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IRIS Graduate Student Summer Fieldwork Award Report

In the past summer, with the Graduate Student Summer Fieldwork Award granted by the Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS), I was able to conduct a two-month extensive research trip in China. Working towards the preparation for my PhD preliminary study, which investigates the modernization of marine biology and aquaculture in China, this pre-dissertation trip allows me to explore key archives for the institutions under my examination; undertake participant observations at pearl-farms; and build up academic networks with Chinese scholars working on the history of biology and aquaculture in twentieth-century China.

As a historical study, my research is predominately based on the availability of archival materials. My summer fieldwork in China primarily consists of archival research in Nanjing, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Qingdao. As the time frame for my study mainly covers the Nanjing Decade (1927-1937) of Republican China, I first spent one week on the Second National Archives of China at Nanjing, where the governmental archives of Republican China were documented. The Archives offers me access to understand the Nationalist government's policy on Biological education and how the education was evaluated and promoted as a way for the cultivation of patriotism. In the Archives, I was able to acquire a copy of documents which recording the process in which National Curriculum for Natural History and Biology was prepared, discussed and settled in Nationalist China.

In addition to the national archives preserved in Nanjing, I also explored three municipal

archives in three coast cities of China, namely, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Qingdao, where knowledge of modern marine biology was first introduced, institutionalized and practiced. In the three municipal archives, I explored two types of information: one concerning institutions for aquacultural education, and the other one on the practices of experimental aquacultural farms.

In these three coast cities, I combine participant observation with my archival research. I visited freshwater pearl-farms, Tears of Angel (*Tianshi zhi lei*) pearl company, its pearl-theme museum, and China's largest market for freshwater pearls in the Zhuji County, which takes two-hour public transportation from Hangzhou. Building on my earlier field trips to seawater pearl-farms and theme museum in Toba, Japan, my trip to the Zhuji County offers insight to understand the circulation of pearl-farming knowledge from Japan to China, which took place in the late 1930s. I see a great potential in the topic to be developed in my preliminary study and dissertation research.

Moreover, in Hangzhou and Qingdao, I visited two major public cultural institutes related to marine biology and its popularization: Hangzhou Provincial Museum, where the first public exhibition of marine biology was held in China in 1929, and Qingdao Aquarium, the first Chinese aquarium established by Chinese scientists with Chinese governmental supports in 1932. Though I was not able to exhaust the archives preserved in these two institutes, I established contact with their librarians, which I believe will be significantly helpful for my future research on the popularization of marine biology in modern China.

Last but not the least, at my last stop in China, I visited historians of science at the Chinese Academy of Science in Beijing. As the current national research center of natural sciences, the Academy possesses valuable archives about the history of science in modern China from the

1920s through today. By meeting with historians who working on biology, agriculture/aquaculture, and science policy, I was introduced with a significant amount of literature in Chinese on the institutionalization of marine biology in modern China and, more importantly, on traditional ways of perceiving and engaging with marine environment in pre-modern China. This cultural transition, which plays a critical role in my historical pursuit, will hopefully lead to intellectual collaboration and co-authorship for me in a foreseeable future.

In all, as a PhD student working on the history of science in modern East Asia, I am truly honored and privileged to be a recipient of the Graduate Student Summer Fieldwork Award granted by the IRIS, which has been effectively facilitated the development of my intellectual pursuit and historical research.