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Epistemological Exercises: Encyclopedias of world cultural history in twentieth-century Japan

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Abstract

Encyclopedias are purportedly all-encompassing, authoritative presentations of information compiled mainly by experts for an audience of non-specialists. Believed to offer only universal 'facts', they have long been associated with objectivity. Yet, by arranging information into a usable form, encyclopedias inevitably convey particular ideologies and ideals. As a result, they offer a lens into the changing 'truths' upheld by or expected of readers. This article compares three successive, high-profile Japanese encyclopedias, each bearing the title *Sekai bunkashi taikei* [*Encyclopedia of world cultural history*]. Somewhat differently from today, the field of world cultural history purported to 'objectively' cover the widest relevant space (earth) and time (the human past). However, the specific concerns and commitments of world cultural historians changed greatly between the 1920s, when the first encyclopedia was published, and the 1960s, when the final volumes of the third series appeared. By looking closely at both the production and consumption of these texts, this article shows the deeply politicized ways in which 'objective' knowledge of the world was interpreted, implemented, marketed, and received by the Japanese public during the years of nation-building, imperial expansionism, and the Cold War.

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Introduction

An encyclopedia is a comprehensive, credible presentation of socially relevant information compiled by specialists and intended for consultation primarily by lay readers. The genre is defined by a central contradiction. Popularly understood to offer nothing but 'facts', it has long enjoyed an unimpeachable reputation for objectivity—universal, unbiased, and empirical knowledge.[1] Yet by sorting, selecting, summarizing, and storing information in a way that does not require the reader to peruse the entire text to understand each part, the encyclopedia inevitably privileges some truths, values, and beliefs over others. As one historian observes,

> Just as a map cannot reproduce the curvature of the earth without distorting it … encyclopedias standardize knowledge, organize consensus around certain theoretical views, and keep in check the proliferation of heterodox ideas and interpretations. In doing so, they often legitimize orthodox scholarly enterprises and recruit knowledge to the cause of established power.[2]

To compile an encyclopedia is to build an epistemology.

Given the belief that it presents 'objective' information to the national community, the encyclopedia offers a consummate window into changing ideologies wrapped in the mantle of universal truth. This article examines three prominent, bestselling Japanese encyclopedias. Two appeared prior to the Second World War, in the 1920s and 1930s, while the third, and largest, was a post-war creation, published in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The three works are united as comparative cases by their shared title: *Sekai bunkashi taikei* 世界文化史体系 [*Encyclopedia of world cultural history*]. Since the 1970s, cultural history has been associated with the 'cultural turn': a postmodern quest for symbols and meanings amid the rejection of traditional positivism. However, at the time each *Sekai bunkashi taikei* appeared, cultural history meant something quite different, even opposite: the unbiased, universalist,

[1] On objectivity, see Peter Novick, *That noble dream: the 'objectivity question' and the American historical profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Thomas L. Haskell, *Objectivity is not neutrality: explanatory schemes in history* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone, 2007); and Peter J. Steinberger, *The politics of objectivity: an essay on the foundations of political conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[2] Federico Marcon, *The nature of knowledge and the knowledge of nature in early modern Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 72.

empiricist study of the widest relevant space (earth) and time (the human past). The serial reference works under study here, then, sought to convey an objective discipline in the objective form of the encyclopedia. Not despite but because of this aspiration, the material that compilers selected for inclusion, the relationships they drew among topics, and the language they used for description betray evolving political and ideological convictions that enjoyed the credibility of objective fact. In other words, by unpacking the form, content, and reception of each successive encyclopedia, we may expose the ways in which Japan's understanding of the world changed over time in response to external events. As the encyclopedias reveal, the process of codifying knowledge involves not only adding what one era considers to be fact but also exorcising what it has come to regard as false.

Pre-war encyclopedias of cultural history: H. G. Wells and Shiratori Kurakichi

The years prior to the Second World War witnessed two very different successive attempts to narrate world cultural history under the title *Sekai bunkashi taikei*. The first, in 1921, was a ground-breaking Japanese translation of renowned English author H. G. Wells's *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind* (1920). Writing in the wake of the First World War, Wells hoped to establish a foundation for peace through a comprehensive, yet accessible, compendium of basic knowledge oriented to a diverse global readership. This aim resonated with the liberal scholars who translated the work for the nascent mass society of interwar Japan. The second *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, which was begun in 1933 and completed in 1940, reflected an ideological turn from pacifism to imperialism, fascism, and militarism. It was edited by Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉 (1865–1942), a Japanese historian of China remembered for his social science orientation and for his efforts to replace China with Japan as the moral centre and rightful hegemon of East Asia. At the height of Japanese expansionism, Shiratori projected his nation atop a racial hierarchy of Asian and Oceanic peoples to legitimize Japanese sovereignty over occupied territories.

Both the Wells and Shiratori series were part of a long genealogy of encyclopedia production in Japan. Inspired in part by earlier Chinese models, the first indigenous Japanese encyclopedia was the *Shūgaishō* 拾芥抄 [*Collection of miscellanies*]. It appeared during the Kamakura period

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(1185–1331) and described 620 items under 25 headings. Similar works were published over the next 300 years, but it was during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) that the genre truly flourished. At this time, an increasingly integrated and commercialized Japan underwent a 'quiet revolution' in the empirical pursuit and provision of knowledge about, and for, an increasingly literate population. Encyclopedic texts formed the cornerstone of a virtual 'library of public information', a bulwark of classification and categorization against a developing sense of 'information overload'.[3]

Around the same time, during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, European encyclopedias attained their contemporary form and function. Serial compilations of universal knowledge, most famously Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, self-consciously embodied the values of the era, including the active pursuit of 'truth', scientific rationality, print capitalism, and unfettered political and intellectual exchange. As consumers, Diderot and his contemporaries imagined a 'Republic of Letters' of propertied white males capable of using information to participate in public affairs.[4]

The encyclopedia continued to flourish amid the global rise of nationalism, as states and intellectuals used it to articulate and inculcate new beliefs, values, and mentalities in metropolitan citizens and colonial subjects. Many came to believe that 'a nation cannot be recognized as "mature," unless it enjoys a multivolume universal encyclopedia in its language'.[5] The earliest national serial, Great Britain's *Encyclopedia Britannica*, was first published from 1768–1771, and was soon followed by similar works from the United States to Russia, the Netherlands to Australia.[6]

Japan, too, found the encyclopedia useful as a signifier of national legitimacy and 'progress' or, in the buzzwords of the late nineteenth century, 'civilization and enlightenment' (*bunmei kaika* 文明開化).

[3] Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in print: information and nation in the early modern period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 18; Marcon, *The knowledge of nature*, p. 72.

[4] On the history of European encyclopedias, see Robert Darnton, *The business of Enlightenment: a publishing history of the* Encyclopédie, *1775–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Richard Yeo, *Encyclopaedic visions: scientific dictionaries and enlightenment culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ann Blair, *Too much to know: managing scholarly information before the modern era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); and Peter Burke, *A social history of knowledge: from Gutenberg to Diderot* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2013).

[5] Tomasz Kamusella, *The politics of language and nationalism in modern Central Europe* (New York: Springer, 2008), p. 879.

[6] Ibid., p. 797.

In 1868 a new government centred on the Meiji emperor (r. 1868–1912) and the oligarchs who ruled in his name began to construct a modern, Western-style industrial state. *Hyakka jiten* 百科事典 (miscellanies) offered an alphabetically organized, serial treatment of topics, while *taikei* 体系 sorted subjects by category. Additional works, sometimes described as encyclopedias, included *zenshū/zensho* 全集・全書 (collected works), purporting to encompass the entire oeuvre of an individual or genre, and *senshū/sensho* 撰集・選書 (selected works), which allowed compilers to determine the most important elements of that oeuvre. Some reference series focused on a particular branch of imported knowledge, whereas others trained readers in the general behaviours and skills of modern subjects. Japan also translated European and American encyclopedias such as Chambers' *Information for the People* (Japanese version, 1873), and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1901).[7]

Crediting the inspiration of *Britannica*—but ostentatiously rejecting its nationalist mission—was the text that, when rendered into Japanese, would become the nation's first world cultural history encyclopedia. *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind* by English novelist H. G. Wells (1866–1946) was initially published in biweekly instalments, before appearing as a bound series in 1920. At the time Wells was 'arguably the best known and most popular writer on the planet', and *Outline* was the most commercially successful publication of his career. (Today, he is generally remembered for his science fiction writing.) Boosted by the strong economy of the 1920s, the expensive, multi-volume work inspired several companion editions and sold over two million copies worldwide within a decade of its initial appearance.[8]

Outline owed its appeal in part to its accessible style. As one historian has described it, its tone was 'relentlessly factual, syntactically uncomplicated … confidently unambiguous, and usually more lucid than dramatic'. At a time when the increasing specialization of knowledge troubled many laypeople with a sense of their own ignorance, Wells inspired faith that individuals might master the corpus of knowledge that they seemed to need for modern life.[9] His prosaic narration also served his

[7] Douglas R. Reynolds, 'Japanese encyclopedias: a hidden impact on late Qing Chinese encyclopedias?', in Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Rudolf G. Wagner (eds), *Chinese encyclopedias of new global knowledge (1870–1930)* (New York: Springer, 2014), pp. 159, 163.

[8] W. Warren Wagar, *H. G. Wells: traversing time* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), pp. 6, 167.

[9] Joan Shelley Rubin, *The making of middlebrow culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 212.

self-conscious mission of providing a universal foundation of information (as he termed it, a 'world brain') for a diverse mass readership. Attributing the First World War to a lack of mutual understanding, he saw standardized global education, which would transcend the nation-centred histories currently available, as an essential precondition of coexistence. 'Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe,' he famously declared. Only by developing a universal mentality might humanity might avoid future wars: '*There can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas* [italics in original].'[10] Wells wrote with the pacifist and progressive intention of inculcating a sense of cosmopolitan humanism that might replace nation-centred allegiances. Yet, ironically, his utopian vision of uniform instruction veered far from the free-thinking education he claimed as foundational to a liberal, democratic world. Instead, it evoked the mass indoctrination and propaganda that were to become characteristic of fascist regimes only a few years later.[11]

To create a globally acceptable canon of knowledge, *Outline* rejected the prevailing mode of historical representation in vogue from the nineteenth century until the First World War. The 'history of civilization' narrated the emergence of nation-states along a steady, unilinear path towards 'enlightenment' which was equated with elite Euro-American norms and behaviours. To Wells, the devastation of the Great War and flourishing of anti-colonial movements challenged the West's monopoly on 'civilization'. Like many interwar social scientists, he preferred 'culture' as a more inclusive, non-teleological object of analysis.

By the early twentieth century, scholars had begun to challenge the evolutionist idea undergirding the history of civilization: that cultures progress through uniform stages to resemble modern Europe and the United States. Instead, some stressed a nondirectional and contingent view of change. German-born American anthropologist Franz Boas (1858–1942) wrote that 'the values, customs, and institutions characteristic of a particular people' emerge as 'an accidental growth, made up of borrowings, independent inventions, scraps taken from here and there'. In contrast to earlier thinkers who linked culture to a racial hierarchy, Boas saw humans as 'cultural creatures who also happen to be biological ones'.[12]

[10] H. G. Wells, *The outline of history: being a plain history of life and mankind* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Books, 1920), p. vi.

[11] Wagar, *H. G. Wells*, p. 163.

[12] Quoted in Adam Kuper, *Anthropology and anthropologists: the British School in the twentieth century* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 184; Tracy Teslow, *Constructing race: the science of bodies and cultures in American anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 65.

Wells's 'cultural history' problematized the West as a universal model for development and argued for respecting cultures on their own terms. Unlike the Eurocentric history of civilization, it insisted that 'primitive' societies as well as the great powers, commoners as well as elites, maintained a progressive consciousness. Reflecting this belief (as well as Wells's training as a scientist), *Outline* narrated history from the origins of the earth through to the present day. Its author upheld the utility of categories such as 'race' and 'nation' but nonetheless depicted humankind as a unitary whole:

> History revealed, and religion and science both confirmed, that men form one universal brotherhood, that they spring from one common origin, that their individual lives, their nations and races, interbreed and blend and go on to merge again at last in one common human destiny upon this little planet amidst the stars.[13]

Translated into several dozen languages, from Greek to Gujarati, Chinese to Czech, *Outline* was a project that 'few literate people alive between 1920 and 1945 could have escaped at least hearing about'.[14] Wells was already renowned in Japan prior to the publication of *Outline*, and his stature ensured the swift translation, eager public reception, and strong influence of his work. The first Japanese version was published in three volumes in 1921 and made available for purchase by subscription. Wells's visit to Japan that summer boosted demand considerably, leading to a second print run in five parts the following year. After Wells released an updated edition—the first of numerous attempts to keep the work current—a revised Japanese version was published in 12 volumes in 1927. It performed well enough in the marketplace to justify several additional print runs throughout the 1930s.[15] Even readers who did not engage with the text directly were exposed to it through repeated advertisements on the front page of Japan's oldest national newspaper, the *Yomiuri Shinbun* 読売新聞. Although the work sold for

[13] Wells, *The outline of history*, p. 238.

[14] Wagar, *H. G. Wells*, pp. 6, 167.

[15] H. G. Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, (trans) Hatano Kanae, Kitagawa Saburō, Shinmei Masamichi and Sano Manabu (Tokyo: Daitōkaku, 1921); H. G. Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, (trans) Hatano Kanae, Kitagawa Saburō, Shinmei Masamichi and Sano Manabu (Tokyo: Daitōkaku, 1922); H. G. Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, (trans.) Kitagawa Saburō (Tokyo: Daitōkaku, 1927); H. G. Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, (trans.) Kitagawa Saburō (Tokyo: Daitōkaku, 1931–1932); H. G. Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, (trans.) Kitagawa Saburō (Tokyo: Sekai Bunkashi Kankōkai, 1935); H. G. Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, (trans.) Kitagawa Saburō (Tokyo: Daitōkaku, 1939).

the relatively high price of 7.5 yen (equal to approximately US$140 today), it was nonetheless marketed as an efficient resource for 'all who have little money, especially students'.[16]

Among the initial Japanese translators of *Outline* were two men who would later take their place among the best-known Japanese intellectuals of the pre-war period: Sano Manabu 佐野学 (1892–1953) and Shinmei Masamichi 新明正道 (1898–1984). Sano, like many students of his day, was drawn to socialism during his time at Tokyo Imperial University, Japan's premier institution of higher learning. Shortly after graduating, he joined the newly founded Japan Communist Party, rising to the top ranks of the organization's leadership. Under imperial censorship, members were pressured to recant their left-wing beliefs. In 1933, Sano stunned his comrades by announcing his 'conversion' (*tenkō* 転向) to orthodox emperor worship. Shinmei Masamichi, who also graduated from Tokyo Imperial University, was a student of political science and an acolyte of Yoshino Sakuzō 吉野作造 (1878–1933), one of the leading liberal thinkers of his day. Shinmei's 1920s writings criticized the dominance of the state over society, and fascism and totalitarianism in Europe. By the mid-1930s, however, he had become attracted to the cooperativist elements of fascism, which laid the basis for his later advocacy of Pan-Asianism and imperial Japan's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.[17]

Liberals at the time of their work on *Outline*, Sano, Shinmei and their colleagues opened with an introduction offering the translation to readers 'with a progressive attitude' (*shinpoteki taido* 進歩的態度). Following Wells's original intent, they claimed to 'rationalize the confused mass of information available to modern citizens', cultivate 'synthetic thinking', and offer 'a history *of* as well as *for* the common people' [my italics]. To reach this readership, they set pronunciation type alongside Chinese characters for easy comprehension and employed everyday language instead of academic jargon.[18]

[16] 'Weruzu *Sekai bunkashi taikei*', *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 13 May 1927, p. 1.

[17] Jeffrey Paul Wagner, 'Sano Manabu and the Japanese adaptation of socialism', PhD thesis, University of Arizona, 1978; Seok-won Lee, 'Empire and social science: Shinmei Masamichi and the East Asian Community in interwar Japan', *Social Science Japan Journal* 17, no. 1 (2014), pp. 59–76.

[18] Kitagawa Saburō, 'Tōgen', in Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei* (1922), p. 2; Kitagawa Saburō, 'Yakusha sōshō', in Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei* (1921), pp. 1–3; Kitagawa Saburō, 'Yakusha sōshō', in Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei* (1935), p. 866.

The title of the translated text did not correspond directly to Wells's *Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*. Instead, the choice of '*Sekai bunkashi taikei*' (世界文化史体系) might better be rendered as 'Encyclopedia of cultural history'. This title explicitly associated the work with the new discipline of cultural history (*bunkashi* 文化史) that flourished in Japan after the First World War. Cultural history was the successor of the Meiji-era history of civilization (*bunmeishi* 文明史), which had imagined Japan attempting to 'catch up' to the Western powers.[19] However, by the interwar period Japan sat as an equal with the victors at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, and was eager to have its parity with the United States and the great powers of Europe recognized. By substituting 'culture' (*bunka* 文化) for 'civilization' (*bunmei* 文明), cultural history envisioned a world of distinct but equal populations. Some Japanese scholars, including many associated with the Kyoto School, used *bunka* to argue for the preservation of a unique and superior 'national essence' against the onslaught of universalism and Western-style modernity.[20] However, the *Sekai bunkashi taikei* took an impassioned stance against nationalism as a causal factor of war.

A key factor in the popularity of the *Sekai bunkashi taikei* was its resonance with a major trend of 1920s Japan: the birth of 'mass society' (*taishū shakai* 大衆社会), including the burgeoning of the commercial press, the ensconcing of urban lifestyles in both imagination and reality, and the growth of consumerism. The interwar period was also the era of 'Taishō democracy', a period of relative internationalism and openness in Japanese politics. Developments such as universal male suffrage (1925) underlined the need for an educated citizenry. Through its claim to provide objective facts, the encyclopedia primed the public for independent thought and positive participation in national life. One 1927 advertisement for the *Sekai bunkashi taikei* in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* declared, 'In the past, the history of each age was written by scholars under the control of the authorities. "Objective" history was nothing more than window dressing for rulers … In the present age, however, Wells has strongly resisted the co-optation of his work for political purposes.'[21] Historian Ienaga Saburō 家長三郎 (1913–2002) credited

[19] Christopher L. Hill, *National history and the world of nations: capital, state, and the rhetoric of history in Japan, France, and the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 3, 23, 52.

[20] Harry D. Harootunian, *Overcome by modernity: history, culture, and community in interwar Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[21] 'Weruzu *Sekai bunkashi taikei*', *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 9 July 1927, p. 4.

exposure to the work as a factor in his self-described immunity to fanaticism during the 1930s and early 1940s. Encountering the *Sekai bunkashi taikei* as a middle school student in the 1920s, he recalled that it exerted an 'extraordinary impact on [his] intellectual life', 'causing a great change' in his view of the past. Orthodox history taught to Ienaga's generation focused on the mythic emergence of an allegedly divine emperor as the essence of contemporary nationhood and Japanese ethno-racial superiority. By contrast, Wells offered a scientific, egalitarian understanding of the origins of the earth and the evolution of the human species.[22]

The *Sekai bunkashi taikei* also appealed to Japanese readers with flattering remarks about their nation, declaring that Japan 'completely dispelled the persuasion that Asia was in some irrevocable way hopelessly behind Europe'. In fact, it asserted, rapid modernization in the Meiji period 'made all European progress seem sluggish and tentative by comparison'. However, Japan occupied only a handful of paragraphs in 700-plus pages. Wells's pretensions to overcoming Eurocentrism notwithstanding, he viewed the country through an Orientalist lens, at once romanticizing Japan and attempting to fit it into Western norms. Describing the country as 'a fantastic caricature of the extremest romantic feudalism', he concluded: 'her secluded civilization has not contributed very largely to the shaping of human destinies; she has received much, but she has given little'.[23]

By the 1930s Japan had metamorphosed from a vulnerable state threatened by the colonial ambitions of the West into an imperial power in its own right in East Asia and Oceania. Many Japanese citizens considered their empire the equal to those of Europe and the United States. They objected to Wells's marginalization of Japan. In the context of a turn towards militarism, fascism, and imperialism, his progressive vision of cultural history also lost purchase. Translators Sano and Shinmei themselves repudiated liberal ideologies to become spokesmen of right-wing orthodoxy. Although the *Sekai bunkashi taikei* continued to sell, it no longer reflected Japan's national mood or geopolitical aspirations.

[22] Ienaga Saburō, *Japan's past, Japan's future: one historian's odyssey*, (trans. and introduction) Richard H. Minear (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), p. 65. Today, Ienaga is best remembered for his 30-year crusade against post-war school textbooks that failed to address atrocities committed by Japan during the Second World War.

[23] Wells, *The outline of history*, pp. 637–638.

The credibility of the *Sekai bunkashi taikei* also suffered from the changing basis of intellectual authority, a result of the professionalization of Japanese academia. Meiji scholars had largely mastered their disciplines through study abroad or from European or American tutors at home. By the 1920s, however, modern universities, museums, and other research organizations had become entrenched in Japan. Similar to those of the great powers, these institutions acted as gatekeepers of professional knowledge production, offering diplomas, positions, and affiliations that signified ability and belonging.[24] The self-educated Wells, an 'unapologetic generalist' who worked from secondary scholarship, no longer commanded respect as a source of expertise.[25] A new encyclopedia was needed to credibly depict Japan as a hegemonic empire and the Japanese as the legitimate rulers of Asia.

In the early 1930s, Shiratori Kurakichi took up the task of compiling Japan's first original cultural history encyclopedia. He did not discuss the reasons behind his choice of title, but it cannot have been a coincidence that he settled upon *Sekai bunkashi taikei*. He was intimately familiar with Wells's work, citing it repeatedly throughout his series. By associating his encyclopedia with the translation of *Outline*, Shiratori (or his publisher) may have hoped at once to capitalize on Wells's renown to boost sales and to supersede the first *Sekai bunkashi taikei* by turning world cultural history to the service of the nation.

Shiratori was a scholar of China, historically Japan's source of information management models as well as of much knowledge and written language itself. When Shiratori began his career, most Japanese historians practised philology, or the close reading of classic texts. Rejecting this traditional approach, Shiratori turned to the work of Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), a German historian who pursued universal human laws through rationalistic induction and the 'scientific' assembly of information. During his long career as a professor at Tokyo Imperial University, Shiratori detached the study of history from the humanities, which remained largely wedded to philology, and instead aligned it with the developing social sciences.[26]

[24] Miriam Kingsberg, 'Legitimating empire, legitimating nation: the scientific study of opium addiction in Japanese Manchuria', *Journal of Japanese Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012), pp. 333–342.

[25] Rubin, *The making of middlebrow culture*, p. 212.

[26] For a comprehensive intellectual biography of Shiratori in English, see Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: rendering pasts into history* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

Within the social sciences, fieldwork, or the collection of empirical data under controlled and ideally replicable conditions, emerged as the signal methodology of credible research. By the interwar period, original field research distinguished professional social science from amateur and armchair studies (such as *Outline*).[27] The most influential early proponent of fieldwork in Japan was Shiratori's contemporary Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875–1962). Travelling among villages throughout the Japanese archipelago, Yanagita examined people and cultures *in situ*.[28] Although Yanagita often preferred not to acknowledge Western influences on his work, his successors were greatly inspired by the studies of Polish-born British social anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski (1884–1942). Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), based on fieldwork among the people of the Trobriand Islands during the First World War, set forth the hallmarks of 'the intensive study of a restricted area': systematic, theoretically informed data collection; long-term immersion in 'native' life; minimal contact with the researcher's home society; and communication with informants in their own language.[29] In 1938, Malinowski's *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (1926) appeared in Japanese translation with an introduction by Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960), a prominent nationalist philosopher (and contributor to Shiratori's encyclopedia). Watsuji's endorsement signalled the anthropologist's acceptance as intellectual orthodoxy in wartime Japan, feeding the 'Malinowski boom' that gripped social science.[30]

[27] Miriam Kingsberg Kadia, *Into the field: human scientists of transwar Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), p. 27.

[28] Alan S. Christy, *A discipline on foot: inventing Japanese native ethnography, 1910–1945* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), pp. 45–87. For recent literature on Yanagita, see Itō Mikiharu, *Yanagita Kunio to bunka nashonarizumu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002); Gerald A. Figal, *Civilization and monsters: spirits of modernity in Meiji Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Shintani Takanori, *Minzokugaku to wa nani ka: Yanagita, Orikuchi, Shibusawa ni manabinaosu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2011); Melek Ortabasi, *The undiscovered country: text, translation, and modernity in the work of Yanagita Kunio* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).

[29] Bronisław Malinowski, *Argonauts of the western Pacific: an account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1922), pp. 1–26. On Malinowski, see Michael W. Young (ed.), *The ethnography of Malinowski: the Trobriand Islands 1915–18* (Boston: Routledge, 1979), pp. 1–6; and George W. Stocking, Jr., 'Maclay, Kubary, Malinowski: archetypes from the dreamtime of anthropology', in George W. Stocking, Jr., *The ethnographer's magic and other essays in the history of anthropology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), pp. 212–275.

[30] B. Marinousukī, *Genshi shinri ni okeru chichi*, (trans.) Matsui Ryōon (Kyoto: Shūkyō to Geijutsusha, 1938).

Malinowski's emphasis on 'practical anthropology', useful to British colonial policymaking, also resonated with the increasingly imperialist orientation of Japanese academia. By the 1930s most of Japan's leading scholars, including Shiratori, worked for public universities or military or government think tanks. Hoping for intelligence on newly conquered areas, the state provided financial support for research. Although the abstract information generated by social scientists was difficult to apply to on-the-ground problems, fieldwork proved exceedingly useful in generating knowledge for legitimizing the Japanese empire.[31]

Shiratori's encyclopedia deployed recent empirical findings by Japanese scholars as the basis of a new, authoritative vision of world cultural history. His series was published in 23 volumes between 1933 and 1940. Volumes were organized primarily by geography and secondarily by chronology. Unlike Wells, whose *Outline* inadvertently privileged the West, fully half of Shiratori's volumes were devoted to the history of what he called *Tōyō* 東洋, or the Orient.

The defining unit of *Tōyō* was *minzoku* 民族, or race-nation. *Minzoku* encompassed both physiological attributes and learned behaviours, including political and social organization, housing forms, arts and crafts, religion, language, and other signifiers of group identity.[32] The concept of *minzoku* borrowed heavily from nineteenth-century Germanic models of cultural history, which centred around the *Volk* as a formulation of the primordial uniqueness of the Aryan self. This Romantic understanding of collective identity spanned innate and learned criteria, rooting linguistic and behavioural sameness in the environment, the territorial unit of the homeland, and an abstract notion of shared blood. Distinguishing the *Volk* was the *Volksgeist* (racial spirit), which found its parallel in Japanese

[31] Kawamura Minato, *Dai Tōa minzoku no kyojitsu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1996); Akitoshi Shimizu and Jan van Bremen (eds), *Anthropology and colonialism in Asia and Oceania* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Nakao Katsumi, *Shokuminchi jinruigaku no tenbō* (Tokyo: Fūkyōsha, 2000); Yamaji Katsuhiko and Tanaka Masakazu (eds), *Shokuminchi shugi to jinruigaku* (Nishinomiya-shi: Kansai Gakuin Daigaku Shuppankai, 2002); Sakano Tōru, *Teikoku Nihon to jinruigakusha: 1884–1952-nen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 2008); Nakao Katsumi, *Kindai Nihon no jinruigakushi: Teikoku to shokuminchi no kioku* (Tokyo: Fūkyōsha, 2016).

[32] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan: time, space, nation* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 79–109; Kevin Doak, 'National identity through ethnicity: ethnology in wartime Japan', *Journal of Japanese studies* 27, no. 1 (2001), pp. 1–39; Eiji Oguma, *A genealogy of 'Japanese' self-images*, (trans.) David Askew (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002); Yuko Kawai, 'Deracialised race, obscured racism: Japaneseness, Western and Japanese conceptions of race, and modalities of racism', *Japanese Studies* 35, no. 1 (2015), pp. 23–47.

notions of *minzoku seishin* 民族精神 and coexisted uneasily alongside Shiratori's empiricism.[33]

In Shiratori's encyclopedia, *Tōyō* served to group the present and imagined future subjects of Japan's imperium. Unlike the empires of the West, which established the innate and insurmountable difference between metropolitan and colonial peoples, imperial Japan asserted the biological, cultural, and historical confraternity of its subjects. Commonality in turn naturalized political unity, implicitly justifying the realm. Japanese social scientists placed their nation atop a hierarchy of Asian and Oceanic *minzoku*, based on its allegedly superior ethno-cultural characteristics, level of development, and racial spirit. Of the latter, Shiratori wrote that it 'rejects discrimination, eschews egoism, overcomes barriers between "white" and "coloured", and unites all the peoples of the world in pursuit of the common good'. The volume on the contemporary era declared, 'It may clearly be seen from history that our great calling as Japanese is to lead the people of the Orient to self-confidence and peace, not only in Asia but throughout the world.' [34]

Establishing Japan at the pinnacle of *Tōyō* required displacing China, Japan's long-time cultural and political model and the hegemon of East Asia. Instead of the traditional, respectful toponym *Chūgoku* 中国 (Middle Kingdom), Shiratori wrote of China as *Shina* 支那, which connoted disdain. His series set forth a narrative of a once-flourishing civilization now in decline. Contributors depicted the Opium War of 1839–1842 and subsequent legalization of opium imports as the starting point of national deterioration and racial decay. One image featured a seedy den, in which a barefoot, shirtless smoker reclined against dirty cushions, his expression vacant, his arms waving in insensate bliss. By comparison, the text noted, Japan had banned opium—and thus forestalled individual and racial debility.[35]

[33] Hannjost Linfeld, *Folklore and fascism: the Reich Institute for German Volkskunde*, (ed. and trans.) James R. Dow (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); James R. Dow and Hannjost Linfeld, *The Nazification of an academic discipline: folklore in the Third Reich* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); James R. Dow and Olaf Bockhorn, *The study of European ethnology in Austria* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

[34] Shiratori Kurakichi (ed.), *Sekai bunkashi taikei 3: kodai Shina oyobi Indo* (Tokyo: Seibundō Shinkōsha, 1937), p. 21; Shiratori Kurakichi (ed.), *Sekai bunkashi taikei 23: Daisengo no sekai* (Tokyo: Seibundō Shinkōsha, 1933), p. 25.

[35] Shiratori Kurakichi (ed.), *Sekai bunkashi taikei 19: Seidai no Ajia* (Tokyo: Seibundō Shinkōsha, 1938), p. 44.

The culmination of Japan's replacement of China as the head of *Tōyō* was the establishment of Manchukuo. In 1932, the Japanese army invaded and occupied northeast China and declared the independent nation of Manchukuo ('Land of the Manchus'). Despite attempts to represent Manchukuo as the realization of Manchu self-determination, to most of the world it was a 'puppet state' over which Japan exercised true authority.[36] Shiratori's encyclopedia sought to counteract this image by tracing the ethnic origins of the Manchu people, showing them as deserving of their own state, while denouncing Han Chinese settlers in the Manchu homeland as imperialists. The text also highlighted evidence of Manchukuo's sovereignty, discussing the national legal code and international treaties (with Japan) and offering portraits of the Manchu (puppet) emperor Pu Yi to support the pretence of local rule. One image showed 'brave, elite' Japanese troops processing across the barren northeast Asian countryside. Rather than describing this movement as an invasion, the caption alluded to Japan's 'legitimate military activities for self-protection' (*seitō naru jieiteki gunji kōdō* 正当なる自衛的軍事行動).[37]

To Shiratori, Manchukuo was utopia, the implied endpoint of history. Yet, he cautioned, the failure of China and the West to understand its noble purpose threatened its very survival. The encyclopedia concluded ominously, jarringly, with an excerpt of a speech by the Japanese delegate upon Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations following its refusal to recognize Manchukuo in 1933. (Given the publication of the volume mere months later, its editor may not have had time to script a fuller commentary.) In contrast to *Outline*, in which Wells presented the League as a step towards global cooperation and the prevention of future wars, Shiratori depicted the organization as a direct cause of the looming confrontation between Japan and the Allies.[38]

[36] Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); Han Suk-jung, 'The problem of sovereignty: Manchukuo, 1932–1937', *positions: east asia cultures critique* 12, no. 2 (2004), pp. 457–478; Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Manchuria under Japanese dominion*, (trans.) Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Thomas David DuBois, 'Inauthentic sovereignty: law and legal matters in Manchukuo', *Journal of Asian Studies* 69, no. 3 (2010), pp. 749–770.

[37] Shiratori Kurakichi (ed.), *Sekai bunkashi taikei 6: Kan Gi Rokuchō jidai* (Tokyo: Seibundō Shinkōsha, 1936), p. 356; Shiratori (ed.), *Sekai bunkashi taikei 23*, p. 23.

[38] Shiratori (ed.), *Sekai bunkashi taikei 23*, pp. 394–395.

With character glosses and supplementary visuals such as maps and photographs to mitigate the difficulty of the content, Shiratori's encyclopedia was an exemplary vehicle for 'building splendid imperial subjects', as one commentator declared. The *Yomiuri Shinbun* and other media praised the work as beautiful, modern, and scientific, 'exceeding scholarly expectations'.[39] Shiratori's series mobilized the authority of the encyclopedia genre to support a nationalist cultural history of Asia proceeding along a historical telos towards Japanese domination.

Post-war Japan in the world: the epistemology of modernization

The seven-year span over which Shiratori's encyclopedia was published exceeded the duration of its credibility as providing an understanding of the world. Barely five years after the appearance of the last volume, Japan suffered defeat in the Second World War at the hands of the Allied powers. Between 1958 and 1961, the nearly identically titled *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei* 図説世界文化史体系 (*Illustrated encyclopedia of world cultural history*, hereafter referred to as the *Illustrated encyclopedia*), unsubtly sought to exorcise Shiratori's wartime epistemologies of the nation and world in favour of a geopolitical vision grounded in the new values of democracy and capitalism. However, this series was less a radical break with than a subsuming of both the Wells and Shiratori encyclopedias, reflecting not only change but also continuity in ideas, institutions, and even individual contributors.

Although not published until well over a decade after the end of the Second World War, the *Illustrated encyclopedia* was rooted in the cultural and intellectual shifts of its immediate aftermath. Following Japan's surrender in 1945, its colonies were liberated or returned to their previous owners and the nation was occupied by the United States and its allies. Beginning in 1946, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) sought to purge post-war society of militarist, imperialist, and fascist influences. Punishable crimes included 'laying down an ideological basis for the policies for the Greater East Asia' and 'advocating the supremacy of the Japanese nation to be a leader of

[39] *Sekai bunkashi geppō* 17 (1936), p. 3; 'Zui-Tō shi', *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 2, no. 5 (1934), pp. 74–75; '*Sekai bunkashi taikei*', *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 22 November 1933, p. 1; '*Sekai bunkashi taikei*', *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 28 November 1934, p. 1.

other nations'—the very mission of imperial scholarship.[40] Ultimately, however, fewer than a hundred Japanese professors (about 0.3 per cent of the total) faced penalties for their activities. Most were exempted from guilt and understood to have suffered coercion by the state. Facilitating their exoneration was the fact that the consequences of field research in the Japanese empire were borne mostly by colonial subjects—a population that the Allies largely overlooked in their pursuit of justice.[41]

Rather than hammer out the wrongdoings of Japanese scholars in court, the Occupation sought to mould them into American partners. The United States consolidated its post-war sphere of influence not simply by military dominance, but also via the 'soft power' of its putative ideals: democracy and capitalism. At its most basic, democracy encompassed an expectation of just, representative government freely chosen by informed and empowered citizens. Capitalism suggested a free market economy with few state-imposed barriers to participation or profit. The victory of the Allies in 1945 appeared to demonstrate the universality of these values and their 'objective' superiority over militarism and imperialism. With the outbreak of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, they were also discussed as a positive antithesis to communism and totalitarianism.[42]

During the 1950s, democracy and capitalism became the basis for modernization, a putatively scientific doctrine that reframed history as a succession of universal stages culminating in the endpoint embodied by the (singular, pre-eminent) United States. In the words of one historian, modernization 'took the American exception and made it the world's rule'.[43] Because democracy and capitalism were understood as natural conditions for all evolved human societies, social scientists viewed research that encouraged their development as objective rather than ideological.[44]

[40] Hans H. Baerwald, *The purge of Japanese leaders under the Occupation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 39.

[41] Sebastian Conrad, *The quest for the lost nation: writing history in Germany and Japan in the American century*, (trans.) Alan Nothnagle (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), p. 82; Yuma Totani, *The Tokyo war crimes trial: the pursuit of justice in the wake of World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

[42] Andrew Jewett, *Science, democracy, and the American university: from the Civil War to the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. vii.

[43] Carol Gluck, 'House of mirrors: American history-writing on Japan', in Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (eds), *Imagined histories: American historians interpret the past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), p. 435.

[44] Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as ideology: American social science and 'nation building' in the Kennedy era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. ix, 4–5, 8, 16;

By definition, democracy had to emanate from the 'bottom up'—that is, from the people. Yet the Occupation considered top-down American tutelage indispensable to the ideological transformation of Japan. It accordingly turned to Japanese social scientists, among the most educated members of society, as partners in representing democracy as an (at least partly) indigenous development. Grateful for their reprieve from war culpability, convinced of the bankruptcy of wartime ideologies, and eager to articulate a new national identity, many Japanese scholars embraced American ideals. Nanbara Shigeru 南原繁 (1889–1974), the first post-war president of the University of Tokyo (formerly Tokyo Imperial University), set the tone for the new era by encouraging learning grounded in the tenets of the American occupiers:

> By its very nature, scholarship is … based necessarily on objective scientific consciousness and rigorous criteria. In this sense, Japan needs urgently to construct a worldview that rests newly and firmly on a scholarly base … The demand for the elevation of scholarly truth in politics and society and the high cultivation of ordinary citizens is greater now than ever before. It is the fundamental prerequisite for 'democratic politics', and it is an extremely important foundation stone for the construction of the new Japan.[45]

Modernization's most serious ideological rival was Marxism. After 1945, the lifting of censorship liberated some older scholars to return to their earlier convictions, while allowing a new generation access to hitherto forbidden teachings. Initially, some American policymakers in Japan viewed interest in left-wing ideologies as a positive sign of intellectual independence after the enforced conformity of the war years. By 1948, however, the intensification of the Cold War led the United States to perform a 'reverse course' on its initial liberalism, persecuting and attempting to bar Japanese Marxists from academic positions. Nonetheless, Marxism flourished in early post-war Japan.[46]

Despite their ideological incompatibility, Marxism and modernization shared certain features. Each doctrine organized history according to a series of stages, grounded in a faith in teleological progress originally

Sheldon Garon, 'Rethinking modernization and modernity in Japanese history: a focus on state-society relations', *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 2 (1994), pp. 346–366; Sebastian Conrad, '"The colonial ties are liquidated": modernization theory, post-war Japan and the global Cold War', *Past and present* 216 (2012), pp. 181–214.

[45] Nanbara Shigeru and Richard Minear, *War and conscience in Japan: Nanbara Shigeru and the Asia-Pacific War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), p. 161.

[46] John W. Dower, *Embracing defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 405–440.

espoused by philosophers of the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment. The two philosophies differed regarding the final stage: according to modernization, a world of independent democratic capitalist nations; and in Marxism, global communism and the withering away of states. Yet both acknowledged capitalism as a phase of progress, allowing some social scientists to reconcile competing attractions in at least the medium term. Moreover, like modernization, Marxism represented itself as a universal and 'scientific' doctrine, holding the promise of objectivity or fundamental 'truth'.

Long trusted as an objective mouthpiece of national values, the encyclopedia appealed to post-war Japanese social scientists as a vehicle in which to set forth a new worldview for the public. Between 1945 and 1968, they produced no less than 1,465 separate encyclopedias of the humanities and social sciences. A bibliographer declared,

> The fact that so many fields are represented in encyclopedias … that in many cases run to hundreds and even thousands of pages attests to Japanese concern with positive competence in virtually every field of human knowledge … In their constant endeavor to learn they have become some of the most avid compilers of … reference works in the modern international [scene].[47]

Among these works was the *Illustrated encyclopedia*. The idea for this series originated with its publisher, Kadokawa Gen'yoshi 角川源義 (1917–1975). During the Second World War, Kadokawa earned a university degree in ancient Japanese history and worked as a middle school teacher and tutor in the Japanese 'racial spirit'. Briefly drafted, Kadokawa was released from service before his unit was deployed and joined a research institute on Japanese culture. Yanagita Kunio, his long-time mentor, encouraged him to start a press. Upon occupying Japan in 1945, the Allies had dissolved many wartime publishing houses, considering them to be voices of militarist propaganda. As survivors foundered, unsure how to assess the changed market, Kadokawa and a handful of employees launched his enterprise in rented rooms a mere three months after Japan's surrender. The publisher vaguely attributed financing for the venture to 'money from my father' (probably the spoils of wartime profiteering).[48]

[47] Joseph K. Yamagiwa, *Bibliography of Japanese encyclopedias and dictionaries* (Ann Arbor, MI: Panel on Far Eastern Language Institutes of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, 1968), pp. 2, iii.

[48] Yarita Seitarō, *Kadokawa Gen'yoshi no jidai: Kadokawa Shoten wo ika ni okoshita ka* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1995), pp. 1–62.

Despite these murky origins, Kadokawa Shoten 角川書店 (Kadokawa Publishing Corporation) soon emerged as an almost mythical institution of democratic public education and nation-building. With much of Japan's pre-war print culture destroyed by bombs and censorship, even the crown prince was said to be unable to obtain reference works.[49] Kadokawa initially achieved success by claiming this market. In the early 1950s his company sold hundreds of thousands of dictionaries, textbooks, and serials. Salespersons working on commission offered subscription plans door-to-door at homes and offices (strategically approaching prospective buyers at the end of the calendar year, when companies distributed bonuses). They even offered free bookcases. Bookstores displayed mock-ups of volumes not yet published, to suggest the appeal of series in their entirety.[50]

Despite the material constraints of early post-war Japan, Kadokawa insisted on high production values and the latest printing technology. Partly for this reason, by 1958 the publishing house was overextended and in deficit. Kadokawa conceived of the *Illustrated encyclopedia* as an attempt to restore financial solvency.[51] Under the circumstances, the title of the project was no accident, but rather a direct reference to its commercially successful precedents by Wells and Shiratori (both cited extensively in its bibliographies). As recently as 1951, the 1927 Japanese translation of *Outline* was republished (curiously, without a new preface), suggesting its ongoing market power and perceived relevance in the post-war period.[52] Kadokawa also employed many of Shiratori's contributors for his own staff. These included Watsuji Tetsurō, who sat on the advisory board, and archaeologist Egami Namio 江上浪夫 (1906–2002), on the editorial board. Art historian Mizuno Seiichi 水野清一 (1905–1971) and archaeologists Mikami Tsugio 三上次男 (1907–1987) and Yawata Ichirō 八幡一郎 (1902–1987) served as volume editors.

Yet Kadokawa's encyclopedia, the longest and most lavish of the three *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, was also an attempt to supersede its predecessors. Both the form and content of books, Kadokawa believed, should build a vision of 'Japan the beautiful' (*utsukushii Nihon* 美しい日本), revitalizing the

[49] Inui Teruo, *Nihon ni okeru jiten no rekishi* (Tokyo: Jiten Kyōkai, 1961), p. 1.

[50] Herbert R. Lottman, 'The great encyclopedia war and other tales of today's Japan', *Publishers' Weekly*, 5 April 1985, p. 23.

[51] Yarita, *Kadokawa Gen'yoshi no jidai*, p. 191.

[52] H. G. Weruzu, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, (trans.) Kitagawa Saburō (Tokyo: Seibundō Shoten, 1951).

nation in its time of crisis.[53] The *Illustrated encyclopedia* comprised 27 volumes of approximately 300 pages each, bound in attractive mottled cloth. Each volume included a list of references, divided into general and specialized sources. The series index occupied an entire volume and enabled readers to search the text alphabetically. Such 'little tools of knowledge', as historians have dubbed these paratexts, were offered as visual proof of the objectivity and scholarly authority of the entire project.[54]

Perhaps most importantly, the *Illustrated encyclopedia* contained an unprecedented number of specially prepared maps, charts, and diagrams, as well as over 2,000 black-and-white photographs. Particularly impressive were the hundred-plus gravure (colour images produced by etching and inking printing cylinders). To draw attention to these features, Kadokawa added the word *zusetsu* (illustrated) to the original title, *Sekai bunkashi taikei*. His appreciation of serial reference works as a viewing as well as reading experience was partly a response to the impact of television, a mid-century symbol of mass society and democracy. In the three-year interval between the publication of the first and last volumes of the *Illustrated encyclopedia*, rates of household television ownership skyrocketed from barely 10 per cent to about 50 per cent.[55] However, the illustrations came at a cost: each volume retailed for 880 yen at a time when the average book cost about 350 yen and less than 15 per cent of books cost more than 500 yen.[56]

The *Illustrated encyclopedia* defined world cultural history as 'the history of culture from its origins through its development, including the culture and history of the most primitive peoples and all the various ethnic groups and races'.[57] Its understanding of culture was grounded in the work of Yanagita and his colleague Shibusawa Keizō 渋沢敬三 (1896–1963), a member of the advisory board. The scion of one of Japan's wealthiest

[53] Kadokawa Gen'yoshi, 'Sengo no shuppankai', in Kadokawa Shoten Sōritsu Gojū Shūnen Shuppan Hensan Iinkai (ed.), *Kadokawa Shoten to watashi* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1995), pp. 107–130.

[54] Peter Becker and William Clark, 'Introduction', in Peter Becker and William Clark (eds), *Little tools of knowledge: historical essays on academic and bureaucratic practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), pp. 1–34.

[55] Shunsuke Tsurumi, *A cultural history of postwar Japan, 1945–1980* (London: KPI, 1987), p. 63.

[56] Shuppan Nenkan Henshūbu (ed.), *Shuppan nenkan 1962 han* (Tokyo: Shuppan Nyūsusha, 1963), p. 55.

[57] Oka Masao (ed.), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 2: Sekai no minzoku* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1958), p. 29.

and most politically influential families, Shibusawa enjoyed a long and distinguished career in banking and diplomacy, while simultaneously pursuing an interest in folk culture.[58] During the Occupation, Shibusawa's economic assets, political connections, and scholarly reputation positioned him to take charge of developing the social sciences. Rejecting Shiratori's 'racial spirit' as the ultimate manifestation of culture, Shibusawa and Yanagita substituted the study of daily living or lifestyles (*seikatsu* 生活). Attention to lifestyles was not new, but took on an altered meaning under Japan's 1946 constitution, which promised the right to 'minimum standards of wholesome cultured living' (*bunka seikatsu* 文化生活). The exact meaning of 'cultured living' was unclear, entangled in decades-long discourses about (Western) modernity, scientific rationality, the reform of the middle-class household, and the mass market.[59] After the Second World War, however, cultural historians took up the task of aligning cultured living with the telos of modernization.

Consonant with the value of democracy, research on lifestyles particularly focused on the common people. As Yanagita and Shibusawa found, traditional print sources, written mostly by and for elites, were not suited to this task. They therefore examined material culture, including food, transportation, housing, clothing, medicine, tools, toys, religious icons, and crafts. Methodologically they embraced ethnology, folklore, physical and cultural anthropology, archaeology, history, art history, economics, geography, linguistics, religious studies, political science, sociology, and other disciplines. Editors and contributors to the *Illustrated encyclopedia* represented a range of social sciences. Nearly all held positions in universities, museums, or research organizations, reflecting the full professionalization of the Japanese research landscape (in contrast to Shiratori's series, for which contributors had included bureaucrats, secondary school educators, journalists, literati, and other non-academics). Additionally, many were experienced fieldworkers of considerable repute, whose names bolstered the prestige and credibility of the encyclopedia. In early post-war Japan,

[58] The definitive biography of Shibusawa was authored by his protégé and collaborator Miyamoto Tsuneichi. See Miyamoto Tsuneichi, *Shibusawa Keizō: minzokugaku no soshikisha* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978).

[59] On the genealogy of '*bunka seikatsu*', see Harootunian, *Overcome by modernity*, pp. 3–31; Jordan Sand, *House and home in modern Japan: architecture, domestic space, and bourgeois culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), pp. 162–202; Christy, *A discipline on foot*, pp. 197–215; and Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of beauty: mingei and the politics of folk art in imperial Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 124–172.

authoring entries for reference series appealed to academics as an acknowledgement of talent and an opportunity for public influence. It was also a critical source of income. Paid 'totally inadequate university salaries [that] do not give the individual scholars even a minimum living wage', many university academic staff supplemented their income by writing and lecturing for mass audiences.[60]

The volumes of the *Illustrated encyclopedia* were organized primarily by geography and secondarily by chronology. The series was relatively successful in overcoming Eurocentrism: Western Europe and North America occupied less than a quarter of the total contents. In representing the Soviet Union and its allies, contributors to the *Illustrated encyclopedia* openly admired communism. 'Among post-war ideologies, Marxism is the most important to understand,' one wrote.[61] The series juxtaposed 'before' images of 'primitive' traditional life with 'after' shots (many supplied by the Soviet embassy in Tokyo) of Russian agricultural collectives, medical clinics, roads, railways, dams, schools, mines, and print culture. Their discussion terminated well before the Second World War, which allowed the authors to elide coverage of Stalin's atrocities and to conclude on the optimistic note that socialism 'must be recognized as a victory from the point of view of history'.[62]

The Soviet Union was familiar historiographical terrain to many Japanese scholars of the early post-war years thanks to their inclination towards Marxism. By contrast, in writing about resource-rich, post-colonial and developing nations, they had virtually no precedents. During the Cold War, these states became the focus of a growing number of area studies specialists from the United States. Area studies, a multidisciplinary project, sought to advance knowledge of nations and regions through intensive language preparation, fieldwork, and the incorporation of local viewpoints and interpretations. Critics today often understand area studies as an attempt to reproduce the power structures of imperialism, replacing overt political control with indirect attempts to foster modernization and to bring nations within the American orbit. Fieldwork established a hierarchy of 'students' enjoying generous

[60] U.S. Cultural Science Mission to Japan, *Report of the United States Cultural Science Mission to Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Institute of International Affairs, 1949), p. 15.

[61] Ryū Shintarō (ed.), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 25: Gendai* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1960), p. 249.

[62] Umeda Yoshitada and Iwama Tōru (eds), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 12: Tō-Ō, Roshia* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1959); Egami Namio and Matsuda Sugio (eds), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 13: Kīta Ajia, Chūō Ajia* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1961), p. 278.

support from their home governments, and 'subjects' dominated by knowledge thus created. Even as Japan itself became a field within area studies, Japanese scholars undertook research abroad to counterbalance their nation's position as the object of Western scrutiny and to claim a position within the international community of knowledge producers centred on the United States.[63]

Following the end of the Occupation and the removal of some controls on travel abroad, Japanese social scientists launched field expeditions to world areas they had never before comprehensively studied, including Iran and Iraq (1956), Peru (1958), Afghanistan (1959), Tanzania (1961), and other destinations.[64] The *Illustrated encyclopedia* swiftly transformed findings in the field into facts for the public. In 1958, Ishida Eiichirō 石田英一郎 (1903–1968), editor of the volume on the Americas, spent a year in the United States and Mexico studying Mayan civilization. In 1958, he also directed Japan's first archaeological dig in the Andes.[65] Whereas Shiratori's encyclopedia had made no mention of pre-Columbian civilization (in fact, it ignored Central and South America as well as Africa altogether), Ishida devoted around 40 per cent of his volume to societies leading up to and including the Inca and the Maya.[66] The Aztec world (generally discussed alongside these cultures in European and American encyclopedias) was excluded, presumably because no Japanese fieldwork had yet addressed the topic. With pre-Columbian studies so new to Japan, the *Illustrated encyclopedia* did not simply highlight recent scholarship, but also exposed the limits of empirical knowledge.

Unlike the intellectual terra incognita of the Americas, Asia boasted a long tradition of Japanese research with which the *Illustrated encyclopedia* was forced to grapple in scripting a new cultural history. Shiratori's concept of *Tōyō*, which organized the populations of the Japanese empire into an ethno-cultural hierarchy with the imperial rulers at the

[63] David L. Szanton, 'The origin, nature, and challenges of area studies in the United States', in David L. Szanton (ed.), *The politics of knowledge: area studies and the disciplines* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 1–33; and Alan Tansman, 'Japanese studies: the intangible art of translation', in ibid., pp. 184–216.

[64] On early post-war Japanese field expeditions, see Iida Taku, 'Shōwa 30 nendai no kaigai gakujutsu ekisupedeishon: "Nihon jinruigaku" no sengo to masu medeiā', *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan hōkoku* 31, no. 2 (2007), pp. 227–285.

[65] Sugiyama Kōichi, 'Ishida Eiichirō', in Ayabe Tsuneo (ed.), *Bunka jinruigaku gunzō 3: Nihon hen* (Tokyo: Akademia Shuppankai, 1989), pp. 311–331.

[66] Ishida Eiichirō and Shimizu Hiroshi (eds), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 11: Amerika tairiku* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1959), pp. 1–145.

top, was an embarrassing vestige of Japan's failed bid for control of its neighbours. After 1945, Japanese social scientists discarded '*Tōyō*' for new Cold War toponyms. 'Northeast Asia' (*Tōhoku Ajia* 東北アジア) described the homelands of the Japanese and the imperial subjects with whom they had identified most closely: Koreans, Manchus, Mongols, and other continental minorities. 'Southeast Asia' (*Tōnan Ajia* 東南アジア) grouped the civilizations south of China according to cultural commonality and mutual vulnerability to communism. The *Illustrated encyclopedia* dispatched Japan's four-year subjugation of the region in two bare sentences: 'When the Pacific War began, the Japanese military occupied Southeast Asia. After the war, when Japan was defeated, Southeast Asia saw its chance for independence.'[67] Similarly, Manchukuo (regarded in its day by Shiratori as the pinnacle of civilization) vanished almost entirely from the post-war narrative, its establishment (but not its subsequent existence) covered in a short, matter-of-fact paragraph.[68]

Where imperialism could not be ignored, social scientists emphasized its positive legacies. 'Under the guidance of Japan, Korea's politics, economy, society, and education were rapidly and comprehensively reformed,' argued one *Illustrated encyclopedia* contributor. The final and most coercive phase of Japanese rule, during which Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese surnames and the language, was explained as a policy for 'eliminating discrimination between Japanese and Koreans and awakening the ethnic consciousness of the Korean people'.[69] Images (often lifted from early twentieth-century propaganda) showed banks, scientific institutes, bridges, railway lines, factories, and fields bursting with rice.[70] Imperialism in Asia emerged as simply a structure of progress, an impersonal experience that was neither inflicted nor suffered.

Apologism notwithstanding, post-war Japanese scholars remained beholden to pre-war research in and on imperial territories. Many formerly colonized societies were hostile to Japanese fieldworkers after 1945, while the construction of communist regimes in mainland China and North Korea foreclosed the possibility of research by non-nationals. As a result, during the Cold War, earlier Japanese scholarship often

[67] Nakamura Hajime and Umesao Tadao (eds), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 14: Indo, Tōnan Ajia* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1960), p. 282.

[68] Mikami Tsugio (ed.), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 19: Chōsen, Tōhoku Ajia* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1959), p. 287.

[69] Ibid., pp. 276, 279.

[70] Ibid., pp. 274–287.

offered virtually the only empirical insight into areas not commonly studied by local experts or Westerners. 'There is no alternative to considering the Second World War a blunder,' wrote one editor. However, he 'could not countenance total repudiation' of Japan's imperial-era scholarship on Asia.[71] With its unique mission to synthesize information, the *Illustrated encyclopedia* presented a singularly useful vehicle for transmuting pre-war into post-war knowledge.

Exemplifying this process was the work of Mikami Tsugio, editor of the volume on Northeast Asia. In the 1930s Mikami became known for his excavations at Lelang 楽浪, a first-century Han Chinese commandery on the frontier of an early Korean state (located within the contemporary boundaries of North Korea). One of imperial Japan's first and most intensively researched sites on the Asian mainland, Lelang attracted leading archaeologists and won international recognition for the findings made there, methodological innovation, and high-quality reportage. For Mikami and his collaborators, Lelang offered evidence of Korea's long history of subjugation by neighbouring superpowers, which implicitly justified contemporary domination by Japan.[72]

In 1945, Mikami and most Japanese social scientists in Korea were repatriated to the home islands. Overseas travel restrictions, the outbreak of the Korean War, and the bitter legacy of imperialism subsequently rendered Japanese researchers unwelcome in their erstwhile colony. Mikami and his colleagues paid little attention to post-war Korean scholarship, which they tended to regard as inferior to their own work. (Meanwhile, they criticized peninsular scholars for ignoring their own earlier findings.[73]) Instead, they cited pre-war Japanese-language publications by researchers associated with the colonial government and university of Korea.[74] Where possible, they stripped away references to the imperial provenience of this knowledge. One photograph of Lelang printed in the *Illustrated encyclopedia* depicted a Japanese archaeologist in a three-piece suit observing a group of

[71] Ibid., p. 36.

[72] Chōsen Koseki Kenkyūkai, *Koseki chōsa gaihō* (Keijō: Chōsen Koseki Kenkyūkai, 1933), pp. 1–2; Mikami Tsugio, 'Watashi no kodai hakken', *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei geppō* 1 (1958), pp. 3–4; Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing 'Korean' origins: a critical review of archaeology, historiography, and racial myth in Korean state-formation theories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), pp. 127–173.

[73] Mikami, 'Watashi no kodai hakken', p. 4.

[74] Mikami (ed.), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 19*, pp. 292–293.

shovel-wielding labourers, marked as Korean by their white clothing. Ignoring the human hierarchy of the scene, the caption explained only the artefacts.[75]

As in the case of East Asia, rewriting the cultural history of Japan involved the retention of certain 'truths' alongside the exorcism of discredited ideologies, in addition to fresh field research. The *Illustrated encyclopedia* devoted six volumes—vastly more page space than was allocated to any other nation—to naturalizing the progression of democracy and capitalism in Japan. Mizuno Seiichi 水野清一 (1905–1971), an archaeologist of East Asia who had contributed to the Shiratori series, oversaw the first *Illustrated encyclopedia* volume on Japan which covered the Old Stone Age through to the emergence of kingship in the early centuries CE. The archaic past, more than almost any other topic, demanded the wholesale dismantling of pre-war epistemology. Prior to 1945, scholars discounted evidence of Palaeolithic inhabitation of the Japanese archipelago as irreconcilable with politically orthodox chronologies centred on mythic accounts of the origin of civilization. During the Occupation, however, the several hundred thousand years of human history in the Japanese islands became a source of national pride. A colour image of a Palaeolithic excavation occupied the frontispiece of Mizuno's volume.[76]

Interest in the Old Stone Age notwithstanding, Mizuno identified the Yayoi period (now dated from *circa* 300 BCE–300 CE) as the crucible of Japanese identity. The reorientation of cultural history around the lifestyles of the common people suggested wet rice agriculture, which was thought to have begun at this time, as the essence of primordial culture. The late 1940s excavation of the Yayoi settlement of Toro, an exercise in democratic volunteerism that mobilized 10,000 community members, yielded the remains of paddies, tools, dwellings, and storehouses.[77] The absence of fortifications at the site was interpreted as evidence of a tradition of pacifism—an appealing myth in the immediate wake of the bloodiest conflict in Japan's history. The *Illustrated encyclopedia* offered images of bells, mirrors, and jewellery dating back to the Yayoi and subsequent Kofun (*circa* 300–600 CE)

[75] Ibid., p. 41.

[76] Mizuno Seiichi (ed.), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 20: Nihon I* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1960), n.p.

[77] Walter Edwards, 'Buried discourse: the Toro archaeological site and Japanese national identity in the early postwar period', *Journal of Japanese Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991), pp. 1–23.

periods. It omitted any mention of the weapons that were sometimes excavated alongside these artefacts. One photograph showed the hilt of a sword, but cropped out the blade.[78]

Beginning with the early modern period, scholars sought the origins of imperialism, militarism, and fascism. Watsuji Tetsurō, who had contributed to Shiratori's series and acted as an adviser to Kadokawa's project, implicated Tokugawa Japan's policy of seclusion (*sakoku* 鎖国) as a source of national backwardness. In his interpretation, isolationism set the stage for autarky in the early 1940s, predetermining the tragedy of Japan's war in Asia. Ultimately the *Illustrated encyclopedia* concluded that Japan's 'feudal' legacy fatefully obstructed its subsequent development as a democratic, capitalist nation-state.[79]

Social scientists also sought more direct causes of the Second World War in their analysis of the modern era (1868–1945). During the 1940s, the American school of 'national character' studies anthropomorphized and homogenized nations according to ascribed personality traits rooted in cultural indoctrination. Many scholars declared the Japanese national character 'pathological', defined by aggressiveness, group-mindedness, authoritarianism, rigidity, and fear of dishonour. They offered these predispositions to account for the protracted, doomed struggle and atrocities of Japan's war in Asia.[80] Attempting to refute this depiction, some Japanese scholars offered an alternative explanation: rather than innate deviance, Japan's recent turn towards militarism, fascism, and imperialism simply reflected slow or late development along the trajectory to democracy and capitalism. Echoing the findings of the IMTFE, *Illustrated encyclopedia* contributors indicted a small coterie of officials as solely responsible for disaster.[81] Meanwhile, they depicted ordinary Japanese as innocents, even victims. Photographs of shivering

[78] Mizuno (ed.), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 20*, pp. 113–155.

[79] Watsuji Tetsurō, *Sakoku: Nihon no higeki* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1950); Kitajima Masamoto and Noma Seiroku (eds), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 23: Nihon IV* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1959), p. 32.

[80] For example, Geoffrey Gorer, *Japanese character structure* (New York: Institute for Intercultural Studies, 1942); Douglas Haring, *Blood on the rising sun* (Philadelphia, PA: Macrae Smith, 1943); Arnold Meadow, *An analysis of the Japanese character structure based on Japanese film plots and thematic apperception tests on Japanese Americans* (New York: Institute for Intercultural Studies, 1944). An outline of the national character school and its critics is offered by Sonia Ryang, *Japan and national anthropology: a critique* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[81] Ōkubo Toshiaki and Shimomura Fujio (eds), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 24: Nihon V* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1960), p. 82.

children, ragged prostitutes, scarred atomic bomb survivors, and destitute homeless people suggested a lifestyle of woe rather than guilt.[82]

By focusing on the common people, the *Illustrated encyclopedia* distinguished the Japanese as the ultimate casualties of militarism and fascism. Yet whereas portrayals of suffering helped to deflect questions of popular responsibility for the war, they also implied passive and privately oriented subjects, rather than the publicly engaged citizens needed for democracy. Alongside depictions of social powerlessness, therefore, scholars sought evidence of mass political agency in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They called attention to the rise of journalism, social science, public opinion, and spokesmen for liberalism; and episodes such as the 1880s popular rights movement and 'Taishō democracy'.[83] Democracy emerged as a deeply ingrained national value only temporarily subordinated during the 1930s and early 1940s.

In the narrative of the *Illustrated encyclopedia*, Japan fulfilled its telos towards modernization during the contemporary era (*gendai* 現代) which began in 1945. The frontispiece of the final volume illustrated Japanese villagers communally tilling a rice paddy, leading the lifestyle of property-owning, independent citizen-farmers. Meanwhile, images of urban landscapes, including highway and train networks, airports, and housing complexes, attested to Japan's swift reconstruction. Perhaps surprisingly for some readers, the *Illustrated encyclopedia* also candidly acknowledged the problems of modern life, such as 'commuter hell', traffic, pollution, and—above all—the dangers of nuclear power. 'It's not necessarily the case that we're closer to achieving everlasting peace today than in the past,' warned the authors.[84] This negative coverage gave credence to the purported objectivity of the work, while revealing a certain self-satisfaction in Japan's parity with the 'modern' nations aligned with the United States. No aspects of progress were left unfulfilled—even negative ones.

The scholarly reputation and high production values of the *Illustrated encyclopedia* ensured its position among the most prominent and popular serial reference works in an age of peak demand. Driven by consumerism—a by-product of Japan's regenerating economy—the four

[82] Ryū (ed.), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 25*, pp. 112–116, 148–152.

[83] Ōkubo and Shimomura (eds), *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei 24*, pp. 81–84, 173, 196–197, 200, 217.

[84] Hibino Takeo (ed.), *Bekkan: Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei hikkei: fu, sōsakuin* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1961), p. 14.

decades after 1945 witnessed an 'encyclopedia boom' (*zenshū būmū* 全集ブーム), as it was described in its own time.[85] During these years, 30 per cent of Japanese households collectively purchased eight million encyclopedia sets—'numbers not even dreamt of by publishers elsewhere'.[86] Serial reference works also found a ready market in schools, which served more students than ever before in Japan's history. Encyclopedias were sometimes regarded as more objective sources of knowledge than textbooks, which were subject to heavy government oversight. Moreover, because textbooks were provided free of charge, they tended to be brief, cheaply made, and lacking in illustrations—a shortcoming for which serial reference works could compensate.[87] A publisher survey found that students and educators collectively represented over a third of *Illustrated encyclopedia* buyers. Company workers and government employees made up another third of consumers. Notably, 17 per cent of purchasers identified as factory labourers, indicating the appeal of serial reference works beyond the professional ranks.[88] For readers unable to acquire volumes for personal use, libraries, with bigger budgets and more shelf space than most households, offered easy access. Owing to early post-war legislation, by 1958 nearly every prefecture and over half of Japan's cities, as well as some towns and villages, operated public libraries. Japan also boasted innumerable mobile bookstalls, patronized especially by women.[89]

Reader reactions to the *Illustrated encyclopedia* were preserved in comment cards enclosed by publishers with each volume. The cards themselves reflected a broader interest in public opinion, associated with the

[85] Shuppan Nenkan Henshūbu (ed.), *Shuppan nenkan 1962 han*, p. 57.

[86] Lottman, 'The great encyclopedia war and other tales of today's Japan', p. 23.

[87] On post-war Japanese history textbooks, see Laura Hein and Mark Selden (eds), *Censoring history: citizenship and memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000); Christopher Barnard, *Language, ideology and Japanese history textbooks* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Sven Saaler, *Politics, memory and public opinion: the history textbook controversy and Japanese society* (Munich: Iudicium, 2006); Yoshiko Nozaki, *War memory, nationalism and education in postwar Japan, 1945–2007: the Japanese history textbook controversy and Ienaga Saburō's court challenges* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Mutsumi Hirano, *History education and international relations: a case study of diplomatic disputes over Japanese textbooks* (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2009); and Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel C. Sneider (eds), *History textbooks and the wars in Asia: divided memories* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[88] 'Dokusha to henshūsha no pēji', *Zusetsu Nihon bunkashi taikei* 2 (1956), p. 7.

[89] Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, *Japan: its land, people and culture* (Tokyo: Ministry of Finance, 1958), p. 546.

democratic expression of the popular voice.[90] Only those comments that were mailed back to publishers and chosen for reproduction in advertisements have survived. Remarks were almost universally complimentary, suggesting that mostly satisfied readers responded or (more likely) that only flattering feedback was deemed fit for circulation. Some readers did observe that they found the text challenging—a testament to the intellectual quality and rigour of the series. Notably, a large number of customers associated the *Illustrated encyclopedia* with democratic values, praising its 'rational scientific view of history', 'great contribution to peace and culture', and 'humanist spirit'. One card celebrated its candid presentation of scholarly debates, disagreements, and limitations, resulting in a 'living cultural history' (*iki iki bunkashi* 生き生き文化史) that encouraged readers to draw their own critical conclusions. Another praised the series as an 'unbiased' account of history, 'not inclined to the right or to the left … the result is truly splendid'.[91]

As these plaudits attested, the *Illustrated Encyclopedia* was not simply an epistemological exercise for academics, but, in Shibusawa's words, a means of 'creating citizens through books'.[92] Public demand for knowledge appeared the ultimate indicator of a national community capable of positive participation in representative government and a capitalist economy.

Encyclopedias exorcised

In 1921, the first *Sekai bunkashi taikei*—a translation of H. G. Wells's seminal *The Outline of History*—offered a universalist vision of cultural history to the nascent 'mass society' of 1920s Japan. A decade later, a second *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, edited by Shiratori Kurakichi, presented a more nationalist version of cultural history consonant with the spread of

[90] Hans Speier, 'The rise of public opinion', in Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner and Hans Speier (eds), *Propaganda and communication in world history. Vol. II: emergence of public opinion in the world* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1980), pp. 147–167.

[91] 'Dokusha to henshūsha no pēji', *Zusetsu Nihon bunkashi taikei* 10 (1957), p. 12; 'Dokusha to henshūsha no pēji', *Zusetsu Nihon bunkashi taikei* 3 (1956), pp. 7–8; Yoshikawa Eiji, '*Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei* no kansei wo yorokobi', *Zusetsu Sekai bunkashi taikei tokushūgō* (1961), p. 1; 'Henshū kōki', *Zusetsu sekai bunkashi taikei geppō* 26 (1960), p. 8; 'Dokusha to henshūsha no pēji', *Zusetsu Nihon bunkashi taikei* 4 (1956), pp. 7–8.

[92] Quoted in Yarita, *Kadokawa Gen'yoshi no jidai*, p. 196.

imperialism, fascism, and militarism. Shiratori depicted the Japanese as the racial apex of East Asian and Oceanic populations, implicitly legitimizing Japan's burgeoning empire. Almost two decades later, following Japan's defeat in the Second World War and occupation by the United States and its allies, a third *Sekai bunkashi taikei*, the brainchild of publisher Kadokawa Gen'yoshi, offered a revised identity for Japan as a model nation among the ranks of United States-aligned countries. While this post-war series incorporated ideas and information from the Wells and Shiratori texts, it re-envisioned contemporary Japan as an exemplar of democracy and capitalism.

As enthusiastically as the public received Kadokawa's *Illustrated encyclopedia* upon its debut in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the popularity of the serial reference genre as a whole was short-lived. By the early 1970s, observers were already lamenting the passing of Japan's 'encyclopedia boom'.[93] In part, sales were undermined by the very characteristics that made such works so appealing to consumers. Definitive and durable, they scarcely lent themselves to replication and replacement in homes and libraries. The end of the era of high-speed growth combined with the oil shocks of 1973 only aggravated the problem of market saturation.

A more subtle and intractable challenge was epistemological. After a restive decade, in 1968–1969 disorder engulfed nearly a third of Japan's four-year institutions of higher learning, mobilizing an estimated 300,000 students. Protesters responded to global trends but followed their own course, ultimately launching a Marxism-inspired offensive against modernization. Though Japanese activists generally did not call democracy and capitalism into question per se, they criticized their implementation. They believed that the rituals of representative government such as campaigning and voting had not unleashed the political energy of the masses; rather, they had suffocated individual subjectivities beneath soft authoritarianism and restored militarism in the shape of the Vietnam War (during which Japan provided significant support to the United States). Students likewise implicated capitalism in social oppression by the bourgeoisie. While parents deplored the rising generation as 'spoiled' by historically unprecedented prosperity, the youth turned the charge of materialism against their elders, attacking

[93] Shuppan Nenkan Henshūbu (ed.), *Shuppan nenkan 1972 han* (Tokyo: Shuppan Nyūsusha, 1972), p. 67.

the prioritization of economic growth over the development of participatory government.[94]

Accompanying the loss of faith in modernization was a fundamental rethinking of the value and purpose of knowledge. Building on earlier critiques, many post-war students attacked the ideal of objectivity that had long animated social science research. In their view, early post-war scholarship, which identified objective knowledge production with modernization, was itself complicit in the failure of democracy and capitalism. As one student organization declared,

> Some people who take a position in favor of the neutrality of academic activities may argue that from a broader point of view these activities contribute to the development of science and humanity. However, in reality, nothing is neutral. Those who support the position of neutrality are the people who never seriously thought of how and by whom their research results would be used. They deserve the name of 'expert idiots' for they are obsessed with their specialties and incapable of taking social responsibility.[95]

Rather than pursuing objective research, students called for self-consciously subjective knowledge production that empowered the disenfranchised and fostered self-actualization, popular agency, and the end of the prevailing social structure.[96]

The disavowal of objectivity fatefully changed the nature of research in the social sciences. Cultural history was superseded by the overtly engaged new field of 'people's history' (*minshūshi* 民衆史). *Minshūshi* retained many core features of cultural history, including interdisciplinarity, an interest in material culture, a focus on the agency and lifestyles of non-elites, and reverence for the work of Yanagita Kunio. However, people's historians viewed their task as the cultivation of mass self-consciousness. In their view, modernization had not 'liberated' Japanese citizens, but instead had created new modes of oppression through the degradation of the environment, increasing social and economic inequality, urban

[94] Inoue Yoshikazu, *Nihon shugi to Tokyo Daigaku: Shōwaki gakusei shisō undō no keifu* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 2008); William Marotti, 'Japan 1968: the performance of violence and the theater of protest', *American Historical Review* 114, no. 1 (2009), pp. 97–135; Rikki Kersten, 'The intellectual culture of postwar Japan and the 1968–1969 University of Tokyo struggles: repositioning the self in postwar thought', *Social Science Japan Journal* 12, no. 2 (2009), pp. 227–245; Oguma Eiji, *1968* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 2009).

[95] Miyori Nakazawa, 'A rhetorical analysis of the Japanese student movement: University of Tokyo struggle 1968–69', PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 1989, p. 184.

[96] Guy Yasko, 'The Japanese student movement, 1968–1970: the Zenkyōtō uprising', PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1997, pp. 106–124.

congestion, complicity with the American military agenda, and a general mood of alienation and anomie. People's historians even compared unthinking adherence to the ideals of democracy and capitalism to the collective 'spiritual servility' of wartime Japan.[97] 'What the Japanese need today is … an investigation of the pathology of the present system in order to reform it,' wrote *minshūshi* doyen Irokawa Daikichi 色川大吉 (b. 1925) in the introduction of his famous *Meiji no bunka* 明治の文化 [*The culture of the Meiji period*] (1969).[98]

Scholars such as Irokawa could not offer unbiased, comprehensive, and definitive knowledge to the public when they did not believe that such knowledge could, or should, exist. Amid the transformation of objectivity from goal to myth, encyclopedias lost much of their ideological significance. Rather than offering an exciting opportunity to build epistemology and identity, the compilation of serial reference works became identified with the dreary pursuit of verifiable information: the water capacity of the Sakuma Dam, the population of Osaka, the ranks of Meiji statesmen. Ironically, in acknowledging the biases of 'objective' knowledge, encyclopedia editors of the 1970s perhaps came closer to a stance of political disinterestedness.

At three different moments of the twentieth century, the making of a *Sekai bunkashi taikei* offered Japanese social scientists the opportunity to assert their intellectual and professional authority and to delineate the parameters of universal knowledge. Most importantly, their work advanced a politically useful vision of Japan's international standing that was accepted as objective by a mass audience. Upon the publication of the *Illustrated encyclopedia*'s final volume in 1961, one of its contributors declared, 'I have no desire to do a project like this ever again. However, such a thing never will be done again.'[99] Nearly 60 years later, he is still right.

[97] Carol Gluck, 'The people in history: recent trends in Japanese historiography', *Journal of Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978), pp. 25–50; Takashi Fujitani, 'Minshūshi as critique of Orientalist knowledges', *positions* 6, no. 2 (1998), pp. 303–322; Narita Ryūichi, *Rekishigaku no narateivu: minshūshi kenkyūshi to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Azekura Shobō, 2012).

[98] Irokawa Daikichi, *The culture of the Meiji period*, (trans.) Marius B. Jansen (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 8.

[99] Yarita, *Kadokawa Gen'yoshi no jidai*, p. 195.