

Boys, be ambitious: William Smith Clark and the westernisation of Japanese agricultural extension in the Meiji era

Garrett Gowen[†], Rachel Friedensen and Ezekiel Kimball 

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, USA

ABSTRACT

This article examines the historiography related to the 1876 founding of Sapporo Agricultural College, the first institution of its kind in Japan. Focusing specifically on the involvement of William Smith Clark, who previously served as the president of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, it argues that the nascent imperial ambitions harboured by both the United States and Japan are essential to a full understanding of Sapporo's founding, curriculum and subsequent history. Drawing on both primary and secondary sources as well as theoretical perspectives on empire, this article depicts Sapporo as one small part of a larger campaign of westernisation.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 21 January 2015
Accepted 5 April 2016

KEYWORDS

Japan; empire; agricultural education; westernisation; Foucault

In 1876, the Sapporo Agricultural College (SAC) opened in Japan. The founding president was an American, William Smith Clark, whose nationality and nine years as the president of Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC) were his sole qualifications for the position. Both colleges had experimental farms, offered primarily English-language instruction, required military training and instruction in the Bible, and taught western methods of agriculture and the mechanical arts. Each institution sought to educate young men in the most up-to-date methods of scientific agriculture and horticulture while also performing a key civic role.

SAC is an especially interesting case with which to investigate early American agricultural extension: it was an essentially American export that took root in the landscape of the Meiji restoration. To understand how this came to be, we examine the complicated relationship between the American and Japanese governments, economies and educational systems in the late nineteenth century. Based on this historiography, our analysis indicates that both countries were engaged in reactions to, and the development of, empire(s). The founding of SAC provides a particularly compelling demonstration of this fact. It was also a notable false start for both countries with SAC quickly abandoning American agricultural practices in favour of models more suitable for the Japanese environment. However, even while it was unsuccessful as a joint exercise in early imperial ambitions, the history of SAC provides compelling evidence of the thoughts and motivations of both American and Meiji officials regarding the role of agriculture in the creation of empire. To that end, we explore

CONTACT Ezekiel Kimball  ekimball@educ.umass.edu

[†]Present address: Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA

archival holdings at the University of Massachusetts Amherst focused on William Smith Clark and his role at SAC.

Building on this analysis, we conclude by conceptualising of empire in a manner consistent with Foucault's theory of governmentality, wherein a nation-state's ability to exert control over a group of people exists independent of geographic territory.¹ As such, even with its limited impact, agricultural extension in Meiji era Japan can clearly be seen as a "multiform tactic" of empire rather than a benign social service.² The internationalisation of agricultural extension served to move educational systems, Christianity and economic partnerships from the West to the East. For the United States, intervention in Japan – having political, economic, military and agricultural dimensions – offered an opportunity to restrict the expansion of European empires while also testing strategies that would shortly be employed in the direct colonisation of Hawaii and the Philippines. For Japan, an agricultural partnership with the United States served as one strategy among many with which the Meiji government experimented that offered access to the western technology and organising strategies that it would later need to secure its own colonial holdings in Taiwan and Korea. Ultimately, agricultural extension became a tool of empire-building for both countries even though this particular partnership was short-lived.

Japanese–American relations in the nineteenth century

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the United States and Japan were uneasy and unequal allies. Having been largely closed to outsiders for more than two centuries, Japan found itself the target of the West's expansionist tendencies.³ These pressures came to a head in 1853 when Commodore Perry sailed a squadron of four American warships into Tokyo Bay and delivered a missive from President Fillmore demanding access to Japanese ports.⁴ Cowed by the "superior technology" of the West, Japan capitulated and opened two ports to western trade; treaties with other western powers shortly followed.⁵ The exchange provides one of the earliest successful examples of the American open-door policy, wherein the United States chose to forego geographic expansion in exchange for access to foreign markets, and highlights both the growth and limitations of American influence.⁶

The combination of these external pressures and ongoing strife within the Tokugawa Shogunate led to the Meiji Restoration in 1868.⁷ The new government made a form of restrained westernisation the centrepiece of its domestic policy agenda, which had major implications for Japan's foreign relations.⁸ The United States, due to its long-running special

¹ Michel Foucault, *Power*, trans. R. Hurley, ed. J. D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 2000).

² Foucault, *Power*, 211.

³ Louis M. Cullen, *A History of Japan, 1582–1941: Internal and External Worlds* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Marius B. Jansen, "The Meiji Restoration," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 308–66.

⁴ Nicholas J. Haiducek, *Japanese Education: Made in the USA* (New York: Praeger, 1991); George Feifer, *Breaking Open Japan: Commodore Perry, Lord Abe, and American Imperialism in 1853* (New York: Smithsonian Books, 2006).

⁵ Sukehiro Hirakawa, "Japan's Turn to the West," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen, trans. B. T. Wakabayashi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 449.

⁶ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860–1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁷ Jansen, "The Meiji Restoration."

⁸ Martin Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounters: The American University in Japan and Korea* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); William L. Neumann, *America Encounters Japan: From Perry to MacArthur* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963).

interest in Japan, occupied a privileged role as a partner in that westernisation from the outset.⁹ Shortly after Perry's expedition, merchants, missionaries, educators and a cadre of quasi-governmental advisors augmented an official American presence in Japan.¹⁰ Further, the United States began to relax some of the more onerous provisions of the earlier treaties – increasing its attractiveness as a partner for the Japanese.¹¹

For several reasons, the Meiji Restoration came at a particularly opportune time for the United States: (1) American foreign policy increasingly turned expansionist – though expansion was initially achieved by economic means; and (2) concerns over Russia's imperial ambitions provoked a desire for a strong American presence in the Pacific.¹² For Japan, the rude awakening provided by western intrusion into its domestic affairs forced the realisation that western governments were rapidly carving up the globe into spheres of influence.¹³ This realisation offered only two paths forward for the Meiji government: life as the colonial subjects of a western power or rapid westernisation to preserve Japanese independence.¹⁴ In choosing westernisation, the United States became an ally of convenience since it could help manage the other western governments with interests in Japan but lacked the imperial wherewithal to strip Japan of its sovereignty.

Westernisation and imperial ambitions

The behaviour of the United States and of Japan during the late nineteenth century is only understandable within the context of a larger historiographic theory of empire.¹⁵ Despite its reticence in declaring itself as a traditional empire in the mould of Britain or Russia, the United States pursued imperial ambitions in line with much of Europe at the time.¹⁶ European imperialism, however, is typically situated within common historical notions of imperialism, which focus on formal delineations of control or instances in which states maintained direct occupation and governance of territories.¹⁷ This type of imperial action is especially evident in the period preceding the 1884 Berlin conference.¹⁸ The United States largely eschewed this approach, and instead adopted informal means of imperial control.

Historians hold differing perspectives on the motivations behind this divergence in imperial behaviour. Robinson and Gallagher maintain that geopolitics and strategic competition drove informal imperial power. The upkeep of formal control was a costly affair, requiring military commitment and an extensive resettlement of native citizens, but the

⁹In the near term, this position was rivalled only by Germany's influence in the Meiji government. For more, see: Richard Sims, *Japanese Political History since the Meiji Renovation, 1868–2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

¹⁰Hirakawa, "Japan's Turn to the West."

¹¹LaFeber, *The New Empire*.

¹²David C. Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire: The American Debate over International Relations, 1789–1941* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2009); Richard H. Immerman, *Empire for Liberty: A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹³Cullen, *History of Japan*.

¹⁴Hirakawa, "Japan's Turn to the West."

¹⁵Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*; Immerman, *Empire for Liberty*; LaFeber, *The New Empire*; Eric T. L. Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1961).

¹⁶William Roger Louis, "Introduction," in *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy*, ed. William Roger Louis (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976).

¹⁷Louis, "Introduction."

¹⁸*Ibid.*

need to preserve any strategic advantage remained an absolute imperative.¹⁹ Hobson and the proponents of New Imperialism, however, argue that global imperialism throughout the nineteenth century was mainly driven by economic forces.²⁰ Capitalist states used coercive means to open new foreign markets for new resources and markets once the limits of the home country became strained. Critics of New Imperialism emphasise the primacy of geopolitics, yet the cause of such manoeuvring can also be attributed to competitive urges for greater industrial power.²¹ The United States largely utilised imperial tactics in the pursuit of economic goals, with the forced opening of Japanese ports as a paradigmatic example.²² A New Imperialist approach, therefore, is a useful frame for understanding American imperial actions in Japan.

In late nineteenth-century America, economic goals took precedence over formal territorial control when it came to American imperial ambition. As it recovered from the Civil War, the United States systematically remade itself – most notably through expansion in the West.²³ Lessons learned from Reconstruction and the rapid consolidation of western territories provided the blueprint for expansion overseas,²⁴ which proximity dictated would occur via the Pacific.²⁵ Indeed, the United States' early efforts in Japan were fuelled by the need for an expanding market to serve as an outlet for the expanding American industrial base.²⁶ As the economy expanded, American business interests were not merely content to ply their wares in foreign ports; they wanted those ports to resemble home, leading to the export of political thought and religion.²⁷ From the Meiji government's perspective, the soft imperialism of the United States offered a welcome respite from the aggression displayed by the Russians, French and British elsewhere.²⁸

The dominant historiography of the Meiji Restoration suggests that the Tokugawa Shogunate fell due to the confluence of external forces and internal strife driven by increasing recognition of the technological inferiority of Japanese industry.²⁹ That same historiography goes on to suggest that rapid westernisation offered the only viable independent path forward.³⁰ By voluntarily westernising, Meiji officials remained in power and selectively assimilated western innovations in a way that did not radically alter the prevailing social order.³¹ In his analysis of Meiji era agricultural policy, Sugihara noted: "The main policy goal was to activate and modernize the existing rural economic structure, by providing the essential support, such as education, market information, modern transport and energy."³²

¹⁹Louis, "Introduction."

²⁰John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (New York: James Pott, 1902).

²¹Louis, "Introduction."

²²Hobson, *Imperialism*.

²³Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2002); Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009).

²⁴Cullen, *A History of Japan*.

²⁵Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*.

²⁶Cullen, *A History of Japan*; LaFeber, *The New Empire*; May, *Imperial Democracy*.

²⁷Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*; Immerman, *Empire for Liberty*; May, *Imperial Democracy*; Michio Nagai, *Higher Education in Japan: Its Take-off and Crash*, trans. J. Dusenbury (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1971).

²⁸Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*; Neumann, *American Encounters Japan*.

²⁹Cullen, *A History of Japan*.

³⁰Akira Iriye, "Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. M.B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 721–82.

³¹Nagai, *Higher Education in Japan*.

³²Kaoru Sugihara, "Agriculture and Industrialization: The Japanese Experience," in *Agriculture and Industrialization: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. Peter Mathias and John A. Davis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 149.

To that end, the Meiji leaders also utilised a resurgent Japanese nationalism – driven by fear of western military superiority – to centralise, professionalise and expand government infrastructure.³³

Nonetheless, these efforts were contested; as Japan began to pursue its own imperial ambitions in the 1880s and 1890s, it faced resistance from domestic critics as well as the western powers.³⁴ Nowhere were these pressures more apparent than on Hokkaido, the northernmost Japanese island and the closest to Russia. Hokkaido had long functioned as an outlet for excess population and as a buffer zone with Russia. With the Tokugawa Shogunate's fall, it also became the home of dispossessed samurai from the central islands.³⁵ As a result, early reform efforts on Hokkaido were intended to move the island securely into the Japanese sphere of influence and keep it from Russian control.³⁶ Consequently, the founding of Sapporo Agricultural College in the capital of the Hokkaido prefecture functioned as a mechanism of social control, a step towards producing experts to reinforce and legitimise the Meiji government, and one plank in a larger programme of domestic westernisation and international imperialism.³⁷

Westernisation as a form of anti-colonialism and colonialism

Economic considerations drove westernisation efforts from the 1850s onwards. Foreign influence entered Japan through its treaty ports and spread via the teachers, missionaries, cultural materials, and western-educated Japanese that flowed inland.³⁸ Whereas the Tokugawa Shogunate attempted to prevent westernisation's spread, the Meiji government redirected it to serve national interests. Early examples included the development of a westernised military, the adoption of new techniques for textile production, and the use of scientific agricultural techniques.³⁹ However, despite the economic linkages and Japan's retrograde military infrastructure, no western power seems to have seriously entertained the notion of annexing Japan during this period. Two plausible explanations exist for this treatment: (1) westernisation led to the perception of Japan as an "outpost of civilisation" – essentially a western power in East Asia; and (2) Japan's modernisation provided enough material resources that the annexation of Japan could not be undertaken in tandem while maintaining imperial holdings elsewhere.⁴⁰

Beyond the recognition of Japan as an outpost of western civilisation, Japan's westernisation also afforded it an industrial and economic base from which it could both protect its

³³Thomas R. H. Havens, *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan: Agrarian Nationalism, 1870–1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Iriye, "Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status.;" Neumann, *America Encounters Japan*.

³⁴Robert H. Ferrell, *Foundations of American Diplomacy, 1775–1872* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1968); LaFeber, *The New Empire*.

³⁵Marius B. Jansen, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

³⁶Jansen, "The Meiji Restoration"; Stephen Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji, 1868–1885," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 367–431.

³⁷Foucault, *Power*; Joseph M. Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American–Japanese Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Mark R. Nemecek, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds: Universities, Leadership, and the Development of the American State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

³⁸Jansen, "The Meiji Restoration."

³⁹Sugihara, "Agriculture and Industrialization."

⁴⁰Henning, *Outposts of Civilization*.

own autonomy and exert hegemonic control of its own.⁴¹ Both Adams and Marshall have argued that Japan's westernisation and its attendant advantages and disadvantages are best exemplified through early Meiji educational policy.⁴² In effect, Japanese educational policy served as a bulwark against colonialism by synthesising western knowledge through the lens of Japanese culture.⁴³

Subsequent events suggest that Japan learned the lessons of both westernisation and empire well. Towards the end of the 1880's, the Meiji government turned away from American models of education and sought out the exemplar of military advancement offered by Germany.⁴⁴ Later educational exchanges with Germany provided Japanese students with opportunities to study German military structure, as well as to receive Prussian-style military training.⁴⁵ In its own imperial holdings in Taiwan and Korea, a programme of Japanisation – closely resembling westernisation – allowed Japan to exert tighter central control.⁴⁶ For example, Japan utilised systematic educational reforms and changes in agricultural policy to demonstrate its hegemony within its new holdings.⁴⁷ Thus, westernisation occupied a paradoxical space in nineteenth-century Japan: it was initially a domestic policy designed to deter foreign intervention, but later became, in a modified way, a part of Japan's own imperial activities in the Pacific.

Agriculture and education in Japan

Educational policy played a prominent role in global diplomacy and imperial expansion. According to Carnoy, education contributes to the formation of capitalist societies, and, within the framework of New Imperialism, provides an avenue for cultural imperialism and domination.⁴⁸ Beginning in the eighteenth century, for example, Britain employed education as a means of inculcating British norms and values throughout Indian society, with the ultimate goal of creating capitalist consumers for Britain's expanding markets.⁴⁹ In this way, education helped to ease along societal and governmental transformations, reforming feudal and traditional societies into modern capitalist states, and was a common, if not necessary, component of informal imperial power in the mid to late nineteenth century.

⁴¹Henning, *Outposts of Civilizations*.

⁴²Donald Adams, *Education and Modernization in Asia* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1970); Byron K. Marshall, *Learning to be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994).

⁴³Benjamin C. Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872–1890* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

⁴⁴Sims, *Japanese Political History since the Meiji Renovation, 1868–2000*.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming Japanese: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

⁴⁷Chih-Ming Ka, *Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan: Land Tenure, Development, and Dependency, 1895–1945* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995); Ping-Hui Liao and David D. Wang, eds., *Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1895–1945: History, Culture, Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Ramon M. Myers and Yamada Saburo, "Agricultural Development in the Empire," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 420–52; E. Patricia Tsurumi, "Colonial Education in Korea and Taiwan," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers & Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 275–311.

⁴⁸Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: David McKay, 1974).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

The Meiji government also viewed educational policy as a form of diplomacy.⁵⁰ Produced just months into the Meiji Restoration, the Kyoto Charter Oath articulated two of the era's defining impulses: (1) Japan would join the international community; and (2) scientific inquiry and modern education would drive this work.⁵¹ Meiji reforms also ripped asunder Japan's underlying feudal structure; the samurai were displaced and a land value system of taxation replaced one based on crop yield.⁵² Consequently, Japan started looking to the West for ways to grapple with these ambitious goals and pervasive challenges.⁵³

As Japan westernised, it rapidly expanded its educational system with a goal of universal literacy articulated in government policy as early as 1872.⁵⁴ The Japanese government also encouraged students to pursue advanced degrees abroad while it imported foreign expertise to catalyse the creation of new universities.⁵⁵ This emphasis on expertise mirrored the post-Civil War United States, wherein university-educated experts supported an expanded bureaucracy and, ultimately, helped to legitimise the re-emerging American state.⁵⁶ To fully understand how these things came to pass requires an analysis of the western role in Japanese education, the structure of Japanese postsecondary education, and the nature of agricultural education in Japan – both generally and in Hokkaido specifically.

Even before the Meiji Restoration, growing interest in western schooling existed in Japan.⁵⁷ Reformers like Fukuzawa Yukichi returned from diplomatic missions “less interested in the material and technical marvels of the West than in how the schools and other institutions were actually run”.⁵⁸ According to the prevailing historiography, this interest in western education developed in response to the belief that western militaries and economies arose from their superior educational systems.⁵⁹ As such, when the Meiji Restoration occurred, the policy of *bunmei kaika* – civilisation and enlightenment – assumed a place of prominence almost equal to that of *osei fukko* – return to direct imperial rule.⁶⁰ From the outset, the goal in this undertaking was to “turn western learning to Japan's advantage in its struggles against the colonialist powers”.⁶¹ Consequently, the Meiji government subsidised the foreign study of future faculty members and bureaucrats and imported large numbers of foreign scholars.⁶² Americans dominated the faculty ranks at Tokyo University until the 1890s but were joined from the outset and were eventually supplanted by Japanese scholars who were educated in the United States.⁶³ These foreign-educated experts were not allowed to linger in the United States, as their contributions were needed in the service of the new

⁵⁰Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*; Teruhisa Horio, *Educational Thought and Ideology in Modern Japan: State Authority and Intellectual Freedom*, trans. S. Platzer (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1988); Mark E. Lincicome, *Principle, Praxis, and the Politics of Educational Reform in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

⁵¹William G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978); Ishii Ryosuke, *Japanese Legislation in the Meiji Era*, trans. W. J. Chambliss (Tokyo: Pan-Pacific Press, 1958).

⁵²Conrad Shirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations* (Stamford: Thomson, 1989).

⁵³Shirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations*.

⁵⁴Adams, *Education and Modernization*.

⁵⁵Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*.

⁵⁶Nemec, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds*.

⁵⁷Lincicome, *Principle, Praxis, and the Politics of Educational Reform*; Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1965).

⁵⁸Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, 64.

⁵⁹Akiyoshi Yonezawa, “Facing Crisis: Soft Power and Japanese Education in a Global Context,” in *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*, ed. Yasushi Watanabe and David L. McConnell (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 54–74.

⁶⁰Horio, *Educational Thought and Ideology*.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 29.

⁶²Yoshiyuki Kikuchi, *Anglo-American Connections in Japanese Chemistry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Marshall, *Learning to be Modern*.

⁶³Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*.

Japanese state.⁶⁴ From the outset, Meiji educational policy saw study abroad and the use of American faculty members only as a way to produce the next generation of Japanese faculty – thereby decreasing Japan's reliance on foreign scholars and increasing its domestic expertise.⁶⁵

Western educational influences extended into Japanese society as well. Hirakawa argued that foreign teachers were responsible for introducing western artefacts, such as western clothing, the solar calendar and Sunday holidays.⁶⁶ While the Meiji attempted to minimise western influence, the prevailing historiography suggests that the rapidity of the westernisation rendered those efforts futile. Western textbooks from the United States and Europe were frequently used, introducing new ideas to Japan.⁶⁷ Moreover, many teachers were also missionaries who insisted on the use of the New Testament as a teaching tool. In fact, the Christian ideas introduced through western schooling posed a particular problem for Japan, as the classroom proved more effective in spreading Christianity than the churchyard.⁶⁸ As Howes noted, early Japanese Christian communities grew up around schools, including William Smith Clark's at Hokkaido.⁶⁹

From the outset, agricultural education was seen as particularly critical to an independent Japan since it offered a unique opportunity to build a new national identity in the rural and remote segments of Japan.⁷⁰ The Iwakura mission to the United States and Europe from 1872 to 1873 found that Japanese agricultural prowess lagged well behind the western nation-states and called for a scientific approach to agriculture facilitated by specialised colleges.⁷¹ Shortly thereafter, the Meiji government launched a series of policy changes designed to boost agricultural productivity.⁷² While these policies destabilised the status quo and prompted rural protests, they laid the foundation for modern agriculture in Japan.⁷³

Since poor rice harvests could sway the Japanese domestic economy and yields were particularly poor in 1865 and 1866, these shifts can be seen as part of a growing government interest in agriculture that would come to include the establishment of experiment stations in 1877.⁷⁴ As Hayami noted, until the creation of these experiment stations, government policy had only emphasised the introduction of westernised agriculture.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, these attempts almost always met with failure. When viewed through western eyes, Japanese

⁶⁴C. W. Brooks to William Smith Clark, 14 September 1871. *William Smith Clark Papers* (RG 003/1-1867). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries (hereafter cited as WSCP); Nemeč, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Trends*.

⁶⁵Nemeč, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Trends*; Hirakawa, "Japan's Turn to the West."

⁶⁶Hirakawa, "Japan's Turn to the West," 470.

⁶⁷Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, 71.

⁶⁸Hirakawa, "Japan's Turn to the West."

⁶⁹John F. Howes, "Japanese Christians and American Missionaries," in *Changing Japanese Attitude Towards Modernization*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 337–66.

⁷⁰Nemeč, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Trends*.

⁷¹Havens, *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan*.

⁷²E. Sidney Cawcours, "Economic Change in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Richard J. Smethurst, *Agricultural Development and Tenancy Disputes in Japan, 1870–1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 569–617.

⁷³Smethurst, *Agricultural Development and Tenancy Disputes*; Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji."

⁷⁴Cullen, *A History of Japan*; Havens, *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan*.

⁷⁵Yujiro Hayami, *A Century of Agricultural Growth in Japan* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975).

farming utilised irregular plots of land; insufficient mechanical and draft animal infrastructure; and strange crops. When westernised agriculture attempted to change these conditions, they proved to be adaptive responses to the Japanese physical geography, and, outside the unique landscape of Hokkaido, western improvements were largely unsuccessful. The creation of the experiment stations thus represented the dawning recognition that westernised agriculture was not a panacea.

We see all of these trends encapsulated at Hokkaido. American efforts in Hokkaido began with an 1871–1872 delegation headed by General Horace Capron – Commissioner of Agriculture under President Ulysses Grant – that recommended the creation of an agricultural college. Shortly thereafter, William Smith Clark spent 14 months from 1876 to 1877 as the founding president of Sapporo Agricultural College. The prevailing historiography suggests that this short stay belies the remarkable impact of his presence and, indeed, Clark is still fondly remembered at Hokkaido as his work was continued by his students and colleagues who remained in Japan.⁷⁶

William Smith Clark at Hokkaido

Previous historical work has established the obstacles facing agricultural extension in the nineteenth century: a lack of funding, a lack of support or coordinated action, and an extreme reluctance on the part of working farmers to incorporate agricultural innovations into their daily practice.⁷⁷ Throughout the century, those interested in disseminating agricultural research to the working farmer tried a number of methods: the creation of agricultural societies, fairs and exhibitions to display and demonstrate recent innovations, agricultural magazines and periodicals, formal education in the recently established land-grant institutions, and farmer's institutes for those uninterested in college.⁷⁸ As a result, agricultural extension and education could best be described as unsettled during William Smith Clark's tenures as president of MAC and SAC. Though extension had American roots reaching as far back as the Early Republic, an upsurge of European interest in agricultural improvement led to increased American interest; in response, American policy-makers and politicians turned to extension to protect and promote American agricultural and economic vitality.⁷⁹

William Smith Clark was involved with the creation of MAC from its conception after the passage of the first Morrill Act in 1861. He lobbied heavily for the land-grant institution to be located in western Massachusetts, near Amherst College, where he was employed at that time.⁸⁰ Two other men served as MAC president during its earliest days, and, following the resignation of Paul Ansel Chadbourne in 1866 due to ill health, the board of trustees offered the job to Clark.⁸¹ MAC's early curriculum favoured practical training in agriculture and

⁷⁶Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*; John M. Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido: The Life of William Smith Clark* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002); Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*.

⁷⁷Roy V. Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer: The Rise of Agricultural Extension to 1914* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970).

⁷⁸Adam R. Nelson, "Institutionalizing Agricultural Research in the Early American Republic: An International Perspective," *Perspectives on the History of Higher Education* 30 (2013), 13–39; Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer*; Jeff Zacharakis, "Extension and Community: The Practice of Popular and Progressive Education," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 117 (2008), 13–23; Nathan M. Sorber, "Creating Colleges of Science, Industry, and National Advancement: The Origins of the New England Land-Grant Colleges," *Perspectives on the History of Higher Education* 30 (2013), 41–72.

⁷⁹Nelson, "Institutionalizing Agricultural Research in the Early American Republic"; Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer*; Sorber, "Creating Colleges of Industry"; Zacharakis, "Extension and Community."

⁸⁰Harold Whiting Cary, *The University of Massachusetts: A History of One Hundred Years* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1962).

⁸¹Cary, *The University of Massachusetts*.

horticulture; students were expected to work several hours each day on the “experimental farm” established concurrently with the college.⁸²

Though Clark was an ardent believer in agricultural education, he had difficulties securing the support MAC needed; the college was perpetually in need of funding and faced criticism from educators and farmers alike.⁸³ Farmers were not impressed by the experimental farm and thought the curriculum too bookish while other college leaders thought that the curriculum lacked academic rigor.⁸⁴ Despite MAC’s perennial problems, Clark was a well-known public figure who had set up an agricultural college complete with an experimental farm, a liberal arts curriculum that also emphasised engineering, and military training – an oft-neglected facet of American land-grant education that produced a pool of potential soldiers to serve the state. While they failed to impress his American counterparts in Massachusetts and elsewhere, all of these attributes made a positive impression on the Meiji government.⁸⁵

A long courtship occurred between Clark and Japanese officials before he was asked to establish SAC. In 1871, Clark maintained a business contact with fellow Massachusetts native Horace Capron, who served as the principal foreign adviser to General Kuroda Kiyotaka in Hokkaido.⁸⁶ Upon the request of Mori Arinori, the Japanese *chargé d’affaires* at the legation in Washington, Capron recommended MAC as “the best educational institution for a Japanese youth of high rank” in the United States.⁸⁷ Clark welcomed Mori’s chosen student, Naito Seitaro, in 1872 along with several other Japanese students interested in the study of modern, western agriculture.⁸⁸ While visiting Naito in the summer of that year, Mori exclaimed that “[MAC] is the kind of an institution Japan must have, that is what we need, an institution that shall teach young men to feed themselves and to defend themselves”.⁸⁹

Contact continued thereafter. In September 1871, Charles Wolcott Brooks, the Japanese consul in San Francisco, thanked Clark for sending him MAC’s annual report, noting that “the Government of Japan are now educating several thousand students in all the branches of a scientifically developed education”.⁹⁰ Brooks suggested that further students be sent abroad to be educated; however, “as Japan requires a great deal with a comparatively limited time, her first scholars cannot be allowed to remain as long or to acquire as thorough and detailed a knowledge as those who come later”.⁹¹ The immediacy of Japan’s modernising needs largely precluded extended academic stays, and a pillar of the new Meiji Government’s education policy aimed for the “elevation of Japan intellectually, morally and physically”.⁹² Mori also sought the advice of Clark, along with many other American college and university presidents, on commercial, agricultural and industrial education.⁹³

⁸²Cary, *The University of Massachusetts*; Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*, 83.

⁸³Cary, *The University of Massachusetts*.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

⁸⁵Nemec, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds*.

⁸⁶Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 122.

⁸⁸Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 124.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

⁹¹*Ibid.*

⁹²Mori to William Smith Clark, 3 July 1872. WSCP.

⁹³Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*; A. Mori to William Smith Clark, 3 July 1872. WSCP.

The archives are largely silent on the subject of when and how Clark was asked to establish a Japanese agricultural college. We do know that Clark submitted his request for leave to the MAC Board of Trustees in January 1876 in order to serve as President of SAC in Hokkaido, citing the “positive advantage” for the College to serve as a model for Japanese agricultural education.⁹⁴ The Board assented, and a contract between Clark and the Meiji government was signed on 3 March 1876:

[Clark] will serve the Japanese Government, and perform all the duties assigned to him, for the term of one year from the twentieth day of fifth month, ninth year of Meiji, corresponding with the twentieth day of May 1876 to the twentieth day of the fifth month tenth year of Meiji, corresponding with the twentieth day of May 1877, in the capacity of Assistant Director, President and Professor of Agriculture, Chemistry, Mathematics and the English Language, at the Sapporo College, Hokkaido, Japan, under the management of the Kaitakushi.⁹⁵

Clark selected two former students, William Wheeler and David Penhallow, to teach at Sapporo – where the three men alone would be responsible for delivering a curriculum that mirrored MAC’s.⁹⁶

Clark arrived in Hokkaido on his fiftieth birthday, 31 July 1876.⁹⁷ He immediately set about refining the college’s structure to match the ambitions of Mori and his Meiji colleagues.⁹⁸ A copy of the new daily routine under Clark details a rigorous class schedule of English, geometry, arithmetic and botany, among others.⁹⁹ Even the Prime Minister, Sanjo Sanetomi, took interest in Clark’s work, noting his satisfaction in a letter to SAC Director Zushio Hirotake:

I am happy to know that the students of Sapporo College are making progress under the exceptionally diligent instruction of President Clark. Upon my return to Tokio, I shall report the particulars to the Mikado, and I doubt not His Majesty will be gratified. Please communicate this to President Clark.¹⁰⁰

A full reorganisation of the SAC took a few weeks more, but by September 1876, Clark sent a copy of his proposal to General Kuroda and the Kaitakushi, the governing body of Hokkaido:

The following branches of knowledge will be regarded as important parts of the College curriculum: The Japanese and English Languages; Elocution, Composition, Drawing, Bookkeeping and forms of Business; Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Surveying, Civil Engineering so far as required in the construction of ordinary roads and railroads, and of works for drainage and irrigation; Physics, with particular attention to Mechanics; Astronomy, Chemistry, with special regard to Agriculture and Metallurgy; Botany, Structural, Physiological and Systematic Zoology, Human and Comparative Anatomy and Physiology, Geology, Political Economy, Mental and Moral Science, and the most thorough instruction in the theory and practice of Agriculture and Horticulture, the various topics being discussed with constant reference to the circumstances and necessities of the farmers of Hokkaido.¹⁰¹

Like MAC’s, this ambitious course of study closely resembled those of generic American liberal arts colleges of the time, despite its supposed focus on agriculture and civil engineering.

⁹⁴W. S. Clark, Petition to the Massachusetts Agricultural College Board of Trustees, 12 January 1876. WSCP.

⁹⁵Y. Kiyonari and W. S. Clark, Contract between President Clark and Minister Yoshida, 3 March 1876. WSCP.

⁹⁶Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*; Y. Kiyonari and W. S. Clark, Contract between President Clark and Minister Yoshida, 3 March 1876. WSCP.

⁹⁷Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*.

⁹⁸Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*; W. S. Clark, Sapporo Agricultural College Daily Routine, 14 August 1876. WSCP.

⁹⁹W. S. Clark, Sapporo Agricultural College Daily Routine, 14 August 1876. WSCP.

¹⁰⁰S. Sanetomi to Zushio Hirotake, 25 August 1876. WSCP.

¹⁰¹W. S. Clark, Sapporo Agricultural College Plan of Organization and Regulations, 2 September 1876. WSCP.

Following four years of study, it would award a Bachelor of Science degree.¹⁰² The general rules further mandated four hours of daily study to match the four hours of daily classes.¹⁰³ Clark also required that new students must be “sixteen years of age, of sound constitution and good moral character”. Additionally, the Kaitakushi required that they sign a contract obliging them to work for the Hokkaido government following graduation.¹⁰⁴ The inclusion of so many of the traditional liberal arts, such as languages and moral science, belies the focus on agricultural education. The Meiji government wanted an imitation of MAC in Sapporo, importing both its agricultural knowledge as well as the liberal accoutrements common to American colleges. These other bodies of knowledge also acted as westernising influences in the landscape of Meiji educational policy.

Perhaps one of Clark’s most important acts at SAC also occurred in September 1876 with his request of a training farm for the college.¹⁰⁵ In a letter to the Kaitakushi, Clark recommends that “a well-equipped farm be placed under the exclusive control of a foreign Professor of Agriculture, who shall be under the direction and authority of the President of the College”, for “the proper training of the students of [SAC] in practical agriculture, and especially in the correct mode of farm management, with due regard to economy of labor, the production of profitable crops and stock, and the maintenance of fertility in the soil”.¹⁰⁶ The training farm could implement the “most rational and approved system of farm economy”, and, according to Clark’s specific stipulation, “only such crops and stock should be raised as are likely to be worth their cost, and as far as practicable hand implements and human labor should be replaced by agricultural machines and the working of horses and cattle”.¹⁰⁷ Clark’s scientific interests supplemented his pragmatic desires, further noting that: “Experiments with new crops, fertilizers and machines, as well as with manufactures such as silk, sugar, beer, vinegar will of course be exceptions to the above general rules, but should always be conducted in the outset upon a moderate scale.”¹⁰⁸ The Kaitakushi agreed to Clark’s requests, writing:

The Sapporo government farm was established for the purpose of furnishing the people a model in agriculture. After consultation with Gen. Horace Capron some years ago, sufficient experiments in producing various crops, raising livestock and general farm management, have been made to demonstrate the adaptation of these things to the climate and soil of Hokkaido. As, however, the customs and ideas of the olden time are yet prevalent, the general introduction of new methods is difficult.¹⁰⁹

General Kuroda’s Meiji loyalties and westernised ambitions are evident in the transfer of the farm to SAC – expressing his “desire to establish upon it the best possible system of agriculture, and to substitute for all the old Japanese habits the best foreign style of farming”.¹¹⁰ Clark was appointed director of the SAC farm in addition to his presidential duties, a portfolio with which he expressed some discomfort: “My contract with the government

¹⁰²W. S. Clark, Sapporo Agricultural College Plan of Organization and Regulations, 2 September 1876. WSCP.

¹⁰³Maki; *A Yankee in Hokkaido*; W. S. Clark, Sapporo Agricultural College Plan of Organization and Regulations, 2 September 1876. WSCP.

¹⁰⁴W. S. Clark, Sapporo Agricultural College Plan of Organization and Regulations, 2 September 1876. WSCP.

¹⁰⁵Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*; W. S. Clark to Kuroda Kiyotaka, 8 September 1876. WSCP.

¹⁰⁶W. S. Clark to Kuroda Kiyotaka, 8 September 1876. WSCP.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹K. Kiyotaka to W. S. Clark, 12 September 1876. WSCP.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*

expires on the twentieth of next May, so that with my best endeavors I could hardly assume control and organize the work for the coming season before the time of my departure for home.”¹¹¹ Another of Clark’s MAC students, William P. Brooks, arrived shortly thereafter and assumed responsibility for the farm.¹¹²

In March 1877, the Kaitakushi sought Clark’s advice on forestry policy, and he responded with earnest detail:

Many centuries ago the kings of England enacted laws for the protection of deer and other wild game and in accordance with the spirit of the times imposed the severest penalties for their violation. More than sixty large tracts of country were converted into forests for the preservation of deer and other game and most of these are still retained as royal forests and carefully guarded by officers appointed for the purpose. Though originally intended merely to preserve game, they yield at the present time a large revenue from the sale of timber.¹¹³

Clark’s thinking on sound forestry policy, as well as its economic and political benefits, demonstrates the western impulses of his advisory role, noting that “every tree is property and belongs to the owner of the land on which it stands, and every person who injures or cuts a tree on government land should be treated as a trespasser.”¹¹⁴ Clark also saw the opportunity for further expansion into Hokkaido, and he recommended that: “good land should be sold to settlers at a very low rate so that all can buy what they need for fuel and lumber.”¹¹⁵ According to Maki, Clark’s forestry advice still informs contemporary Japanese forestry agencies.¹¹⁶

Clark also saw his time in Japan as an opportunity for missionary work. In an early conversation with General Kuroda, Clark advocated the teaching of the Bible, despite a long-time ban on Christianity.¹¹⁷ Kuroda eventually relented, and Clark received Bibles from a missionary in Yokohama to be distributed to his students.¹¹⁸ In November 1876, the students of SAC signed a pledge in which they “solemnly [promised] to abstain entirely from the use in any form, except medicine, of opium, tobacco and alcohol, liquors; and also, from gambling and profane swearing so long as [they were] connected with the institution.”¹¹⁹ The pledge was followed by a request to Clark: “We all desire to study the Bible. So we humbly ask your favor that you will teach us it every Sunday hereafter.”¹²⁰ Clark noted the pledge as an example of “what heathen college students are capable of”, asking “what Christian college can do better?”¹²¹

Clark’s Christianising efforts extended beyond his tenure in Japan. Following his return to Amherst, Clark maintained contact with the Christian community in Hokkaido. One such update read: “You will be delighted to learn that, in August last, Rev. M.C. Harris, our American missionary, visited Sapporo and baptized the entire sophomore class into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”¹²² Clark’s pride in his

¹¹¹W. S. Clark to K. Kiyotaka, 13 September 1876. WSCP.

¹¹²Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*.

¹¹³W. S. Clark, Memorandum on Forestry, 8 March 1877. WSCP.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹¹⁶Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*; W. S. Clark to William B. Churchill, 5 August 1876. WSCP.

¹¹⁹SAC students to W. S. Clark, 28 November 1876. WSCP.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

¹²¹Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*, 174.

¹²²W. S. Clark to Mr Dodge, 31 October 1877. WSCP.

missionary legacy can be seen in his sharing of this information – writing in August 1878 that: “my students in Sapporo continue steadfast in the faith and are very earnest and successful Christians. Rev. M.C. Harris of Hakodati has recently baptized seven Freshmen, and the Kaitakushi does not interfere.”¹²³ Clark even attributed the success of SAC to divine intervention:

It is indeed remarkable that so excellent an English College and Preparatory School should be so liberally sustained in the wilds of Yeaso. The Lord’s hand is clearly in it! We have just parted with a most admirable Christian brother, Rev. Mr. Davis, that he might go and labor with you for the evangelization of “Dai Nippon.”¹²⁴

The “Covenant of Believers in Jesus”, as the organised Christian students of SAC referred to themselves, endeavoured to create an independent church in order to avoid the controlling interference of foreign missionaries and churches.¹²⁵ Consequently, even while westernisation functioned as the leading edge for profound cultural changes, the Meiji era’s emphasis on a moderated approach led to a distinctly Japanese form of Christian community at Hokkaido.

Word of Clark’s successes in Hokkaido followed him home to Massachusetts. In September 1877, Clark received a letter from General Kuroda, who thanked Clark for his work in teaching Japanese students “that useful branch of science in order to enable them in future to undertake the task of developing the Islands of Hokkaido”:¹²⁶

It is now scarcely a year since you entered upon that responsible duty, but by your zealous efforts and hard work, not only has the system of the College been properly established by also the students have already made considerable progress. Indeed it would have been impossible to effect such a speedy success, had its organization and system of instruction not been well planned.¹²⁷

Kuroda also noted that “there is hardly a doubt that, by following the course of education you marked out, and with the help of the ... three professors you leave behind, many useful men will in future come out from that College”.¹²⁸ Clark replied in October:

I am exceedingly grateful for all your confidence and generous kindness to me while in your service, and only regret that I was able to accomplish so little for Japan in consequence of the shortness of my time, my ignorance of the language and customs of your people, and my limit of ability... If you employ wise and good men as professors in the Sapporo College, I am sure its graduates will become most excellent and intelligent officers, and assist most efficiently in the execution of your plans for the improvement of the country.¹²⁹

Kuroda’s recognition that SAC produced useful men also highlights the transformative influence of American education practices in reinforcing expertise and service as components of the new state.¹³⁰ While Clark worried about the potential implications of such

¹²³W. S. Clark to J. H. Neosima, 6 August 1878. WSCP.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*, 179–181.

¹²⁶K. Kiyotaka to William Smith Clark, 14 September 1877. WSCP.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹W. S. Clark to Kuroda Kiyotaka, 26 October 1877. WSCP.

¹³⁰Nemec, *Ivory Towers and Nationalist Minds*.

power, his reply to the General shows his pride and satisfaction in the work accomplished in Hokkaido.¹³¹

William Smith Clark made his final farewell to Hokkaido on 16 April 1877, exactly eight and a half months after his initial arrival.¹³² Observers left behind varying accounts of his famous final address: Oshima Masatake writes that Clark “mounted again on horseback and taking rein in one hand, and a whip in the other looked back toward us, and called aloud: ‘Boys, be ambitious like this old man.’”¹³³ Still earlier writings provide different versions: “Boys, be ambitious for Christ!”, “Boys, be ambitious for good!”, and “Boys, be ambitious not for money or selfish aggrandizement, not for that evanescent thing which men call fame. Be ambitious for the attainment of all that a man ought to be!”¹³⁴ The historical record is unclear about which of these accounts may be the true one, or that Clark even made a parting statement. The discursive space created by the accounts, however, allows us to consider the contradiction between Clark’s injunctions and Japan’s ultimate imperial ambitions. Though Clark insisted that ambitions for worldly pursuits should take second place to ambitions for good, the creation of an agricultural college in Hokkaido reveals Japan’s use of “multi-form tactics” in the pursuit of its own governmental and regulatory ambitions. Despite the inconsistencies, Clark’s declaration of “Boys, be ambitious” retains an important place in Japanese culture, reminiscent of both the progressive and paternalistic aspects of the export of western education principles and scientific agriculture to the Japanese context.¹³⁵ Though Clark’s influence faded in the United States upon his return, his westernising legacy lived on in Hokkaido and Japan as a whole.

Conclusion: extension and empire

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault posited that, starting in the seventeenth century, western European monarchies moved from a system in which the sovereign maintained “power over death” to one that emphasised government’s “power over life”.¹³⁶ Citing both discipline and biopower as two methods of managing “power over life”, Foucault sees the use of these tools are part of a society’s progression towards what we might call modernity, as long as we acknowledge the constructed and historically contingent nature of that term. The concept of biopower and its related theory of governmentality offer a more complex view of the story of American agricultural extension in nineteenth-century Japan, American and Japanese imperial ambitions, and the mechanisms that made their empires possible.

Biopower “brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of the explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life”.¹³⁷ Biopower, less a form of power in itself and more a technique of power, helps governments regulate populations

¹³¹Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*.

¹³²*Ibid.*

¹³³*Ibid.*, 195.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, 195–96.

¹³⁵Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido*.

¹³⁶Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1: *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 138–39.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 143.

by regulating the behaviours of those populations. As Foucault lectured, “this new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species”.¹³⁸ Large numbers of people require management in order to ensure the survival, health and happiness of those individuals – and ultimately of the state, which will avoid being rocked by revolt or discontent. Biopower focuses on the things that affect people on a very large scale, such as birth rates and mortality rates, life expectancy, the control of epidemics and other social ills. Thus, biopower is a regulatory technology that manages populations in the pursuit of balance and continuity of the state – and one of the state’s most effective biopolitical tools is education.

Just as the concept of biopower provides education with a regulatory role, Foucault’s theorisation of governmentality offers a nuanced interpretation of education and empire. While neither the United States nor Japan could be considered an empire in the 1870s, both nations displayed imperial ambitions and could be thought of as nascent imperial powers from the point of view of theories of empire that distinguish between economic and hegemonic power. Though historically economic and hegemonic forces have been unified under the auspices of a sovereign government, there is no structural reason that they must.¹³⁹ We draw on Foucault’s definition of governmentality, which holds that:

... what government has to do with is not territory but, rather, a sort of complex composed of men and things. The things, in this sense, with which government is to be concerned are in fact men, but men in their relation, their links, their imbrication with those things that are wealth resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, and so on: men in their relation to those other things that are customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, and so on; finally men in their relation to those still other things that might be accidents or misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death, and so on.¹⁴⁰

In this conceptualisation, territory is but a means to an end: that is, the acquisition of territory has historically allowed governments to exert control over the lives of those in that territory. Governmentality involves the ability of governments to regulate individuals through indirect mechanisms – rather than relying on the direct imposition of the law, governmentality relies on biopolitical controls to discipline and manage populations. As Foucault explained, “the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes it directs; and the instruments of government, instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiform tactics”.¹⁴¹

Among the most important of these “multiform tactics” are education, religion and economy, and all of those were present in the founding of Sapporo Agricultural College in Meiji Japan. Foucault emphasised that a “whole complex of knowledges” must be created to legitimise authority, and others have noted the key role that higher education plays in legitimising social and political order.¹⁴² Education, a technique of governmental and biopolitical regulatory control, extended the power of the Meiji government in Hokkaido, fully incorporating it into their sphere and protecting it from their aggressive Russian neighbours. Notably, this sort of regulation of biopower serves as a multiform tactic of empire

¹³⁸Foucault, “17 March 1976,” in *“Society Must Be Defended”: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 242.

¹³⁹Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁰Foucault, *Power*, 208–9.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁴²Philip Altbach and Patti McGill Peterson, “Higher Education as a Projection of American’s Soft Power,” in *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 37–53; Foucault, *Power*, 220.

even when the innovation it introduces – in this case, westernised agriculture – does not work. Simply by disrupting their daily lives, the Meiji government reinforced its control over their citizenry.

Further supporting this argument, Foucault also argued that “the apparatuses of security” are the mechanism by which governmental power is legitimised in a post-feudal landscape; a landscape which, notably, Japan was just entering into in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴³ By suggesting that SAC would help prevent economic scarcity, both the Japanese and American governments held out the hope for security and promoted their roles in the perpetuation thereof. These efforts were coupled with other “multiform tactics” promoted by imported American educational experts, such as William Smith Clark, in the form of Christianity, consumer goods and other western influences to the Japanese environment.

With this theoretical framework in mind, agricultural extension takes on imperial proportions as one of these “multiform tactics” – a biopolitical control that helped exert power over and regulate the population in a distant province of the nascent Japanese empire. In the United States, demonstration farms, land-grant institutions, experiment stations and, ultimately, a nationwide cooperative extension system brought scientific agriculture to the nation’s farmers while also altering the ways they farmed and interacted with the state. In Japan, American agricultural extension functioned differently: It served principally as a disruption to the status quo, but it was nonetheless a “multiform tactic” of empire. William Smith Clark’s work in Hokkaido, which brought a new system of higher education, Christian theology and further inculcation into the world economy, fits well within the developing narrative of imperialism and empire in the late nineteenth century. Whatever the meaning behind Clark’s famous parting words to his students or the success of his stay in Japan, Japan’s use of western technology and ideology allowed it to be ambitious as well – ambitious in the pursuit of empire.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Garrett Gowen is a doctoral student in the School of Education at Iowa State University. His research interests include the history, organisation, and social and civic outcomes of higher education institutions.

Rachel Friedensen is a doctoral candidate in educational policy and leadership studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is currently writing her dissertation about diversity policies at US universities.

Ezekiel Kimball is an assistant professor of higher education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. In his work he examines the roles that individual agency, institutional practices and social structures play in the construction of student experience.

ORCID

Ezekiel Kimball  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1428-7586>

¹⁴³Foucault, *Power*.

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