiyuki (1926–94) was profoundly shaped by his family background as the son of a prewar diplomat. Tsurumi was born and spent a significant part of his childhood in the United States, but was also haunted throughout adulthood by a sense of personal connection to Japan's invasion of Asia, because during the war his father had headed the military administration of Japanese-occupied Malacca. After graduation, Tsurumi worked for a long time for International House of Japan, and became well-known as a writer, peace activist and co-founder of the Pacific Asia Resources Center (PARC – *Ajia Taiheiyō Shiryō Sentā*, established in 1973), a social movement that works mainly on issues of human rights and social justice in Asia and on problems emerging from Japan's relationship to other Asian countries. He did not obtain his first formal academic post, at Ryūkyō University, until he was in his 60s.

Tsurumi's writings on Japan's relationship to its region have sometimes been criticised for presenting a dichotomy between a poor and exploited 'Asia' and a rich and exploitative 'Japan' that implicitly stands outside of 'Asia'.⁶⁴ The 'Japan/Asia' dichotomy seems particularly evident from the titles of two of his works: *Ajiain to Nihonjin* (*The Asians and the Japanese*, first published in 1980) and *Ajia wa naze Mazushii no ka* (*Why is Asia Poor?* published in 1982, at a time when Japan clearly was not).⁶⁵ But I think that it is too simple to assume from these uses of the term 'Asia' that Tsurumi was just echoing Japanese orientalist stereotypes of advanced Japan versus backward Asia. Tsurumi's use of the word 'Asia' (like that of Uehara Senroku whom I quoted earlier) was deeply influenced by the background of the Bandung Asian-African Conference of 1955 and the non-aligned movement that grew out of that conference, in which 'Asia' was frequently used a virtual synonym for the experience of colonisation and exploitation.

64 See, for example, John Lie, *Multicultural Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004). Lie writes: 'When I lived in Tokyo in the mid-1980s, several of my politically progressive friends recommended that I read *Ajia wa naze Mazushii ka* (*Why is Asia Poor?*) by Tsurumi Yoshiyuki (1982). Asia for my progressive friends did not include Japan. In fact, postwar Japanese intellectual and political life has largely ignored Asia (Sonoda 1993:22–25). Only recently has scholarly interest in Asia begun to revive (Ishida 1995:78–82)', p. 41.

65 Tsurumi Yoshiyuki, *Ajiain to Nihonjin* (Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1980); Tsurumi Yoshiyuki, *Ajia wa naze Mazushii no ka* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1982).

Far from emphasising the separation of Japan from 'Asia', Tsurumi developed an imaginative and innovative approach for understanding the interconnection of Japan to its region; an approach that in some senses interestingly prefigures later discourses on globalisation and its social effects. His approach to the topic, which he theorised as 'thinking while walking' (*arukinagara kangaeru*), is best illustrated in his two widely sold short studies, *Banana to Nihonjin* (*Bananas and the Japanese*, 1982) and *The Eye of the Sea Cucumber* (*Namako no Me*, 1990).⁶⁶ *Bananas and the Japanese* uses the simple but, at the time, quite radical device of examining Japan's relationship to its region by exploring how the humble banana finds its way onto Japanese dining tables. Starting from the arrival of the first bananas in Japan in 1903, Tsurumi takes his readers on a journey through the development of plantation agriculture in colonial Taiwan to the 1960s and 1970s, when the rise of mass consumption in Japan was linked to the massive expansion of plantation agriculture on the Philippines Island of Mindanao. Tsurumi's work, in other words, makes visible the invisible social relationship between Japan and Mindanao forged by consumer culture. In tracing the journey of the banana from tree to table, through a long line of intermediaries, Tsurumi shows how minor changes in consumption patterns in Japan can have huge effects on the lives and social structures of people many thousands of miles away in the producing villages. *The Eye of the Sea Cucumber* undertakes a similar exploration of the historical development of the trade in the delicacy *namako*, this time revealing a deep thread of connection between Japan and the Indonesian Island of Sulawesi.

Tsurumi's work precisely explores the 'precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction and motion' that form the core of Appadurai's 'process geographies'. At the same time, it poses challenges to some conventional notions about the production of area studies knowledge: Tsurumi not only conducted most of his research outside the bounds of academic institutions, but also emphasised the importance of engaging in social action together with the people who were the subjects of his research. His work is very clearly a call for 'engaged scholarship', which demands that the researcher not only talks the talk but also walks the walk. For Tsurumi, 'thinking while walking' implied that research is a physical activity carried out by the body as well as the mind: it engages all the senses of sight,

66 Tsurumi Yoshiyuki, *Banana to Nihonjin: Firipin Nôen to Shokutaku no aida* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982); Tsurumi Yoshiyuki, *Namako no Me* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1990).

hearing, touch, taste and smell, as well as faculties of reasoning and reflection. His approach had a continuing influence on the work of a range of scholars (most notably Japanese scholars such as Murai Yoshinori and Utsumi Aiko), and I would argue that it deserves more attention than it has received so far from Asian studies scholars; for Tsurumi's readable and seemingly simple accounts of Japan's material relationships with its region contain rather profound suggestions of alternative ways to envisage social space and to practise the art of research.

Excavating the Past: The Case of the Okhotsk People's History Workshop

My second example of an alternative approach to Japan and its region comes from the work of a study group that is relatively little known even in Japan, let alone internationally: the Okhotsk People's History Workshop (*Ohōtsuku Minshūshi Kōza*, hereafter abbreviated to Okhotsk Workshop), which was established in the early 1970s and provided the seed bed for a range of study groups and social movements that are still active today.⁶⁷ Based in the northern Hokkaido town of Kitami, the Okhotsk Workshop was both small and local, but it is important to emphasise that it was not an isolated phenomenon. Broadly similar study groups exist in many parts of Japan. Their activities are a fascinating part of the process of 'doing history' in Japan,⁶⁸ though these activities have only recently begun to attract much serious study from university-based historians.⁶⁹

67 The group was initially created as the 'Society for Telling the History of Kitami' in 1972, and changed its name to the Okhotsk People's History Study Group in 1973. See Koike Kikō, 'Ohōtsuku Minshūshi Kōza', in *Iwanami Kōza: Nihon Tsūshi*, appendix vol. 2, *Chiiki Kenkyū no Genjō to Kadai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), pp. 229–43, reference from pp. 231–32; Hiroshi Oda, 'Unearthing the History of Minshū in Hokkaido: The Case Study of the Okhotsk People's History Workshop', in *Local History and War Memories in Hokkaido*, ed. Philip A Seaton (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 129–58, doi.org/10.4324/9781315733685-7; Oda Hiroshi, 'Koike Kikō: "Itami" kara Hajimaru Minshūshi Undō', in *Hitobito no Seishinshi*, vol. 2, *Chōsen no Sensō – 50-nendai*, ed. Tessa Morris-Suzuki (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2015), pp. 313–39.

68 I borrow the term 'doing history' from Minoru Hokari. See Minoru Hokari, *Gurindji Journey: A Japanese Historian in the Outback* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2011); see also Hokari Minoru, *Radikaru Onaru Hisutori: Ōsutoraria Senjūmin Aborijini no Rekishi Jissen* (Tokyo: Ochonomizu Shobō, 2004); see also Sachiko Shōji, ed., *Rekishi Suru! Doing History!* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka City Art Museum, 2017).

69 The best study of the subject in English, focusing mainly on women's study groups in the 1950s, is Curtis Gayle's *Women's History and Local Community in Postwar Japan* (London: Routledge, 2010).

The emergence of these local groups needs to be understood in the context of the rise in 1960s and 1970s Japan of the phenomenon that US historian Takashi Fujitani calls ‘*Minshūshi* as a critique of Orientalist knowledge’.⁷⁰ Inspired by the work of historians like Irokawa Daikichi (1925–) and Yasumaru Yoshio (1934–2016), ‘people’s history’ sought to explore the lives of non-elite ‘ordinary people’ as the motive force of Japanese history, while questioning the relatively rigid theoretical apparatus of Marxist dialectics that had dominated much history research in postwar Japan.⁷¹ This search for the lost voices of the people had obvious appeal to historians operating outside the realms of the elite universities, in relatively poor and outlying parts of Japan.

The central figure in the Okhotsk Workshop was an energetic and charismatic local history teacher named Koike Kikō (1916–2003), who originally came from Tokyo but had been purged from his position as a high school teacher in 1948 because of his involvement in trade unionism and his opposition to the content of the officially approved history textbooks. In 1953, he obtained a position as a teacher at a school in Kitami, where he spent the rest of his career.⁷² Few of the participants in the Okhotsk Workshop, indeed, were university historians. Most were schoolteachers, local public servants, housewives, Buddhist priests and Christian ministers, retirees and other local people with an interest in history – people often condescendingly referred to as ‘amateur historians’. They were, however, part of an amazingly rich tradition of local history research that exists all over Japan, and whose work has not only yielded a wealth of empirical historical knowledge, but also poses interesting conceptual challenges to mainstream academic concepts of the role of the historians and the process of ‘doing history’. Other significant local groups include the Ehime Women’s History Circle in Shikoku,⁷³ which dates back to the 1950s, and the vibrant people’s history movement which developed in the Kyushu city of Minamata in response to that region’s problems of industrial pollution.⁷⁴ In the mid-1970s, the Okhotsk

70 Takashi Fujitani, ‘Minshūshi as Critique of Orientalist Knowledge’, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 6, no. 2 (1998): pp. 303–22, doi.org/10.1215/10679847-6-2-303.

71 See Carol Gluck, ‘The People in History: Recent Trends in Japanese Historiography’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): pp. 25–50.

72 Oda, ‘Unearthing the History of Minshū’; Oda, ‘Koike Kikō’.

73 Gayle, *Women’s History*, ch. 6.

74 For example, Okamoto Tatsuaki, ed., *Minamata no Minshūshi*, 5 volumes (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 2015).

Workshop was attracting audiences of several hundred to its regular lecture series, and its 10th anniversary conference in 1982 was attended by around 900 people.⁷⁵

If ‘walking’ is the key term in Tsurumi Yoshiyuki’s approach to history, ‘digging’ – or, more precisely, ‘excavating the past’ (*kako o horiokosu*) – is the key term in the work of the Okhotsk Workshop. The term ‘excavation’ appears repeatedly in Koike’s writings: so often, indeed, that it is sometimes difficult to be sure whether he is using the term metaphorically or literally, since the group both conducted actual archaeological digs and also ‘unearthed’ the past through oral history interviews. The purpose of this excavation was to uncover, record and preserve the forgotten voices of those local residents whose experiences had been lost in mainstream grand narratives of the settlement of Hokkaido, which tended to present relatively triumphalist stories of the achievements of pioneer settlers. Among the early subjects for ‘excavation’ by the Okhotsk Workshop were dissident members of the Meiji Era Freedom and People’s Rights movement who had been exiled to the far north of Japan as a punishment for their activism, and convict labourers who had been brought to northern Hokkaido to work on construction projects. (Kitami’s neighbouring city of Abashiri is still home to one of Japan’s largest prisons, with a history dating back to the nineteenth century.) Even after the abolition of convict labour in the 1890s, poor and unemployed men continued to be shipped to Hokkaido from other parts of Japan to work as *takobeya* (literally ‘octopus pot’) labourers (contract workers who were kept confined in barracks on mining or construction sites, often working in very harsh conditions for minimal wages). The Okhotsk Workshop formed teams to research the experiences of workers on these sites, and published detailed volumes containing archival records, oral history transcriptions and other historical material. They also erected monuments and performed memorial ceremonies for the repose of souls of those who had died on these sites.⁷⁶

75 ‘Ohōtsuku Minshūshi Kōza Hyakukaime ni’, *Mainichi Shimbun* (evening edition), 10 May 1982, p. 4.

76 See, for example, Jōmon Tonneru Kōji Junnansha Tsuitōhi Kensetsu Kiseikai, ed., *Tonneru no Kabe no naka kara: Jōmon Tonneru Kōji Junnansha Tsuitōhi Kansei Kinenshi* (Rubeshibe: Jōmon Tonneru Kōji Junnansha Tsuitōhi Kensetsu Kiseikai, 1983); Chūō Dōro Kaishō Giseisha Tsuitōhi Kensetsu Kiseikai, ed., *Ru-beshi-be no Bohyō: ‘Chūō Dōro’ ni Taoreta Torawarebito e no Chinkonfu*, 4th ed. (Rubeshibe: Chūō Dōro Kaishō Giseisha Tsuitōhi Kensetsu Kiseikai, 2006). Original published in 1990; also round-table interview with Tsurumaki Hiroshi, Satō Takumi, Mori Ryōichi, Nakagawa Isao and Tonohira Yoshihiko, Abashiri, 4 November 2011.



Figure 8.3. Memorial for convict labourers near Abashiri.

Source: Photograph by author.

As oral history collection and the physical excavation and restoration of historical sites progressed, however, the spatial contours of the Okhotsk Workshop's work began to change. As they dug down into the past they struck (as it were) underground veins or rivers connecting their local area not just to other parts of Japan but also across borders to other parts of Asia. Research on the *takobeya* labourers, for example, proved to flow into the story of the importation of forced labour from Korea and China, which began as a trickle in the early to mid-1930s and became a flood after the passing of the first of a series of labour recruitment laws in 1939. Particularly large numbers of forced labourers from the colonies were brought to Hokkaido to work on projects that included mining and the construction of dams and airfields. Members of the Okhotsk Workshop discovered that some of these labourers had remained in their region after the end of the war, and began to collect their oral testimony, as well as documentary and archaeological evidence about the sites where they had laboured. One result was the construction of a memorial in Abashiri to the colonial forced labourers who had worked and died there.⁷⁷ This research theme was particularly energetically pursued by the Sorachi People's History Workshop (*Sorachi Minshūshi Kōza*), one of a number of new groups established in neighbouring regions by local people who had been inspired by the work of the Okhotsk Workshop. In 1997 the Sorachi Group in turn established the East Asia Collaborative Workshop

⁷⁷ 'Chū Chō Jinmin no Tamashii, Yasukara ni Nemure', *Ohōtsuku Minshūshi Kōza Nyūsu* special issue 1 (November 1976): p. 1.

(*Higashi Ajia Kyōdō Wākushoppu*), which regularly brings together groups of young people from Japan, Korea and elsewhere to excavate sites associated with wartime forced labour, discuss issues of cross-border history and (in some cases) return the remains of Japanese and Korean workers who died on labour sites in northern Hokkaido to their families.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, members of the Okhotsk Workshop in Abashiri were excavating another historical channel that linked their locality across Japan's borders: in this case to communities in the central areas of the island of Sakhalin/Karafuto. During the colonial period, the population of Japanese-ruled Karafuto (as we have seen) included relatively small communities of indigenous people from three language groups: the Ainu, the Nivkh and the Uilta. Under colonial rule, the indigenous inhabitants of the island were moved into villages created by the colonial authorities and subjected to intense assimilationist education, while also (particularly in the case of the non-Ainu groups) being exposed to the intrusive exoticising gaze of tourists and anthropologists. Members of the Nivkh and Uilta communities were also trained to conduct spying missions across the border into Soviet northern Sakhalin (just as members of the same communities in the north were trained by their Soviet rulers to conduct missions across the border into Japanese Karafuto).

On Japan's defeat at the end of the Pacific War, almost all the Ainu people of Karafuto were evacuated to Japan, where many settled in the northern part of Hokkaido. The Nivkh and Uilta, who were not regarded as 'Japanese citizens', were left behind in Sakhalin, and a number were subsequently sent to Soviet labour camps as punishment for their work as 'Japanese spies'. From the mid-1950s, however, some Uilta and Nivkh survivors from former Japanese Karafuto migrated to Japan, where many settled in or around Abashiri. As a very tiny minority who had experienced both ethnic discrimination and the intrusive scrutiny of Japanese and other foreign ethnographers in colonial Karafuto, members of these indigenous communities were often reluctant to speak about their backgrounds. In Japan itself, they struggled to make a living, often in low-paid jobs,

78 Sorachi Minshūshi Kōza, ed., *Shumarinai no Kyōsei Renkō, Kyōsei Rōdō* (Fukagawa: Sorachi Minshūshi Kōza, 1994); Tonohira Yoshihiko, *Wakamonotachi no Higashi Ajia Sengen: Shumarinai ni Tsudou Nichi-Kan-Zainichi-Ainu* (Kyoto: Kamogawa Shuppan, 2004); see also Tessa Morris-Suzuki, 'Letters to the Dead: Grassroots historical dialogue in East Asia's borderlands', in *East Asia Beyond the History Wars: Confronting the Ghosts of Violence*, ed. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Morris Low, Leonid Petrov and Timothy Y Tsu (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 87–104.

but the exoticisation of their presence continued, particularly in the form of a so-called ‘Orochon Fire Festival’, which was initiated in Abashiri in the late 1950s – soon after the postwar arrival of the Uilta and Nivkh migrants from Sakhalin. The festival itself was essentially invented as a tourist event by the local authorities, and bore very little resemblance to any known Uilta or Nivkh tradition, but a number of postwar indigenous migrants from Sakhalin, including Sakhalin Ainu, were persuaded to take part, to some degree at least out of a sense of obligation to the community in which they had settled.⁷⁹

By the 1970s, though, things were beginning to change. The Ainu rights movement was gathering momentum across Hokkaido, and this encouraged some of the other indigenous migrants from Sakhalin to begin publicly to reclaim their own identities, and to try to educate the wider community about their own history and culture. Key figures in this process were members of the Daaxinneeni clan, whom we encountered in the previous chapter – shaman and elder Daaxinneeni Gergulu (who was by now in his 80s) and his adopted son Geeldanu (Kitagawa Gentarō) and daughter Aiko. Their resolve to tell their own histories to a wider audience was strengthened by the support of the Okhotsk Workshop, which in February 1975 invited artist and schoolteacher Tanaka Ryō – a long-time friend of Gergulu and his family – and Daaxinneeni Geeldanu to address a special lecture session they had organised on Uilta human rights and culture.⁸⁰ The talk evoked a strong response from members of the Okhotsk Group, and helped to inspire a local movement that persuaded the Abashiri City government to support the creation of a resource centre (*shiryōkan*) to preserve and promote the cultures of the indigenous peoples of Sakhalin.

79 See Tanaka Ryō and D Gendānu, *Gendānu: Aru Hoppō Shōsū Minzoku no Dorama* (Tokyo: Gendaishi Shuppankai, 1978), pp. 220–27.

80 Tanaka and Gendānu, *Gendānu*, pp. 175–77.



Figure 8.4. The Jakka Duxuni, Abashiri, 2011.

Source: Photograph by author.

The centre was eventually opened in August 1978, just a few weeks after the death of Daaxinneeni Gergulu, and was given the name *Jakka Duxuni* ('storehouse for precious objects' in Uilta).⁸¹ Under the directorship of Daaxinneeni Geeldanu, the Jakka Duxuni brought together a rich collection of Uilta clothing, religious artefacts, musical instruments and other items, some of which had been brought from Sakhalin, while others had been made locally by members of the migrant Uilta community. It also displayed items made by other indigenous groups from Sakhalin, Hokkaido and Kamchatka, and provided a focal point for the activities of the Uilta Association (*Uilta Kyōkai*). The association, established in 1976, worked not only to record and preserve Uilta history, but also to campaign for the former military recruits from Otasu (see Chapter 7) to be given the pensions awarded to other Japanese members of the wartime army. With the thawing of Cold War tensions, it became possible to reopen the connections between Hokkaido and Sakhalin, which had been severed during the war, and members of the Uilta Association made several visits to the island, and in 1982 constructed a memorial in Otasu to the villagers who had died in Soviet labour camps.⁸²

81 Tanaka Ryō, 'Hoppō Shōsū Minzoku Shiryōkan Jakka Dofuni no Ayumi', in *Hoppō Shōsū Minzoku Shiryōkan Jakka Dofuni Tenji Sakuinshū*, ed. Uilta Kyōkai Shiryōkan Uneikai (Abashiri: Uilta Kyōkai, 2002), pp. 11–16.

82 Tanaka, 'Hoppō Shōsū Minzoku Shiryōkan', p. 13.

By collecting and preserving records and traces of forced labour and of the colonial history of the indigenous people of Sakhalin/Katafuto, members of the Okhotsk Workshop, the Sorachi Workshop and the Uilta Association shed light on a very neglected corner of Japan's past and present relationship with its region. Their work subverts nation-state-centred narratives of Japan's place in its region, while also (I would argue) posing far-reaching challenges to traditional narratives of modernisation and progress, as well as to traditional Marxist models of stages of development. The colonial linkages forged between specific places within and outside the nation of Japan (between Hokkaido and parts of Korea or Hokkaido and Sakhalin, for example), force us to think of regional history in more complex spatial terms, and to re-examine the intricate imbrication of the historical trajectories of large state systems and smaller non-state communities.

These grassroots historical initiatives are themselves always vulnerable, as illustrated by the story of the Jakka Duxuni. Daaxinneeni Geeldanu died in 1984, and his adoptive sister Aiko, who had taken on the role of director of the resource centre, died in 2007. The 1970s and 1980s 'people's history' wave that had helped to support their initiatives was by now waning, and the next generation of indigenous migrants from Sakhalin to Hokkaido often found that the sheer demands of everyday existence left them without the time or enthusiasm to maintain the work begun by their elders. The Jakka Duxuni closed its doors in 2010,⁸³ and its collection was moved to Abashiri's Museum of Northern Peoples (*Hoppō Minzoku Hakubutsukan*). Thereafter, the most visible perpetuation of distinctively Uilta tradition were the embroideries that continued to be produced by local Japanese residents who had been taught Uilta embroidery techniques by Kiatagawa Aiko. Yet the small examples of the work of the Okhotsk Workshop, the Jakka Duxuni and other groups like them suggests possibilities for the rethinking of Japan's frontiers and of the human history that overflows those frontiers. I believe that, for those studying the region from outside as well as people within Japan itself, closer interaction with the work and legacy of such groups can offer one avenue for reimagining possible frameworks of area studies and revitalising the study of Japan and East Asia.

83 'Uilta Shiryōkan: 32-nen no Rekishi ni Maku – Rōkyūka "Iji ga Konnan" – Shōsū Minzoku no Bunka', *Asahi Shimbun*, 10 November 2010, p. 31.



Figure 8.5. Uilta embroidery: (above) by Kitagawa Aiko's Japanese students; (below) by Kitagawa Aiko.

Source: Author's collection.

Making Space

The stories told in the latter part of this chapter are reminders of the fact that the study of history and society is an active process of constituting and reshaping space. Research may reinforce existing senses of spatial belonging – to a locality or a nation, for example – or create awareness of links to places that previously seemed remote and unimportant. By rediscovering concealed or lost connections, researchers and ‘history activists’ participate in the building of conscious relationships based on those connections. Tsurumi’s writings, by making visible the growing economic ties between Japan and Southeast Asia, provided a basis for new social connections, through which Japanese and Southeast Asian activists would share knowledge about and protest against labour exploitation and environmental damage. The work of the Okhotsk People’s History Workshop and its offshoots opened up new perspectives on social links between northern Hokkaido, Korea and Sakhalin, and created a framework for the growth of social and cultural networks within this Northeast Asian region.

Compared to the big regional histories presented by Latourette, Fairbank, Reishauer and others, the projects pursued by Tsurumi, Koike and the Okhotsk Workshop may seem rather small and marginal. But, as I shall argue in the concluding reflections that follow, there is a very important place for such bottom-up ‘small histories’ in the rethinking of traditional categories of space and time.

This chapter is a revised version of an article that first appeared in the journal *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (2011): pp. 123–42.

This text is taken from *On the Frontiers of History: Rethinking East Asian Borders*, by Tessa Morris-Suzuki, published 2020 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

doi.org/10.22459/OFH.2020.08