

From Sano Mayuko ed., Bankoku hakurankai to ningen no rekishi [Expos and Human History], Shibunkaku, 2015 Contents / Introduction : About This Book

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## Introduction: About This Book (tentative translation)

SANO Mayuko

The 1970 Osaka Expo signified the start of a new era for Japanese society. Even today, it holds a certain place in Japanese collective experience and in the memories of a large number of people. It is also the starting point for full-fledged research on expos in Japan. During the 1960s, not only commentary on the unfolding great event that was the Osaka Expo were frequently published but Japanese scholars also began contributing to the body of academic research on the history of the expo that has continued without interruption since the first London Expo in 1851. The expo is an event that gathers products from around the world in display in a large hall. It was born in Britain, carried to New York in 1853 and Paris in 1855, and continuously organized around Europe and North America for more than a century; the Osaka Expo was the first time Asia, or indeed any non-Western country, hosted an expo and thus it is only natural that it garnered great attention.

An interdisciplinary team of researchers conducted the first attempt at expo research at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University. The broad specialties of the researchers illustrate the nature of the gigantic and complex enterprise that is the expo and research on this enormous topic was only possible thanks to this pioneering institute. The team published the *Zusetsu Bankoku Hakurankai-shi, 1851-1942* (The Illustrated History of Expos, 1851-1942) and the *Bankoku Hakurankai no kenkyū* (Research on Expos) (Yoshida, Mitsukuni ed., 1985 and 1986, respectively, Kyoto: Shibunkaku). These two books remain core literature for those who engage in expo research, including myself; I found these books to be instrumental both as an undergraduate student and when I later began to supervise students of my own.

“Let’s produce an expo anthology for the 21st century that can serve as the next-generation version of those two books.” This may sound presumptuous, but this was our goal when putting together this volume. This book is part of a group research project titled “Expos and Human History, with a Focus on Asian Dynamics,” conducted at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken). Involved in the present project are Inoue Shōichi (Nichibunken) and Hashizume Shin’ya (Osaka Prefecture University), who were the youngest members of the team at Kyoto University, as well as myself as research representative, who owe a great deal to their preceding work. Additionally, we have welcomed many new faces to this ongoing conversation. We are greatly honored to be able to have this book published by the same publisher, Shibunkaku, who published the above-mentioned two volumes 30 years ago.

There has been much expo research done in Japan since the days of Yoshida Mitsukuni. When searching for the Japanese terms *bankokuhaku* or *banpaku*, both of which

mean expo, in the National Diet Library's journal article database, you can find an almost countless number of papers, and there are more than a few books on the topic that have been well mentioned. Ever since the Osaka Expo introduced expo research to the Japanese academic community, the expo has become a source of unlimited study material for researchers who take on a variety of perspectives, including the overall planning and site layout, individual display items, and the political and diplomatic issues surrounding the event.

One striking feature of most of the existing scholarship is the tendency to focus on Japan's cultural representation, or how Japan has structured its exhibitions at Western expos and how this was received. Although I have done no statistical analysis, I felt that this perspective had been overemphasized; it leads to a body of research that focuses on how Japanese culture has been treated as a "different culture" or an "other" in relation to the West and is backed by a strong tendency to critically debate the West's modernization and imperial expansion.

It is not to be criticized but rather natural for historical studies if we consider the expo's important function as a window through which a modernizing Japan could deepen its relationship with the international community and define its place therein, and also the serious efforts that Meiji leaders made for Japan's expo participation in order to make a good impression on other countries. This was the perspective I myself took when I first studied expos as an undergraduate student. My thesis was titled "Bunka no jitsuzō to kyojō: Bankoku Hakurankai ni miru Nihon shōkai no rekishi" (How to Exhibit "Japan": A History of Japan's Search for Itself in the History of International Expositions), and my first publication was a revised version of that paper. The core of my interest has not changed to this day.

Nonetheless, I came to question this "perspectival overemphasis" when I studied the 1862 London Expo—the British capital's second expo and one especially relevant to my research—and examined not only Japan's participation but the event overall. As I describe in my own paper in this book, this was the first expo *bakumatsu* Japan participated in, thanks to the help of the then British Minister to Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock. This expo serves as a starting point for Japanese cultural representation. However, because so it does, I was genuinely motivated to grasp its entire picture. Around 2007, I had the repeated opportunities to conduct research at the National Art Library in London, Britain's official library for historical material concerning expos and a part of the Victoria and Albert Museum (originally called the South Kensington Museum) that has its origins in the first London Expo of 1851. As I went through the expo's administrative records, I realized that Japan's treatment as a "different culture" and the surrounding political issues, which many Japanese scholars had considered unique to Japan, was only one such case among many. Indeed, Japan's situation had much in common with the historical experiences of other non-Western countries.

This may seem obvious, but at the time it shocked me. In Japan, both the treatment of our culture and the process by how we came to participate in expos are very significant. However, from the perspective of the organizers, Japan's participation was only one part of a vast number of administrative tasks that involved many countries and that organizers wanted to address in one sweep. The dispassionate attitude apparent in the documents was truly anticlimactic.

We cannot grasp Japan's position in the international community without considering both the organizer's perspective and the perspective of other non-Western countries that share Japan's experience. Although I had previously taken a strong interest in Japan's cultural representation in expos, focusing on a Japan-centered viewpoint, I realized I must resolutely relativize that perspective in the context of world history. This has been a standpoint I find broadly meaningful beyond the confines of expo research, and it has greatly influenced not only my research but probably my general perspective as well.

This does not mean that I stopped focusing on Japan's participation in expos in my research. On the contrary, I realized that while it is not possible for one person to research the entire global history of expos, such a task might be possible for a team of researchers who hold similar perspectives. I collected information about expo research in neighboring countries, such as China and Korea, and found they had a similar tendency to focus on the treatment of their own country's culture. I also found scholars from those countries who agreed that collaborative research was needed. I decided to start from comparative studies with Asian neighbors before tackling a global study in order to consider how to break away from the traditional framework of expo studies. It was around this time that I took up my position at the Nichibunken and was given the opportunity to take the first small steps to realize my idea. Below is an outline of the group research to date.

- ① October 8–11, 2010 (in Shanghai): “Expos and East Asia: The Possibilities of Collaborative Research,” sub-group activity for the project “To which Extent is the ‘Oriental’ Value Judgement Permissible? Acceptance and Rejection of Heterogeneous Thought and Form—In Search of the Limit of Cultural Tolerance in the Global Ages,” funded with Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [A] and represented by Inaga Shigemi, Nichibunken (2010–2012)
- ② February 25–26, 2011 (in Kyoto): “Expos and East Asia: The Possibilities of Collaborative Research (II),” project meeting funded with Nichibunken director discretionary funds
- ③ September 30–October 1, 2011 (in Kyoto): “Expos and Asia: From Shanghai to Shanghai, and beyond,” Nichibunken Symposium
- ④ April 2012–March 2013 (3 project meetings in Kyoto): “Expos and Asia,” one-year Nichibunken group research project
- ⑤ April 2013–March 2016 (15 project meetings in Kyoto, Osaka, Aichi, and Okinawa): “Expos and Human History, with a Focus on Asian Dynamics,” three-year Nichibunken group research project

※ The project meeting in October 2014 was held as an international workshop titled “The History and Future of Expos,” thanks to funding from the Japan World Exposition 1970 Commemorative Fund (JEC Fund). We welcomed overseas guests, including Yook Young-Soo, Girardelli Aoki Miyuki, and Cao Jiannan, authors of articles in this volume. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Kansai Osaka 21st Century Association, which manages the aforementioned fund, as well as the three researchers who have continued to participate in our project.

① and ② were very small gatherings. I cannot thank Xu Subin (Tianjin University), Aoki Nobuo (Tianjin University), and Ukai Atsuko (University of Tokyo) enough for having worked with me since that time. Moreover, it was while in Shanghai for ① that I met Iwata Yasushi (former METI World Exposition Promotion Office Director) and Ehara Noriyoshi (former Director of the Japan Pavilion at Expo 2010 Shanghai), who since then have been core members of our research group.

It goes without saying that the 2010 Shanghai Expo served as the immediate impetus for our research. We were lucky with the timing. However, we saw this expo not merely as an event representing how the non-West has caught up with the West in terms of production since the 19th century. Instead, while the organizers of the Shanghai Expo carefully studied the 1970 Osaka Expo, the first expo to take place in Asia, what was boldly highlighted at the 2010 event was the wealth and ambition of China as a new global power. In response, the other participating countries used their exhibitions to illustrate their relationships with China. It showed as though Asia had digested this institution created by the West in the nineteenth century, and gone beyond either compliance with or opposition to it, now gripped a full command of it to suggest a new potential balance of cultures in the 21st century. This gave me new confidence about the importance of conducting expo research today on the Asian stage.

It is said that the age of expositions ended after WWII, or possibly after the 1970 Osaka Expo. It is true that today there are many other international events on the same scale as the expos. Indeed, people move across borders on a daily basis, giving today's expos a wholly different character than those between 1851 and the early 20th century, when the Western powers and other countries competed for industrial progress and proudly displayed their power. Thus, just like the aforementioned research conducted by the Institute for Research in Humanities of Kyoto University limited itself to the pre-WWII period, there existed a clear gap between the outdated 19th-century expo model studied by historians and the contemporary expos studied through event analysis. Inspired by the Shanghai Expo, we found meaning in understanding these two kinds of expos as existing along one trajectory. Our discussions moved back and forth between all of expo history, stretching from the mid-19th century to today.

We organized ③ just this research direction became clear among us. It was originally intended to be a one-time event, but many participants wanted to continue and I was able to hold ④ and ⑤. Many of today's project members became involved at this point; space does not allow me to list everyone here, but many more wonderful colleagues have joined the group since.

Our members' specialties are diverse and include diplomatic history, legal history, art and design history, architectural history, intellectual history, cultural anthropology, geography, and more. This diversity was created in response to the nature of the expo. We also have non-academic members who are involved in the planning and execution of expos, such as the aforementioned Iwata and Ehara. We make no distinction between on-site professionals and academic researchers, and discuss and work together. It has actually been my dream in a general term to create such an environment by building a bridge over the gap

between the academia and the practical world, and it was quite natural to carry it out for expo studies. It became especially clear at ③ that discussions in such a diverse group were possible and meaningful.

While this book is a direct result of ⑤, it is also the fruit of all our activities since ①.

Here I should mention that the goal of our group research and of this volume is not to define the field of “expo studies.” It is rather the opposite.

Anyone with an interest in the humanities, social sciences, or modern history is sure to have encountered expos in his or her readings. In the 19th century, there were no other events on such a scale. Even after WWII, expos continued to be the place to present new ideas for improving people’s lives. As the biggest official event of the world, expos’ organization and visitors’ experiences have generated a common memory, especially in the host country, giving rise to a distinct generation—just as in Japan after the 1970 Osaka Expo. Therefore, it is not strange that expos appear in history books around the world.

Even given their widespread nature, it is easy to overlook expos unless we know what exactly they are and to assume the expo to be an entertainment event without major significance. Indeed, this is how most general history books treat expos. However, if we really examine expos we cannot but acknowledge their wide influence on people’s lives and how intimately connected each international expo is with social trends.

Before starting the group research project described in ④, I participated in a symposium titled “Internationality on Display: Revisiting the 1862 International Exhibition,” organized at the Victoria and Albert Museum to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the 1862 London Expo. There I had the opportunity to meet researchers from Britain, the United States, and the rest of Europe, and this inspired me to continue this project as a group research endeavor. The participants there were all fully aware of expo’s importance and how the study of expos goes beyond merely analyzing the event itself. It was encouraging to be in an environment where this was widely known without having to be explained.

This awareness must be due to these countries’ long history of organizing expos. I also found a discrepancy between their perspective and mine, reflected in the fact that, despite the symposium’s focus on “internationality,” there was no one other than myself invited to present on a non-Western case. I strongly felt that I must endeavor to advance our comparative and collaborative research in order to encourage Asian or non-Western world to more loudly speak out to the global research community. It is also true that there are American and European scholars focusing on “different cultures,” such as Japan, at the expos, and we find in them tendencies to emphasize otherness through specific displays, similar to what we saw above in conventional Japanese research. Yet, in general, the focus of Western research, as this symposium showed, is less on the display of different cultures and more on the expo as an engine for transforming human society as a whole. Thus the expo is a research topic that can attract interest from a much wider group of people.

Our project does not aspire to be “Western,” but it does have something in common with the Western perspective I noted above: a breadth of perspective. None of our members see themselves as “expo researchers.” My colleagues will not be displeased if I say that



each member simply encountered the expo within his or her own field of study and found it to be an important clue for deepening their understanding of humanity, society, and the world. This is why all discussions at our project meetings had a quality of boundless width while revolving around a theme as concrete as the expo. This is also what we hope to express in this volume: anyone who conducts research on modern society, regardless of his or her field, can benefit from attention to the expo. The title, “Expos and Human History,” is meant to reflect this sentiment.

The papers that follow in this volume present our members’ various perspectives, uncovered and deepened through many years of discussion. Bearing in mind our group’s broader focus, the title makes no reference to Asia, although the original problematic is reflected in the fact that one third of the papers address cases of Japan’s neighboring countries in Asia. In structuring the volume, I avoided the chronological or geographical ordering that one might find in an expo encyclopedia, and instead focused the order around expos’ impact on people’s lives. However, within each section, the papers are arranged more or less chronologically.

Part I, “People and Expos,” examines the relationships between expos and a specific individual (or individuals). The papers tell the stories not of the abstract concepts or inter-state relations but of people who lived in a certain period, showing how deeply expos affected lives of individuals. This is a perspective that gradually developed throughout our discussions and sums up this volume’s unique viewpoint.

My paper, the first in the volume, discusses the first British Minister to Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock. As mentioned above, he is known for bringing Japan to the 1862 London Expo, but this paper takes a broader scope, examining his involvement in several other expos, starting with the first expo in London in 1851. It investigates the interactions in his life that served to connect Europe and Asia and the development of expos. In the second paper, Haga Tōru examines the Iwakura Mission’s understanding of Western civilization through their tour to the U.S. and Europe, focusing on their vivid observations during the 1873 Vienna Expo, which had a substantial role in kick-starting modernization in post-Meiji Japan. Next, Teramoto Noriko directs the spotlight on Maeda Masana, whose efforts toward Japan’s participation in the 1878 Paris Expo contributed to the inauguration of a new, important period in world cultural history, marked by the development of the Japanese export industry and the rise of *Japonisme* in Europe. The following paper, by Yook YongSoo, focuses on Jeong Gyeongwon, who was responsible for Chosun Korea’s participation in the 1893 Chicago Expo, examining his encounter with Western civilization. Yook calls Gyeongwon “Korea’s Fukuzawa Yukichi,” and uses a wide selection of Korean historical sources to examine his role; this paper provides Japanese readers with the full taste of comparative research.

While the above papers discuss government officials, the papers by Mutō Yukari, Aoki Nobuo, and Hayashi Yōko deal with three artists: these are, respectively, cloisonné artist Namikawa Yasuyuki, whose expo participation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries helped create his distinct style and decided the direction of his life; architect Liu Jianpiao, who visited the 1925 Paris Expo as a foreign student, played a central role in the 1929 Westlake

Expo, and inaugurated a new age in Chinese architectural history; and painter Fujita Tsuguharu, a renowned figure who connected Japan and France and whose connection with the expo had previously received almost no attention. Even more so than the officials', these individuals' connections with the expos were diverse and their stories open our eyes to the many people whose lives profoundly intersected with the expos.

Part II, "Places and Expos," similarly grew out of continuous discussions at our project meetings. Wybe Kuitert uses spatial design to demonstrate how the use of a Korean royal palace as an expo site under Japanese rule from 1910 destroyed traditional *feng shui* values but at the same time added new political meanings. Mashiyama Kazushige looks at a Japanese Expo that was originally planned for 1940 by the Sumida River in Tokyo, which never happened, showing the clear impact that an "unrealized expo" had on human history. If we read this paper together with Hayashi's study of Fujita Tsuguharu in the previous chapter, we might be led to examine some of the concrete roles this 1940 Expo played in Japanese cultural history, roles overlooked due to the fact that this Expo did not actually take place.

Next, Nakamaki Hirochika analyzes the structural characteristics of the 1970 Osaka Expo, the one that finally happened in Japan, together with the neighboring Senri New Town, built in the same period and intimately connected. Finally, Kanda Kōji focuses on Kumano on the Kii Peninsula. He concretely elucidates how the area's image as a tourist destination (today known for its ancient road) changed over the long course of the 20th century and what role the expo played.

Part III, "Professions, Society, and Expos," contains papers that examine expos' roles in social development and change, including that in the various professions involved in the expos' operation. Although these papers do not deal with specific individuals, like in Part I, they also show our project's characteristic focus on people. This section includes papers by the aforementioned experts on the on-site management of expos; I regard this as a true accomplishment of this volume.

First, Ishikawa Atsuko examines the *rankai-ya*, Japanese exhibition specialists who increased rapidly during the Meiji period and onwards. She builds on her long experience of organizing the rich material belonging to Nomura Co., a leading company in the industry. Her paper highlights this characteristic aspect of Japan's expo history for the first time. Next, Inoue Shōichi examines the "companions," another profession that began and developed together with the Japanese expo. The companions during the Osaka Expo are widely known, but this paper examines their roots a century prior. Based on contemporary discourse in a variety of media, his discussions also raise questions about the social standing of women. Takii Kazuhiro's paper, meanwhile, introduces the ideas and work of Watanabe Kōki, the first principal of Tokyo Imperial University, positioning it within the context of the Meiji expo boom.

Ukai Atsuko is an expert on *Japonisme*, which has always had a strong connection with Japanese expo research. In her paper, she focuses on the *kinkarakami*, an item exhibited by Japan at expos in the 19th century, and casts some doubt on the perspectives of previous *Japonisme* studies. Her paper is a step toward relativizing *Japonisme* within global cultural influences. Next, Hashizume Shin'ya discusses the general history of urban electrification

within the history of expos. The expos have undergone advanced social change, both with regard to technology and to human minds, and this paper paints a vivid image of its most representative aspect.

The following paper, by Sawada Yūji focuses on the 2005 Aichi Expo, where Sawada served as director of events, carefully explaining the expo's planning and production aspects from the viewpoint of a producer. Similarly, Iwata Yasushi bases his paper on his experiences organizing expos. He supervised Japan's participation in the 2010 Shanghai and 2012 Yeosu Expos as a government official and, while he presents the administration's view in his paper, he does so candidly and as an individual. While Sawada and Iwata's two papers take different viewpoints, together they describe the unique Japanese expo planning situation, where the key is cooperation between the government and the so-called "expo industry."

The final section is titled "The Beginnings and Development of Expos." It contains papers that relate to the expo event itself and show the changing values surrounding expos. Ichikawa Fumihiko examines the French appellation *exposition universelle* and analyzes the character of the Paris Expos, regularly held in the 19th century and a driving force of early expo history, not as international but as universal expos. Girardelli-Aoki Miyuki discusses expos and the Ottoman Empire, a topic still rather unknown in Japan, using a large survey and local fieldwork. As mentioned, our group research has mainly emphasized Asia, especially East Asia, but many of the relevant questions also apply to other non-Western countries; Girardelli's research makes this clear.

Next, Xu Subin sums up modern China's participation in expos and touches on China's development of domestic museums, using both previous research and her own primary source analysis. This will surely come to be basic reference literature in the field. Her paper offers interesting comparisons not only between China and Japan but also with the previous paper on the Ottoman Empire. In contrast, Mutō Shūtarō next examines how China came to host its own expos and focuses on the 1910 Nanyang Industrial Exposition, viewed as the first such substantial event in China, analyzing its course against the changing Japanese-Chinese relations.

Next, Kawaguchi Yukiya discusses the political significance of how artwork from around the world was treated during the first expo in Asia, the 1970 Osaka Expo. He points out questions of exhibition ethics that are applicable to many of today's contemporary art exhibitions; these questions have been rather overlooked in expo studies, obscured both by the more conspicuous argument of historical orientalism and the expos' well-known nature as a celebration of industry and technology. In the following paper, Ehara Noriyoshi looks back at his role as Director of the Japan Pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai Expo and shares his past experiences while expressing his appreciation for the Chinese historical figures who offered support on the long way toward realizing the expo. The final paper by Cao Jiannan offers a survey of the time between the Tang period and the 21st century, taking a grand perspective to trace the formation and development of the "exposition" in China.

Cao's paper addresses the diverse uses of the word 博覽會 (exposition) in today's China and the many other terms that signify similar events. In Japan, we have a similar term, 博

覧会 *hakurankai*, used for a variety of events, to an exceeding degree, ranging from 万国博覧会 *bankoku hakurankai*, originally translated from “international exhibition” or “*exposition universelle*” in the 19th century, to 内国勸業博覧会 *naikoku kangyō hakurankai*, the domestic-scale exposition for industrial promotion modeled after such events in Europe, to similar events today often organized by local governments or even department stores. Project members have noticed this situation in Japan, but we did not manage to develop the question into an independent paper in this volume; I am grateful to Cao for discussing similar situation in China. As part of the same cultural sphere in which Chinese characters are used, this is an issue of great comparative interest.

That said, I do not believe it is very meaningful to criticize the widespread use of the term 博覧会 *hakurankai* or to try to define “real” expositions. If the word 博覧会 *hakurankai* is so overused today, then we must objectively trace the history of how the word 万国博覧会 *bankoku hakurankai* became established in 19th-century Japan and reached the popularity it enjoys now. As regards the organization of official expos, a level of institutionalization happened with the signing of the Convention Relating to International Exhibitions in 1928, some 80 years after the first expo. Since then, despite some amendments, it is clear that only those events registered with and approved by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), the secretariat of the convention, can be considered official expos. It would be possible to limit the scope of research to such expos, but we chose not to do so.

As such, the term 博覧会 *hakurankai* in this volume reflects the diverse usage we find in real life. I want to note that the events discussed here range from expos in the narrow sense (universal expositions/international exhibitions) to domestic expositions originating from the reception of such universal expos to the great variation of related events as discussed by Cao. Even so, I used 万国博覧会 *bankoku hakurankai* or (international) expos in the title of the volume to convey what remains at the core of our discussion.

It is my hope that you will enjoy reading about the various aspects of “expos and human history” as presented in the following papers.