

The Connection Between "Dryness" and "Ancient Civilization"

Our relationship with Taiki Sangyo Co., Ltd. of Okayama Prefecture (hereafter referred to as Taiki Sangyo) began with the aim of launching an onion drying project based on our established network and accumulated knowledge and experience in Sudan. It was in April 2015 that we put together the proposals for the JICA Public-Private Partnership Feasibility Survey (hereafter referred to as Feasibility Survey) placing the highest priority on site needs, and since then four years have passed. The background and outline of preparation and implementation of the investigation is described in the AAI News mini-series that began in issue 94. The Feasibility Survey was also the beginning of a "dry" collaboration between AAI, which has many years of experience in dry land consultancy work, and Taiki Sangyo, an electric dryer maker, which holds the largest market share in Japan.

In the project investigation, Taiki Sangyo brought a 120 kg electric dryer (E-30 type) to Sudan's Kassala state. The E-30 type was one of the largest electric dryers in Japan at that time and was the main product of Taiki Sangyo. We closely evaluated the machine's performance upon its installation and operation on site and observed one problem - the amount processed per individual operation was less than the expectations of farmers given their scale of onion production. To meet this challenge, Taiki Sangyo decided promptly develop an E-60 type, which has double the processing capacity. It is worth noting that one of the actual results of our Feasibility Survey was that Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted the Economic and Social Development Plan (formerly a 'non-project type' grant aid), through TICAD VI held in Kenya, which was implemented as an ODA project. In this project, 23 units of the E-30 type were deployed and installed in a total of 10 locations; 4 locations in Kassala state, 3 locations in Khartoum state, and 3 locations in River Nile state.

With the steady dissemination of Taiki Sangyo's electric dryers in Sudan, with the utmost care the introduction of the new model E-60 type was promoted in the JICA project, starting in October 2018. In the extension/

demonstration stage, based on the trial results of the Feasibility Survey we aim to demonstrate it as a dry factory with three E-60 types, in a more practical form to be used by the farmers' association. I would like to introduce the details in the future in the form of a mini-series.

Now, the connection with Taiki Sangyo was not only "dryness". It is a shared interest in "ancient civilization". Arid land, which has been the main stage of activity for AAI, is undoubtedly the center of the birth of ancient civilization. While working in developing countries, AAI staffers often visit ruins and historic sites, and many of them have a good knowledge of ancient human history. Since Sudan is the cradle of the Kush (Nubian) civilization, which has a close and mutually influential relationship with Egypt, the author is also investigating its history. However, President Yasuhara of Taiki Sangyo also goes to the Khartoum National Museum on his holidays in Sudan. In addition, he negotiated to borrow several exhibits from the museum for the Okayama Orient Museum Special Exhibition. I was wondering if he just spontaneously began go start negotiations on the exhibits when the reason for his actions suddenly became clear. The Okayama City Orient Museum was founded with the donation of the Orient art collection by President Yasuhara's own grandfather, the late Shinjiro.

After hearing this intriguing story, when the project kick-off party was held in Okayama last fall, I eagerly asked Mr. Yasuhara to take me on a guided tour of the museum. With the common theme of "dryness," we would like to adopt another key phrase in our work alongside Taiki Sangyo "ancient civilization". (April 2018 Naoki Koga)



Pyramids in Sudan



Ancient painting