

focus, which was developed in the early 1990s when the impact of communal politics was as not as clearly visible in Kheda District as thereafter.

Another problem with the empirical coherence of the book relates to Gidwani's assumption, from the very beginning of his research, that it is the erosion of the rural dominance of the Patel community in central Gujarat that needs to be explained (p. xix). Although he is able to show several aspects of the changing relations between the various communities of Kheda District over time, he is never able to convince the reader of the erosion of power by the dominant Patel community. For that, Gidwani would have needed much more information on the subordinate classes in Kheda District and the views and perspectives of its members than he was able to gather. In his afterword, he himself admits that one of the most difficult tasks during his fieldwork was to dissociate himself sufficiently from the dominant Patel community to be able to get access to the members of the lower classes and castes in the rural localities he studied. Although he occasionally presents us with some fascinating accounts of the views of members of the subordinate classes, the problem he encountered in gaining sufficient access to these groups indicates that the power of the Patel community in Kheda District might not, or not yet at least, have been eroded as much as he assumed at the outset of his research.

Notwithstanding these minor points of criticism, the book is a magnificent achievement in combining in-depth anthropological research with historical and creative theoretical analyses. This makes it highly relevant for scholars studying Indian society as well as those interested in larger issues of capitalism, caste, and class formation.

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KAWASHIMA, KEN C. *The Proletarian Gamble. Korean Workers in Interwar Japan.* [Asia-Pacific. Culture, Politics, and Society.] Duke University Press, Durham [etc.] 2009. x, 297 pp. £59.00. (Paper: £14.99.); doi:10.1017/S0020859011000320

For those interested in the labor and social history of the interwar period, Kawashima's study of Japan in the 1920s and 1930s is recommended reading for several reasons. Compared to most labor histories of early twentieth-century Japan, Kawashima shifts our focus away from the centrality of the factory floor to examine the larger processes of the anxiety-filled search for employment and housing by ethnic Korean workers. Taking cues from Marx and a range of post-Marxist theorists such as Louis Althusser, Kawashima argues that these Korean colonial subjects were not just exploited within a system of industrial production that paid them low wages and subjected them to harsh working conditions when they were lucky enough even to find a job. Rather, the ways they were exploited extended far beyond relations of production to the uncertainties and precarious nature of their very existence in Japan at this time. In this way, Kawashima brings our attention to the vulnerable, dependent nature of the Korean proletariat and explains how such relationships emerged and were reproduced during the interwar years.

Kawashima traces the emergence of such relationships back to 1910, the year that Japan annexed Korea as a formal colony. He highlights two elements of colonial policy that were particularly relevant to the changes among the Korean peasantry and their eventual migration to Japan as wage laborers. The first was the land survey that took place from 1910 to 1918 and second was the policy to increase rice production that was implemented

between 1920 and 1934. This “land expropriation”, the privatization of property that resulted in the massive displacement of Korean peasants, was carried out by the Japanese colonial administration, in conjunction with large-scale organizations like the Oriental Development Company. These agricultural workers were then forced to sell their labor as a commodity in Japan where they faced particularly insecure and brutal living conditions as they became enmeshed in a number of formal and informal institutions of interwar Japan. Drawing again from Marx, Kawashima calls them “virtual paupers” (p. 62) whose wages were 30 to 60 per cent lower than those of Japanese workers on public works construction projects like roads and bridges. Projects like these proliferated after the 1923 Kanto earthquake that destroyed much of the Tokyo and Yokohama area. Particularly significant is the fact that most Koreans ended up doing day-laborer jobs which by their very nature were transitory, unpredictable, and unstable. And within that low-ranking category of day-laborer work, Koreans were often relegated to the worst jobs such as hauling gravel and other tasks that left them especially prone to injury and dangerous work sites.

Kawashima uses the term “intermediate exploitation” (the title of chapter 3) in his discussion of the harsh conditions faced by Korean workers who were often forced to live in temporary camps near a work site (*bamba*). In this remote location, they were then subject to the whims of their employers who could charge inflated prices for subsistence items like food and also levy fees for other daily necessities. In addition, Koreans typically received extremely low wages, largely as a result of a series of middlemen who took a percentage of their wages for services like finding and arranging temporary work. In this sub-contracting hierarchy, mandatory fees and the skimming off of wages left Korean workers especially vulnerable.

One important aspect of Kawashima’s discussion is his insistence on critiquing the notion of an essentialized Korean minority in Japan that is marginalized by an all-powerful state. Instead, he shows that Koreans filled a range of positions in interwar Japan (including skimming intermediaries) and had a variety of relationships with private and government interests. Kawashima rejects situating his study within the literature on the ethnic Korean minority in Japan (*zainichi* literature) and shows instead the multiplicity of experiences, including those of Pak Ch’um-gum, the first Korean elected to the Diet in 1932. In contrast to certain narratives that often assume a dichotomous relationship between a one-dimensional Korean victim and a Japanese aggressor, Kawashima’s work forces us to confront the complexities of the economic, social, and political relationships that existed in interwar Japan in the public and private spheres, as well as those realms that overlapped or were ambiguous.

In doing so, Kawashima draws on a wealth of Japanese-language secondary sources that deal specifically with “Resident Korean” (*zainichi*) issues, including collections of primary source materials compiled by one of the pioneers in that field of study, Pak Kyung-sik. He cites relatively recent studies of figures like Pak Ch’um-gum and then complicates the narrative by pointing out that Pak’s election to the Diet in 1932 was accompanied by a silence regarding his background and affiliation with the assimilationist organization in Japan, Sōaikai. While Sōaikai was technically a private welfare organization, Kawashima shows how it was related to the Japanese government through processes like unemployment registration. Koreans were funneled through Sōaikai by the state in order to search for work, and in the process encountered the ideological messages of this organization whose mission included the promotion of “Japanese–Korean harmony”. But, as Kawashima shows, this was something that “was not to be achieved by addressing the conditions of discrimination, but by eradicating those Korean populations that the Sōaikai criminalized while upholding and disseminating a simplistic image of the pure and innocent Koreans.” (p. 156)

Kawashima's analysis of these issues is most interesting when he exposes moments of tension, such as the attacks on Sōaikai by the Korean communist labor union, Rōsō in the context of a well-known 1926 strike at a musical instrument factory in Shizuoka prefecture. He draws on primary source evidence like a Rōsō flyer written to appeal to Korean workers, with the words, "Do not confuse all Korean proletarians with the blind actions of the Sōaikai!!" The flyer then notes the history of Sōaikai's establishment by the Japanese government and its huge subsidies from the Home Ministry. In this way, Kawashima brings together an impressive array of statistical data on trends of this era such as immigration and wages, and balances those quantitative measurements with the passionate voices of activists like the Rōsō organizers that come through from that flyer.

Kawashima is fundamentally interested in revealing the disruptive nature of the process of labor commodification and he does so convincingly by showing how Koreans in Japan continually resisted the conditions thrust upon them. For instance, when they were forcibly evicted from rented residences, often because of ethnic discrimination, they demanded fees to relocate. Kawashima situates these evictions in the context of what he calls "urban expropriation", a process akin to the "land expropriation" encountered in colonial Korea. When the 1925 universal suffrage law was passed, Korean men had the right to vote, but they were also required to live in one place for an entire year and list that address in order to vote. Because of their precarious living situations, Koreans sought to change this requirement through the courts, asserting that it was biased against them and excluded them based in effect, on their ethnicity. Finally, when Korean workers went on strike in the 1920s and 1930s, Kawashima shows how their demands were often quite different from the typical demands of Japanese factory floor workers who wanted better working conditions or higher pay. For Korean workers, in many cases, they went on strike with the simple demand just to be paid at all.

While there is much to be learned here about labor relations and social networks during the interwar period, Kawashima's study also provides new insights into a number of issues related to Japan–Korea relations and the nature of Japanese imperial power in the modern era more generally. The most striking of these is the Korean use of Japanese names in the 1920s and 1930s in order to facilitate renting an apartment. Typically, the use of Japanese names by Korean colonial subjects is examined through the lens of the name change policy that took effect in colonial Korea in 1939. It is held up as one of the most humiliating policies instituted by the Japanese administration as a way to eradicate Korean identity during the colonial period. In Kawashima's analysis, however, we see this described "as a discursive strategy to combat territorial insecurity" (p. 121) faced by Koreans who were discriminated against as they sought to rent housing in Japan during the interwar years. In some cases they encountered even further problems when their identities were revealed and they were charged with fraud by their landlord.

In the epilogue, Kawashima mentions that in registering for unemployment, workers were categorized as part of the Japanese home islands (*naichi*) or outside territories (*gaichi*), a category which would include Koreans as well as other colonial subjects such as the Taiwanese. While Kawashima's focus is limited to Korean workers, the categorizations above raise questions that could lead to interesting comparative analyses of other members of Japan's "surplus population" (p. 11) during this same period.

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