In Search of a “History of East Asia”

Reinosuke Fujiie*

Abstract: In this article the author supported by some 20 other scholars announces a new approach to writing a history of East Asia with emphasis on commonality among its major components, China, Korea, and Japan.

The common denominators binding these countries are a culture formed by the use of the ideographic Chinese characters, Buddhism mediated by the Chinese characters, neo-Confucianism, and the penal and administrative codes.

The entire history of East Asia is developed in four parts: Part 1 from prehistoric era to the 1st century B.C.; Part 2 from 1st century B.C. to 9th century A.D.; Part 3 from 9th century A.D. to mid-19th century; and part 4 from mid-19th century to the present.

Readers will be impressed on this unique approach to capture the whole of history of East Asia.


© 2003 by the Sungkyunkwan University, The Academy of East Asian Studies
Part I

Since August 1982, when the Republic of Korea’s Government filed a protest over the descriptions of Japan’s colonial rule in Japanese textbooks, the so-called textbook controversies erupted in the three countries, namely, Japan, China, and Korea. China and Korea protested the descriptions of Japan’s colonial rule. In the main, China and Korea objected Japan’s aggressive expansion policy in various parts of Asia. Such protests were supported internationally as well. In response to this, the Japanese Government established provisions on “neighboring countries” in the criteria for approval of history textbooks. Japan’s political leaders and the emperor responded with the expression of regrets as the occasion demanded. Such responses were only a temporary glossing over of the issue. Contradicting these moves, some leading cabinet members frequently repeated claims of the “legitimacy” of Japan’s “colonial rule” or rejected charges of “aggression.” This helped create an atmosphere of suspicion about the sincerity of the settled attitude of “apologies” by the Japanese government over the mistakes of the past.

With the arrival of the 1990s, the Cold War structure that had constituted the frame of the postwar world began to collapse. The Gulf War and the civil wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina broke out, while elsewhere European nations began steps to join the European Union. Thus the condition of international society became quite fluid.

It may be argued that with such changes in international society a way of fundamentally coping with the issue of textbooks, searching for the essence of the issue, rather than a temporary glossing over, should be contemplated. Such a consciousness about the problem had begun to emerge among some well-informed people. One

---

1. Necessary consideration will be given to reflect international understanding and international cooperation in dealing with the historical phenomena in the recent and modern periods in neighboring Asian countries. (And additional items in the criteria for the approval of textbooks.)
of the results was, on our part, the formation of the Society for the Study of History Education in East Asia, launched in 1996.\(^2\)

Incidentally, the right-wing controversial Society for Compiling New History Textbooks was inaugurated at about the same time. Perhaps this should be noted as another polar view produced by the situation in the contemporary period.

Historians who, at different times, have supported and participated in the purpose outlined by a group led by my advocacy and have walked the same path to the present together are the leading members. They are listed below in the chronological order of their specialization.\(^3\)

Kudo Motoo, Ancient History of China, Professor of the Department of Literature, Waseda University
Ozawa Masato, Archeology of China, Lecturer, Seijo Junior College
Fujiie Reisosuke, Social and Economic History of China, Professor emeritus, Tokai University
Yi Seong Shi, Ancient History of Korea, Professor of the Department of Literature, Waseda University
Kegazawa Yasunori, History of Tang China, Professor of the Department of Literature, Meiji University
Xia Yingyuan, History of Sino-Japanese Relations, Former Research Fellow, Social Science Academy of China
Kondo Kazunari, History of Song China, Professor of the Department of Literature, Waseda University
Wang Ruilai, History of Song-Yuan China, Part-time Lecturer of the Gakushuin University and others
Miyajima Hiroshi, Social and Economic History of Korea, Professor of Sungkyunkwan University
Fukaya Katumi, Modern and Recent History of Japan, Professor

\(^2\) The naming was done not at the beginning but in the middle of 1997 or so.
\(^3\) For details about participating members, see Yi Seong-shi’s records of the dialogue entitled, \textit{Is History with East Asia as the Subject Possible?} Extra issue of Sekai, No. 696.
In addition, although not present at meetings, we have members who support our purpose and have agreed to contribute with articles. There are more than 10 such historians in China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam. We have also appealed to historians of the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea though the General Federation of Koreans in Japan, but so far without receiving positive response.

We have held regular scheduled monthly meetings, and have met more than 50 times. The basic policies and items on which we have agreed, the problems raised, and controversies developed at the meetings are summarized below:

At the point of departure for our meetings was, as mentioned, we had our self-examination over the textbook controversies since the 1980s. We then conceived an idea that we should search for something that could serve us as a common textbook instead of any individual country’s textbook. Admitted that our effort would hardly be adopted immediately into a textbook, but we hoped that our scheme would become a basis for the shape of a future textbook to come.
For this purpose, the prerequisite was a search for the “image of the History of East Asia.” We do not know whether it is possible to grasp the history of East Asia as a totality beyond the historic view of any individual country, Japan, China, or Korea. Whether this is possible or not, it is besides the point. But without such a viewpoint perhaps we cannot gain a correct image of history. Is it not our responsibility to in search of a concrete view of such history? Since this is unexplored territory in the past historiography, it is expected to be extremely difficult. But let us pursue it. It may be said that this was the basic agreement we reached at the outset.

Moreover, if this task is to be in tune with the trend of world history, such as the collectivity of nations pioneered by the European Union that renders the role of the nation state more relative and lowers barriers among nations, it is indispensable for creating a future perspective of the world of East Asia. In the background is our realization that as historians we live in the contemporary world in which international society is becoming more fluid and opaque. This is our basic agreement as mentioned.

What was to be decided first of all is where the world of East Asia is, the territory to be covered. We concluded as markers of the world of historical East Asia, we would critically take (1) the world of Chinese ideographic characters, (2) the world of Buddhism mediated by the Buddhist scriptures translated into the Chinese script, (3) the world of Confucianism, and (4) the world of penal and administrative codes may be critically inherited. Then, we added some common denominators such as Continental China, the Korean Peninsula, the islands along the deep Pacific trench, from Japanese Islands, the Ryukyu Islands, to Taiwan, and the eastern edge of the Indochina Peninsula (Vietnam).

Next, in contemplating the framework of East Asia as an entity through history, we encountered the question of periodization. For instance, in the case of history of China during the period of the Yin-Zhou Revolution estimated to be in the mid-11th Century, B.C., we have a theory that considers it to mark the change from the old period
to the medieval period. According to another theory, the changing
period during the Spring and Autumn Period in the 5th Century
B.C. is the transition to the medieval period. Still another theory con-
siders the transition period to be from the Three Kingdoms Period in
the 3rd Century, B.C. to the last period of Tang. Another theory
maintains that the period lasting until the end of Tang should be
considered as the Ancient Society. Another view is that only after the
An-shih Rebellion in the 8th Century does China shift to the
Medieval Period. Thus as is well-known these several different theo-
ries have been fiercely debated for several decades since the end of
the World War II. No matter which one theory we might adopt for
the framework of the history of East Asia it would be difficult in sev-
eral ways. Applying it to other periodization in the histories of Japan
and Korea definitely becomes more awkward. Therefore, we have
decided gracefully to forgo the old idea of a periodization such as
ancient period or a medieval period for each individual country.
Instead we have concluded to establish new demarcations common
to the history of East Asia.

These new demarcations call for dividing the history of East
Asia into four periods; The First Period will be from the prehistoric
period to the end of the 1st Century, B.C.; the Second Period will
cover from the end of the 1st Century B.C. to about 19th Century;
the Third Period will be from the end of the Second Period to the
mid-19th Century; and the Fourth Period will be from the latter
half of the 19th Century to the present. We have purposely avoided
giving each period such names as the ancient period or the medieval
period. Instead, we have decided to indicate the four periods with
indications. Thus the First Period will be called the Foundation of
the World of East Asia; the Second Period will be named the For-
mation of the World of East Asia; the Third Period will be the Tradi-
tional Society of East Asia; and the Fourth Period will be entitled the
Rebirth of the World of East Asia.

How have we captured or how are going to capture each period
will be outlined by going into substance. For the First Period we will
present the ecological features of the World of East Asia, and we will seek the shape of the agricultural-nomadic culture. And based on this we will seek the actual condition of the classical civilization of China and the early states such as Xia, Yin, and Zhou. Then, we will examine how these affected various types of civilization that rose in the peripheral areas of East Asia. We will thus endeavor to investigate the substance of the base of the World of East Asia. In that we will regard the flourishing period of the Former Han (the Wu-ti-Xuan-ti Period) as one demarcation for the formation of the base of the World of East Asia, and it will mark the end of the First Period.

The Second Period is an era that witnessed the deterioration and collapse of the Chinese Empire, which was completed for the time being in the Former Han Period, combined with the massive moves southward of the northern nomads such as Xiong-nu and Xian-bei to sweep Northern Qin to settle and intermingle there. This is the period in which the melting of the so-called Hu-Han progressed. This can be seen in the establishment of the Tang Empire, in which the emperors of China also served as the Great Khan of the Hu tribes.

This was also the period in which the small territorial states were born in the peripheral areas of East Asia under the influence of China. These states mutually influenced each other and gradually formed the cultural sphere of the Chinese ideographic characters. The Chinese ideographic characters were the means of transmission through which religions, ideas, and legal systems were spread. During this era these states repeatedly accepted Chinese culture in accordance with the changing situation and the rough form of the World of East Asia took shape. In the history of China this period corresponded to the period that lasted until the end of Tang in the 9th Century.

The Third Period is an era in which the traditional society directly connected to today’s World of East Asia was shaped.

The early part of this Third Period (the 10th to the 13th Century) was an era in which the energy of the northern tribes exerted strong
pressure on the agricultural zones of Asia centered on China. After passing through the change brought about by such pressures, the 14th and 15th Centuries saw dynastic and other changes in various areas of East Asia. The ideology of governing of the state systems—although considerable differences were recognized by the different conditions of each area—was strongly influenced by the Neo-Confucianism started by Zhu Xi of the Southern Song. At this point for the first time the World of East Asia found a unique systematic ideology.

Also during the Third Period, with regard to agriculture the intensive rice cultivation unique to East Asia was established. It was spread to the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Islands. And in China the center of economic prosperity shifted from northwest to southeast. As a result of this, the sphere of trade spread through sea routes to islands such as the Ryukyu Islands and other areas of Asia. This resulted in the variegated main entities that comprises the World of East Asia. Especially the Joseon Dynasty in the Korean Peninsula and the Tokugawa Shogunate in the Japanese Islands, and the Ruan Dynasty of the Indochina Peninsula registered the influence of China, albeit with considerable degrees of variation, and each built a unique own state system and achieved a high degree of development.

The Fourth Period is the so-called recent and modern period, during which the European and American powers that had experienced the Industrial Revolution began to advance into the World of East Asia. This World of East Asia, which had witnessed a variegated development, was suddenly forced to participate, whether it liked it or not, in the international order led by the European and American powers. Because of this, various areas of East Asia were prompted to make the shift to become modern nation-states. But this was also a period during which differences in the situation in which they were placed led countries to develop at different, this contributed to conflicts within East Asia.

The conflicts among the great world powers caused two great wars during the 20th Century. The end of these wars resulted in the
liberation of colonies and semi-colonies in the World of East Asia, but simultaneously gave rise to new conflicts. Alongside such conflicts there was an explosive technological revolution and economic development, which broke down various ideological barriers and curtains. Consequently, under the leading nations’ advocacy of globalization, the world now appears to be moving step by step toward an uncertain future. Thus, we should end our task by asking what lies ahead in the opaque and chaotic 21st Century?

Since we have intended from the very beginning to publish the results of our studies, one reason why we divided the history into four periods as just described is to write a history comprised of four parts. Then we decided to assign ten members from our list to this task as below:

Part I. Responsible Person: Kudo Motoo
Part II. Responsible Person: Kegazawa Yasunori
Yi Seong shi
Part III. Responsible Person: Miyajima Hiroshi
Kondo Kazunari
Wang Ruilai
Part IV. Responsible Person: Namiki Yorihisa
Zhao Jun
Sun Anshi

Additionally, this writer, who serves as the chairman of the regular monthly meetings has been appointed to serve as the person responsible for overall activities.

With the overview and ideas as set forth above and the framework of the totality, the following ideas for the table of contents covering Parts, Chapters, and Sections were conceived:

Introductory Chapter: What is the World of East Asia?
1. Why a “History Textbook common to East Asia” now?
2. Commonality in the Sphere of the East Asian Culture
   a. The Sphere of the Chinese Ideographic Characters
b. Customs and Habits
  c. Agriculture and Cultivation

3. Geographical Characteristics
   a. Outlines of Topography
   b. Seas and Oceans
   c. Climate Zones

4. Races and Languages
   a. Outlines of Races
   b. Distribution of Languages
   c. Mutual Influences

5. Development Processes

Part 1. The Foundation of East Asia

Chapter 1. The Regional Nature of East Asia and Its Agricultural Culture
   a. Ecological Characteristics
   b. The New Stone Age and the Formation of Agriculture and Stock Raising

Chapter 2. Formation of the Early States and the Classical Civilization
   a. Various Aspects of the China Region
   b. Moves for the Formation of the World of China
   c. Moves of the Various Peripheral Areas

Chapter 3. The Formation of the Unified States and the International Order
   a. The Path to the Unification of States
   b. Unification by Qin and the International Order
   c. Former Han and the International Order
   d. The Structure of the Order in the World of East Asia

Part 2. The Formation of the World of East Asia

Chapter 4. The Starting of the World of East Asia
   a. The Confucian Ideological System and Local Powerful Tribes
b. Eastern Barbarians, Western Barbarians, Northern Barbarians, and Southern Barbarians

c. Society and Culture of East Asia

Chapter 5. Population Movement and Self-sufficiency of Various Races of East Asia

a. From the Age of Separation to Rapid Movements of Races

b. The Movement of Various Races of East Asia and the Formation of States

c. The Arrival of the Age of Religion

Chapter 6. The Formation and Unfolding of the Territorial States in East Asia

a. The Unification of China and the Group of States with Penal and Administrative Code States

b. The Development of East Asian Society and Various Aspects of Its Culture

c. The Transformation of East Asian Society and Its Movements for Change

Part 3. The Traditional Society of East Asia

Chapter 7. The Metamorphosis of the World of East Asia

a. The Multi-polarization of the World of East Asia

b. The Emergence of the Centralized Bureaucratic Politics and the Formation of a Society Based on the Civil Service Examination System

c. The Northern Current and the Southern Current in the World of East Asia

d. The Economy, Society and New Developments in the Culture

Chapter 8. The Age of International Trade in East Asia

a. The Political Change in East Asia

b. Production and the Revolution in Life Styles

c. East Asia and The European World System

Chapter 9. The Maturing of the Tradition

a. Toward the Era of the Prohibition on Overseas Traffic
b. The Maturing of the Traditional Society

c. Omens for Change

d. A Perspective on the Modern Period

Party 4. A New Birth of the World of East Asia

Chapter 10. The Modernization of Various Regions of East Asia
   a. Trading in East Asia and Its Opening to the West
   b. Impacts of Modern Civilization
   c. The Sino-Japanese War and East Asia
   d. The Tradition and Its Transformation

Chapter 11. Two World Wars and East Asia
   a. Japanese Imperialism and East Asia
   b. Nationalism and Socialism
   c. The Total War between Japan and China and the Collapse of Japan
   d. The Formation of National Consciousness and Mass Culture

Chapter 12. The Post-War World
   a. National Independence and the East-West Cold War
   b. Development and Economic Growth
   c. The Drastic Changes of Society and Life

The International Community and East Asia

A sub-section was added under the section so that various suggested items could be incorporated. However, this was found to be too complicated to include here.

The size and format of this book call for approximately 1,200 manuscript pages, each page containing 400 characters. The plans are: The Introductory Chapter (60 pages), Part I (100 pages), Part II (200 pages), Part III (325 pages), Part IV (500 pages), and the Concluding Chapter (150 pages). It will be a pyramidal order with later Parts becoming larger as we progress with age. The book format calls for 400-500 pages, with each page 22cm x 15cm. A horizontal writing format will be adopted, and as many plates as possible
(approximately one quarter of the entire book) will be inserted to render the book as visual as possible. Iwanami Shoten is expected to be the publisher.

Part II

It is easier said than done to describe the history of East Asia as a through history by capturing it anew as a total whole. Moreover, to execute the project as a cooperative work among historians from different specializations from Japan, China, and Korea has many positive sides, but from time to time it may result in unintentional lack in communication among the participants. We often hear misgivings uttered about the success of a cooperative work among researchers of different nationalities. Nevertheless, in our case, where we bade farewell to a historical view centered on only one country, the gaps and collisions caused by differences of the participants’ nationality have been less than those caused by differences in the participants’ specialization.

To quote a familiar example, while to students of the history of China the Three Kingdoms Period was the period of the rivalry among Wei, Wu, and Shu, to students of the history of the Korean Peninsula it was the era of the confrontation among Goguryeo, Shilla, and Baekje. While we take it for granted that such a matter is accepted as common sense, when the term “Three Kingdoms” is carelessly used in the table of contents or in various sentences, specialists on China encountered protests from researchers in the history of the Korean Peninsula.

There is a similar problem with the uncritical use of such expressions as the “Eastern Barbarians,” “Western Barbarians,” “Northern Barbarians,” and “Southern Barbarians.” It is a fact that China was at the center of the World of East Asia and it had a great impact on each region of East Asia. But this does not mean that we should not fall into the trap to view China at the historical center. Once, in
discussion, the researchers in the history of Korea hurled such a poignant criticism at the historians specializing in Chinese history. This is a trap that researchers of Chinese history, regardless of their nationality, fall into without realizing they are doing so. Incidentally, these arguments are covered in the proceedings of the meetings, from the 16th meeting on to the current 55th, and have been compiled by Kitahara Sumako. The proceedings so far amount to 2,000 pages, a vast amount, converted into manuscript pages of 400 characters each.

In the preceding Chapter 1 of this paper we already looked at the outline of each period. On the basis of the discussions that have already taken place, I would like to go into some of the problematic points contained in the “History of East Asia” in a little more detail.

During Period 2, as was already stated territorial states were born one after another in the peripheral regions. It is a period in which the common points of the World of East Asia were most clearly visible as Mr. Nishijima et al proposed. The peripheral states actively adopted Buddhism, Confucianism, penal and administrative codes that they learned through the medium of Chinese ideographic characters, and endeavored to build their own states. It is understood that such efforts contributed to shaping the rough outlines of today’s World of East Asia. Yet there were different paths in accepting and adopting Buddhism, Confucianism, and the various codes.

For example, how and when did those states adopt the codes? It is not clear when Japan obtained the penal and administrative codes from China for the first time, but it was probably during the Sui-Tang Period, perhaps 200 years later than the Korean Peninsula did. However, in less than 100 years after that, beginning in 681, in the 10th year of Emperor Temmu’s reign, Japan’s unique penal and administrative codes were compiled. The first result of this was the enactment of the “Asuka no Kiyomihara Codes in 689." This was

succeeded later by the more systematic Taiho Codes in 701 and the Yoro Codes in 757.

The codes enacted during the Butoku-Jogwan era and the Tang bureaucratic systems stipulated in China’s Yong-hui Codes of 651, which the Japanese seemed to have studied hardest, called for a three departments and six bureaus system. However, in the Japan’s established, “eight departments” were the equivalent to the Tang’s “six bureaus.” Such modifications were designed to fit the situation in Japan. Yet, needless to say, the Japanese codes were still imitations of the Tang codes. Especially in the case of the “penal codes,” for the major parts Japan just outright copied the Tang penal codes. This was done to catch up speedily with Tang, an advanced state, at great speed in order to demonstrate the prestige of the small Middle Kingdom on the eastern periphery of East Asia.

A similar pattern can be seen not only in the Japanese bureaucratic system but also in the landholding system stipulated by the administrative code. For example, the “handen (equal landholding) system” is copied from the equal landholding system of Tang.

The well-field system of Tang which derived from that of Western Zhou and Western Wei Dynasty, in a direct line of origin, from a 200 year tradition, and was designed to allocate to male adults ranging in age from 18 to 59 (from young adulthood to and maturity) 20 mou each of the provincial land to be held in perpetuity and 80 mou of the land shared by each male person. In contrast to this the Japanese state with penal and administrative codes hastily compiled land a register and based on this decided to allocate only the personal share land to both men and women of over six years of age, two tan for each man and two thirds of that amount to each woman.

When the two systems are compared, what attracts attention first is that in Japan land was also assigned to women, and the age limit was lower, no land to be held in perpetuity was allocated, and a significant difference existed in the amount of each allocation. More specifically, while the equal land system was mainly for the dry field in northern China, in Japan it was for wet field. In China
the amount of the allocated land seems to have been the desirable target amount. But in Japan it was the land ledger that actually allocated landholding. A more fundamental problem was that while Chinese society already had a more than one thousand years history of private ownership, Japan, as was pointed out by Mr. Yoshida Takashi et al.,\(^5\) was still in a pre-private ownership stage and its social structure was that of tribes and chieftains. These were serious discrepancies from the case of China. Nevertheless, Japan’s penal and administrative code bureaucrats impetuously and highhandedly launched the implementation of the equal land system. Perhaps Japan was trying to learn from China in the shortest possible period of time because of the tensions on the Korean Peninsula and the Jinshin Rebellion (672). If Japan could adopt the ideals of China by rearranging the state structures, it could give the appearance of being the monarchy of the Eastern Sea.

And how was it in the case of the Korean Peninsula? During the reign of King Sosoorim of Goguryeo (373) some records indicate that the penal and administrative codes were promulgated. One year before that, reportedly King Fujian of the Former Qin introduced into Goguryeo Buddhist images and scriptures (372). Therefore, the penal and administrative codes were imported also from the Former Qin, and such codes were probably the Taishi Code of Western Qin, which consisted of two main components, a penal code and an administrative code. Moreover, there is no record of Goguryeo compiling a unique code of its own at this time.

The next records of penal and administrative codes are found in the Samgook Sagi (History of the Three Kingdoms) which notes that in the seventh year of the reign of Shilla’s King Beophung (520) penal and administrative codes were promulgated and a system of official robes and crowns was established. Since I have an insuffi-

---

\(^5\) Part I of the Code, vol. 22. It is the recent understanding of Japanese historians that the earlier Tenchi Code did not exist. The “Kiyomihara no Code” is also said to have been non-existent. (Aoki Kazuo in Dissertations on the Penal and Administrative Code State of Japan, Iwanami Shoten, 1992.)
cient knowledge of the history of the Korean Peninsula I cannot assert it, but I still believe this does not imply necessarily Shilla enacted its own unique penal and administrative codes. And many scholars believe that even in the 7th and 8th Centuries, Shilla never compiled systematic penal and administrative codes.6

What is the reason for this? One of the direct reasons is that Japan, during the Sui-Tang Period, readjusted its status from that of being a foreign vassal state during the period of the “Five Kings of Wa” to that of becoming an “equal” state. In contrast to this the states of the Korean Peninsula led by Shilla continued to remain within the “enfeoffment system.” For his reason, with the strong restrictions coming from China, it would not have been easy to enact their own penal and administrative codes besides the ones that had been already distributed.

However, this only scratches the surface of the issue.

As opposed to Japan, which, either through the medium of the Korean Peninsula or direct exchange always found the sources of culture in China, the Korean Kingdoms were contiguous to the Chinese Continent. Although they were subject to strong influence of China, the Korean Kingdoms also had a considerable amount of exchange with the nomadic peoples in the Chinese Continent and through this they sensed the existence of other civilizations. Because of this the Korean Kingdoms did not lean solely on China as was the case of Japan, and their evaluation of Chinese civilization was probably always relativized. This is probably why Korea managed to retain a unique outlook even while following in the footsteps of China.

Perhaps other parts of the Asian Continent which kept influencing various states of the Korean Peninsula latently or overtly, particularly the movements of these nomadic people on the peripheral

areas of East Asia were somewhat like the existence of underground magma, and were also vital factors for deciding the flow of the history of East Asia.

Part III

According to linguistics specialist,7 the Chinese language, same as the languages of the Southern part of Asia such as Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese originally had an orderly syntax, putting modifying words after the words to be modified. However, it appears that in a long historic change, Chinese came under the influence of the northern Altaic languages such as Mongolian, Tungusic, and Turkish and shifted gradually and partially to the reverse structure. That is to say, whereas you say in Japanese8 that “I first to that man book one copy give” is expressed in the modern standard Chinese, the Putonghua (the standard Chinese), as “I first give him one copy of book.” But in the Cantonese dialectic, another version of the same Chinese language in Southern China), it becomes, “I give that book to him first,” with the adverb, “first,” placed later. Thus we see the latitudinal transition, that is, the regional difference between south and north, corresponds to the longitudinal change, that is, the syntax change from the ancient language to the modern language. As evidence of this, the longitudinal change referred to here which links the ancient period with the modern period can be found as an intermediate stage regionally in the northern part of the southern language and in the southern part of the northern language.9

9. There is still no established theory as to what language family the Japanese
The transition of the Chinese language viewed linguistically can be seen not only in the syntax changes but also in the modifications of pronunciation and vocabulary. The largest change in the vocal sound organization, as far as can be systematically known, is said to have taken place in the 10th Century when the Northern Song Dynasty emerged following the Ten Kingdoms for five generations at the end of Tang. For example in the labial, the three items confrontation of the unvoiced airless sound, unvoiced voiced sound, and voiced sound such as “p,” “p,” and “b” were changed into the two-items confrontation in the Altaic languages such as the voiceless (or semi-voiced) airless sound and the airless voiced sound such as “b,” and “p.”

This was the period in which the modern Chinese language is classified normally as the “unvoiced aired sound” and the “voiceless aired sound.”

Needless to say, the period from the end of Tang to the early period of Song was the period when the northern nomads advanced in mass to south of the Great Wall. Similarly, the massive southward movement of the Hu tribes occurred during the beginning of the Second Period that we have defined, that is, during the period from the end of Later Han to Wei-Jin. That a considerably big change in the vocal sound took place is pointed out on the basis of Liu Fa-Yuan’s *Qie Yun* and others. Reportedly, the initial “r” sound that existed during the Later Han Period disappeared and was changed to the “l” sound, and it is said that for the beginning sound of a word, no “r” sound dot exists in the Altaic languages.

There is also the problem of the past tense and the past perfect tense. In earlier times in the Chinese language, as in the Japanese language belongs to. It is a difficult question. However, in terms of syntax, it has a typical reversed structure.

language, the past tense and the past perfect tense were differentiated. But in northern Chinese— that is, the standard version—the two were merged into one. In the Hakka and Min dialects, which are considered southern “dialects,” the difference in the two is said to remain. As to when the branching of the northern and southern dialects took place, according to an estimate in the linguistic chronology, it was during the 12th and 13th Century.

In other words, big changes in the vocal sound organization and the problem of “tense” and “aspect” that integrated the past tense and the past perfect tense both took place simultaneously in the Third Period (about the 12th and 13th Century) as we have termed it. Then, more changes followed during the end of Later Han and Wei-Jin period. Thus, we can glimpse the strength of the impact that the northern nomads exerted to China through transitions in the Chinese language.

But was this strong influence exerted only on China? Possibly it also had exerted a considerable impact directly or indirectly on the Korean Peninsula at the eastern periphery of the continent and then on the Japanese Islands just across the sea.

This writer thinks that the beginning of the Third Period may be characterized by the trend toward militarization in all of East Asia. What served as the detonator was, this writer estimates, the energy of the nomads who exerted an overwhelming influence in the northern region of the continent.

13. In the past the Japanese language also distinguished between the past tense (ending with キ and ケリ) and the past perfect tense (ending with ヌ, ツ, and タリ). However, beginning in the 12th and 13th Centuries and reportedly in the 16th Century these were merged into one ending, タ. As discussed in the main text of this article, in the Chinese language the past and past perfect tenses also became as the same reportedly in Northern China in the 12th and 13th Centuries. This was simultaneous with the change in the Japanese language. Why was this so? An interesting fact.

The first direct incursion into the Japanese Islands was the attack on Tsushima and Iki Islands in 1015 in the late Heian Period staged by the Jurcheds, the so-called the attack by the Toi pirates. Possibly, even before that date and in other areas, especially in the northeastern part of Honshu pressures by or tense exchanges with the northern tribes of the continent were frequent.

One of the bases for estimating such happenings is the existence of Fukushima Castle in the northern part of Tosaminato in Aomori Prefecture.

According to the second excavation since 1992, this castle was estimated to have been built in the period from the late 10th Century to the 11th Century. Some of the historians seem to fix it more precisely at the middle of the 10th Century. If this is true, then it was immediately after the Tenkei Rebellion (935-940), which was the forerunner of the emergence of the warrior class, and when a considerable shift in the northern policy of the Heian court was visible. Another change can be observed in the fact that the military governor-general who was a subordinate of the provincial governor of the county of Mutsu, came to possess his own power semi-independent from the provincial governor, and a member of the powerful warrior class was appointed to this post. It is thought that the role of the military governor-general was to control prisoners in the six counties of Ou Province, to subjugate the northern barbarians, and to control the trade of northern products.

---


17. It seems to be an event that occurred in 1014, when Taira no Koreyoshi in the lineage of Taira no Takamochi was reappointed to be the Barbarian Subjugation General, he reportedly gave a huge amount of bribe to Fujiwara no Michinaga. Perhaps, the appointment to the Barbarian Subjugation General would bring a tremendous amount of profit and interest from the
According to the reports of the excavation, Fukushima Castle occupied a large lot surrounded by earthen fortresses and outer moats, and the square-shaped inner structures, some 200 meters long on each side, were also guarded by earthen fortresses and outer moats. Compared to Akita and Taga Castles, also in the Northeastern region, Fukushima Castle far surpassed in scale. While the former were more like office structures and their moats were only narrow, Fukushima Castle, it is pointed out, indicated an extremely defensive position designed for actual combat. Fukushima Castle had the scale and character comparable to the dock with earthen fortresses at Dazaifu built in anticipation of an attack by united Tang-Shilla forces.\textsuperscript{18}

Why were such strong castle-fortresses constructed at the northern end of the territory controlled by Japan?\textsuperscript{19} Some scholars seem to believe that it was related to the change in the role of the military governor-general. The military-governor constructed Fukushima Castle in order to subjugate the barbarians of Hokkaido and Tsugaru and also to trade with them. Yet, while it is natural that the barbarians of Hokkaido were included in the threat from the north as practically recognizable, possibly a new, more powerful, potential enemy began to appear. Also, possibly military governor-general and the power structure behind him endeavored to strengthen steadily the defense system against the strong foe whose identity was beyond grasp. It has been known that from the 40th parallel north and beyond (currently from Akita and Iwate Prefectures north to Aomori Prefecture) a large number of settlements of a defensive trade in products from the north. The Six Counties of Ou were Iwate, Suwa, Hienuki, Ezashi, Waga, and Izawa and these were under the jurisdiction of the Barbarian Subjugation Command. Presently this area corresponds to the southern half of Iwate Prefecture.

\textsuperscript{18} Op. cit., Sato Makoto, \textit{The Ancient State, the Sea of Japan, and Northern Japan}.

\textsuperscript{19} Roughly the edge of the 40th parallel north runs a little north of the Ojika Peninsula and seemed to have been the official northern limits of Japan’s control at that time.
nature existed. Perhaps, Fukushima Castle was the so-called center of the defensive system that included these settlements, and at the foremost front of national territories. It was the foremost front base to have influence both at home and abroad.

A new and formidable enemy that had been anticipated already appeared in the history book called *Shoku Nihongi* (The Chronicle of Japan, Continued) which described the events in the 7th and 8th Centuries. This probably included such northern Asian nomads as Shukushin (Sugsin in Korean, Xiao shen in Chinese), Makkatsu (Malgal in Korean, mo he in Chinese), and Tetsuri, whose existence people were aware of, even without knowing any details. The movements of people that shook the foundation of the World of East Asia started rumbling before and after the 10th Century, and probably spread as far as the islands on the eastern periphery across the sea. Fukushima Castle, which had not been mentioned at all in documents and historical materials and whose significance could not be grasped until recent years, seems to support this speculation.

In such a situation of growing tension the warriors emerged and grew. The emergence of the warrior class in Japan is described as the “entrance of the Number One Warriors,” which in fact refer to three, Taira no Takamochi, Fujiwara no Toshihito and Fujiwara no Hidesato.

What is common to them is the fact that originally all three were of noble birth. Taira no Takamochi was the grandson of Emperor Kammu, and both Fujiwara no Toshihito and Fujiwara no Hidesato had Fujiwara no Kamatari as their common ancestor. Furthermore, these warriors were stationed in the countryside and were active as local affluent powerful landlords. They also excelled in martial arts, and demonstrated evidence of having learned such tactics from the surrendered Ezo prisoners. We will return to this later. Since they were noted for chivalry it is noted that they were appointed with a mission to subdue brigand groups.

The prisoners referred to as the Ezo prisoners were taken in large numbers as a result of the campaigns to subjugate the Ezo in
the Northeast region during the period from the end of the 8th Century to the early 9th Century. These prisoners were forcibly evacuated from almost all parts of the country. By the 10th Century such settlements of surrendered Ezo prisoners disappeared, and it is thought that they were returned to their places of origin in the Northeast region because of a change in policy.

The Ezo were extremely fierce and brave. They were described as “one warrior going against a thousand foes” warriors in the *Konjaku Mongatari* (Tales of the Present and the Past) and the *Heike Monogatari* (Tales of the Taira Family). The samurai swords we see today are not completely straight blades but are slightly warped. Their origin is the “warabite katana” or the sword of the bracken hand. This sword, with some degree of warp, was tenacious enough to withstand the impact of a slashing attack, and was not too long, about 50 centimeters. It was brandished from horseback, and was suitable to slash the enemy while running against him or chasing him from behind. Such horseback tactics for slashing the enemy while dashing on horseback were the “tactics of the surrendered Ezo prisoners.” The policy of dispersing the surrendered Ezo prisoners resulted in speeding their chivalry tactics throughout the country.

The period from the end of the 8th Century to the 9th Century is termed the time when the penal and administrative code systems began to decline. In the middle of the century brigand groups and pirates were frequently rampant. This was linked in the middle of the 10th Century to the rebellion of Taira no Masakado and Fujiwara no Sumitomo. Courageous warriors to subjugate brigands and vicious criminals were now in demand.

Precisely at this opportune time the threat from the Northern periphery was heightened and unrest was spreading. This led to popular respect for the way of warriors. The transformation of local powerful families into warriors (samurai) began and they vied each other in learning cavalry tactics and others such as those of the Ezo. The Japanese sword with a firm and elegant curve became elongat-
ed, the colorful tenacity of the armor to defend oneself from slashing attacks with such a sword was developed. All these contributed to turning the warriors into the heroes of the time. The Nine Years’ War and the Three Years’ War in the 11th Century served to endow the warrior class with a special spiritual ligament and this would move forward the birth of the military regime.

Although difficult to become knowledgeable about the details of the history of Korea, the turbulence caused by the northern tribes in the 10th Century led by the rise of the Khitan tribe was naturally far greater and more direct than what happened in the Japanese Islands. This became stronger with the centuries progressed. After the struggle with the Jurcheds the Koreans would finally encounter a life-and-death struggle with the Mongols. Perhaps because such conditions were in the background, perhaps the Yangban class composed not only of literati but also of warriors came into being. However, the system of traditional civil supremacy broke up, and for a century (1170-1270) even a military regime emerged.

What about Vietnam? Although we have no detailed knowledge, the military force of Southern Han which had established a state centered in Panyu (present day Guangdong) in the first half of the 10th Century was defeated by Wu Quan, originally a military general from the delta area of the Hong River, established an independent regime but short-lived regime. However, it should be recognized that this paved the way for the independent by the succeeding Li Dynasty.

Even China, from the end of Tang to the Five Dynasties, exhibited a marked trend toward military power. However, the emergence of the Northern Song checked this, because the emergence of a large number of bureaucrats who passed the civil service examination led to the establishment of a system of civilian supremacy that surpassed tradition.

However, as it resulted inemasculating the military power, some civilian bureaucrats expressed their admiration for the military (garrison) system adopted by the preceding dynasty. Nevertheless,
this was only a nostalgic feeling on their part. Needless to say, this soon led to the overthrow of Northern China by the Jurchens (1126) and to the full control of the entire territory by the Mongols (1264).

Part IV

As the historical common denominators of the World of East Asia, some scholars mentioned ideographic Chinese characters, Confucianism, Buddhism (based on the Buddhist scripture translated into ideographic Chinese characters), and the penal and administrative codes. As we said at the outset, we have critically adopted these. We have many other tasks to tackle, including agricultural cultivation, matters related to Daoism, and manners and customs.

In discussing Daoism, with reference to the Korean Peninsula, records and documents indicate that it was introduced there in the first half of the 7th Century. According to Samguk Yusa (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), in the 7th year of King Yeongyu (the 7th year of King Taizu reign of Tang (624), Daoist priests and images were dispatched to Goguryeo, and a Daoist priest lecture on the "Dao de jing." And then, in Samguk Sagi (History of the Three Kingdoms) it is recorded that in 643, 17 years later in the 2nd Year of King Bojang’s reign, the second king of Tang, Taizu, made gift to Daoist priests and the "Dao de jing" to the Koreans.

However, since the Korea is a peninsula contiguous to the Continent, there is a strong possibility that Daoism was introduced there long before the official dates. More than that, some of the celestial beings important in Daoism were indigenous with the people of the Peninsula, so these may have been transmitted to the Continent and adopted as an important factor in Daoism and then re-exported them to the Peninsula. The question of the origin and introduction of the

20. There is a passage in Samguk Sagi where Laozi was studied.
21. Yi Noong-hwa, Joseon Dogyo Sa (A History of Daoism in Korea), later the title was changed to Hanguk Dogyo Sa (A History of Daoism in Korea)
idea of celestial beings call for further scrutiny.

Be that as it may, Daoism in the Peninsula, until it was forced into decline during the Joseon Dynasty, was connected to the worship of mountains and celestial beings. The dual worship of Daoism and Buddhism gave it a considerable degree of influence, especially during the Goryeo Dynasty when the state protected the religion and erected Daoist temples like Bok weon gwan. Moreover, during the reign of King Ye-jong and King hui-jong (1094-1122) large-scale worship ceremonies were held, and this era marked the flourishing period of Daoism.

Then, what was it like in Japan? Some Daoist scholars take the stand that “Daoism had important influence…” on the emperors’ reign designations, and by extension on the character of the emperor system and “Shinto.” Other scholars, in refutation of this stand, believe that actually Daoism had no real influence and was only “borrowed” as knowledge from documents, thus flatly refuting the former stand. This has resulted in a brisk exchange of arguments, so it will not be easy to settle the issue of Daoism in Japan. However, after taking into consideration various theories and scrutinizing historical materials as objectively as possible, we may make the following observations.

There are no traces indicating the construction of Daoist temples

---

22. As it was strongly objected by the Neo-Confucian scholars, Daoism in Korea continued to decline, while the Daoist regimen and medicine were utilized for the systematization of Korean medicine. Cha Joo-hwan, *Chosen no Dokyo* (Daoism in Korea), translated by Miura Kunio, et al., Jinmon Shoin, 1990, p. 249. In Korea Daoism found its active path in strengthening men’s virility and extending human lives.


in Japan, no Daoist priests who engaged in the systematic propagation of doctrine. This leads us to think that Daoism as a religious order per se was not introduced. However, an investigation of *A Catalog of Books Currently Extant in Japan* which listed in detail Chinese books present in Japan toward the end of the 9th Century, reveals in the section dealing with “Daoism” that *Laozi kakokei* 10 volumes, *Tajo rokun gengen kotei seika-ki* (kyo), 10 volumes, *Baopuzh* 21 inner volumes, and a total of 62 sections (487 volumes) are listed. Therefore, it is obvious that a considerable number of Daoist scriptures were placed on board on vessels from overseas. It would be difficult to deny therefore the ideological impact of Daoism. Yet it did not exert enough influence to shake the existing systems and thoughts of Japan. The reason for this assessment is that although the Daoist section listed 62 section or 487 volumes, not all important Daoist scriptures are included in these. Also, in the section on Daoism not all the books are on Daoist doctrine, indeed the number of books on Daoist medicine and remedies predominate. In the “medicine and remedy” department 165 sections (1101 volumes) are listed, while the department on the Five Basic Elements lists only 154 sections and 516 volumes, a big difference. As in the case of Daoism in the Joseon Dynasty, it may be that the Japanese were more interested in mundane health promotion.

Daoism was also introduced into Vietnam. There it mingled

25. For the view that a Daoist temple existed, see Kuroita Katsumi, *Waga Jodai ni okeru Doka Shiso oyobi Dokyo Shiso ni tsuite* (On the Daoist Thought and Daoism in Ancient Japan), in *Shirin*, 8-1, 1923. However, this seems to have been caused by the misinterpretation of the Chinese character, kan, as it appears in *Nihon Shoki* (History of Japan).

26. Besides the 25 sections of footnotes related to Laozi, the Daoist Scripts are in *Baopuzi*, Inner Parts, 21 columns, Tashanglingbojing, vol. 1, and *Yaobozhenanzhijing*, vol. 1 and others, a total of approximately 10 copies. Besides these, footnotes related to *Zhuanzi* and *Lizi* are noticeable. See Masuo Shinichiro, “*Nihon Kodai no Dokyo Shuyo to Gigi Keiten* (Acceptance of Daoism in Japan and False and Fictitious Scripts), in *Dokyo no Rekiishi to Bunka* (The History of Daoism and Culture), Yuzankaku, 1998.
with Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism to produce syncretism for popular worship, but the details are not well known. Along with the situation in Taiwan where Daoism has most flourished, these are future subjects to be investigated.

In addition, there are common elements in customs and annually-held events. The May 5th Festival, the July 7th Festival, the Kitchen Festival, and the Kanoe-saru (Chinese zodiac) All Night Vigil Festival all exhibit strong Daoist influence. These common elements and differences should be examined.

There are also other issues most fundamental to human life such as foods and dwellings.

Looking around the world we find that chopsticks are skillfully manipulated for consuming cereals, beans, vegetables, and meat only in the Chinese Continent, the Korean Peninsula, the Japanese Islands, the Ryukyus, Taiwan, and Vietnam, that is to say, only in the World of East Asia. The investigation of origin and spread is one of the important tasks before us.

Some trace the origin of chopsticks to Yunnan, China, but the claim for the Central Plains of China appears to be stronger. The time of origin is estimated to have been during the Spring and Autumn Period or the Warring States Period. It became universal by the time of Former Han. This theory seems to be valid judging from excavated artifacts as well as from documentary materials. However, how did it spread to the peripheral areas of East Asia? Confucianism taught people to be fussy with their table manners. Did the spread of the use of the chopsticks accompany the spread of Confucian etiquette, perhaps?

As to dwellings, first people laid mats on the floor and made bamboo seats on the mats. In the Continent, during the Six Dynas-

ties Period or thereabouts people gradually began to develop the life-style of sitting on beds and couches. Moreover, beginning in the Tang and Five Dynasties Period people started using chairs. On the other hand, in the Japanese Islands the beginning style of sitting on the floor evolved into sitting on tatami mats. When did the two styles split, and how did it happen?

In the documents of the Six Dynasties Period the word, huichuang (folding chair) is found. Can we therefore assume that the change was brought about through the influence of the Northern nomads? Perhaps, the fact that we who lived in the Japanese Islands stuck to the old custom was more or less owed to our having had little dealings with the Northern nomads. This is something we ought to examine.

Our search has just begun. A History of East Asia that we plan to publish is only a trial work. However, we think that it is a challenge that we must face for the development of historiography as well as for the future of the World of East Asia. All of us have pledged to exert our utmost effort. (trans. by Dr. Kim Yongmok)