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Invitation to Anthropology

06 September 2017

The Mushroom at the End of the World: Week 1

Life is precarious. Throughout reading the seemingly disconnected chapters, Tsing makes thoughtful observations on how Matsutake mushrooms can be compared in many different spectrums of life, such as relationships, cultural values, scalability, and capitalism. After learning about how the Matsutake mushroom, a breed of mushroom that I’ve never encountered in my life, is intertwined in many anthropological things around the world, it made me ponder what kind of assemblage I belong to and how my actions are contaminating others associated with it. It’s really difficult to know where to draw the line; the whole world, including me, seems to be connected by a thin thread. Throughout the book, Tsing states the new emerging values created by Matsutake—it made me realize that “purity is not an option” (Pg. 27) in this seemingly disharmonious world where everybody is different, and the smallest actions of self-contained individuals affect each other and create a harmony that shapes everyone to learn to adapt and survive. I wonder, what kind of contamination we are making in this world as individuals?