Jimbun-Chiri 2004: A Review

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The Jimbun Chiri is the Japanese Journal of Human Geography, published 6 times per year by the Human Geographical Society of Japan. Volume 56 (2004) continues the tradition of supplying a venue in which Japanese, and in a few cases foreign researchers, can publish their work. The journal also provides a location for aspiring graduate students to publish their excellent dissertation work, a requirement to receive a doctorate in Japan. This volume contains twenty six contributions, on topics that range from Yamaguchi Takayoshi's study on dairying in Tibet to Miyazawa Hitoshi's article on handicapped accessibility in Tama New Town. It contains a substantial amount of work by younger scholars and graduate students who are publishing in the journal. Of the twenty six articles, fourteen are published by graduate students. The other authors are from a diverse background, with a few working as geography faculty, others working in fields such as Economics, Literature, Letters, and Management, as well as authors from the nonacademic sector such as the National Institute of Population & Social Security Records. The contributions represent diverse programs as well, including those of Kwansei Gakuin, Otemon Gakuin, the universities of Osaka City, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Chukyo, Kansai, Kyushu, Oita, Nagoya, Tokyo, Osaka, Tohoku, Sokendai, Wakayama, and the school of Marketing & Distribution Sciences Non-academic sources include the Asahi Shimbun and the Museum of Ethnology in Osaka. One author hails from the Australian National University. No school dominates, and no theme dominates, unless the broad topic of historical geography is considered a single theme. This volume also introduces its first special edition, with an editorial and four articles totally in English.

Each issue is divided into four main divisions, beginning with a Japanese and English index. The first division, "Articles," contains one or two articles, usually authored by faculty at a Japanese institute, but often the exceptional work of a graduate student. Four of the twelve articles in this section are such articles written by graduate students. One article, in a special edition, was authored by a non-Japanese, Peter Rimmer. The articles in this division are written in Japanese, with a full explanation of the topic in English at the end. Figures and tables are also subtitled bilingually, making use to non-speakers of Japanese possible.

The second division contains topics regarded as "Reviews," and is found only occasionally. Only two of the 2004 issues had this section. The topics contained herein are rather wide, ranging from geographical thought and approaches to topical literature reviews. The reviews are again in Japanese with only an occasional synopsis at the end in English.

The third division, found under the heading of "Research Notes," is much more than mere

1) Names are referenced in the Japanese order, with family name first and given name second.
“notes.” Six of the fourteen authors of this year’s section are graduate students, and along with the other authors are presenting research just as valid and interesting as that found under the “Articles” section. All of these contain a concise well written English summary of the topic.

The fourth division is a varied section, only in Japanese, that contains meeting reports, announcements, book reviews, news, and the occasional program for an upcoming meeting. As this is assumed to be of interest only to local Japanese geographers, it is in all editions in Japanese only.

Regional Directions

The six issues covered a good portion of the world but the majority of articles, twenty one of twenty eight articles or research notes, concerned Japan. In second place was China, with two articles on China and one on Hong Kong. Single articles presented research findings in India, Italy, Laos, and Vietnam. Even in the special edition, only two articles address globalization from somewhere other than Japan. This illustrates the same problem that is occurring with researchers in the United States: it is easier to stay home to do research than to travel elsewhere. This is an unfortunate trend in geography, which by definition includes many more places than one residence. There seems only to be talk of “internationalization,” with the majority of research remaining domestic. Even so, the few articles in this volume that concern areas other than Japan are places not easily reached. Nakatsuji Susumu, a graduate student from Kyoto University, chose a small village in Luang Prabang Province of Laos to examine the environmental effects and “Changes in Slash–and–Burn Agriculture after the Introduction of Cash Crops.” Tsutsui Yukino chose a rural village in the Red River Delta to study the effects of Doi Moi, “New Thinking,” on the economy of a remote village in his micro–scale study. Goto Takuya analyzed the “Changes in the Chicken Procurement Strategies by Japanese Trading Firms and Developments of Their Foreign Procurement Bases” in China, finding Shangdong Province to be the main supplier. Okuno Shii (Cheung Chiwai) looked at the Hong Kong movie industry, specifically, the “cinematic landscape,” and how place can be defined through film in an era of globalization. These kinds of studies are those that should make the rest of us envious of the authors’ abilities and spirit, urging us all to take an active research interest in a place totally different from our comfortable surroundings.

Topical Directions

The Jimbun Chiri has traditionally been a journal that reflects the preoccupation of Japanese geographers with Historical Geography and analysis. This volume is no different except that it contains an article that explains this. Shimazu Toshiyuki investigates the geographical thoughts and practices of Kawada Takeshi of the late Edo and early Meiji periods, as Kawada evolved from a regional gazetteer into a historical geographer after being influenced by the German Ludwig Riess; Kawada in turn influenced the direction of geography in Japan from that time forth. Eight of the total twenty–eight articles in this volume are of a historical bent, and several

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2) Chinese pronunciation of the kanji is also listed with the article.
others, although primarily either political or urban in nature, are also historical. Kitagawa Shinya’s study of the geopolitical rise and demise of the Lega Nord in Italy, is primarily political but as it takes place in the past is also historical. It is an interesting study of the effects of actually attaching territory to a political dogma, in this case, defining “Padania” instead of a more undefined “Italy.” A second article with both political and historic aspects is that of Wakamatsu Tsukasa’s analysis of the public housing and assimilation projects of the Burakumin in Shingu City, Wakayama. He looked at the role of agencies in spatial transformations and the social effects in transforming the Dowa districts. Kanda Koji studied the homeland concept in Wakayama City during the 1930s, specifically, the Homeland Art Movement that was begun to revitalize the Nanki district after Tokyo became the dominant city.

Four articles dealt with population historically. Suzuki Makoto analyzed the “Kokoh-Chosa” population statistics in the Tokai area during the Meiji and Taisho periods. His research attempted to use the old form of census statistics, which were very inaccurate, by normalizing the errors, and then determining whether the early population increases in Japan from 1885 to 1920 were due to an increase in births instead of a decrease in deaths as predicted by the standard demographic transition model based on the European experience. Yamaguchi Satoshi’s article looks at the migration from Okinawa to “mainland” Japan during the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands and the problems faced by these non-assimilated Okinawans. Fukumoto Taku does a straightforward analysis of the changes in the Korean population in Osaka from the 1920s to the 1950s, and Nakanishi Yuji, another graduate student, studied the history of the White Russian Society in Kobe, from its rise in 1917 to its disappearance after WWII.

Several other articles were in the historical category. Kitada Koji analyzed the changing urban system in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial rule with a comparison to parallel development in Korea. Mikawa Masahiro did a historical analysis of 759 CE and 766 CE manorial maps from the Nara Era to determine the accuracy of the pictorial representations on the map, by reconstructing the landscape and the jouri survey.

Two other articles also deal with population but in the diffusion category. Kubo Tomoyoshi and Ishikawa Yoshitaka looked at Japanese International Retirement Migration, a relatively new occurrence in Japanese society which was considered nonexistent. Their findings indicated destinations but found differences from other countries’ retirement migrations, because most Japanese leave for only a short duration and contemplate a final return to Japan. Tanigawa Norihiro looks at a specific community in the Osumi Islands, and interviews the inhabitants for their life stories in order to find motivation for departing from and returning to the islands.

Nine entries can be categorized as economic geography. Two are blended with environmental concerns. These are Namie Akihito’s “Inter regional Differences in the Generation and Recycling of Solid Waste: A Case Study of Fukui Prefecture,” in which the analysis finds differences among urban, rural, and tourist destinations in regard to landfills and recycling rates. Yamauchi Masakazu’s review on methodology, “Towards a New Approach to
Geographical Research of Fishing Communities,” suggests new methods to analyze fishing communities instead of treating them as agricultural communities. Motooka Takuya’s “The Locational Process of the Hanshin–Awaji Great Earthquake Recovery Public Housing Project in Kobe City” can also be categorized as an “urban” study. Using three methods, he analyzed the economic flows between agencies and government to determine the success of each in providing public housing to the 1995 earthquake victims. Rolf D. Schlunze’s contribution, “Managerial Embeddedness of European Manufacturing Firms in Japan,” can be considered “management geography.” He found that “cultural differences determine geographical locations and their linkages to other places,” and examined how far European companies in Japan have adopted Japanese management practices. Kamo Hiroyasu in “The Spatial Structure of the Labor Market,” provides a synopsis of previous work done on labor market study, and a review of current research issues concerning its spatial structure. He suggests that the labor market needs to be analyzed on a national or district scale which has not been done, and that the markets need to be reanalyzed because employment has shifted from secondary to tertiary sectors. Hanzawa Seiji analyzes the geography of popular culture at the economic level with his study of the location of anime and video game industries in Tokyo. Sugimoto Yoshio’s article, “Indian Cinema in an Age of Globalization,” examines the effects of CDs, DVDs, and satellite television on globalization and the Indian movie industry. Two other economic studies already mentioned are Tsutsui Yukino’s Vietnam study, and Goto Takuya’s study of chicken procurement in China.

There are three articles that do not fall into the preceding categories. A very good environmental problem is examined in Yajima Iwao’s study of water supply and waste treatment resources in mountainous areas using the Kumatsugi District as a case study. He found that water supplies developed faster than sewer treatment facilities leading to excessive water pollution. Peter J. Rimmer provided a look at the effects of globalization and localization in popular culture in “Manga World: Globalization Theory Revisited.” Kajita Shin’s rural geographic study examined depopulation rates in relation to decreasing government allocations.

Special Issue

Of notable mention in this volume was the last issue, the first in which all the articles are written in English with a Japanese summary. This was a conscious decision by the editors to move the journal into a “global academic context” for the “exchange of geographical knowledge.” This edition addresses globalization in terms of popular culture, with articles on manga, anime, Indian cinema, and Hong Kong martial arts films, all of which have spread to many corners of the world.

There is a diversity of subjects covered in this volume of Japanese human geographic research. It contains valuable information for any student of Japan or of Japanese geography, and should be placed in any library where Japanese studies exist. It offers a glimpse into the contemporary geographical research being done in Japan, and leaves the reader with a desire to see more published, as what is covered here can only be a small part of the research that is taking place.