

Japanese in Modern Philippine History. Shinzo Hayase. Tokyo: Waseda University Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, 2014. 250 pp. ISSN 2185–131X.

The current work is a collection of several research studies of Shinzo Hayase, a Southeast Asian history professor from Waseda University whose research interest includes Philippines-Japan relations (Hayase 2014). The first section, “Japanese Immigrants in the Philippines,” has three chapters. The second section, “Japanese Goods in the Philippines,” has two chapters, while the last section Japanese and the War in the Philippines contains three.

When one refers to Japanese migrants, one easily thinks of the laborers who built Kennon Road¹: they are one of the groups discussed in the first two chapters of the first section. These individuals migrated to the Philippines during the Meiji period (1868–1912). One chapter deals with issues concerning the need for laborers because Filipinos were deemed to be inefficient. However, as a result of American immigration policies against Chinese and Japanese, the Japanese would-be migrants faced initial stumbling blocks as they sought to enter the Philippines. The first wave of migrants were predominantly male, and were hired to do manual labor.

After the completion of Kennon Road, the laborers transferred to Davao in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, which was an economic frontier due to the American cordage industry. Hayase argues that the “claimed efficiency” of Japanese workers was merely exaggerated by Meiji diplomats; he cites accounts by American taskmasters who found the work of the Japanese to be inferior to “white men and negroes.” Hayase adds that it was part of the diplomats’ purpose of sending “suitable examples of citizenry” to the islands to replace the *karayuki-san*.² However, the migration project failed because of the high mortality rates due to tropical diseases.

An unknown topic in Philippine history involves the Japanese fishermen who traversed the Philippine seas. In the third subchapter, Hayase mentions their unique status since they were the few who could repeatedly visit the Philippines. A number of them traveled and fished in the Philippines illegally, unlike those who came as part of a company, or

with government aid. Four monuments within Hiroshima prefecture remind us of the fisherfolk's connection with Manila; inscribed on them are the numbers and villages of their origin, and their contributions to the journeys.

The second section deals with goods and trade relations among the Philippines, America, and Japan. The ports for trade include Yokohama, Osaka, and Kobe. However, due to the Great Depression and the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, the dynamics of trade shifted. The Philippines was under a bilateral tariff-free trade agreement, which gave American goods the upper hand. Because of Japan's vicinity and devalued currency, Japanese products could still penetrate Philippine markets. The American merchants, sensing the threat, established a "gentleman's agreement" with Japanese merchants to limit their export quantities. The entire section provides a longer list of goods which Japan imported from the Philippines, as well as goods exported to the country.

The fifth chapter speaks of American policies which predisposed Filipinos to American culture, including their choice of product consumption. The chapter also discussed the implementation of the American education system and of English as the medium of instruction. With Japan's entry into World War II, overseas Chinese around the world called for a boycott of Japanese products. This was harmful for Japan because Chinese merchants were among the major distributors of Japanese products. The boycott had some success, but other Chinese merchants could not do without Japanese goods, or found other ways and places to keep their businesses. Thus, Japanese products continued to be sold.

The final section deals these migrants trapped between two worlds—Japan and the Philippines. The sixth chapter translated the monthly bulletin, *Firipin Joho* (*Philippine Information Bulletin*) published by the *Firipin Kyokai* (*Philippine Society of Japan*). It contained information about news, business, and culture concerning the Philippines. The organization that printed this bulletin was composed of Japanese business owners with vested interests in the islands. Their counterpart was the *Philippine-Japan Society*, comprised of elite families in the Philippines.

The seventh chapter discusses the migrants living in Davao during the war. Although rice production provided the initial impetus to migrate

there, the production of abaca allowed them to stay and even bring their families. The Japanese in Davao were required to provide the Imperial Army and Navy with food, supplies, and interpretation services. Hayase then narrates memories of war crimes perpetrated by the Japanese, but highlights some dynamics complicating their role in the war. The marriage of Japanese migrants to locals produced mestizo children, whose loyalty was questioned, as were those who came from Okinawa and likewise had an ambivalent relationship vis-a-vis mainland Japanese migrants. At any rate, Hayase mentions a memorial marker in Okinawa prefecture, which tells their wartime story, shares their origins, and contains a list of those who died during the conflict.

The final chapter deals with the memorial services conducted by the Japanese for their war dead. It emphasized that the services did not aim to glorify the soldiers, but to remember the victims dragged into the conflict. This had repercussions, for the locals saw these memorials as painful memories of the past.

This volume is an integral primer because the book introduces “must-read” studies and shares a significant amount of primary sources, from raw economic data to excerpts from political briefs and memoirs translated from Japanese to English. One minor issue I have with this volume is the redundant discussions across the chapters in each section, although the repetition can help readers who are taking each chapter individually rather than reading the entire book. Furthermore, some chapters digress from the theme of Philippines and Japan, which offer some context but occasionally distracts the reader’s train of thought. Finally, it would have been enlightening for Hayase to have commented on whether his views have changed since the publication of each chapter.

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Notes

- ¹ The construction of Kennon Road, which leads to Baguio in Northern Luzon, began on 15 January 1901. Among the “construction workers” of Kennon Road, previously named Benguet Road, are “Igorots, Filipino lowlanders, “Americans” (which encompassed the North Americans, South Europeans), Hindus, Chinese, and Japanese” (Terami-Wada 1991, 244).
- ² A karayuki is a term referring to “anyone who left Japan to work abroad as seasonal laborers” during the “nineteenth century.” It was later on used to refer to a “woman who went abroad as prostitutes” (Terami-Wada 1986, 303).

References

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