



Umesao Tadao, *Journal of Journeys to Southeast Asia*

Kitazawa Naohiro

Journal of Journeys to Southeast Asia is a travelogue of journeys to Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos in which ecologist and ethnologist Umesao Tadao, and later the first Director General of the National Museum of Ethnology, attempts to compare the civilizations of the respective countries. The book devotes much space to the research and travel records when Umesao participated in the “Osaka City University Biological Expedition to Southeast” as expedition leader. We must remember that at this time, the memories of World War II were still vividly present in Southeast Asia and diplomatic ties with Japan were just being resumed. Umesao’s accounts, which he obtained while visiting various places by car, compare the knowledge he obtained through books and his own observations. There is much to be learned from this work penned over half a century ago, for it includes both the landscapes that have already been lost and the cultures that still remain to this day. What is distinctive of this travelogue is that it includes stories behind fund-raising, negotiations with administrative bodies, as well as troubles while on the road—the worries not documented in public records—and is therefore strongly personal in nature. Although it is written in plain language, the travelogue describes the way specialists of different nationalities and fields of study conducted research together and thereby conveys not only the social state of affairs in Southeast Asia at the time but also the very excitement of field work.



東南アジア紀行
(上) 梅棹忠夫

中公文庫

Source:

- Umesao Tadao, *Journal of Journeys to Southeast Asia* (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1964; later Chuko Bunko, two volumes, 1979)