

Paper Abstract: The History of Energy and the Environment
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Shi-Lin Loh

shiloh@fas.harvard.edu

Ph.D. Candidate, History and East Asian Languages, Harvard University
Visiting Researcher, Waseda University, Japan (2015-2016)

Academic Site: <https://harvard.academia.edu/shiloh>

Exposed Bodies, Experimental Rays: Radiation in Japan before Hiroshima and Nagasaki

This paper examines the uses of ionizing radiation in Japan before 1945, focusing on their deployment in medical and scientific experiments. It will show that Japanese scientific and medical experts, like their Western counterparts, were well acquainted with the biological effects of ionizing radiation via the use of X-rays and radium. They acquired this knowledge in three main ways: through painful personal injuries incurred in the course of their research, through exposing animal, plant and human bodies for the sake of that same research, and through reading scientific reports of the same phenomena undertaken by their colleagues in Europe and America. The exposed bodies of *hibakusha* survivors of the atomic bombings and the nuclear power plant industry were preceded by the *hibakusha* of medical and scientific research. These activities, like the *hibakusha* casualties of medicine and industry, were trans-national phenomena as diffuse as radiation itself.