The Archaeology of Late Modern History in Taiwan and Why Does It Matter

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Abstract

The archaeology of late modern history focuses on the edge of our collective memory of present society. Only a decade ago, Taiwanese archaeologists began to approach materials dated to the time peirod. This article will provide an overall review on recent archaeolgocal projects. The conclusion highlights the contribution from these studies to our understanding of the formation of Taiwanese society in general and our own discipline in specific. It also calls for more enthusiastic archaeological involvment in the writing of the history of Japanese occupied Taiwan.

The social history of Taiwan under the Japanese colonization (1895-1945) has been approached from perspectives of various disciplines. It is now widely perceived that the fifty-year governance under Japan has a profound influence upon the formation of Taiwanese identity and culture, even the underlying structure of modern Taiwanese society. Archaeological involvement in writing of the history of Taiwan during this time, however, is lacking. This is interesting as archaeology is considered as being privileged to unveil the unwritten details of daily life in the past. Since the mid-1980s, our paradigm has changed gradually with the proliferation of historical archaeology. However, only in the past decade, Taiwanese archaeologists have come to recognize the need to take part in the studies on the Japanese occupied Taiwan.

My presentation will review recent development of archaeology of late modern history, especially during the Japanese colonization. I then will use our recent study on two archaeological assemblages as an example, which explores choices of ceramic consumption and colonizer imagination in Japanese occupied Taiwan from an archaeological perspective. It concludes that archaeological perspectives are crucial to our understanding of undocumented lifeway of the time. In the end, this paper highlights archaeological relevance to the contemporary society and also so call for further archaeological input to our study of Taiwan

under Japanese colonization.

Map 1. Taiwan and major ceramic production centers in Japan.

A brief review of archaeology of late modern history in Taiwan

The concept of "archaeology of late modern history" (近現代) is adopted from Japanese archaeology, where it refers to the time period between the late 19th century and the end of World War II. Since now we have come to realize that Taiwanese society of the same time also dramatically developed in full-scale, I believe that the term may have its correspondent in the history of our own. Also like in Japan, Taiwanese archaeology of late modern history did not fully take off until the past decade. Since, there have been multiple large-scale archaeological projects targeting on material dated to only a hundred years or so. It should be also noted that this recent rapid development has much to do with Cultural Resource Management-related projects. The achievement is fruitful but the recognition seems mixed.

To begin with, the most recognized material heritages inherited from Japanese colonization are buildings, from numerous historic houses to the presidential office building. Various projects have been made to study and restore aged churches, temples, houses, schools and other buildings. Yet, the archaeological involvement was limited at best. Indeed, the development of historical archaeology in Taiwan has been hampered for various reasons (Tsang 1997; Liu 2008; Chen?), but even later had archaeologists come to recognize late modern history as subject for their research. The gradual awareness appears parallel with the growth of Taiwan study since the 1990s (Liu 2008b).

The onset of archaeology of late modern history came into being in 1993 when Tsang was introduced to archaeologically test the foundation of the North Gate of old Taipei City (or Cheng-en Gate). Despite limited to small scale excavation, the project led the way to large-scale salvage excavation in the Taipei Machinery Bureau site between 2007 and 2011 (Liu, I. C. 2008a; Li and Liu 2010), which unearthed Chin Dynasty munitions factory underlying old Taipei railway station during Japanese occupation. It is the first time that buried massive architectures came to light associated with cultural remains. In his thesis on bricks found in the site, J. Y. Liu (2011) put together material with archaeological context and historical archives to establish dialogue in depth between archaeology and related disciplines, including historians, architectures and engineers. His study highlights how well integrated materials could contribute to better comprehension of the "familiar past" of a city.

At about the same time (2007-2009), three other archaeological sites, Huakangshan, Talungtung and Chiwuyuang (Taipei Botanical Garden), were on the verge of destruction by constructions. The follow-up large-scale salvage excavations in the three sites yield tremendous quantity of artifacts dated to the early 20th century (Liu I. C. and Chao 2010; Chao and Chung in press; Liu, I. C. 2011). In particular, the Daruma kilns (達摩窯) unearthed in the Taipei Botanical Garden site provide surprising information that is not documented in historic records (Sakai et al 2010). Together with other archaeologically found kilns dated to the turn of 20th century, we now came to a better understanding of the development of kiln industry in Taiwan. For example, historic records have long suggested that sugar cane was only produced in Tainan region, yet archaeological finds in Dolio, Yunlin (Liu, I. C. 2007) reveal that local independent development of sugar industry may have occurred in central Taiwan by the late Chin.

In 2010, a short forum held in the Academia Sinica for the first time put archaeology of late modern history under scrutiny of academic archaeologists. The overall achievement brings a big question for archaeologists: Are they or are they not subjects for archaeological research? The answer appears mixed and unsettled. One of the reasons that stumble people stems from the doubt that if archaeology of 20th century can contribute to our comprehension of Taiwanese society in general and even to our own discipline in specific? In the following, I will use a case study to argue that archaeological data of late modern history in fact give archaeologists a rare vantage, which equips us with a richer repertory of anthropological questions. By answering these questions, archaeology as a whole will greatly

benefit.

Choices of ceramic consumption and colonizer imagination: an archaeological perspective

During the Japanese colonization in Taiwan (1895-1945), the so-called second period of administration, i.e., the Civilian period (c.a. 1915-1937), is critical in the developments of Taiwanese society as it went through prompt modernization. Undoubtedly, the socio-economic developments in colonized Taiwan were intensely tied to that in Japan, which were intertwined with Europe and America through modern world-systems. Taishō Regime (1912-1926), though only lasting less than fifteen years, is particularly critical to modern Japan, as the Japanese society experienced drastic changes in almost all dimensions. The era is not only considered the time of the liberal movement known as the "Taishō democracy", it also saw remarkable economic boom, largely benefited from the European War (1914-1917), as well as the rapid expansion of consumer society. Some even go as far as claiming the Taishō period as the “Utopia of the Empire of Japan” before World War II (Takenmura 2004).

One of the changes that closely related to this study is the appearance of white-collar class. It brought to the society a brand new consumer culture and a life-style with increasing emphasis on consumption and recreation, for example the popularity of western-style suit, sports activity such as baseball, and the appearance of large department stores. The coming of mass consumption culture also set their footprints in Taiwan, though mainly within large cities and downtown Taipei in particular.

In the following, I argue that we, as archaeologists, have much to offer in furthering our understanding to Taiwanese society in this time, regardless that 20th century societies are often dismissed from archaeological subjects. In the archaeological study of ceramic consumption, we intend to understand community milieu and self-imagination in the colonial society as manifested in people’s choices of daily-life consumptions. What is the pattern of ceramic consumptions in Japanese occupied Taiwan? What makes this pattern? And, how social negotiation is practiced in the public context and how it varies in different community settings.

To start with, we compare two sets of unearthed ceramic assemblages from Huakangshan (HKS) in eastern Taiwan and Talungtung (TLT) in the north (Fig.1). Both archaeological assemblages are securely assumed to represent materials consumed by primary school teachers in between the early to mid-20th century

during the Japanese occupation. One of the features that differentiate Taiwan from other Japanese colonial territories in Southeast Asia is that the literacy rate in Taiwan was high. Toward the end of Japanese rule, there were over 900 primary schools in Taiwan, with the net enrollment rates nearly 75 per cent. Thus, the impact of compulsory primary education on the Taiwanese was wide-spreading and immense. It seems fair that the advancement of public education is the foremost colonial legacy to our contemporary society, despite that its overall goal was to facilitate colonial control over Taiwanese. To most local commoners, policemen and school teachers were the colonial pioneers who represented the colonialism in the real life. They were both appointed by the national government, wearing black uniforms with insignia on the shoulders and carrying *katana* (Samurai Sword).

Yet, throughout the course of Japanese colonization, schools were basically segregated according to ethnicity (Li 2005). *Kōgakkō* (Public Schools) were for Taiwanese children (thus TLT site), while *shōgakkō* (Elementary Schools) were specifically for children of Japanese nationals (thus HKS site). Although such discriminated education system was officially abandoned in 1941, when all schools were known as *kokumin gakkō* (Civil Schools) open to all students, ethnicity of children still weighed much as whether or not he/she was accepted into "Civil School of First Class Programme". The public education system during this time period has twofold relevance to this study. First, primary school teachers would be profoundly influential to various childhood experiences of this time, regardless Japanese and Taiwanese nationals. In addition, although Taiwanese teachers outnumbered teachers of Japanese nationals in most kōgakkō schools, only the later were privileged to live in school living quarters provided by local governments. Accordingly, it seems legitimate to assume that both archaeological assemblages in this study, one from a kōgakkō and the other from a shōgakkō, represent material culture consumed and left by teachers of Japanese nationals.

In our archaeological study, the focus is on commercial ceramic goods that best regarded as "marginal consumption", which is defined here as a wider array of consumption behaviors situated in between purchasing commodities that plainly meet basic needs and that belong to conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1899, Mason 1998). Goods of this nature may not be luxury, high-priced or exceptional, but rather they could be day-to-day living goods, such as clothes and utensils that help to symbolize ethnic and/or class differences (Bocock 1993, Miller 1987). The consumption choices consciously or unconsciously reveal consumers'

self-imagination and life style.

During the Japanese Colonization Period (1985-1945), Taiwanese society has consumed a great quantity of imported ceramics. The gross value imported from Japan continuously grew to its prime time in 1940, worth of 3 million *yen*. Among them, utensils contain the majority, in particular those for eating and drinking. Clearly, many ceramic utensils are to meet basic needs. Yet, food culture transcends simply satisfying basic needs. A great proportion of ceramics with advanced quality and/or elaborated decoration also denote additional function to showcase their owners. We argue that choices made upon marginal consumption of ceramics of this nature by Japanese teachers would reflect their group consciousness as colonizers and cultural savor as Japanese.

During late 19th century to 1930s, Seto and Mino regions had rapidly developed into the heartland of Japanese ceramic production. As they monopolized the ceramic market for middle and lower products, other traditional ceramic centers, including Kutani, Kyoto, Arita and Hizen, etc., turned their heads to specialize in commodity with higher value and thus higher profit. This development set the basic ground for the Japanese ceramic industry between 1920 and the end of WWII, even up-to-date. On the other side of the same token, consumers must have bought in the same ideas of fixed regions-dependent price structure and the implications behind to make it functional. Thus, unearthed ceramics from archaeological sites would be better understood only within the context of this consumer culture of the time in interest.

Secondly, it has been suggested by Deetz (1977), and Lightfoot (1997, 1998) in somewhat different veins, that the public and private domains of material culture tend to behave distinctly. While bowls are more or less exclusively used within private lives, cups tend to be used in public circumstances, such as in the office or serving guests. Using personal cups in public context may set the stage to expose self-imagination to others' judgments (Bourdieu 1984). By doing so, people negotiate others' expectations through manipulating material culture (Beaudry 2010, Mrozowski *et al.* 1996). As a result, tea cups unearthed from archaeological context are constantly better decorated than bowls, while coffee cups and wine cups are even more elaborately decorated. This archaeological phenomenon suggests that both manufactures and consumers recognized the same value system and usage patterns. Thus, it seems plausible that ceramic cups in the realm of marginal consumptions could tell more about the cognition and ideology

of consumers in the recent past. While not to downplay other social and economic factors, we argue that the colonist social milieu of local community greatly factor in the choices of ceramic consumption in the framework of prestige negotiation and social positioning.

Case study: Huakangshan and Talungtung sites[1]

Huakangshan (HKS) site is located atop of a low mound, 20 meters higher than nearby floodplain, in the Hualien city on the eastern coast of Taiwan (map 2). The site was first discovered in the early 1930s and small-scale testing excavation in 1992 suggests that the site consists of one single archaeological component of late Neolithic horizon. In 2008-2009, our large-scale salvage excavation reveals that the cultural depositions in the site are much complex than recognized before. It turns out that the multiple archaeological strata in HKS range from at least 5000 BP to the early 20th century (Liu and Chao 2010). This study will only focus on materials found in the upper stratum (L1B), mostly accumulated during 1920s and 1945. In this stratum, we found more than 10 garbage pits or middens scattered along with two elongated house foundations, the remains of staff living quarters of then Hualien Port Shōgakkō. According to written records, this was a small scale primary school run by the local government with only 16 staff in 1925, and later the number increased to 28 in the 1938. It appears that the ceramic assemblage unearthed from these garbage pits were consumed and left by the school teachers and their families lived in the school. It should be noted that this primary school was established exclusively for children of Japanese nationals, and so are the teachers.

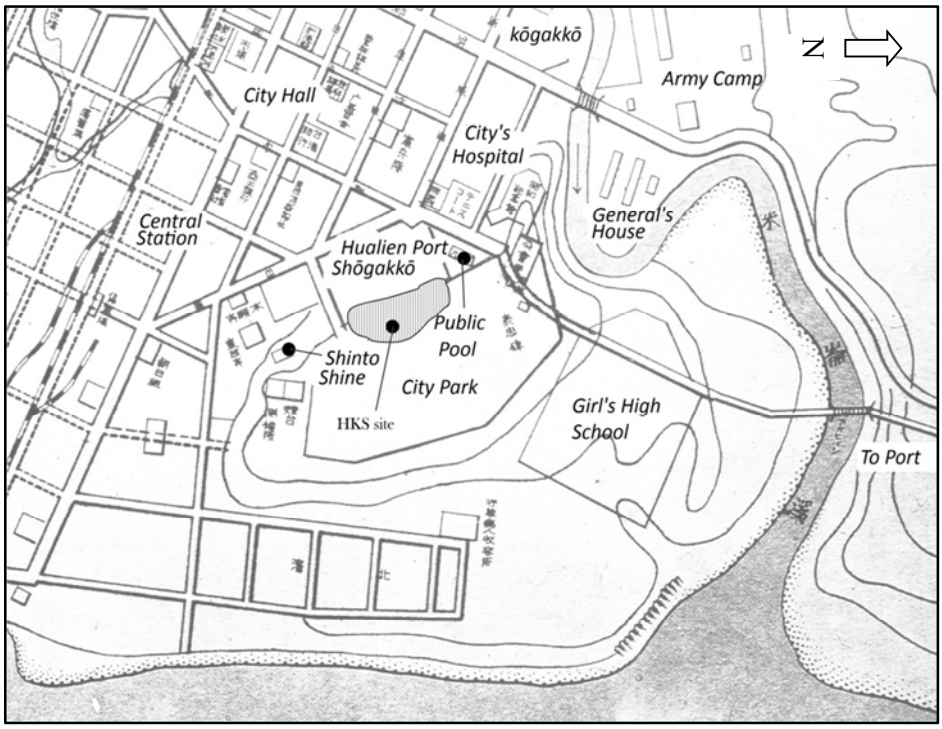
The Talungtung (TLT) site, on the other hand, is located in the Taipei City, then the capital of Japanese colonized Taiwan. Yet, the neighborhood was considered outskirts of town at most and was populated by mostly Taiwanese instead of Japanese (Lan 2002). In 2006, TLT site was found during the reconstruction project for Talong Elementary School, whose antecedent was Talungtung Kōgakkō established in 1896, the first public school by Japanese government in Taiwan (map 3). It was built between the Confucian Temple and one of leading traditional merchants' centers, the Forty-four Blocks). In 2009, the follow-up large-scale salvage excavation in TLT reveals two primary

[1] The HKS site was excavated by the Insti. of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, and the TLT by the Tree Valley Foundation. The authors wish to specially thanks for their valuable help to this article.

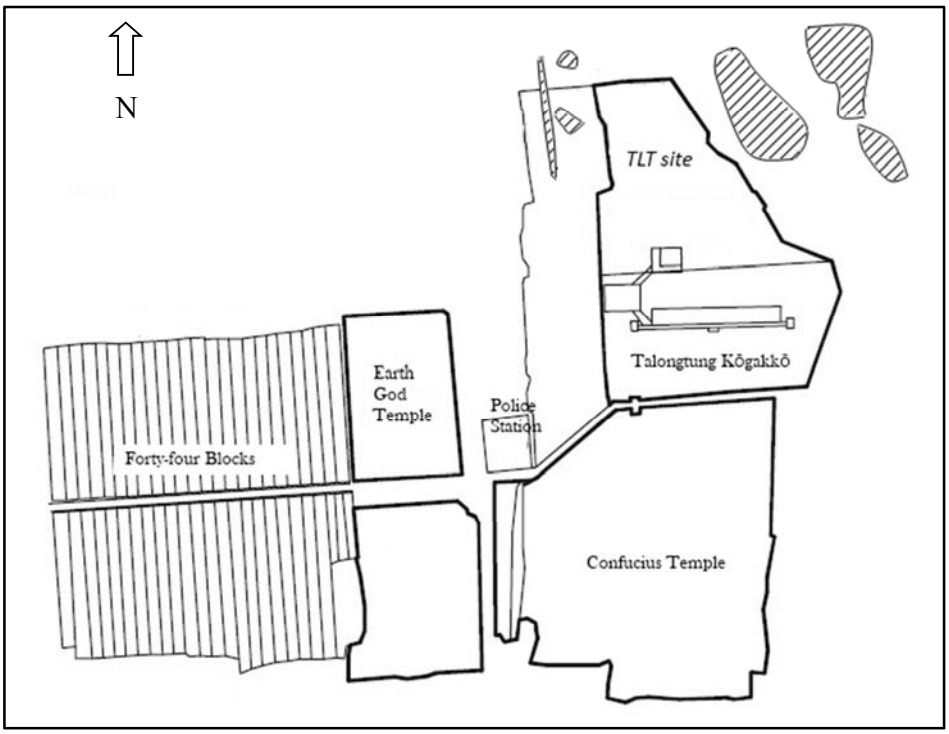
archaeological components: the lower stratum represents middle Neolithic materials dated to about 4400 BP, while the upper one consists of immense ceramics, glass ware and metal implements used and left by teachers lived in the Kōgakkō, which are stylistically dated between 1920s and 1950s.

Based on these stylistic *dating-fossils* and integrated with multiple lines of evidence, including written records, image archives and oral history, it is suggested that both the upper deposits on TLT and HKS sites were mainly accumulated approximately between early 1920s and late 1945, that is, the latter half of Japanese colonization in Taiwan. In the following, we further group unearthed ceramic cups into four major regional ware-types. This is accomplished principally according to their distinct decoration and stylistic typology. They are Seto-Mino ware, Banko ware, Kutani ware and Kyushu ware (Figure 1). The four wares consist nearly 95% of unearthed materials from both archaeological sites. Each ware represents ceramics produced by a series of kilns and plants in a specific production center. As discussed, closely located kilns tend to produced stylistically similar ceramics as a combined result of potters' traditions, frequent interaction, institutional advancement local governments and the price market effect.

The dominating Seto-Mino ware represents products from innumerable kilns located between Gifu and Aichi Prefectures. The "twin-centers" have dominated ceramic industry since the beginning of 20th century, which partially resulted from the benefit of convenient transportation to nearby Nagoya port. Banko ware was produced by limited kilns in Yokkaichi City in north Mie Prefecture, southwest of the Seto-Mino region. Banko was focused in producing most renowned for domestic accessory and cosmetics. Banko ware is characteristic of having relatively higher-fired, semi-vitrification stoneware, not porcelain, with a yellowish milky appearance. Kutani in north Ishikawa Prefecture has long been one of well-known production centers, whose stylistic trademark includes elaborated overglaze sketch and delicate fine-line painting with gold. One special Kutani-style cup type is worth particular mention. The rounded-body cups with very low footring (almost a small ball in shape) are constantly sophisticated decorated by overglaze hand-painting of multiple colors (Figure 1:3). Lakeview with pagodas and mountains in the background is the most common motif (Figure 1:2), an image full of the Eastern savor.



Map2. The HKS site and Hualien Port Shōgakkō in 1931



Map 3. The TLT site (shaded) and Talungtung Kōgakkō in 1921 (based on Lan 2002)

While these three wares are well documented in art history and industry literatures, the term Kyushu ware is not. We devise this term in the considerations that archaeologically found fragmentary ceramics made from Hizen, Arita and related kilns are often incapable to distinguish on a consistent basis because of their similarity and mutual imitation. Kyushu ware, therefore, is used in this study to lump ceramics from Hizen and Arita in Saga Prefecture together with that from Hasami and Mikawachi just across the prefectural border to Nagasaki. Indeed Arita and Hizen wares have been well appreciated for centuries, however, semiofficial spectators in mid-1920s also considered Hasami products as "*approximate parallels*" to Arita-yaki in terms of their quality and prices (Mitsui 1979). Kyushu ware is characteristic of crystalline glaze, slightly converted sharp lips and masterly strokes of underglazed paintings (Figure 1:4,5,7). In decoration, Kyushu ware is famed of darkish to midnight blue in color, and pond or garden view is the most common motif. It should be noted that each of the four ware-types is value-meaningful in the ceramic price system of the time, with Kutani and Kyushu ware were consistently considered high-valued and supreme quality, while Seto-Mino and Banko ware were of middle to lower ranks.

As discussed above, the modernization of Japanese ceramic industry during the turning of last century has resulted in overall specialization between production centers. Products from higher-ranked centers include Tokyo, Kutani, and western Kyushu region such as Arita, Hizen and Hasami etc., were constantly and publicly recognized superior. Accordingly, the official pricing framework valued those products much more than products from other lower-ranked centers. According to the Japanese Ceramic Industrial Association, the first two classes in the official price system "were dominated by supreme products made from Kyoto and Kutani, as well as by major corporations such as Noritake, while mass products from Seto and Mino were mostly well lower than the sixth grade……At the same time, hand-painted Arita goods (and their parallels) stand roughly in upper-middle grades in the pricing category" (Mitzui 1979).

Our analysis on ceramic cups reveals a significant variation between the two assemblages. In sum, higher-valued specimens (Kutani and Kyushu wares) from HKS (N=452) clearly exceed TLT (N=578), combined 20.1% versus 7.8% respectively, suggesting that people lived in HKS consumed more high-priced ceramics collectively. This is even more distinctive when breaking down to individual types. In TLT, more than half of the Kutani cups are small sake cups that may have come in sets, while in HKS they are fairly rare (MNI=2). In fact,

sake cups of various origins occupy more than 21% of ceramic cups found in TLT while only about 2% in HKS. On the contrary, the very characteristic round-body tea cups, often elaborately decorated, produced from Kutani and Kyushu are infrequent in TLT but are prevalent in HKS.

Figure 1. Ceramic cups of various wares. (1-3:Kutani; 4,5 and 7:Kyushu; 6,8:Mino)

Analysis result

To be honest, we are surprised by the result, which contradicts to our expectations. At the very start in our original hypothesis, teachers in the TLT Kōgakkō, Taipei, are assumed to consume more decorated and higher-valued ceramics on the account that, as a small group of colonizers living amongst wealthier community of the colonized, they may be more tempted to manipulate expressive material culture, such as quality ceramics of Japanese style, as a metaphor of group identity, the colonizers. Teachers of Japanese nationals in the TLT Kōgakkō were not only outnumbered, they might be exceeded in terms relative incomes as well, since inhabitants of neighboring community, the Forty-four Blocks, were basically merchants of Taiwanese nationals and were likely better off economically, only inferior politically. Therefore, we expect Japanese teachers worked for TLT Kōgakkō to consume higher-valued goods, such as clothe, ceramics, watches and other materials of popular consumption culture, as countermove against their unanticipated inferiority in economic. The bottom line is that colonist status as a group is supposed to be superior. This is particularly true for school teachers: being a teacher is not only a occupation, teachers were also the vanguard of colonialist advance. One principal of Japanese nationals has appealed in public that teachers have to wear decently in all time and regardless economic depression for exactly the reasoning (Takenaga 2009). Yet, this is clearly not the case in our comparative study.

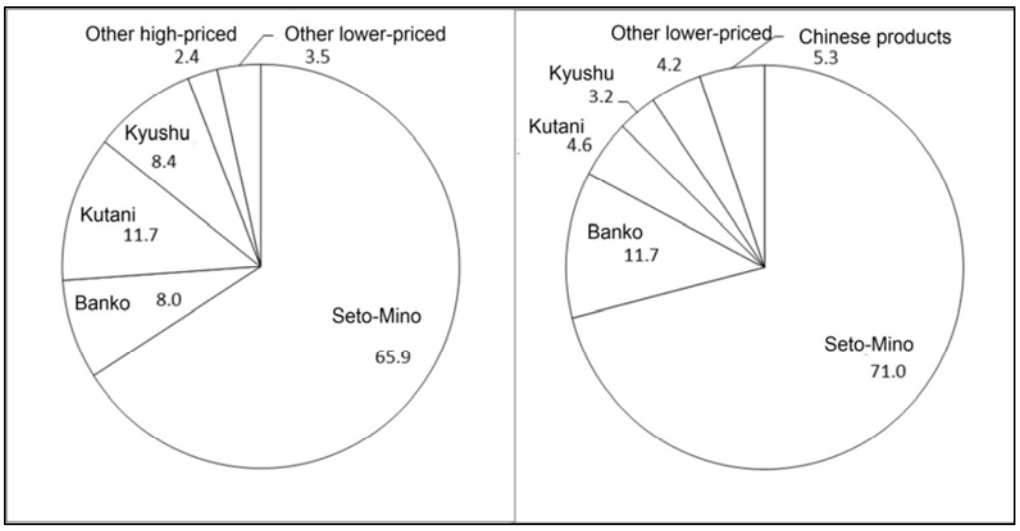


Figure 2. The comparison of major ceramic types between HKS and TLT assemblages.

Discussion

Perhaps, the variance between the two sites has more to do with lifestyle and taste. First, it is not simply the tagged prices that matter. Indeed, HKS yields higher proportion of higher graded ceramics, but unlike other wealthy resort sites in Japan of similar age (Sakurai 2007), here we found fairly small quantity of western-style coffee and/or black tea cups made by celebrated corporations such as Noritake, even though they were equally valued as Kutani ceramics. It seems that the overall ceramic assemblage from the HKS site displays consumers' taste blended with humanism, literatus and tradition instead of conspicuous western style, the mainstream of popular culture of the time. Secondly, Japanese ceramics in the TLT site are, in general, of lesser-degree quality. In addition, they were also found associated with certain Chinese products of finer quality. This suggests that consumers' taste in this suburban kōgakkō was mixed and somehow keen on Chinese style. In fact, TLT yields relatively low amount of typical Japanese rice-bowls of high body and low footring (Nagasako 2007), only about 3% as opposed to more than 33% in HKS. We believe that the inconsistency in consumer choices between the two places can be better understood in context of local community settings.

The TLT site is located in then capital Taipei city, where were inhabited by 320 thousand people and about one quarter of her population belonging to Japanese nationals, including the Governor-General of Taiwan. Nonetheless, the Talungtung Kōgakkō was on the border of Taipei city, and in early 1920s only about 50 residences in this neighborhood were considered of Japanese nationals. The kōgakkō itself, being the first public school in Taiwan, was established directly outside a large, long-standing community of Taiwanese and surrounded by Chinese temple of Earth God and the Confucius Temple, which are both imperative to Chinese culture. Therefore, Japanese teachers lived in the campus of Talungtung Kōgakkō may be regarded as a small group of colonizers living amongst the colonized who well outnumbered the former. In fact, as inhabitants of the Forty-four Blocks largely made their living in business, they were inferior in political life but likely better off economically.

HKS site, on the contrary, is located in uptown of Hualien city in the eastern coast of Taiwan where was "developed" only since the end of 19th century. The city's population in 1930 was estimated around 28 thousands, among them about 8 thousands were of Japanese nationals, which translates to nearly 28%.
Through-out the 50 years of colonization, Hualien was quite Japanese style city, in

particular the downtown area. Having higher Japanese population only partly accounts for the city's unique milieu, it was basically built by colonial government out of ashes after a series of conflagrations (Chang 1996). The cityscape was planned to connect the port and the station, and in between city hall, governmental offices, central park, city pool, hospital and Japanese Shinto Shrine were established, in addition to a variety of army camps. As contrast to Talungtung Kōgakkō embedded within wealthier Taiwanese community, the Hualien Port Shōgakkō was surrounded exclusively by Japanese community and away from business quarter where most Taiwanese merchants inhabited.

The differing community settings and population composition coincide with the variance of ceramic consumption and choices. We have outlined that ceramic cups are used more in the public context, which sets the stage to expose consumers' self-imagination to others' expectation. By doing so, people negotiate social discourses through manipulating material culture (Beaudry 2010, Beaudry *et. al.* 1991). On-campus living quarters in the Japanese colonized Taiwan were at best considered as "privy publicity", where the government-regulated elongated houses were semi-open to public access. The same dormitory will have distinct milieu according to different people acting in the neighborhood. While school teachers in TLT interacted more with Taiwanese such as other teachers of Taiwanese nations, students' parents and local community leaders, school teachers and their families in HKS socialized largely with other Japanese, not Taiwanese, which was also evident in unearthed gift cups. In another word, the latter negotiated their social position among Japanese through publicly using the valued ceramics that they consumed. Yet, what was showcased is not the fashioned and western-style material, rather, it is the taste of tradition and literatus by which teachers positioned themselves among the colonial milieu encompassed. On the contrary, Japanese teachers lived amongst Taiwanese community in the suburban Taipei seemed needless to do so. Perhaps, their social status as colonizers has freed them from negotiating their social position, which led to the contained manifestation of their material culture.

Conclusion

In the comparative study cases that I just outlined, we tried to explore to ask and answer questions that are largely eluded in the written history and can only be narrated based on archaeological records. While we will inevitably learn and even adapt analytical framework from other disciplines, we as historical archaeologists

must ask our own questions. By asking archaeological questions, we can respond to the famed witticism by James Deetz: “historical archaeology is the most expensive way in the world to learn something we already known” (1991:1).

As I have suggested elsewhere, when putting the official price system and CPN codes together with historic archives, archaeologists who study ceramic remains of this time period are situated in a unique vantage point: We could assure ourselves where specific archaeological find was produced, even by whom, and at the same time, we are able to estimate their value in *systemic*, not *archaeological*, context. Both are extremely rare in archaeological research. All of a sudden, we are equipped with a richer repertory of anthropological questions. How material culture is used in the forming of self-identity? How it is manipulated in the negotiation of social position? How goods are used to construct colonizers imagination?

I have explained the potential in my brief review and case study. I reiterate that archaeological perspectives are crucial, if not only, to our understanding of undocumented lifeway in the past. Archaeologists can greatly contribute to the writing of the history of Japanese occupied Taiwan by their subtle, but valuable, inputs, which in turn highlight the archaeological relevance to the contemporary society. There surely remain many to do, yet archaeologists would not stand out looking-in.

Acknowledgements (incomplete)

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Figue 3. Seito-Mino yaki.

Figure 4. Kutani cups.

Figure 5. Banko ware (above 4) and Kuyshu cups (lower 4)