Seeds of Control: Japan's Empire of Forestry in Colonial Korea. David Fedman. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020. 320 pp. $40. Hardcover. ISBN-13: 9780295747453.

David Fedman's *Seeds of Control: Japan's Empire of Forestry in Colonial Korea* represents a major milestone in what is now a rapidly maturing literature in English on colonial Korea. This lively account joins a burgeoning list of recent studies, such as Jun Uchida's *Brokers of Empire*, Todd Henry's *Assimilating Seoul*, and Sungyun Lim's *Rules of the House*, that provide for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the workings of the colonial state and colonial society than the rather caricatured picture presented in older historical works. More specifically, within this increasingly sophisticated literature, Fedman draws our attention to the use and management of Korea's forests. Previous studies on colonial Korea have largely focused on the major urban centres, often utilizing the concept of colonial modernity, and when they have engaged the Korean countryside it has usually been in the context of the agrarian problem, i.e., charting and debating the extension of Japanese ownership over agricultural land, as well as rising poverty and tenancy rates among Korean farmers. For the most part the vast forests of the Korean peninsula have been out of view, a considerable oversight when we consider they covered the majority of land, were an important source of building materials and fuel, whilst forest products permeated everyday consumption in both city and farming village. In this sense, bringing the forest into view is itself a major contribution to the historiography of colonial Korea, yet in many ways this book offers far more than a simple account of colonial period forestry.

Through the lens of forestry management Fedman's study is an environmental history of both colonial Korea and imperial Japan on the one hand, and a nuanced account of interactions, marked by both contestation and collaboration, between the colonial administration, Korean forest communities, industrial capital, and professional forestry scientists, on the other. It provides a grounded account of the reality of colonial rule, as well as the process by which Korean forests were managed by a policy derived from Japanese assumptions about Koreans and their forests, Japan's own experience in the Meiji period, and the surprisingly transnational networks of scientific knowledge production within the Japanese empire. In his lively account, Fedman draws on a wealth of literature and sources, primarily in Japanese and Korean, including specialist forestry periodicals, colonial government reports, contemporary media, company histories and the recollections of several of those involved in colonial period forestry management to show how governing Korean forests was an important part of the colonial state's effort to "reorganize society" (224) and how the legacy of this period and its greenification drives left an imprint on the peninsula after liberation.

The work is organized into three main parts. The first, titled "Roots," provides a compelling narrative of changing Japanese forestry governance across the Tokugawa through to the Meiji era and then charts how the Meiji experience was then transferred to Japan's colonial territories albeit with somewhat diverging outcomes in each colony. It then discusses Korean forestry management in the late Choson period and the contradictory images held by foreign visitors and prospectors of Korean forests as both barren and promising sources of timber. The second part, titled "Reforms," contains four chapters which individually tackle: the attempt to establish a system of imperial land rights over Korean forests; the efforts of individuals (both Korean and Japanese) working at the colonial government's experiment stations to engineer

forest growth; the growth of a timber industry in Korea; and initiatives on the part of the colonial state to foster a sense of civic forestry via owners' associations. The third part, titled "Campaigns," explores ideological aspects of the colonial state's forestry policy and the desperate mobilization of forestry resources in support of Japan's war effort. Here Fedman avoids simply charting the plundering of Korea's forests during the war. Instead, he gives great attention to what the centralization of resource use/allocation meant for individual households, and, more importantly, how their response to fuel scarcity generated "a radical reconfiguration of energy pathways" (221) that saw a rationalization of traditional heating systems in Korean homes.

In the concluding chapter Fedman all too briefly sketches the ways in which the experience of the colonial period left an imprint on forestry governance in liberated Korea. It was here that I felt my only grumble with this otherwise outstanding work. Having highlighted the continuities across the standard chronological divide, Fedman largely stuck to the colonial period as his chronological frame when parts of his argument called for a fuller extension of his keen analysis into liberated Korea. This minor grumble aside, Fedman has produced a remarkable work that will surely appeal to an academic audience (both graduate and under-graduate) interested in Japanese, Korean, colonial or environmental history. You will certainly find it on my next course reading list.

Steven Ivings, Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University