書評

Shiho Satsuka
Nature in translation: Japanese tourism encounters the Canadian Rockies
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1. Introduction

Nature in Translation is a book derived from Anthropologist Shiho Satsuka's PhD thesis. It is an ethnographic based on the young Japanese tour guides in the Canadian Rockies in the context of the bubble economy and the popularity of cross-country nature tours. The main theoretical focus of this book is the concept of translation for those who live in transnational communities.

Satsuka did her fieldwork while working as an apprentice guide for Rocky Mountain Tours (RMT) from February 2000 to December 2001. The geographical background of the study—Banff National Park is a tourist destination favoured by Japanese tourists.

There are two reasons why I chose this book to review. The first one is that this book contributes not only to contemporary Japanese studies but also to science and technology studies. In the aspect of contemporary Japanese studies, Satsuka discussed that the idea of 'gaikoku' (foreign country) in Japan has changed after the Cold Wars era—it used to be related to only western countries, especially the United States. After the Cold Wars era, young people in Japan considered the US not as attractive as it used to be to the older generation, cause the US model of freedom is considered as a competitive model constructed with material accumulation. And thus, other western countries, such as Canada started to gain more popularity among the young, for they represented a more natural, caring, humane model— the ''true'' freedom.

Another reason for choosing this book is that the concept of translation in culture has many similar points with the idea of *Kyosei*. As Otsuki and

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Satsuka (2016) pointed out, multiculturalism in Canada is one method to deal with the problem of diversity and difference, and Kyosei is the big framework of multiculturalism in Japanese culture. Reading this book can also be a chance for me to have a further understanding of *Kyosei*.

I begin by providing context for the book through the overview chapter. I then discuss the ideas Satsuka clarified in this book—Nature, freedom, cosmopolitan, and 'I'. At last, I close with a brief reflection on the book.

2. Overview

The book consists of 6 chapters, organized into three parts: Canada and its image of freedom in Japan; young Japanese tour guides; and translation of nature. In part 1 (chapter 1 and chapter 2) we learned about the relationship between nature in Canada and the expanding discourse around the freedom in Japan, and how the image of Canada is formulated in Japanese popular culture. In part 2 (chapter 3 and chapter 4) the making of a tour guide is analyzed in an ethnographic way, and the tour guides' negotiation in the aspect of gender and family was explored. In part 3 (chapter 5 and chapter 6), Satsuka analyzed the way to translate nature.

Satsuka explored the relationship between mankind and nature, and the definition of freedom and subjectivity. Satsuka interpreted the differences between how Canadians think about nature, and how Japanese think about nature. Satsuka expressed the idea that we should not expect different cultures to appreciate and understand nature in the same way.

In the late 1990s, Japan experienced a financial crisis after the collapse of the asset price bubble. People started to question their previous assumptions about work, traditional family roles and the state welfare system. The period from 1991 to 2000 was known as the 'Lost 10 Years.' Many young Japanese people chose to escape from their homeland and started 'soul-searching.'

In classic anthropological fashion, Satsuka elaborates from her field notes to describe how the guides left Japan and came to Canada to live in that 'magnificent nature,' as well as what image they held from Canada and how

it contrasted with the reality they witnessed here. Through ‘everyday casual chats in places like the company office, the empty tour van before or after the tours, in someone’s living room or on hiking trails’ as well as formal recorded interviews (p.13). She explored how the young Japanese guides left Japan and went to Canada in order to get in touch with ‘magnificent nature,’ how they trained themselves as social workers as well as tourist guides, and how they handled issues such as personal identity, cultural differences and gender issues. Satsuka made friends with these tour guides with many authors from around the world during her fieldwork.

3. Nature and Translation

How do we translate the term ‘nature?’ If you ask such a question, maybe you can get many obvious answers—nature can be ‘Shizen’ in Japanese, also written as ‘Nature’ in French, or ‘Natura’ in Latin. Nature can refer to the physical world or all of life in general. The idea of ‘Shizen’ in Japanese is more complicated than this. ‘Shizen’ is a Japanese pronunciation of the Daoism concept of ‘Ziran’ in Chinese, drawn from Laozi. ‘Shizen’ describes a condition of artlessness or literally ‘by itself,’ a situation existing without human intention.

Later, when the Japanese were searching for a word to translate the English word ‘nature’, they used the word ‘Shizen.’ This was actually a mistranslation. Since there was no word for nature in traditional Chinese at that time; the closest word to this concept might be ‘Dao’ itself. The opposite notion of ‘Shizen’ is ‘Sakui’ or ‘Human Creation.’ The opposition between shizen and sakui, between the natural way of heaven and earth and the power of human creation, was revived after the Second World War by public intellectual Maruyama Masao when he tried to identify the responsibility for Japan’s wartime aggression, according to Satsuka (p.27). Maruyama narrated it as the war had happened ‘naturally’ in order to exonerate the Emperor, who was still in power. Ordinary Japanese people were framed as the victims of the war. For Maruyama, the ‘lack’ of subjectivity was the main problem of not clearly identifying responsibility for the war. The issue of subjectivity

became fundamental to the country which was trying to turn ‘west.’ In order to enter the international community once again, Japan needed to establish a new soul of individual autonomy to overcome ‘nature.’ They found another concept hard to translate—jiyû. Jiyû means a sense of freedom. At the same time, it kept part of its meaning in the idea of Buddhist self-detachment.

4. Narratives of freedom

The idea of ‘narratives of freedom’ brought out by Satsuka is not new.

The young guides were using ‘narratives of freedom’ as a reason for leaving their homeland and pursuing a new life in the Canadian Rockies. The economic crisis mentioned above was not the only reason that drove young people to ‘escape’. Satomi Hamada’s experience (p.41), mentioned in the first chapter, is a significant one. She graduated from a two-year junior college well known for women’s education and entered a large brokerage company after graduation. She was actually not interested in the job, but it was seen as a solid and stable one. Working there would also make her considered a ‘reliable’ person. The ‘sense of stability’ attracted her. She started to work as a clerical worker in the bubble economy. The clerical workers living with their parents at this time had a large portion of their salaries as disposable income. Their consumer activities were also criticized as ‘excessive’ by educators and critics. Many young ladies spent their money on dining, fashion and travelling, while Hamada chose to spend her leisure time skiing. Hamada started to ski as a college student. She began to realize that she did not have enough time to ski after starting to work, which caused her stress and made her finally decide to change jobs. She has a friend who moved to a ski resort who enjoyed skiing during the on-season and worked as a part-time employer (furītā, people who work as part-time employers instead of a regular full-time job) in the city during the off-season. Hamada looked forward to a lifestyle like him and decided to quit her job and move to Canada. The appearance of part-time employers can be viewed as Japanese young people’s pursuit of freedom. In the newly established neoliberal environment, the phenomenon is also a continuous one to 2019.

According to the Statistics Bureau in Japan, the number of people employed in 2018 was 55.96 million. There were 34.76 million regular staff employed in the year, increasing by 530,000 from the previous year. At the same time, there were 21.2 million people employed as irregular staff in 2018, increasing by 840,000 from the previous year. Among them, 27.7% of the male and 30.9% of the female workers stated that the reason they chose to work as a part-time staff was that they want to work at their own convenience (総務省統計局, 2018). The part-time employers choose to detach themselves from the 'sense of stability,' which usually comes along with stress and constrained schedules. They jumped out of the context of Japanese society and regulations. The part-time employer is still considered an 'unsecured' choice, but it shows Japanese young people's struggle to 'escape' since the economic crisis. Both Hamada, who moved out of Japan, and the young freeters chose to give up on finding a regular job inside Japan were the symbol for young people's desire to drop out of the regular system and pursue their own freedom. Hamada was not the only one who came to the Canadian Rockies for this reason. There were many other guides who considered working here a dream come true and established their new subjectivities.

5. Cosmopolitan

Tour guides in English-speaking countries are expected to be a part of environmental stewardship, according to Satsuka (p.141). Environmental Stewardship in Banff national park involves reshaping people's subjectivities, to transform people into 'local' residents of a national park. However, the idea of environmental stewardship is different in Japanese. The Japanese guides took a different approach to locate people in nature. Japanese tourists ask more questions about plants and rocks. They also seem to be a little lacking in humour. It is also not easy to translate the idea of 'stewardship' into Japanese. Japanese tour guides are more like an agency to arrange a meeting between the tourists and nature, and nature is the one who does the talking. This question has been mentioned at the start, in the prologue:

‘Japanese tourists give the impression that they are like rodents blindly following instincts controlled by nature, rather than humans who have their own unique subjectivities to see nature as an object of their appreciation’ (p.13). Satsuka mentioned that many local Canadians doubted that Japanese tourists enjoyed the scenes because they just took photos—moved—took more photos. This does not mean that the Japanese tourists were not interested in the environment and knowledge. Quite the opposite; they put a great deal of effort into keeping themselves informed to the latest by the professionals, and they also loved the principles of nature. They just found it beyond a person’s ability to grasp all the ideas and demarcate nature and human societies. The notion of stewardship is not easy to translate.

Satsuka has mentioned the word ‘cosmopolitan’ many times in the book. When she first went to RMT to propose that she would like to work as an apprentice guide there, she said the town where RMT was located ‘looked like an ordinary small town in western Canada, except that it had a strong cosmopolitan flavour. (p.15). Correspondingly, the guides were also viewed as ‘Japanese cosmopolitans.’ The idea of ‘cosmopolitan’ is that all the people, wherever they came from, belong to the same society. The ‘Japanese cosmopolitans’ were the result of their reinvention in the new context. The work as a tour guide in the Canadian Rockies embodied their desire to escape from the ‘determined track.’ They started a life filled with frugality and satisfaction. The nature in the Canadian Rockies helped to construct the guides’ subjectivities. While working as tour guides, they were invited to immerse themselves in nature and transform themselves into locals, while keeping some traditions of ‘old-style’ Japanese behaviour. In the sense of the Buddhist idea of ‘jiyû’, the perfect match between a person and their surroundings was the foundation for attaining ‘freedom.’ To achieve this notion of freedom, it is important to train one’s own body and mind, and let oneself detach from one’s self-interest in order to become one with nature.

Canada’s natural environment offered the canvas on which the guides could explore themselves again. The exploration is not limited by cultural norms, social rules or any kind of boundary lines. Moving to Canada

provided the young people with chances to 'stand by themselves' and to pursue freedom. Escaping to western society is their way of taking their own lives back. At the same time, the western subjectivity provided by Canada is different from its neighbour. Immigrants are often attracted by the scenes of wilderness.

6. 'I' produced by discourses

The female guides deserve to be mentioned. Being a tour guide in mountain areas is considered tough work for women, but the Japanese women here transcended the dominant stereotype. Hanako Maeda's story (p.62) is an impressive one. She accepted the job she did not like because of the salary, but actually, she was not trained for the work, and she had to ask others for help from time to time. She regretted having chosen the wrong job. She was fascinated by the female guides in the program. Maeda said they looked 'so cool' and she wanted to 'stand on her own feet' as the female guides did. The female guides were not just 'cool,' they played the role to construct their subjectivities beyond the gender stereotype. The female guides described by Satsuka were charismatic. They moved between routine life and Canadian nature. They straddled many diverse worlds— (the normal stereotype of) male and female, the gap between grown-ups and children, and also the distinction between human society and nature. Satsuka drew portraits of these charismatic guides. By comparing them to the familiar figures in modern Japanese culture, she pointed out that gender is not a natural fact; it is a performance of culture. The gender category everyone belongs to is determined by the social role they have picked up. Shiho referenced Judith Butler's critique in *Bodies That Matter* (1993) that the subject 'I' was produced by discourses that enable it to appear as an individual. The gender role performed by these female guides is closer to 'nature' than the role posed by Japanese society.

7. Conclusion

Satsuka suggested that multiculturalism and environmental protection

are two key areas where Canada has assumed a leading role in the world (p.174). These two ideas have become Canada's source of pride and attractiveness. By following the trail of Japanese tour guides in Banff, Satsuka found that the translation of nature needs to be seen as a continuous process. She drew the portraits for Japanese tour guides who kept a distance from both Japanese and Canadian societies. But they inhabit nature; they are the cosmopolitan agents who found the freedom and independence they pursued. The book is also an impressive introduction to anthropology, which explored the relationship between mankind and nature, the definition of freedom and subjectivity.

Bibliography

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