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Coffee Production in the Asia-Pacific Region: The Establishment of a Japanese Diasporic Network in the Early 20th Century

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the Japanese migrants who were mainly involved in coffee production in Hawai‘i (the US territory) and in Saipan and Taiwan (the Japanese territories) from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1930s. In developing the coffee industry in those Japanese insular territories, the Japanese people who had connections with Hawai‘i through trade and migration played significant roles. Although coffee never achieved its status as a main cash crop in any part of the Japanese Empire, by the late 1920s, it was regarded as one of the commodities whose “domestic” production would prevent the outflow of Japanese yen. However, due to a lack of experience in coffee production, Saipan and Taiwan relied heavily on the Japanese coffee farmers in Kona, the Big Island of Hawai‘i, who were engaged in its production from the late 19th century; therefore, this trans-pacific movement of people, agricultural commodity, and knowledge describes the importance of networks connecting Japanese diasporas in the insular territories of the US and Japanese empires.

Keywords: The Japanese Empire, Coffee production, Diasporic network, Japanese migrants, Hawai‘i, Taiwan, Saipan

1. Introduction

Along with sugar and tea, coffee has been one of the most popular research topics for global historians in recent years. Due to its production areas being predominantly concentrated in the former European colonies, the history of coffee production and consumption tend to be explored from the perspectives and experiences of Western empires. Except for Java in the Dutch West Indies, the involvement of Asia and its people has been relatively overlooked and has received negligible attention in the global/world history of coffee. However, it is true that the Japanese Empire embarked on the *domestic* production of coffee in its tropical colony, Taiwan, from the early 20th century, when it experienced a rapid increase in coffee consumption resulting from the westernization of food culture.

Although coffee production in colonial Taiwan failed to achieve the status of a major cash crop in the Japanese Empire in the same way as sugar, rice, and pineapples, the trajectory of its planting and production is worth examining. Similar to other colonial agricultural products in Taiwan, coffee was not native to the island; therefore, the development of the coffee industry was not accomplished without such external factors as migrations of people, knowledge, skills, and capital. What characterizes the history of coffee planting in Taiwan is that one of the roots/routes can be traced

back to Hawai‘i, which was annexed by the United States in 1898, and that one of those who had experienced immigrating there contributed to the establishment of coffee farms, later plantations, in Saipan and Taiwan, the insular territories of the Japanese Empire.

This fact suggests two new insights into global food history. First, in his examination of the history of sugar, Sydney Mintz (1985) describes the networks and systems established through worldwide circulation that helped promote Western imperialist expansion on a global scale. While much historical research on food has been used as a means to examine and prove the master-subordinate relationship between the metropole and its colonies, as represented by Mintz’s work, the case study of the coffee triangle network between Hawai‘i, Saipan, and Taiwan indicates the presence of diasporic connections, namely, interactions and exchanges between the places populated by Japanese overseas migrants. This diasporic interaction was initiated and maintained by Japanese migrants and traders who moved across the Asia-Pacific region serving as agents that helped bring coffee plants, capital, and skills to the destination areas. What is intriguing about this movement is it transcended the imperial and colonial borders that divided the northern part of the Asia-Pacific in the early 20th century. However, the projects of coffee production within the territories of the Japanese Empire were underpinned by ambitions and motives of Japan-based trans-Pacific businessmen and Japanese immigrants to Hawai‘i. Accordingly, the movements and circulations of coffee-related matters took place beyond the imperial and colonial borders.¹

The next insight is that oftentimes, in the field of coffee production history, Asians (Chinese and Japanese) have been described as coolies or contract laborers, substituting for African slaves after the abolition of the slave trade and systems in the mid-19th century. Due to the nature of the work they had to engage in, only a few Asians became coffee plantation owners in European colonies before WWII. In the book *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America 1500-1989*, editors William Clarence-Smith and Steven Topik (2005) introduce coffee smallholders in Asia in order to challenge the model of large-estate farming in Latin America, but it hardly discusses the experiences of Asians as owners of coffee farms. The history of coffee in Taiwan, on the contrary, demonstrates the fact that Japanese people have been actively involved in coffee production as developers, managers, and owners of coffee farms. Accordingly, this research highlights two elements that have been given little attention in previous work regarding global food history: the existence of the network supported by the Japanese diasporas in the coffee belts of the Asia-Pacific side and a focus on the leading role of the Japanese in the dissemination and development of coffee production in Asia.

Shifting attention from coffee production history to the colonial history of Taiwan, there has been a considerable accumulation of research on the topic in Japan and abroad. The island of Taiwan, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, came under the control of the Empire. Blessed with abundant arable soil and tropical weather that were suitable for the cultivation of various agricultural products, Taiwan quickly established itself as one of the prominent sugar-producing areas in Asia. In addition to sugar, other commodities including rice, bananas, and canned pineapples were produced to satisfy the appetite of its colonial master. On the other hand, some products such as tea, camphor, and coal were exported widely to China, America, and Europe (Chen, 2014, 6-7). Those products have been interpreted as significant sources for supporting the economic foundation of Taiwan and thereby their importance has been primarily discussed in the context of the colonial economy and international trade. This case study instead attempts to demonstrate the

¹ The following articles also look at the trans-Pacific connection between the territories of the US and Japan in the early 20th century: Stephen, J. (1997). Hijacked by Utopia: American Nikkei in Manchuria. *Amerasia Journal*, Vol.23, No.3, pp.1-42 and Azuma, E. (2008). Pioneers of Overseas Japanese Development: Japanese American History and the Making of Expansionist Orthodoxy in Imperial Japan, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.64, No.4, pp.1187-1126.

influence of Japanese agricultural and business experiences abroad on the development of coffee farming in Saipan and Taiwan by tracing back its roots to Hawai'i.

This paper consists of three sections. The first section introduces the history of coffee consumption after the Meiji Restoration, which increased rapidly as a result of westernization of food in the urban areas. More importantly, starting from 1908, migration to Brazil, in which Japanese were predominantly involved in the coffee production, has strongly contributed to the rising popularity of the consumption. The next section examines the history of coffee production in Taiwan during the period from the early 1900s to the 1920s, when coffee was produced on an experimental and small-scale level. In setting the foundation for the coffee cultivation and production, Hawai'i played a key role in the commercial production of Taiwan coffee. Lastly, the process through which the diasporic network between Hawai'i, Saipan, and Taiwan was established and sustained by the Japanese people on the move is explored. In conclusion, how the notion of a diasporic network that encompassed the Asia-Pacific region in the period of modern empires provides a new insight to an understanding of global food history and Japanese migration history is discussed. Similar to many other agricultural commodities, coffee is not native to Taiwan and its production was enabled through influxes of people, plants, skills, and capital. Under the Japanese rule, coffee production in Taiwan failed to achieve the status of a major cash crop and therefore did not have an opportunity to participate in the global coffee market. Rather than focus on why its production failed, this article illuminates the various movements that crisscrossed the Pacific Ocean to make the domestic coffee production project of the Japanese Empire a reality.

2. The Popularization of Coffee Drinking Culture in Urban Japan

Sydney Mintz points out in his book *Sweetness and Power* that once sugar transformed from a luxury to a quotidian need, production and consumption became highly interdependent (1985, 35). This relationship also applied to coffee in the Japanese Empire, with the major difference being that those who produced and consumed coffee were closely connected as both groups were Japanese.

In 1889, a coffee shop, *Kohi Sakan*, was opened in Tokyo by Tei Eikei (Japanese name: Nishimura Tsurukichi), who is credited as the "first coffeehouse master" in the history of café culture in Japan. He was born in 1859 to a man called Tomosuke but later was adopted by Tei Einei, who worked for Japan's Foreign Ministry as a Taiwanese secretary. Upon his adoption, Nishimura Tsurukichi was given a new name, Tei Eikei. Since his childhood, Eikei was talented at languages and learned Chinese, French, and English. Around 1874, his foster father sent him to Yale University, the US, for better chances of success, but he had to return home due to his kidney-related illness without completing his studies. However, his life back in Japan was not stable and he changed his jobs frequently; after working as a teacher in Okayama for few years, he worked for the Ministry of Finance (Hoshida, 2003, 23).

In 1888, Eikei built a western-style house in Tokyo and made it a coffeehouse called *Kohi Sakan*. Inspired by coffeehouses in London, where he visited on his way home from the US, he decided to create a public space where students, youths, and ordinary people could share their knowledge and ideas over coffee (Hoshida, 2003, 28). At *Kohi Sakan*, foreign newspapers and books as well as billiard tables for social recreation were provided to attract young and aspirant cosmopolitans who became important figures in international fields such as Ishii Kikujiro (a diplomat who signed the Lansing-Ishii Agreement in 1917), Iju-uin Hikokichi (a diplomat and Japanese Ambassador to China) (Hoshida, 2003, 33). Tei's idea behind his coffeehouse was to challenge the *Rokumeikan* (Deer Cry Pavilion), which was constructed through the initiative of Inoue Kaoru, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, to showcase Japanese civilization to western visitors. Tei criticized the

Rokumeikan in that it opened its doors exclusively to the people of high class and was filled with “superficially” western materials and events (Hoshida, 2003, 32; White, 2012, 10). Unfortunately, *Kohi Sakan* went bankrupt five years after its opening. Although his targeted customers were “ordinary” people, coffee served there was not necessarily cheap or reasonable; it cost 1 *sen* and 5 *ri*, and coffee with milk, 2 *sen*, while one bowl of soba noodles was 8 *ri*, nearly half the price of coffee (Hoshida, 2003, 28; White, 2012, 10).

The popularization of coffee culture, however, was further accelerated by the opening of Café Paulista in 1913. It did not take long until Café Paulista was visited by people of various classes. Open from 9 am to 11 pm, the café offered a space for people to start their day, meet someone, and take a break (White, 2012, 45). Around 70,000 people visited the main shop in Tokyo each month, along with 52,000 in Osaka and 28,000 in Kobe (White, 2012, 46). As the name Café Paulista (which means “a native or inhabitant of the city of São Paulo”) indicates, the development of Japan’s coffee drinking culture is strongly tied to Brazil, or more precisely, the state of São Paulo. In fact, the founder of the coffee shop, Ryo Mizuno, was also known as a “father of immigration to Brazil.” Mizuno himself visited Brazil in 1906 to observe the coffee plantations and, after a series of negotiations with the São Paulo state, concluded the introduction of Japanese contract laborers to work for the coffee plantations, the most thriving industry in Brazil. In 1908, 781 people including 650 families immigrated to São Paulo and they worked as contract workers on the coffee plantations. During the pre-war period, nearly 190,000 Japanese went to Brazil, which was the second-largest destination for the Japanese immigrants who sailed across the Pacific Ocean in search of work. Seven years after Japanese immigration to Brazil began, Café Paulista opened its first shop in Ginza, one of the most affluent areas in Tokyo. Mizuno used the coffee that was gifted to him by the São Paulo state government as a token of their gratitude for sending Japanese to work on Brazilian coffee plantations. The coffee was provided during the periods from 1913-1917 and 1919-1923, which allowed him to offer it at his cafés at a lower price than that served at other coffee shops (Iijima, 2011, 17).²

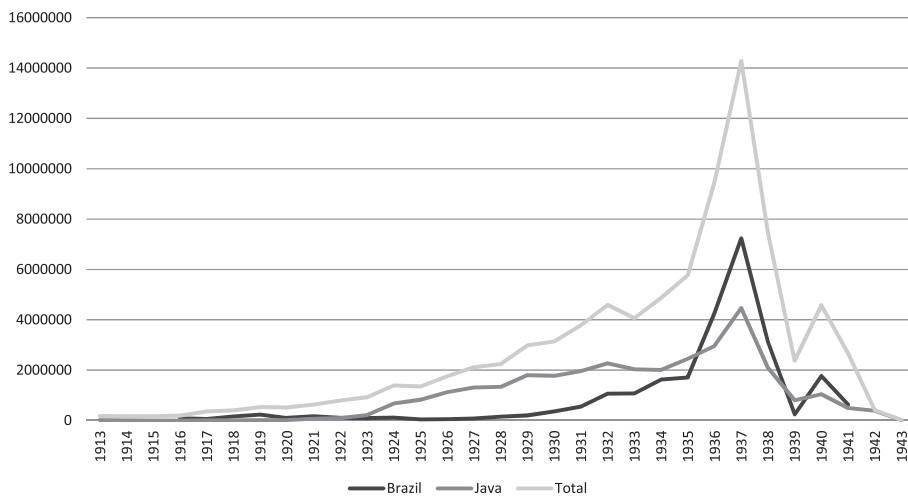
The project of the free coffee distribution was spearheaded by the São Paulo state government to establish a market for Brazilian coffee in Asia. In 1923, when the free distribution ended, the government set up a PR office in Tokyo to promote their coffee and they started to advertise Brazilian coffee actively to the general public. One of the PR methods to appeal to Japanese consumers was to highlight that the coffee was made by their countrymen living and working in Brazil. A.A. Assumpção, a representative of the PR office, referred to Brazilian coffee as a “gift” from the immigrants in his article in the *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*, which was among several that focused on the lives of Japanese immigrants in Brazil in 1934 (“Kinben Yukan naru”, 1934). This PR emphasized Japan’s special connection with Brazil and planted a sense of affinity in consumers. In addition, Brazilian coffee advertisements were frequently published in popular women’s magazines, including the one that was published in *Shufuno Tomo* in 1933, which described the hard work of Japanese immigrants.

Approximately 200,000 Japanese immigrants working in Brazil are engaged in the production of world-renowned Brazilian coffee. In the morning and the evening, let’s fully enjoy its taste while thinking of our fellows who are cultivating coffee farms in a faraway but friendly nation across the ocean. (Translated by the author)

² Café Paulista offered a cup of coffee for 5 *sen*, which was one-third the price of the coffee sold at other cafes. Mariko Iijima, *Senzen Nihonjin Kōhi-saibaisha no Gurobaru Hisutori* [Global History of Japanese Coffee Farmers before WWII], *Imin Kenkyu*, Vol.7 (University of the Ryukyus, 2011), 17.

The import of coffee rapidly increased from 555,125 kg (925,200 kin) in 1923 to 5,678,960 kg (9,464,934 kin) in 1936, over the period when Assumpção actively promoted Brazilian coffee in Japan (Zen Nihon Kōhii Shōkō-kumiai Rengō-kai, 1980, 205-6). With the exception of a few years (1936-38), the largest source of Japanese coffee importers was Java, the Dutch West Indies,³ but it cannot be denied that the relationship established by the state of São Paulo and Japanese immigrants played a significant role in the popularization of coffee in Japan.

Table 1. Coffee Imported to Japan: 1913-1943



Reference: Zen Nihon Kōhii shōkō-kumiai Rengō-kai, 1980, 213.

3. The Early Stage of Coffee Production in Taiwan under Japanese Rule

The production of coffee in Taiwan is said to have started before the Japanese colonization of Taiwan in 1884 when an English trader brought coffee plants from Manila in the Philippines. Although its production was once successful, it did not blossom into an industry that sustained the island's economy (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 12). In 1895, Taiwan was incorporated into Japan and this time, coffee was expected to be one of the cash crops that would sustain Taiwan's economic independence.

The coffee production in Taiwan under the Japanese rule can be divided into three major periods: the period of experimental planting at the agricultural stations under the maintenance of the colonial government from the late 19th century, the period of small-scale production by Japanese settlers from the 1910s to the 1930s, and the period of plantation-style production initiated and spearheaded by the mainland companies in the 1930s. During the first period of coffee production, in 1902, Tashiro Yasutada, a government botanist who was appointed as an engineer at the Bureau of Production at the Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan from 1895-1924, test-produced coffee at the Hengchun Tropical Plants Experimental Station and other branch stations in the southern part of Taiwan (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyoku, 1911, 211-3; 1915, 248). In addition

³ Along with China, the Dutch West Indies (Java) was one of the important areas from where Japan obtained foreign products since the early 17th century. Also, at the beginning of the 20th century, Java produced the second largest amount of coffee after Brazil. Considering its historical relations and amount of coffee production, it is plausible that Japan largely relied on coffee imported from Java. Zen Nihon Kōhii Shōkō-kumiai Rengō-kai, 1980, 213.

to the coffee trees originally brought by the Englishman, Tashiro obtained seedlings from Ogasawara Islands, Hawai'i, and Brazil, and experimented with three different species of coffee: Arabica, Liberica, and Canariensis. Due to its successful production, coffee harvested at the experimental station was displayed at the National Industrial Exhibition in 1907, followed by its presentation as domestically produced coffee to Emperor Taisho at his coronation ceremony in 1915 (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 12-3). In the 1910s, various species of coffee continued to be test-produced at other stations in Taiwan, and it was proved that Arabica, the most consumed variety of coffee, had a promising future as a commercial agricultural product (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 13).

As a next stage, coffee seedlings raised at the experimental stations were distributed to Japanese agricultural settlers who resided in the Japanese villages (*Toyota-mura*, *Hayashida-mura*, and *Yoshino-mura*) in Hualien, the eastern part of Taiwan, in the 1910s (Sato, 1938, 12). These so-called *imin-mura*, Japanese colonial villages, were established in the early 1910s and the settlers were required to cultivate the land from scratch and produced rice and sugar as main cash crops (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 28-9). Coffee was one of the minor crops that helped diversify the agricultural product to avoid possible damage caused by heavy dependence on monocultural production. For example, in *Toyota-mura*, Arabica coffee seedlings were distributed through a village's advisory office for Japanese farmers from 1911-1915, the formative stage of the colonial villages. According to a 1929 report published by the Bureau of Production, coffee was cultivated on a total of 17.3 acres (seven *kōho*) of land by more than 15 households (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 14).⁴ Dividing those numbers by the entire number of households and the overall area of the village land in the same year⁵ shows that eight percent of households cultivated coffee by using less than 10 percent of the total area of the village.

Coffee in Taiwan in the 1910s-1920s could not have developed without the transplants of the seedlings from Hawai'i. With other farmers, Yosokichi Funakoshi, who was supposedly the owner of the largest coffee farm (4.8 acres) in the village, imported coffee seedlings in 1917 (Inoue, 1950, 28). Before his settlement in the village and launch of coffee production in the village, Funakoshi himself had earlier observed coffee farms in the US and also had a younger brother residing in Hawai'i (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 14, 154). Thus, Funakoshi utilized his family connection with Hawai'i to develop coffee farming in Taiwan. As a producer of his own coffee brand, Funakoshi assumed a leading role in coffee production in Hualien's Japanese villages (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 154).

Hawai'i had already been reputed for its Kona coffee since the late 19th century, and by the 1910s, as many as 90 percent of the coffee farmers in the Kona coffee district were Japanese immigrants (Coulter, 1933, 110). Around 1927, Funakoshi sent the green coffee harvested in his coffee farm to his brother in Hawai'i and asked him to obtain an opinion on the quality of the coffee from a foreign expert; the result was "medium quality (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyokufu, 1929, 154)." At the same time, Funakoshi also contacted Bunji Shibata, founder of the *Kimura Shōten* (the present Key Coffee Company) in Tokyo, to request an evaluation of his coffee, which resulted in the same "medium quality" review.

Meanwhile, in 1928, the Agricultural Society of Hualien sent the coffee harvested in *Toyota* village to Café Paulista and received a report stating "[The coffee] looks similar to green coffee of Central America and Hawaii, but after its roasting, the aroma was more closer to the one of Brazil,

⁴ Sakurai Yoshijiro, an engineer for the colonial government in Taiwan, estimated that as many as 3,000 coffee trees could be planted in a one *kōho* plot of land.

⁵ The statistics are on the Directory of the Hualien Office; as of 1929, *Toyota-mura* had 175 households with 708 *kō* of land (Karenkō-chō, 1929, 32).

although it was lower, and the quality was relatively good (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyoku, 1929, 154-5).” However, Café Paulista found it difficult to buy the unhulled coffee because coffee in that state required a process of removing parchment skin while foreign coffee was imported without parchments. In addition to extra processing, coffee after hulling decreased in quantity by 20% (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyoku, 1929, 155). As the assessment from coffee experts and companies suggests, selling the coffee made in *Toyota* village was not an easy task due to a lack of the outstanding quality and a small amount.

However, coffee in Hualien found its market in mainland Japan by 1928. Funakoshi shipped his coffee to Yokohama, one of the major ports for coffee imports along with Osaka and Kobe, and sold his coffee to the aforementioned Café Paulista in Tokyo (Hashimoto, 1930, 57). Since Shibata used to work for Café Paulista before he set up his own coffee company and was acquainted with Funakoshi through the evaluation of his coffee, coffee made in Hualien found the niche for its marketing despite the small production quantity (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyoku, 1929, 156).

Around the same time, Sakurai Yasujiro also sent a sampling of arabica coffee harvested in Shirin Horticultural Experimental Station near Taipei to Sato Tomizo at the Nippon Brazilian Trading Company in Kobe. Similar to Funakoshi’s coffee, it was evaluated as “lower than (arabica) coffee produced in South America, Central America, Hawaii and Arabia” but it might compete against “Java Robusta.” Among the four kinds of coffee, Java Robusta, Brazil Santos, Hawaii Kona, and Arabica Moca, shipped in Kobe in 1928, Java Robusta was priced the lowest, 59 yen (Table 2), but coffee from Java accounted for nearly 60% of a total amount of coffee imported into Japan (see Table 1). After his assessment, Sato mentions that the coffee in Taiwan could prevent the import of Java coffee and “greatly contribute” to the Japanese economy (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyoku, 1929, 156).

Table 2. Price of Coffee imported into Kobe, Japan, in 1928

<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Price (yen)</i>	<i>Price including taxes</i>
<i>Java Robusta</i>	59.20	75.00
<i>Brazil Santos No.4</i>	72.00	88.00
<i>Hawaii Kona No.1</i>	78.50	94.50
<i>Arabica Moca No.1</i>	88.00	104.00

Source: Hashimoto, 1930, p.54

Sakurai’s report on coffee ends with a promising future for the coffee industry in Taiwan. He envisioned the further development of coffee cultivation among settlers in the Japanese villages by being equipped with pulping machine, drying platforms, and roasters etc (Taiwan Sōtoku-fu Shokusan-kyoku, 1929, 158). By 1930, coffee harvested in Hualien was also sold as a local souvenir. However, the spread of rust disease in the area resulted in coffee trees being wiped out in the villages by 1933 (Taiwan Keizainenpō Kankō Kyokai, 1942, 398-9).

4. Diasporic Coffee Network and Coffee Production in Taiwan

4.1. The Hawai’i-Saipan-Taiwan network

Whilst the great majority of coffee production had, until this point, been carried out on either on an experimental or small-farming scale, the 1930s, as the last stage of coffee production, saw a drastic change in its production method and system. In 1930, the first coffee plantation was established by the Osaka Sumida Bussan Company on a plot of land of 980 acres (400 *chō*) leased from the Office

of the Governor-General. In the following year, the Tokyo-based Kimura Shōten opened a plantation in both East and West Taiwan (Taiwan Keizainenpō Kankō Kyokai, 1942, 399). Three major factors encouraged the commercial production of coffee by these mainland-based companies. The first, as described above, was the successful coffee production at experimental stations and Japanese villages. Secondly, from the early 1930s, the Office of the Governor-General promoted the diversification of agricultural crops. When the policy to curtail rice production in Taiwan was implemented in 1934, several tropical commodities including pineapples, bananas, tobacco, and coffee expanded quickly, the plots were cultivated, and the products were exported to mainland Japan (Saito, 1969, 120-1). Thirdly, since the Japanese government promoted the domestic production of agricultural commodities in the 1930s, coffee in Taiwan could satisfy not only the consumers' desire but also the national objective. Indeed, a sharp rise in coffee consumption in the metropole increased the dependency on imports from foreign countries such as the Dutch West Indies and Brazil (Table 1). To reduce the amount of coffee imported from foreign countries, Taiwan was counted on as the only coffee-producing colony of the Empire. The mass production of coffee was thus expected to provide the mainland companies with a business opportunity and also to further westernize the Japanese Empire by demonstrating its self-sufficiency in the production of coffee. By 1939, around 3,420 acres of land were cultivated, out of which 46.4% was in Hualien, and 31.4 % in Tainan district. Therefore, coffee production was concentrated on the eastern and southern parts of the island (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kankō-kai, 1942, 400).

In most cases, agricultural commodities introduced to colonized areas were new to these areas. Therefore, their transplant and production required deliberate planning to fulfill the Empire's expectations and provide a stable footing for the colonial economy. Coffee in Taiwan was no exception and indeed, coffee plants and production skills were brought and introduced from multiple areas including Java, Brazil, Saipan, and Hawai'i with a prospect of successful commercial production. Due to Japanese migrants' involvement in introducing and developing the industry in Taiwan, Hawai'i became one of the most important of these routes and the diasporic migration of coffee is verifiable.

One of the figures who significantly contributed to the development of Taiwan's coffee production is Sumida Tadajiro, the founder of the Osaka Sumida Bussan Company. He had immigrated to Hawai'i in 1898 and established himself as a businessman before he started coffee farming in Taiwan. While in Hawai'i, he founded the Honolulu Sumida Trade Company in 1904 before setting up the Pacific Bank, and in 1908 started the first commercial production of *sake*, Japanese rice wine (Nihojin no Kaigai Hatten Shōkai, 1930). After these achievements in Hawai'i, he decided to return to Japan and founded his trade company in 1918. Primarily engaged in transporting Japanese products to overseas communities in the US, Hawai'i, and Saipan in Nan'yo, Sumida also promoted Kona coffee to trading companies in Tokyo ("Ganso Kohi Gyunyū").

On April 13, 1926, Sumida extended his business to coffee producing in Saipan, with this production expected to replace the import of foreign coffee (Zen Nihon Kōhii Shōkō-kumiai Rengō-kai, 1980, 177). He established the *Nan'yo Kohi Kabushiki Gaisha* (Nan'yo Coffee Company Limited) and became the President of the company at the request of several Japanese coffee farmers residing in Kona, including Ikeda Torahei, Matsumoto Eita, Yamagata Naotarō, and Nishioka Gisaburō. In fact, the establishment of Nan'yo Coffee Company was carefully planned and schemed by the Japanese coffee farmers in Kona. Four years before the setup of the company, Japanese coffee farmers in Kona started researching a suitable site for coffee production, and Nishioka Gisaburō, who was in charge of fieldwork, reported that Saipan would be the ideal place. A group of Japanese coffee farmers approached Japanese businessmen who had a connection with Hawai'i, including Sumida Tajiuro, Motoshige Wasuke, and Deishi Sonosuke, and with their support, they organized a

company with a capital of 500,000 yen. Additionally, with the help of Wasuke Motoshige, a trader from Yamaguchi, they recruited several Japanese farmers to Saipan who were experienced in Kona coffee production (Zen Nihon Kōhii Shōkō-kumiai Rengō-kai, 1937). According to the company's business report, as of 1935, 14 out of 35 stockholders were Japanese residing in Kona and three were in Honolulu (Iijima, 2011, 15). Therefore, there existed a diaspora network of coffee production capital between Hawai'i, a US territory, and Saipan, a Japanese territory. This network was underpinned by the combination of two diasporic networks: one consisted of Japanese overseas migrants with coffee production experience and the other was established by Sumida, who was equipped with business insights from his experience trading in Hawai'i and Nan'yo.

The establishment of the Nan'yo Coffee Company was reported in the *Nippu Jiji*, one of the Japanese newspapers in Hawai'i, as a new "meaningful" company for three major reasons. The first reason is some of the Japanese coffee farmers accumulated excessive assets due to the rise in Kona coffee prices. For example, the farm price of coffee cherries soared per pound from \$2 in 1922 to \$3.65 in 1927 (Lund, 1937, 70). This was mainly caused by a drop in coffee production in Brazil caused by a frost attack in 1918, which led to a sudden and dramatic increase in Kona coffee value. Consequently, the Japanese farmers invested their savings into the renovations of their homes and the installation of wet-processing facilities (Kinro, 2003, 70). Considering the economic situation, the launch of the Nan'yo coffee company was a well-timed opportunity for the coffee farmers in Kona.

The other reason is that it was an innovative attempt in that the company was established and operated with the cooperation between Japan-based businessmen and Japanese immigrants in Hawai'i. Although coffee farms in Kona enjoyed a certain level of freedom regarding the management of their subleased coffee land unlike their counterparts who worked for sugar plantations, they were still under the control of two major white-owned companies—Captain Cook and American Factors (Kinro, 2003, 32). On the contrary, Nan'yo, which was mandated by the Japanese Empire, provided an opportunity for the Japanese immigrant investors to operate coffee plantations on their own. In fact, *Kaigai Hatten Annaisho* (1935), a guidebook promoted the "prosperous" settlement in Brazil and Nan'yo introduced coffee production in Nan'yo as the advancement of Japanese immigrants in Hawai'i into a Japanese territory and the founder coffee farmers were described as people who were aspiring producers of *domestic* coffee. By 1935, the company managed a coffee plantation of a total of 200 *chōho* (490 acres) in four areas in the Island of Saipan with a coffee processing factory⁶ and was about to expand its production on Lota Island, in which they acquired another 200-*chōho* plot of land from the government (Mihira, 1935, 15). Although a coffee farm of some 500 acres was not so large compared to plantations in Brazil, from the perspective of Japanese coffee farmers in Hawai'i, it was enormous compared to Kona, where most of the coffee farmers managed a 5-to-10 acres of coffee land under a lease from white-owned companies. Accordingly, the case of the Nan'yo Coffee Company implies Japanese coffee farmers sought out the places to utilize their coffee production experience and capital without the control of the US Empire (Asaumi, 1926, 2; Inoue, 1950, 39).

Following this successful plantation management in Saipan, Sumida decided to begin the operation of a coffee plantation on a larger scale in 1930. On December 11, 1930, he sailed out from the port of Moji, Japan, to Keelung in Taiwan with 16 of his staff, including coffee specialists. In an interview with the *Jiji-Shimpo*, a Japanese daily newspaper, Sumida recounted his project with excitement:

⁶ By 1935, Coffee produced by the Nan'yo Coffee Company was highly evaluated as "aromatic" coffee. (Mihira, 1935, 15).

I have leased 1,500 *chōho* (3,675 acres) of fertile land for coffee production in a suburb of *Karenkō-chō* (present-day Hualien) from the Office of the Governor-General. My company planted coffee seedlings, which were harvested from the 400-*chōho* plantation (owned by his company) in Saipan, Nan'yo, in rich soils on the outskirts of *Karenkō-chō* and the harvested coffee proved to be of far better quality than the coffee produced in Nan'yo. After a decade-long trial production proved a success, I have decided to launch a large-scale coffee plantation, this time by employing around 1,000 natives... I expect that the amount of coffee produced in Taiwan will surpass that produced in Nan'yo in a few years ("Taiwan no Kōhii Saibai"). (Translated by the author)

Along with Sumida's business ambition being directed to Taiwan, the knowledge and capital that he acquired from the Nan'yo Coffee Company was indispensable for the successful mass production of domestic coffee. Since this plantation style started in 1930, which was 45 years after the colonization of Taiwan, coffee production on open, flat lands was difficult for the reason that other residents or agricultural products already occupied these lands. Therefore, the mountain areas were considered ideal because vast and intact government-owned lands were easily acquired. However, these virgin lands necessitated substantial efforts and finance to cultivate and make them suitable for coffee plantation. In reality, Japan-based company owners, both Sumida and Shibata, had to buy both private and government-owned lands to establish coffee plantations (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō, 1941, 402, 409); in other words, large-scale production of Taiwan coffee was not achieved without the investments from the Japan-based companies.⁷ (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kankō Kyokai, 1941, 402, 408).

In operating his coffee plantation, Sumida imported coffee plants from Hawai'i, which at the time had a low risk of rust disease (Zen nihon Kōhii Shōkō-kumiai kengō-kai, 1980, 185). Regarding coffee plantation management, there is a striking similarity between the Sumida coffee plantation in Taiwan and sugar plantations in Hawai'i due to the existence of "race" in the owner-labor relationship. Like the sugar plantations in Hawai'i, Sumida's coffee plantation introduced a hierarchy system, under which there was a field head-supervisor (one Japanese), field supervisors (one Japanese), assistant field supervisors (four Taiwanese), and around 260 field workers including women and children (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kankō Kyokai, 1941, 416, 422). Since it was extremely difficult to recruit laborers locally, the company employed Taiwanese recruiters to find laborers from the

⁷ There, four coffee plantations were operated by Japan-based companies as of 1941, out of which all the coffee plantations were operated by Kimura Kōhi-ten except Sumida Bussan Gaisha Nōjō. (Taiwan Keizainenpō Kankō Kyokai, 1941, 405)

Table 3. Coffee Plantations Operated by Japan-based Companies (1941)

<i>Plantation</i>	<i>Total Land*</i>	<i>Land Coffee Trees Planted*</i>
<i>Sumida Bussan Kabushiki- gaisha Nōjō</i>	486.288	320.000
<i>Kimura Kohi-ten Kagi Nōjō</i>	301.000	117.00
<i>Kimura Kohi-ten Taito Nōjō</i>	564.500	148.00
<i>Taiwan Coffee Kagushiki-gaisha Nōjō</i>	861.600	56.00

*Kō: 2.45 acres

Source: Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kankō Kyōkai (ed). (1941), *Taiwan Keizai Nenpō* (The Annual Report of Taiwan Economy), Kokusai Nihon Kyōkai, Tokyo, 405.

western part of Taiwan to settle in the plantation (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kanko Kyokai, 1941, 419).⁸

On the plantation, they normally had to work ten hours with a one-hour recess, and men were paid 1.25-1.45 *yen*, women, 89 *sen*, and children 30-70 *sen* per day. In Taiwan, the Japanese, as colonial settlers, secured higher positions than Taiwanese, who had to be under “strict supervision” while they worked on the plantations (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kanko Kyokai, 1941, 422-3).

Four years later, about 4,200 kilograms of coffee were shipped to Osaka (Zen nihon Kōhii Shōkō-kumiai Rengō-kai, 1980, 205). However, against Sumida’s high expectation, the mass production of coffee was far from achieving self-sufficiency and from fulfilling the desires of the Japanese Empire. One of the reasons for the failure was a lack of laborers, whose numbers only reached 20 percent of the required labor force. Natural disasters and coffee diseases also played a role, the latter attacking young coffee plants (Zen nihon Kōhii Shōkō-kumiai Rengō-kai, 1980, 188).

4.2. *Hawai’i-Dalian-Taiwan Connection*

While the quality of the aforementioned Funakoshi’s coffee was far from being excellent, it must have been satisfactory enough for Shibata to detect a tangible achievement, especially considering the fact that he launched his own coffee plantations later in 1931. Funakoshi’s efforts helped to induce Japanese coffee companies to expand their business into Taiwan.

Having worked for Café Paulista established by Mizuno, Shibata decided to set up his coffee company, Kimura Shōten, right after the Great Kanto Earthquake (Kii-kohi Shashi Hensan Iinkai, 1993, 6, 8). Unlike Café Paulista, which was heavily dependent on the coffee offered by the São Paulo state government, he found it effective to apply the “American-style” of coffee business, which controlled every stage of the coffee enterprise from production to processing to wholesale, to his business scheme. In this sense, the expansion of the Japanese Empire worked in his favor, helping him to achieve his business goal; Taiwan was the ideal coffee production area and it was under Japanese rule. The coffee produced in Taiwan came to be known and sold as “domestically grown” coffee, which would reduce the amount of coffee imported from foreign countries.

In 1931, Shibata began cultivating the Taitō Coffee Plantation in Taiwan that had been sold off by the government. The process was not an easy task and a large sum of money was fed into the plantation through the Japanese diasporic network in Tokyo, Dalian, and Manchuria, where his company ran coffee shops. Dalian, for example, had its first coffee shop opened by Shibata in 1910. Since Dalian was a leased territory and the base for the South Manchuria Railway Company, it was a setting that enabled him to offer coffee to Japanese residents and Russian political refugees (Kii-kohi Shashi Hensan Iinkai, 1993, 23). Shibata grew coffee’s popularity in previously untapped locales within the Japanese Empire and utilized this network to finance his coffee plantation in Taiwan.

In October 1936, Shibata spent two weeks in Kona, the Big Island of Hawai’i, to observe “genuine” coffee production and its operation system. His other intention was to recruit “experienced” coffee farmers in Kona because the very first harvest of his coffee farm in Taiwan was to start in the following year, and he put an advertisement in the *Nippu Jiji*, one of the major Japanese newspapers in Japan (“Taiwan no Kōhii Jigyō,” 1936). It remains unknown whether anyone actually moved to Taiwan, though; however, it suggests that Shibata found Kona was an essential reference to the operation of his coffee plantations in Taiwan.

In his 1937 article, “Kōhii no Kona [Kona of Coffee],” which was published in the magazine

⁸ Four-thirds of the settlers were from Guangdong and the rest of them were Kwangtung, China. Many of them moved to other places after a couple of years working on the coffee plantations, which became a vexing issue for the company (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kanko Kyōkai, 1941, 422).

Coffee as a reflection of the 1936 trip above, he pointed out that although Japanese coffee producers dominated in the Kona coffee industry by comprising nearly 95 percent of the overall producers in Kona, they had failed to obtain a controlling power over coffee production and sales, which were exclusively operated by, Captain Cook Coffee Companies and American Factors (Shibata, 1937, 8). This comment indicates an awareness of his success as a plantation owner in Taiwan.

In Taiwan, Shibata employed both plantation-style and tenant-farmer systems in his coffee plantations. Both systems employed Indigenous people (Takasago Tribe), Taiwanese (called *Hontō-jin*), and Chinese immigrants from the west area of Taiwan as laborers (*Hontō-jin imin*) (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kanko Kyōkai, 1941, 414, 419). Compared with the thoroughly hierarchical plantation style of the Sumida coffee plantation, plantations operated by Shibata's Kimura Shōten were slightly relaxed in that Taiwanese (nine out of 16) and Indigenous people (one) were hired as field supervisors (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kanko Kyōkai, 1941, 417). However, an element of "race" surely existed because none of the Japanese were employed as field laborers, and also there was a wage difference between Taiwanese and Indigenous people in the amount of 10 *sen* (Taiwan Keizai Nenpō Kanko Kyōkai, 1941, 423).

By the mid-1930s, the coffee industry in Taiwan seemed to attain its sustainable production, but the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War put an end to it.

Conclusion

Despite the short history and small scale of coffee production in Taiwan, its implications are noteworthy. First, the coffee production in Taiwan was far from being solely the work of the Japanese Empire. It was made possible by the people, plants, skills/knowledge, and capital that moved to various places, both inside and outside the Empire. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Japanese migration studies tend to divide flows of Japanese migrants according to a destination—whether it was a Japanese colony/territory or not. However, this dichotomy approach ignores the connections that were established beyond the imperial and colonial borders, such as those between Hawai'i, Saipan, and Taiwan. Incorporating coffee into the study of Japanese migration further complicates the understanding of these movements as one-directional flows of people and objects. Coffee made by Japanese immigrants in Brazil contributed to the popular consumption of coffee in Japan and their counterparts in Kona, Hawai'i was indispensable to the spread of coffee production in Japanese subtropical territories.

This coffee-related migrations were enabled by the "diaspora networks," through which Japan-based businessmen and coffee producers committed to a series of trans-border exchanges of skills, information, and human resources. This can likely be attributed to Japan's unique empire-building process, which included sending immigrants out to both inside and outside of its territory. Moreover, the diasporic network helped people like Sumida and Shibata to seek out business opportunities, from the periphery of one empire to the periphery of another. Indeed, the history of Japanese immigrants' coffee farming in Hawai'i functioned as one of the significant information sources for agricultural commodities cultivated in Taiwan.

Last but not least, it should be noted that this depiction of the diasporic network excludes the discussion of imperialism by placing both Japanese territories and non-territories on the same level. It cannot be denied that Japanese immigrants in Hawai'i (the subordinates) were under the control of European and American landowners and that Japanese settlers in Taiwan were the colonial masters. However, when considering a master-subordinate relationship from the perspective of

coffee land use, the Japanese in both locations were the “settlers” who appropriated the land of the native people. Therefore, this case study needs to be discussed in relation to race and ethnicity in the future.

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