

CARE BETWEEN BEES AND HUMANS: THE CASE OF BEEKEEPING IN JAPAN

Ria TSUZUKI (Kyoto University, Japan)

How can bees, humans, and other species care for each other?



▷How can social science discuss about care between humans and nonhumans?

CARE

- is a situated, material practice involving ongoing **tinkering and adjustments** in response to specific needs, which emphasizes the **relational and improvisational** nature of care in everyday [Mol, Moser & Pols 2010]
- is about **staying with the trouble**—remaining present in complex, entangled relationships with more-than-human others [Haraway 2016]

For beekeeping, beekeepers engage in ongoing, situated acts of “tinkering” — adjusting hives, responding to bee behavior, and maintaining ecological balance. In this meaning, care theory offers a productive lens for understanding beekeeping not as mere resource extraction, but as a relational and responsive practice.

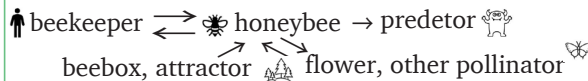
▷How about care for **avocational beekeeping** in Japan ?

	Beeboxes	Bee attractors	Honey harvest		
among humans and nonhumans	 ❖ Beekeepers make various types of beehives ❖ waiting bees coming to stay → makes beekeepers happy	 ❖ applying bee attractors such as bee orchid → also generate some relationship with others	 ❖ harvesting honey once a year (fall) ❖ the honey would be collected from thousands flowers		
among nonhumans (predators)	giant hornet / wasp - using its pheromone to attack - bee colony can protect by themselves	western honeybees - steal japanese honeybees' honey	bears - steal honey and also broke their box	acarine disease (Acarapis woodi) - bees can protect to some extent	

Mark I : Care among multiple species



Mark II : Care in alluring



These examples come from small-scale avocational beekeeping in Japan. When applying the idea of care to commercial contexts, we must also consider its **ambivalence** — including issues of control and exploitation. Still, caring for bees with attention to many other species may be a way of caring for **nature and our planet as well.**

For more discussion about care theory

For further research about beekeeping in Laos

For who has any questions or interest in my research (email)

PP-490 [Beekeeping for Rural Development]

Care between Bees and Humans the Case of Beekeeping in Japan

Ria Tsuzuki

Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

There is a growing global interest in animal welfare, but what are the issues when considering animal welfare in beekeeping? This paper examines the care relationship between humans and bees in beekeeping, based on recent discussions in the field of anthropology about care for animals. From the results of two years of participant observation and interviews, it is shown that semi-wild honeybees engage in mutual care with beekeepers through a “seductive” relationship. In the context of Japanese beekeeping, particularly with the Japanese honeybee and beekeepers, the relationship is not only one in which humans allure the bees for the purpose of beekeeping, but also one in which the bees allure the humans. This form of beekeeping, based on a seductive relationship, demonstrates not only care for the bees but also the potential for beekeeping to offer care for humans, suggesting a form of beekeeping that is not solely focused on extracting honey.