Book Reviews


Where humanistic geography is concerned, a certain number of works have been written by geographers of countries other than Japan exploring the meaning or significance of place and space through literature1; but in Japan, this type of study on the part of geographers is so rare as to be almost non-existent. Since the beginning of the 1980s, numerous semiological studies on Tokyo, i.e., attempts to read and interpret the urban morphology and city structure as text, have taken place, initiated mainly by architects2, and a considerable number of pertinent works have been published. In this context, literary critics have also published considerations on the significance of certain places and quarters of cities given prominence to by authors of literary works3. The book now under review is however, the first literary-oriented work by a Japanese geographer on the subject. While appreciation of the author’s remarkable achievement from the point of view of humanistic geography and urban semiotics, involving the reconstruction of the experiences of places of Tokyo and its environs, is entirely appropriate, the intentions of the author as geographer seem not to be limited to these particular aspects. First, the author sets out to demonstrate to readers, in a vivid and convincing way, the validity of the various new trends in geography by analyzing existing literary works relating to Tokyo and its environs. Being familiar with the new techniques in quantitative geography, the author perhaps felt the necessity of complementing the sterility of logical positivism with the human flavour of literary works. Secondly, the author traces chronologically the changing geographical problems of Tokyo and its environs, starting with the physical setting comprising the Musashino diluvial plain, and continuing on to the currently ongoing waterfront development involving reclamation work in Tokyo Bay. In the process, he consistently has recourse to literary texts supplemented by a range of geographical studies.

Following Chapter 1, which consists of a short introduction to “reading the city as text”, Chapter 2 is dedicated to the analyses of certain very precise geomorphological descriptions of Musashino plain written by novelists, notably Ooka Shohei; and Chapter 3 deals with the discovery of persistent contrasts between yamanote (upper diluvial plain) and the shitamachi (lower diluvial plain) throughout the long history of Edo/Tokyo, mainly analyzing the writings of Nagai Kafu, in which these places form the story backgrounds. Chapter 4, with its subtitle “Allocation of Public Facilities” consists of discussions on urban restructuring planning in the early Meiji period. The writings of Mori Ogai, or to give him his proper name and calling, Mori Rintaro, medical doctor attached to the Imperial Army, are cited at length, and to supplement these non-fictional works (Ogai in this instance wrote as a doctor rather than a novelist) some of Koda Rohan’s writings are called into play. In the interests of “public hygiene” the earlier opinions of Doctor Mori were declared unacceptable by the authorities of the time. Later on, however, as Sugiuura points out, Ogai or Doctor Mori was promoted to Inspector General (sokan) in charge of the medical affairs of the Imperial Army and subsequently changed his stance, placing more importance on public order than on the rights of private individuals, thus falling into line with the official policy of the day.

Topics such as cognitive or mental maps, dealt with in Chapter 5, and the time-geography of Chapter 6 are perhaps the most suitable themes for the geographer’s analyses pertaining to literary works. In fact, the comparison of the cognitive maps of Tokyo of Mori Ogai and Natsume Soseki is extremely interesting and convincing. The remarks on the time-space constraints suffered by the protagonists of Soseki’s novels constitute a successful demonstration of
the validity of time-geography. This part also underlines the utility of time-geographical methods applied to urban historical geography. Analyses of the pictorial maps (ezu) mentioned by Kafu are appropriate as explanations of cognitive maps for general readers.

Chapter 7, "Suburbs of Imperial Capital", Chapter 8, "Town and Village as Experienced by a Country Schoolteacher", and Chapter 9, "Commuting to the Caramel [confectionery] Factory" were written in order to demonstrate case studies on agricultural location theory, central place theory and spatial interaction, respectively. The writings of TOKUTOMI Roka cited in Chapter 7, TAYAMA Katai in Chapter 8, and SATA Inako in Chapter 9 are certainly very geographical in nature and constitute materials invaluable for the purpose of historical geographical reconstruction; but at the same time, in these chapters the author relies more on writings by geographers and historians rather than on analyses of literary writings. The same could be said for the author's interpretation of the industrial location theory presented in Chapter 10 and housing location in Chapter 11. However, in the latter chapters, the analyses of literary works, including the Nihon no kaso shakai (The Lower Social Strata of Japan) of YOKOYAMA Gennosuke, are successfully articulated to the pertinent geographical analyses.

Chapter 12, "Affairs at Summer Resorts" has the subtitle "Spatial Preferences" and consists of analyses of selected works of NATSUME Soseki, TANIZAKI Jun'ichiro, HORI Tatsuo and others; but at the same time this chapter comprises an excellent description of the synthesis of the historical formation of summer resorts surrounding Tokyo. Chapter 13 analyzes the diffusion process of floriculture in the province of Chiba Prefecture, in what is actually the application of the innovation-diffusion study method of Hägerstrand to the Japanese case; and a novel by TAMIYA Torahiko is successfully utilized to demonstrate the importance of the communication network for the diffusion of innovation. In Chapter 14, the topic is the perception of environmental hazards, and the pertinent literary extracts selected for analysis are by YAMADA Taichi. In this chapter, the presentation of hazard perception is based mainly on the analyses by geographers, including the author himself, the literary extracts being utilized merely to demonstrate the concrete circumstances of the Tama River floods, which took place in the year 1974. In Chapter 15, the author once more considers the problem of agricultural location, but here the issue is the development of highly industrialized and computerized agriculture. Moreover, the new geography which the author wants to present here is the modification of the von Thünen model in urbanizing areas as shown in, for instance, the Sinclair model. Chapter 16 introduces the new waterfront development of Tokyo Bay areas, but the author here focuses on the inter-regional and regional input-output analysis in the case of Urayasu, where Tokyo Disneyland is located. In this case, however, there is no pertinent literary work for the period of the establishment of Disneyland available.

As the reviewer has pointed out chapter by chapter, the analyses of literary works are successfully and harmoniously integrated with the presentation of a new methodology of contemporary geography, with some of the chapters utilizing literary citations solely for the purpose of demonstrating concrete cases in illustration of the geographical analyses concerned. Specialists in Japanese literature could no doubt point out additional literary works appropriate to each discussion; but what must be underlined here is the fact that, prior to the appearance of Sugiura's book, this sort of geographical analyses of Japanese literature had never before been put together for the purposes of publication, and furthermore that the book is currently having a fresh impact not only on geographical circles but on circles involving literary criticism. It is also important to point out that this book has succeeded in the opening up of new horizons in Tokyo studies, not only from the geographical viewpoint but also where researchers in other disciplines are concerned. The reviewer recommends this book also as a textbook or reference work in an introductory course to geography for university students majoring in literature.

It is well known that Japan is one of the densest forest countries in the world. Japanese geographers have been interested in mountain forests, however, so far they have been indifferent to plain forests. But this book analyses the uses of the plain forests in the agricultural regions, focusing on the Kanto Plain where many plain forests remain in Japan.

There used to be a lot of plain forests in the Kanto Plain, but after world war II, especially after the Rapid Economic Development of Japan in the 1960s, the plain forests have been in decline. However, recent urbanization of rural areas made some people aware of the importance of the remaining plain forests which serve manifold public function. As a prerequisite for the preservation, it is indispensable to survey the regional characteristics of the remaining plain forests in terms of distribution, the way they are used, and surrounding physical and social condition. This book, therefore, is timely as well as valuable.

This book consists of five chapters as follows:

CHAPTER I: Introduction
CHAPTER II: The Characteristics of Plain Forests in the Kanto Plain
CHAPTER III: The Uses of the Plain Forests in the Urban Fringe Districts of the Capital, Tokyo
CHAPTER IV: The Uses of the Plain Forests in the Outskirt districts of the Kanto Plain
CHAPTER V: Conclusion

In addition, this book has a summary in English of this study and also has English captions underneath all the figures, tables and photographs. Therefore, an accurate image of this book's theme will be able to be gained by foreign readers who are not familiar with Japanese.

First of all, in CHAPTER I, the author describes the purpose and methodology of this study after reviewing the previous studies on the plain forests. The author describes the purpose of this study by explaining, first, what function the present plain forests have in the rural areas in the Kanto Plain; second, in what conditions the plain forests now exist in their own respective districts; and last of all, the regional aspects concerning the uses of the present plain forests. The procedure of this study is as follows: firstly, the author emphases that as plain forest has been a common and customary term regularly used, the definition of the plain forests must be clearly made, so that the various characteristics of the plain forests may be grasped statistically. Then, the author makes detailed fieldsurveys of such typical plain forest regions. At these fieldsurveys, special consideration is paid to the plain forests’ utilization in relationship with the whole structure of the agricultural regions concerned.

In CHAPTER II, the author firstly defines the plain forest as “the forests existing on the lowlands, uplands and hilly lands, and on the gentle slopes of the piedmonts among the mountain areas. “Then the author describes the distribu-
tion of the plain forests in the Kanto Plain by examining recent topographical maps in the 1980s. According to these, the author points out that in the Kanto plain there are forests of red oaks (*Quercus acutissima* Carruth), *konara* oaks (*Quercus serrata* Th nb.) and Japanese red pines (*Picea densiflora* Sieb. et Zucc.), for the most part, on the diluvial uplands, on hilly lands covered with the Kanto loam, and also in the regions of upland farming. In contrast to it, there are a few plain forests on the alluvial lowlands covered with fertile alluvial soil in the regions of rice farming. Furthermore, plain forests are distributed more in the outskirt districts of the Kanto Plain than in the urban fringe districts of Tokyo, and more in the eastern parts than in the western ones.

Next, the author analyses the various characteristics of the plain forests statistically by using the *World Census of Agriculture and Forestry* as data. Calculating the area of the plain forests during 1960 to 1980 by every other decade, the decreasing trend is made clear and precise. Furthermore, the author analyses the ratio of plain forests land, constitution of tree species, the ratio of artificial forests, conversion areas of forests, types of ownership and the sizes of owned forests by 453 villages, towns and cities in 1980. The author points out that most of the plain forests are privately owned by farmers and the size of the owned area is generally extremely small. And also he points out the regional difference of the characteristics of the plain forests. The ratio of the plain-forests land in the eastern part of the Kanto Plain is higher than that in the western part with the exception of the northern part of the Musashino Upland. The plain forests in the eastern parts of the Kanto Plain are higher in the ratio of the artificial forests than in the western one. As for the tree species, red oak and *konara* oak forests in the western part, and Japanese red pines in the eastern are predominantly seen.

As a result of this analysis, the author chooses typical plain-forest regions. As regard to the urban fringe districts, the agricultural regions in the northern part of the Musashino Upland are selected, and as the outskirt districts, the Nasunohara Upland in the northern part of the Kanto Plain and the Hitachi Upland in the eastern part are selected.

In CHAPTER III and IV, the author's qualities as a fieldworker are fully revealed. He creates a lot of original tables and figures such as land-use maps which were gained by his own detailed field-surveys. The author describes the difference in the uses of plain forests between before the Rapid Economic Development and after it in the two districts in these two chapters. The traditional uses as farm forests are definitely made obvious, and making them the standard bases of consideration, the present uses and conditions are analyzed. In the days before the Rapid Economic Development, the plain forests had not been generally managed for commercial forestry, but used for farm forests widely, in both districts. The plain forests were closely connected with upland farming and farmers' daily lives.

In the rural areas in both districts, the farmers could not maintain the agricultural production unless they made their fields fertile with barnyard and farmyard manures produced from the fallen leaves they gathered in the plain forests, for the parent material of the soil is the Kanto loam with low fertility. In addition, as cash crops, sweet potatoes in the urban fringe districts, and sweet potatoes and leaf tobacco in the outskirt districts were cultivated; and the cultivation of these crops required necessarily a great quantity of fallen leaves for the heating material of the nursery beds as well. Consequently, the fallen leaves were especially important forest products. In both districts, the plain forests were not only used as farm forests to satisfy the farmers' direct needs in their farming and daily lives, but also functioned as windbreak forests and watershed protection forests. The farmers cut the trees in cycles of 15 to 25 years to get fuel wood, and then red oaks and *konara* oaks through sprout regeneration, and pines through forestation, were grown and managed. Most of these forests are not natural vegetation, but secondary ones planted and managed by the farmers. It is important to realize that the sustainable rural system, between human activity and the forests, in this manner, had been established in the days before the Rapid Economic Development.

However, after the Rapid Economic Develop-
ment, the way of the plain forests are used has changed because of both the external conditions, like urbanization, and the internal conditions of the farm households that the plain forests have lowered their significance as farm forests. As a result the plain forests are divided into three types of use; first, those which remain maintaining a close relationship with agricultural production; second, those whose use as farm forests is extinct, and is left unused; and lastly, those which are converted into other agricultural land uses and urban land uses, with the decrease of the plain forests.

In the urban fringe districts, the first type is seen in the regions where there have risen the intensive vegetable production areas, and the advance of urbanization is left behind even in the Urbanization Control Areas. Under the external conditions of such designation as Urbanization Control Areas and Agricultural Promotion Areas, which are working as checks for keeping the plain forests, the farmers maintain the traditional ways of usage in the plain forests. The reason why the plain forests are still used and properly maintained is that the farmers continue to make use of gathered fallen leaves according to their own size of farm. But the author points out that inheritance tax has prevented the farmers from keeping their plain forests. Because inheritance tax has risen so high that in case of inheritance, the heir is forced to sell his plain forests. The sold plain forests are being converted into warehouses and material depositories. The second type is seen in the districts where urvanization is in progress. The farmers have a strong conscious-ness of possession about the plain forests in the case of retaining their estates, and look upon them as reserved lands for selling for urvan land uses in future.

In the outskirt districts, the first type is locally seen in the intensive horticultural regions which are developed, and in the traditional leaf tobacco-farming regions. Nevertheless, in these districts other organic fertilizers in place of farmyard manure have become available. The plain forests, therefore, are connected with upland fields through the gathering of the fallen leaves mainly for the heating material of the nursery beds. At present, a new use of the plain forests, though rudimentary, is seen in the regions where raw shiitake mushroom is cultivated. The cultivation of shiitake mushrooms as one of their diversified farmings is keenly on the increase, and the bed logs have been demanded regularly in a large quantity after the period of the Rapid Economic Development. Since the price of the bed logs has risen in recent years because of the shortage of the material, it is strongly recommendable for farmers to grow konara-oak forests. In comparison with the cultivation of Japanese cedars, they are sure to bring the farmers higher returns in the shorter term. The author emphasizes that this new use of the plain forests will certainly perform the effective part of conserving a large quantity of plain forests which still stand in the outskirt districts. The second and third type are seen widely in the districts where the raising of livestock and a new type of rice farming were introduced into the farmers' management and orchards were cultivated. In the present days it is easier for the farmers to keep the balance of organic matter than in the past-day upland-field farming. Consequently, the plain forests have lost their significance in the agricultural production and in the farmers' lives. The plain forests have been converted into orchards, new paddy fields and pastures, and contributed to widening the size of the farmers' management. The plain forests owned mostly by the farmers with large scale of farming, who maintain the plain forests as their property, for the most part, they are left unused. As there is no effective legal regulation against the plain forests in these regions, the plain forests are easily con-verted into such urban land uses as public, recreational, industrial and residential facilities. As a result of the large-scale conversion into the urban land uses, some districts have chang-ed into the state of quite a different land use.

In CHAPTER V the author concludes this study and suggests a significant proposition. These regional difference in the condition of the remaining plain forests in the respective districts are the very reflection of the regional differences in the use of the plain forests. Since the preservation of the plain forests as open spaces is called for at the present time, the remaining plain forests of the farmers' own pos-
session are quite important and valuable. As the farmers are strongly conscious of owning the plain forests as their property, it is difficult to retain the plain forests as farm forests, if they don't have any definite aim to use the plain forests for new utilization like producing bed loge. Moreover, as land prices are rising new even in the outskirt districts as well as in the urban fringe districts, it will be an effective policy, in order to protect the plain forests, that the administration should adopt proper measures by admitting as farmlands the plain forests which are used by the farmers at the present time.

This book gives us some proper knowledge about plain forests that we have been indifferent to so far. We need to reconsider the sustainable relationship between human activity and plain forests at present. I believe that this book can give us a relevant key to creating a sustainable rural system.

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