Revisiting Kon Wajiro’s Nihon no Minka

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This book is a record of a follow-up survey for 50 private houses all over Japan which were captured by Wajiro Kon in his “Nihon-no-Minka” first edition, in 1922. We formed a research group named Rekisei-kai, means asphalt in Japanese, including architectural researchers, architects, landscape architects, folklorist, photographer, editor, and students.

It was not easy to find trace of Kon based on only his diary and sketches, yet as a result of six years research work, we have determined 11 neighborhood and 20 exact sites. We found remaining houses much more than we expected. Many houses are not kept purposefully but they had been just “left” as they are.

Also, during the research, we have found Kon was trying to capture the change of houses and lives of people, who were facing the spread of urbanization in Japan at the time, by using the train as a new infrastructure.

We believe that we can withdraw great hint of sustainability for future residential housing and community from those surviving “ordinary” houses as Kon had noticed. We would like to express our gratitude to the people at the local site, who answered our question as if asking themselves, and gave us warm support.