

Book Reviews

Review of *Zhai zi Zhongguo: Chongjian youguan “Zhongguo” de lishi lunshu* (Dwelling Here in China: Reconstructing the History of the Concept of China), by Ge Zhaoguang. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2011. [宅兹中国：重建有关「中国」的历史论述 / 葛兆光著. 北京市：中华书局，2011. RMB 39.00元，330页]

For more than the past twenty years, Ge Zhaoguang has stood at the forefront of Chinese scholarship. In his two-volume work *Zhongguo si-xiangshi* (Chinese Intellectual History), a work garnering considerable attention, he broke through the traditional great-man approach to Chinese intellectual history and pioneered an intellectual history focused on knowledge and ideas—the common knowledge used by the masses in ordinary society. Having completed this grand opus, he found himself “thoroughly exhausted.”¹ Nonetheless, issues raised by his research in intellectual history led him to delve into a new area without so much as taking a breather. After a few years he produced the present volume, *Zhai zi Zhongguo: Chongjian youguan “Zhongguo” de lishi lunshu* (Dwelling Here in China: Reconstructing the History of the Concept of China). Though this is a small book consisting of only three parts and eight chapters, the issues it discusses are weighty indeed. As the author says in the preface, the issues he takes up concern such great matters as the world, Asia and China, scholarship and politics, self-identification and self-exclusion, individual country histories and regional history, etc. Nearly all these issues do not exist on the same level. As the author stresses, this book is a multilevel history viewed from sundry perspectives. Using issues that he encountered and had considered over the years and drawing on his experience at the National Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Fudan University, he promotes the development of Chinese scholarship. Ge Zhaoguang seeks not to contemplate and struggle with issues himself. Rather, he wants Chinese scholarship to develop in new directions and develop new fields. This work can be said to be the author’s program for the new fields he proposes. Hence, evaluating this important work is not an easy task. Here I will merely present my reactions by reading this book with the hope that these comments add to the discussion.

1 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, “Zixu” (Preface), p. 1.

1. The Multiple Perspectives of This Book

The author, in his Preface, clearly states his purpose, namely, to discuss “how we should adhere to China’s position while at the same time transcending China’s circumstances to reconstruct the history of the notion of China in the global or Asian context.”² This scholarly pursuit occupied the author for several years. In fact, these four concepts—China’s position, China’s circumstances, the global context, and the Asian context—conflict with one another. Finding a consistent position in the face of these conflicts is no easy task. Yet it is this multidimensional perspective that is the distinguishing feature of this book. It is herein that the value of this book lies.

The author first replies to a question raised by the Westerners, namely, What is China? Is China the ever changing nation-culture-polity of Chinese history, or is it a nation-state with clear borders, a citizenry identifying with it, and an unbroken tradition?³ This is the central topic of the book. In fact, China and the West have several completely different perspectives on how to identify China and Chinese history. The present book, in sorting out and evaluating each of these perspectives, also looks at their usefulness and points out their deficiencies and problems.

First, the received view of the Chinese is that China is a multiethnic state unified from ancient times, namely, the multiethnic state whose main ethnic group is the Han people and whose borders are those of present-day China. This is the assumed view in most Chinese discussions of the past, and it has hardly ever been called into doubt, yet it is a view that the Westerners have raised all sorts of questions about. We have to reply to these questions; we cannot turn a blind eye and a deaf ear toward them. This is an important element of the author’s reply to the questions of the Westerners. In politics we must explain, and in scholarship we must demonstrate. Lame arguments and fallacious reasoning only invite opposition and do nothing to move the debate forward. In this book, the author has a subconscious antipathy of such unquestioned assumptions. He does not think that situational demands or political fairness set a standard by which scholarly work is to be judged. Hence, he wants to “reconstruct the history of the notion of China.” In this basic assumption lies the unique value of this book, for it enables us to cast aside much of the confusion in past perceptions and to reply more effectively to Western questions.

Next, when they raise questions, the Westerners offer theories and perceptions of various forms, which the author sorts out for us. Most Western scholars of China studies are proficient at pointing out theoretical explanatory

2 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, “Zixu,” pp. 3-4.

3 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, “Xushuo” (Introduction), p. 4.

models, such as the theory of conquest dynasties of the 1940s, the theory of the tribute system of the 1960s and 1970s, and the regional-characteristics theory of the 1980s and later. Each of these theories exerted a profound and far-reaching influence. Even today, one can still see patent traces of these theories. After these theories came to China, some scholars adopted them wholly, without any analysis. Though this wholesale importation had some positive effect, these theories were of no help in acquiring a clear understanding of the development of the notion of China. The author, while respecting the idea of a search for theories, is unsparing in his criticism of their problems. Use of a theoretical model to explain Chinese history leaves one with the feeling that facts are being selected to fit the theory. Every theory has a degree of suitability, yet it also inevitably has its limitations. In studying and explaining a historical trend, the author does not give priority to theory. Rather, he seeks to return to the original state of history, to adopt the basic historical attitude of reviving the true state of history. Say nothing of John K. Fairbank's impact-response model, tradition and modernity model, or imperialism approach, even Paul A. Cohen's regional or provincial studies, which seek to study Chinese history from a Chinese perspective,⁴ are colored with Western ideas. After all, do not urban-history studies, social-history studies, and the methods of historical anthropology come from the West? The author thinks that such Chinese-historical studies within the Western theoretical paradigm, that is to say, views of Chinese history acquired through a comparison of China and the West, are in fact nothing more than a reflection of Western studies, enabling one to see only the surface and general contours of history. They cannot clarify the full sweep of history or allow a detailed view of history. Such studies have their use, but they are not a necessary or sole standard by which to measure our perceptions of Chinese history. Hence, this book implicitly provides a way to reply to Western assertions. This is another important feature of this work.

Third, since one cannot rely on the conclusions of prior Chinese-style scholarship, and since Western theories have their limitations, the author pursues a program of returning to the sequence of the development of Chinese history to discuss in detail the internal and external factors leading to changes in Chinese history, using the East Asian or Asian perspective to probe China's perception of its periphery and the outside world and the periphery's perception of China, and then coming up with his own views. This multidimensional approach, while avoiding the inadequacies of a unitary

4 See "A China-Centered History of China," in Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

approach, enables one to see historical developments in all areas and thereby derive a more realistic apprehension. The results can be said to be a systematic inference, with a totally new perception. As a matter of fact, using China's perceptions of the periphery and the periphery's understanding of China amounts to more than just pursuing a scholarly viewpoint; it expands the scope of research on the history of China, breaking through "discovering history in China" (see n. 4), and thus offsetting its inadequacies. By deciphering the Korean, Japanese, and Annamese courts' understandings and perceptions of China, as well as changes in these understandings and perceptions over time, we can gain insight into some features of Chinese history itself. Regardless of whether there was a common Asian or East Asian identity, since there was an identical or similar historical background, peripheral countries such as Japan and Korea, under the watchful eye of such institutions as Confucianism, Buddhism, and literary Chinese learning, preserved many Chinese sources, and the literati in these countries strongly identified with Chinese history in their thought. Only from the modern age did China, Japan, and Korea take different historical paths. As the author says, through the watchful eyes of neighboring East Asian countries, we can more clearly perceive the fine details of Chinese culture, and thus have a greater probability of approaching historical reality. This is the methodology that the author has vigorously pursued. It is also a field of research that the author has arduously proposed in recent years. And this book provides the guiding principles of research in this field.

In addition, this book also touches on the doctrines of religions and the viewpoints of various regions. The entire book consists of three parts and eight chapters. Part 1, "Understanding China through History," presents the perspective of Chinese history itself. Part 2, "Crisscrossing Asia, East Asia, and China," presents the Asian perspective. And part 3, "A Methodology for Understanding the History of Asia and China," discusses theoretical issues in his methodology for researching Chinese history. He thus covers various levels of history and sundry perspectives on history. Just as a physical object is three-dimensional, so history is multidimensional, multifaceted, and multi-layered. Hence, from multiple perspectives, there naturally are multiple explanations in the elaboration of Chinese history. Accordingly, we must engage in multiple studies of the events of Chinese history and offer multiple explanations. This is perhaps the author's basic point and his original purpose in writing this book.

2. The Multifaceted Nature of the Author's Research Topics

A multiple perspective aims at a multifaceted history. The author points out that understanding Chinese history requires knowledge of three areas,

namely, history, culture, and politics. “From the viewpoint of history, China is an entity whose spatial borders change. From the point of view of cultural identity, China is a community with a clear and stable culture in its core region, though the boundaries of the periphery may be somewhat fuzzy. From the point of view of the political system, ‘China,’ as many people use the name, refers to a dynasty or a government, but this dynasty or government, in terms of political significance, is not the same as China the country, and is certainly not the China mentioned in historiography.”⁵ The author thus clearly divides China studies into three areas. This division enables us to return to the long flow of history and see Chinese history as a dynamic process of development, and also see the multifaceted issues of Chinese history. Hence, this book asserts that to understand Chinese history, we need to study different levels of history, with a special focus on the level of the history of ideas and the history of thought.

The historical viewpoint emphasizes regional shifts in China. That is, we cannot entirely rely on the borders of a given time to understand the borders of the historical China, since the borders of China in every dynasty were different. The borders of China during the Han dynasty were completely different from those of the Tang dynasty, and those of the Yuan dynasty were completely different from those of the Ming dynasty. We have to adopt a historical attitude. If we ignore the peculiar features of particular historical periods and rely entirely on our present understanding, we will end up with one-sided views of other ages’ perceptions and evaluations of Chinese historical issues brought about by shifting borders. Part 1, “Understanding China through History,” seeks the special features of the different ages of Chinese history from a historical viewpoint. On the formation of the state, the West has consistently maintained that the nation-state is a modern phenomenon. This viewpoint comes, of course, from Western society and history. Using this theory to explain Chinese history gives rise to many problems, such as a problem that Western Sinologists delight in discussing. As these Sinologists view matters, throughout Chinese history there have only existed such dynasties as the Han, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing; there has never been a truly modern China. This view in fact involves placing theory before evidence and selecting facts to fit the theory, since using this point of view to explain Chinese history and the formation of the Chinese nation has severe limitations. After extensively analyzing Song historical circumstances, the author points out, “Historically, a state that has borders has a definite territory, and a state that has territory constitutes a nation-state with international relations. Owing to pressure from other increasingly powerful states, China

5 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, “Xushuo,” Appendix 1, p. 35.

gradually formed from the Song dynasty on. Chinese firmly identified with the culture of this nation-state, and its historical tradition already had a solid foundation. Moreover, ethical living in China was uniform and widespread, and the sphere of governmental administration was quite definite. Hence, the Chinese nation-state is not necessarily connected with Western ‘modernity,’ either spatio-temporally or in terms of subject matter.”⁶ Thus, Western modernity is conceptually ill-suited for explaining the Chinese nation-state, because “China did not develop from an empire into a nation-state. Rather, in the awareness of a borderless ‘empire’ was the concept of a limited ‘state,’ and in the cognizance of the limited ‘state’ was preserved the image of the ‘empire.’”⁷ This argument is quite important. It not only frees us from such theoretical interference from the West, but also provides an important conclusion obtained from the concrete details of Chinese history. It also puts on display the author’s extraordinary penetration and strong theoretical constructiveness. By freeing ourselves of the Western theoretical control, taking as our point of departure the details of Chinese history, and elucidating the special features of Chinese history, we have eclipsed the relevant Western theories.

Though historically the dynasties of China had shifting borders, this in no way affected the clear and stable identification of the people of the central regions with Chinese culture. This is the central point of the present work. Be it shifting borders or rising and falling dynasties, or even the division and unification of Chinese territory or the movement of peoples—no such events determined the standard of judgment for Chinese history: identification with the culture. Precisely because there was this identification with the culture, we have in Chinese history this historical regularity of long division leading to unity (*fen jiu bi he*), as well as the Mongol Yuan dynasty and Manchu Qing dynasty unifying the country. More than four centuries of division during the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties period led to the thriving and prosperous Sui and Tang dynasties. Any theory that denies identification with Chinese culture and favors another level of explanation is unreasonable and inapt. This cultural identification found expression within historical China and without as well, that is, in China’s relations with the periphery. In parts 1 and 2, the present work explores the profound influence of this cultural identification. Whether it be Chinese perceptions of peripheral regions prior to the

6 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, “Xushuo,” “Houxiandai lishixue: Cong minzuguojia zhengjiu shenme lishi?” (Postmodern Historiography: What Type of History Should We Save from the Nation-State?), pp. 25-26.

7 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, “Xushuo,” “Ru he zai Zhongguo lishi zhong lijie lishi Zhongguo” (How Should We Understand Historical China in Chinese History?), pp. 28-29.

arrival of Matteo Ricci or Korean or Japanese perceptions of China after the seventeenth century, the central issue is identification with Chinese culture. Hence, this perception of and connectedness with Chinese culture is an important standard for understanding Chinese history and an important perspective for grasping the premodern East Asian world. This cultural identification not only found expression in the tribute system and in depictions of foreign lands; it was also reflected in maps. The author points out that premodern Chinese descriptions of foreign lands “were not based on contemporary individuals’ knowledge of actual reality but rather were imaginative creations about ‘China’ and the ‘four barbarians’ of the world as understood through the tribute system.”⁸ This is a profound conclusion. One can see that the author construes the issue of cultural identification as an important measure of the multifaceted nature of historical development and as the central research topic of this book.

The third level of historical research is research on political history, and the author, of course, sees this level of research as important. But the present work stresses that if we ignore cultural identification in Chinese history and identify China with a particular dynasty or government, the results will appear very biased. The author thus firmly denies such Western theories as the theory of conquest dynasties, the theory of nationalism, etc. He especially denigrates the tendency in the West to separate off from Chinese history the Yuan and Qing dynasties, dynasties founded by minority nomadic peoples, rashly rending the holism of Chinese history and ignoring the core issue of Chinese cultural identification in Chinese history. For in Chinese history, race and ethnicity were never a criterion for judging Chinese history, whereas culture and cultural identification were. This fundamental viewpoint of the present work, a new perspective for the new age, derives from and develops Chen Yanke’s “race and culture” thesis and Tu Weiming’s theory of “cultural China.” Some Western Sinologists are satisfied with fragmentary knowledge and partial understanding of Chinese history and are incapable of seeing the total picture of Chinese history and its overall characteristics, and this leads them to introduce distortions. Hence, this book emphasizes that research in Chinese history requires knowledge of three complementary and interconnected areas. Only by adopting a multilevel, multiperspective method of elaborating Chinese history and understanding the connections of these three areas can we grasp the nature of China and Chinese history. If we grasp one aspect without knowing the rest, we will be unable to see the obvious and

8 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, chapter 2, “*Shanhaijing*, zhigongtu he luyouji zhong de yiyu jiyi” (Recollections of Foreign Lands in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, Tribute Paintings, and Travelogues), p. 83.

will find ourselves lost in a labyrinth of bias and narrow perspective. Hence, though a linear, complex history can explain some aspects of Chinese history, it can hardly grasp the overall characteristics inherent in Chinese history. The author emphasizes a multidimensional perspective, the three most important levels of which are the perspectives of history, culture, and politics.

Yet geographical borders cannot define the scope of research on Chinese history. When systematically researching the thread of internal development of Chinese history, by looking at perceptions in the periphery—especially Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia—we can supplement the deficiencies of an exclusive interest in Chinese history by itself. This approach is not only superior to researching Chinese history under the Western paradigm; it also expands the scope of research on Chinese history and gives expression to the special features of multifaceted research in this area. In this work the author—whether discussing Japanese peripheral studies at the turn of the twentieth century or advocating a comprehensive research methodology of taking into account everything from the western regions to the eastern seas—displays this multifaceted, multiperspective, multidimensional manner of research. It appears in his perspectives, is reflected in his source materials, and finds expression in the research topics he discusses. Thus, the great contribution of this book lies in its breaking through received judgments and definitions to open up entirely new vistas and directions for development.

3. Questions

At first glance, the present work's theoretical stance does not seem very strong in comparison with other works, but a close reading leaves one feeling that this book reveals a broad research perspective, opens up entirely new vistas in research in Chinese history, and offers a vast theoretical framework based on a solid foundation of specialized research. Within this theoretical paradigm, it is worthwhile to reevaluate many theses, and restudy many issues, in Chinese history. Precisely for this reason, the excellent guidance and superior scholarship contained in this work are well worthy of careful study. Any work, of course, has its strong points as well as its deficiencies. Especially in a work of broad theoretical import like this, it is difficult for even the most knowledgeable author to avoid one slip among a thousand concerns. That said, here I will raise a few doubts that occurred to me in the course of reading this book.

In the preface, the author explains that “Zhai zi Zhongguo” (Dwelling Here in China [the Central Kingdoms]) in the title comes from the inscription on the He Zun, a Western Zhou bronze wine vessel discovered in 1963 in Baoji, Shaanxi, thereby hinting at his reverence for the Western Zhou dynasty (11th cent. -771 BCE). For sure, Western Zhou had the most important influ-

ence on China, for Western Zhou played a crucial role in the formation of the Chinese people and in the establishment of China's institutions and ideas. The history of China as a relatively integrated whole began with the Shang (16th-11th cent. BCE) and Zhou (11th cent.-256 BCE) dynasties. The book's subtitle is "Chongjian youguan 'Zhongguo' de lishi lunshu" (Reconstructing the History of the Concept of China). This gives the reader the impression that the work discusses historiography on the whole of Chinese history. But the whole book mainly focuses on Chinese history from the Song period (960-1279) on. It is a response to relevant Western, mainly American, Sinological theses. Though the book occasionally mentions historical and related theses pertaining to periods prior to the Song period, in general it does not systematically discuss them. It builds on a foundation of specialized research and is somewhat different from the general run of monographs. Hence, this criticism is perhaps a bit of nitpicking, but when I look at the title of this book, I always feel that the contents of the book have not lived up to the billing of the title. Hence, if in the future the author were to supplement his work by considering pre-Song history and relevant theses so as to make it cover all of Chinese history, the theory of this work would be improved and the reader would have a deeper understanding of the whole of Chinese history.

The author is an important scholar of Chinese intellectual history, and the present work comes out of his research of that history. In this work the author greatly stresses ordering the history of scholarship and understanding intellectual history. The three areas that the author emphasizes in China studies—history, culture, and politics—all ultimately matter in terms of identification, that is, identifying with Chinese history, identifying with Chinese culture, and identifying with Chinese politics. This in some sense is a development of the author's approach to research in the history of Chinese thought, and in fact, this whole book is quite relevant to Chinese intellectual history. This can be clearly seen in the titles of some of the chapters, such as chapter 1, "The Origin of an Awareness of China in the Song Period: Early Sources of Nationalism in the Early Modern Age"; chapter 2, "Recollections of Foreign Lands in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, Tribute Paintings, and Travelogues: Sources of, and Changes in, Chinese Awareness of Foreign Lands before and after the Arrival of Matteo Ricci"; and chapter 3, "Old Maps as Artifacts in the History of Ideas." These titles all clearly express approaches to research in the history of Chinese thought. This relevance to Chinese intellectual history is a feature of this book. Thus, the author, in reconstructing the history of the notion of China, does so from the point of view of intellectual history. This is an important point, for this approach gives rise to many new conceptions. Though R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943) once

said, “All history is the history of thought,” the level of intellectual history cannot take the place of the level of the actual happenings of history. Hence, only paying attention to intellectual history and ignoring the actual happenings of history can give rise to problems.

For example, in discussing identification with East Asia, the author states, “If there really was identification with East Asia, it occurred before the mid-seventeenth century.”⁹ This assertion creates two problems. First, what is identification with East Asia? Is it identification with Confucian culture? Or is it political identification or identification with an economic community? The truth is that at different levels, we should give different responses. With the diversification of culture since the start of the modern age, identification with East Asia has become more complicated, but economically the region is becoming increasingly interconnected day by day. Receiving greater emphasis today in the East Asian community are economic and geographical factors. Hence, East Asian debates of the present and East Asian debates prior to the seventeenth century logically should be on different levels and from different vantage points. Second, prior to the mid-seventeenth century, was there any identification with East Asia? In answer to this question, we have a later time limit, but not an earlier time limit—an issue that the book does not clearly discuss much. We know that prior to the seventeenth century the Ming dynasty made efforts to establish a Chinese world with the Ming court as its center. It was this order that people identified with in East Asia. But what were the circumstances in dynasties before the Ming, such as the Yuan, Song, and Tang dynasties? This is a topic worthy of detailed investigation.

The present work also states, “During the Ming and Qing periods, Japan, Korea, and China, in transitioning from being one cultural family to going their separate ways, reflected the final collapse of the Orient, that is, an East Asian identification based on the culture of China. This gradual going of separate ways seemed to embody a great internal breakup of the Oriental culture.”¹⁰ This perception is a grasp of some features of intellectual history, but it is hardly a statement of all the features of history, since this breakup was not all that perspicacious. Though there were some cultural rifts, they hardly amounted to a breakup. The elements of division were insufficient to rupture the great East Asian network of Confucian culture. Rather, they were only enough to raise doubts and rebellions against East Asian unity, but because the influence of the West was still quite uncertain, nothing new came of these rebellions. Indeed, Nishijima Sadao’s four pillars of the East Asian

9 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, “Xushuo,” p. 12.

10 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, chapter 4, “Xifang yu Dongfang, huozhe shi Dongfang yu Dongfang” (West and East, or East and East), pp. 152-153.

world—Chinese characters, Confucianism, Buddhism, and the Chinese traditional legal system—were still in place, as before, and though there were fissures in East Asian identification, with the result that the East Asian world was not as unified as under the Ming dynasty, still this cultural sphere persisted. And from the mid-eighteenth century, these fissures gave way to revival of pre-sixteenth century unity. Thus, in the early nineteenth century, both Japan and Korea, when first confronted with Western attacks, adopted a policy of national seclusion, and China, Japan, and Korea all remained committed to Confucian culture. To take Korea as an example, perhaps Korea did not identify with Qing China as much as it identified with Ming China, but this does not imply that Korea totally lacked identification with Qing China. Though early in the Qing period Korea harbored strong rebellious sentiments against the Qing court, by the late Qianlong period (1736-1795), it started to change. While in its discourse it continued to call the Qing court “barbarians” (*yidi*), in terms of actual actions, it greatly changed how it regarded the Qing court, which it now regarded as a suzerain. Hence, when in the modern period Korea faced invasion from the West and Japan, Korea turned to the Qing court for support. And the Qing court lived up to its duty to protect Korea to the point where war broke out between China and Japan (the First Sino-Japanese War) in 1894-1895 when their interests collided. From this one can see that history never follows a straight line, nor does it totally develop in one direction. There are many reversals and complications.

The present work points out, in relation to the above, that some Koreans thought, “What came after the Ming dynasty was not China.”¹¹ This is one of this book’s most important perspectives. This perspective relies mainly on an essay by Kim Chong-hu (1721-1780) challenging Hong Tae-yong (1731-1783), pioneer of the Northern School, in which he criticizes Hong Tae-yong for his association with the Qing scholar Yan Cheng (1732-1767). While this line of thinking represented the thought of some Koreans of the time, as Hong Tae-yong said in response to this criticism, this line of thinking is not practical. Hong Tae-yong criticized Koreans who thought of themselves as a “little China,” as engaging in parochial arrogance. He forcefully stated the matter thus: “We in the east are the barbarians! . . . Why call for such a taboo?”¹² That is to say, quite a number of people did not think that Korea was culturally superior to Qing China. After all, Koreans were called

11 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, chapter 4, “Xifang yu Dongfang, huozhe shi Dongfang yu Dongfang,” p. 153.

12 Hong Tae-yong, “Utae Chikchae sŏ” (Another Reply to Kim Chong-hu), in *Tamhŏn sŏ* (Collected Works of Hong Tae-yong) (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1999), vol. 3, p. 67.

“barbarians” (*yi*). Compared to Kim Chong-hu, Hong Tae-yong represented a new generation of literati coming to the fore. This new generation of literati took the former remote identification with China and gradually aligned it closer to Qing China. With the appearance of the Northern School and under the leadership of such men as Yi Tök-mu (1741-1793), Pak Che-ka (1750-1805), and Pak Chi-wŏn (1737-1805), Korean literati cast their lot with Qing China and positively interacted with Qing scholars. At the height of such interaction, their dealings greatly exceeded Korean dealings with Ming scholars. Hence, Kim Chong-hu’s statement “What came after the Ming dynasty was not China” was no more than a statement; it did not reflect the reality of history at all.

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Review of *Kinsei Higashi Ajia kaiiki no bunka kōshō* (Cultural Interactions in Maritime East Asia during Premodern Times), by Matsuura Akira. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2010. [近世東アジア海域の文化交渉／松浦章著. 京都: 思文閣出版, 2010, ¥9,000, 448頁]

This book, with copious illustrations and maps, ample quotations from Chinese and Japanese primary sources, and detailed analysis, is a masterful treatment of the cultural contacts among East Asian countries during the Ming and Qing periods. It makes a major contribution to the development of a promising new discipline: cultural interaction studies. Departing from the traditional approach, which examines international relations from the viewpoint of a single country or two countries, this new discipline treats East Asia as a complex and multilayered cultural entity. It pays attention to the formation of culture and its spread to other countries. But more important, it also attempts to answer the fundamental question of how different cultures within East Asia were transformed when they encountered one another.

The book under review is a collection of sixteen articles published from 2002 to 2009. The author has carefully revised these articles before incorporating them into this collection. He has also organized the articles into four parts, each examining a specific topic.

The four articles in part 1 deal with issues concerning cultural contacts between Qing China and Japan. There are detailed discussions of the Qing court's changing policies toward maritime activities and how these changes affected Tokugawa Japan, which lacked formal diplomatic relations with China and secluded itself from international contacts. Yet Japan at that time did not live in total isolation from the outside world. Although the Japanese shogunate officially banned Japanese commoners from maritime trade, it allowed Chinese merchants to trade at Nagasaki, which served as a window for Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges. When Japan eventually opened its door to the outside world, the Japanese government established a shipping line between Japan and Shanghai as a channel for trade, transportation, and communication with Qing China. The Qing court tried to open a similar line to be operated by its own steamboats, but the Japanese government blocked that effort.

Part 2 of the book, also consisting of four articles, focuses on cultural interactions between Qing China, Korea, and Ryukyu. These articles reveal that interactions between two countries could also take place in a third country. In 1534 envoys from Korea and Ryukyu visited the Ming court. They took the opportunity to know not only their host, but also one another. Moreover, cultural interactions were the business of both officials and commoners. In the case of China, people from coastal Fujian Province played an important role. Detailed discussions of the economic backgrounds of these people offer a convincing explanation for their motive in leaving home to seek a new life overseas.

Part 3 of the book touches on how cultural interactions were conducted between Qing China and Tokugawa Japan. The first case is that of Ichikawa Kansai (市河寛斎), a late-Edo period poet who authored *Zuien shishō* (隨園詩鈔 Selected Poems from Suiyuan). When compiling his work, Ichikawa did not simply transcribe all the poems from the original Chinese work, *Suiyuan shihua* (隨園詩話), by Yuan Mei (袁枚). Instead, he acquired the *Xiao Cangshan fang shichao* (小倉山房詩鈔), another work by Yuan Mei, and selected from it only certain poems for inclusion in his own work. Ichikawa's practice indicates that when introducing Chinese literary works to Japan, Japanese scholars did not embark on wholesale cultural importation from China. Rather, they were selective when borrowing from China. This was a very important aspect of Sino-Japanese cultural relations.

Participants in cultural interactions were not confined to intellectuals in China and neighboring countries. Commoners with minimum education in Chinese were also a part of this process. Asian sailors on the high seas sometimes suffered shipwreck. When they were rescued by local authorities in China, Korea, Japan, Ryukyu, or Vietnam, they would stay for a short period

in the host country. With the help of interpreters, local officials would interview these sailors to establish their identity before repatriating them. During such an interview, some of the sailors would use Chinese characters to provide information on the culture, politics, and economy in their home countries. Records of these interviews in primary sources serve as a reminder of the various forms of cultural interactions among countries where Chinese was the written language.

We should not assume, however, that the connotations of Chinese terms used in the context of cultural interactions were static and unchanging. The term *maiban* (買辦) is a case in point. Commonly rendered in English as “comprador,” a *maiban* before 1842 was a Chinese who procured provisions and other necessities for foreign merchants whose ships anchored in Guangzhou. These agents also acted as middlemen for these merchants when they wanted to sell their cargoes or purchase Chinese goods. Yet they were not hired by foreigners but employed by one of thirteen Chinese trading firms (*hang*) in Guangzhou. And these firms were controlled by the Qing court. The role of a *maiban* before 1842 thus revealed monopoly and control as part of the nature of the Qing foreign-trade system. This system was replaced by free trade after 1842, when the Qing court was forced to open five seaports to foreign traders. There were still compradors in this new system. But they were now hired by foreigners as interpreters and middlemen, and were no longer employees of a Chinese firm. Although Chinese records still used the term *maiban* to refer to these people, the function and role of a *maiban* was now different from that of his predecessor before 1842.

The brief stay of sailors in foreign countries and their contact with local authorities does not mean that cultural interactions in premodern times were sporadic. There were foreigners who made sustained efforts at learning the Chinese language and culture. And their efforts are an important characteristic of the interactions in question. Examples of such foreigners include James Flint, a member of the British East India Company, and George Thomas Staunton, son of a member of the British delegation to Qing China in 1793.

Cultural exchanges were multilayered activities. They had scholarly, economic, as well as material dimensions. The four articles in part 4 of this book examine the movement of such goods as books, porcelain, live pigs, and tea between Qing China and Japan, and its impact on the two countries. From 1801 to 1809, Chinese merchants doing business in Nagasaki purchased and brought home some Japanese books. These were Japanese editions of Chinese works. Some of the original Chinese works had long been lost in China, but copies had been preserved and reprinted in Japan. These Japanese works facilitated Chinese scholars’ textual study of Chinese works that had previously been unavailable in China. This scholarly aspect of Sino-Japanese

trading activities during the Qing dynasty was culturally significant, and therefore deserves our attention.

When the Qing court relaxed its control over maritime activities after 1684, overseas trade by Chinese merchants from Fujian Province flourished. In this trade, chinaware was a major item of trade. Such chinaware, however, was not necessarily from the famous kilns in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, but often from private kilns in Fujian Province.

Further studies of trading goods also reveal that changes in Sino-Japanese relations affected not only trading patterns between the two countries, but also particular economic sectors in Taiwan. A case in point is live pigs. Taiwan used to acquire large numbers of pigs from Fujian and Zhejiang provinces for local consumption, and such purchases were part of Qing domestic trade. After 1895, however, Japan subjected Taiwan to its colonial rule. Japanese authorities in Taiwan imposed strict control over importation of Chinese live pigs and encouraged the Taiwanese to raise pigs locally. This policy led to a sharp decrease in the importation of Chinese pigs. Taiwan consequently developed into a major producer of live pigs in Asia in the 1930s and exported live pigs to China through Hong Kong.

High-quality Taiwanese tea was another major trading item in Sino-Japanese trade. Modern scholars have pointed out that Taiwanese tea was sold to such places as Manchuria, Xiamen, and Europe. A closer study of the tea trade between Taiwan and Xiamen shows that although tea merchants from Xiamen managed this trade, the final destination of their cargo was not their hometown, but ports in Southeast Asia. These Xiamen merchants often held dual citizenship. This allowed them to open branch offices near present-day Taipei, where they purchased high-quality tea in large quantities at relatively low prices. They then shipped the tea back to head offices in Xiamen. The tea was not meant for local consumption, but for exportation to Southeast Asian countries, where there were large populations of tea-drinking overseas Chinese.

In studying maritime activities, modern scholars usually focus on official or private trading activities. Yet there was another form of trading activity: piracy, which considerably affected maritime Asia. I would like to draw the reader's attention to another work by Professor Matsuura, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki no kaizoku to Ryūkyū* (Ryukyu and Piracy in East Asian Seas, 2008), and also to a recent work by my colleague Dr. Ivy Maria Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast of China: The Impact of Japanese Piracy in the 16th Century* (2010). These two studies on piracy add yet another interesting layer to our understanding of cultural and economic interactions in East Asia, thus allowing us to see the interactions in question as a whole.

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Review of *Bunka kōshō gaku to gengo sesshoku: Chūgoku gengogaku ni okeru shūen kara no apurōchi* (Cultural Interaction Studies and Linguistic Contact: The Peripheral Approach in Chinese Linguistics), by Uchida Keiichi. Suita, Japan: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2010. [文化交渉学と言語接触：中国言語学における周縁からのアプローチ／内田慶市著. 吹田：関西大学出版部, 2010. ¥4,200, 357頁]

The present book is divided into three parts: “Introduction: The Peripheral Approach in Chinese Linguistics as an Area of Cultural Interaction Studies,” “Part 1: Linguistic Research in the Periphery,” and “Part 2: Modern East-West Cultural Interaction as Seen from Iconography.”

Introduction

The introduction loudly proclaims the establishment of the new discipline of cultural interaction studies, and then forcefully presents the distinctions between periphery and center, individual and general, special and universal, in developing its thesis. That thesis can be summarized as follows.

Cultural Interaction Studies To start off, what are cultural interaction studies? Let us listen to what the author, Uchida Keiichi, has to say.

Cultural interaction studies, at least in the case of the history of Sino-Japanese cultural interaction, was formerly conducted within a two-nation framework. In fields of research as well, knowledge was accumulated in the separate academic silos of such disciplines as linguistics, philosophy, ethnology, religion, literature, and history, and a means of grasping the overall picture of cultural interaction was lacking. In contrast, the cultural interaction studies that we propose seeks to transcend states, nations, and individual disciplines; assumes a composite body of culture found in all of East Asia; and attempts to grasp the totality of cultural interaction from a synthetic perspective while keeping an eye on cultural formation, propagation, contact, and change within

this cultural sphere. (P. 3)

That is, in this new discipline, since we are dealing with interaction, we necessarily assume a framework of two or more nations, but we attempt to grasp East Asia as a totality and carry out research on an appropriately grand scale.

The Periphery and the Center To realize this grand conception, we have to adopt an approach from the periphery, we are told. What is the periphery? The author writes,

Well, in many matters, if one looks just at the center, one often cannot grasp the essence of the matter. In the center of a typhoon, there is no wind; the wind blows in the periphery. The ancients put the matter well. For instance, in Japan, we have the sayings “The base of a tall lamp is dark” (*Tōdai moto kurashi*) and “The onlookers of a game of *go* see eight moves in advance [that is, more than the players themselves]” (*Okame hachimoku*). And China has the sayings “Participants are perplexed, while observers see clearly” (*Dang ju zhe mi; bang guan zhe qing*) and “We do not see the full face of Mt. Lu; we only climb up a side of the mountain” (*Bu shi Lushan zhen mianmu; zhi yuan shen zai ci shan zhong*, Su Shi [1037-1101]). (P. 4)

The Periphery and the Center, the Individual and the General, the Special and the Universal

The author continues,

In linguistics, the connection between periphery and center is similar to that between individual and general, and that between special and universal. To present my conclusion up front, the members of these pairs are not opposites. Rather, they supplement each other. The relationship is not one of this or that, but one of this and that.

But most linguists who study a particular language (such as Chinese, Japanese, or English) limit their research to that particular language. In contrast, general linguists harbor the conceit that general linguistics is a guiding theory, that it can solve the problems of individual languages. (Pp. 10, 11)

He thus severely criticizes the present state of linguistics research.

The author quotes the Japanese linguist Tokieda Motoki (1900-1967): The universal and the special do not exist as opposites to each other. Within every special phenomena there are universal aspects. This can be said not just of Japanese, but of everything in general. An investigation into the special phenomena of Japanese also clarifies the universal aspects of language in general.

He then, without reserve, pours scathing criticism on English linguists as well: Those who study language, whether they be linguists of a particular language or general linguists, should reconsider Tokieda's discussion of the relation of the special and the universal. Many of Japan's English linguists especially need to digest this discussion well. When structural linguistics was fashionable, they headed in that direction. When that lost its appeal, they embraced transformational grammar. Then when that did not work, they moved on to case grammar. Then cognitive linguistics became all the rage. (P. 13)

The Individual=the General, or the Special=the Universal Since linguistics arose from within the Indo-European languages, the author casts doubt on whether it is really universal.

In the Indo-European languages, in general, the sentence has a subject, and the subject carries out the action. From this fact, they reason in a priori fashion to the conclusion that the sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. Even Noam Chomsky, who led a revolution in linguistics, blithely assumes the $S = NP + VP$ structure in his analyses. (P. 15) He thus dispatches Chomsky with one fell stroke, and with the return stroke of his sword, he cuts down the notion that one can explain even simple, everyday Chinese sentences with the $S = NP + VP$ analysis:

But in Chinese and Japanese, this pattern does not necessarily hold. In Japanese, some scholars assert, the subject can be suppressed. And in Chinese, one cannot explain the following examples with the subject-predicate pattern.

Qianbian lai le yige ren. (Someone came out in front.)

Boli sui le. (The glass broke.)

Zheli de shui keyi he. (The water here can be drunk.)

Xia yu le. (It started to rain.)

Such examples of sentences expressing existence or appearance, of the natural passive, and of topicalized sentences do not fit the subject-predicate pattern. That being the case, the $S = SP + VP$ rule applies only to individual languages and is not an essential feature of all languages. (P. 15; some Chinese examples omitted by this reviewer)

In That Case, What Should We Do? The author advocates starting from the basic question, What is language?

In the study of Chinese grammar, the deep study of individual phenomena does indeed yield progress in the field, but what is lacking is a systematic overview of the whole structure of Chinese grammar. We have a pile of studies on whether *le* (the perfect particle) can appear twice

in a sentence, whether *zai* (to exist) can be used in the progressive form, when *de* (a particle indicating modification) is used to attach a modifier to a head noun, and what the difference is between a complement and a parallel modifier, etc., without any explanation of what a sentence is, or what a subject and predicate are. But more than anything else, what is missing is the essential question of what language is. What is missing is a view of language, or to exaggerate, a worldview. Can this be called scholarly progress? (P. 5)

Things do indeed stand as Uchida has indicated. But is it not extraordinarily difficult for researchers to put the his suggestions into practice?

Determination to Establish a New Field of Study To conclude his Introduction, the author quotes Suzuki Satoru:

In scholarship, adopting a thesis on the nature of a discipline is a gamble.... This gamble frightens scholars. Those who hold back, who go with whatever theory happens to be popular without adequately investigating, can safely pursue their careers in academia, but such a rudderless career is not the path of true scholarship.¹

What comes through here is the author's determination to burn his bridges and face the challenge of establishing a new field of research.

There are other points in the Introduction worthy of mention, but since I have limited space, I will move on and present a brief introduction to Parts 1 and 2 of the book.

Part 1: Research on Chinese in the Periphery

Here too there are many points worthy of mention, but I must limit myself to the following two.

The Monumental Landmark of Nineteenth-Century Chinese Grammatical Research: Crawford's *Wenxueshu guanhua* As one trying out the peripheral approach, I find myself drawn to Westerners' early linguistic and grammatical studies and the thirty or so grammars and textbooks studied by the author. Among them, the most highly rated is *Wenxueshu guanhua* (Mandarin Grammar, 1869), by T. P. Crawford (Gao Dipi) and Zhang Ruzhen. According to Uchida, this work has the following three special features:

- "A important feature is that the present work treats measure words as an

1 Suzuki Satoru, "Keishiki to kinō no higan o tsuku taiketeiki bunnō ron" (A Systematic Grammar That Goes beyond Form and Function), *Honyaku no sekai*, June 1982: 25.

independent part of speech” (p. 99).

- “Worthy of notice is that this work clearly acknowledges the existence of what today are called verbal-sequence sentences” (p. 102).
- “Another important feature is that sentences with the preposition *ba* are considered one type of verbal-sequence sentences” (p. 103).

Summarizing, he writes, “Overall, this book is the most systematic nineteenth-century Chinese grammar written in vernacular Chinese prior to the appearance of *Ma-shi wen tong* (Chinese Grammar by Ma Jianzhong). In this sense, this work is truly a monumental landmark in Chinese grammar” (p. 111).

Discovery of a New Source: Bi Huazhen’s *Yanxu caotang biji* In his tireless efforts to develop a new discipline, the author came across some new sources, for example, Bi Huazhen’s *Yanxu caotang biji* (Notes from a Yanxu Thatched Cottage). Bi’s work was first introduced to the world by He Qunxiong in *Chūgokugo bunpōgaku kotohajime* (The Origins of Chinese Grammar) (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2000). Up to that point, it was thought that *Ma-shi wen tong* was the first systemic grammar by a Chinese author. Hence, this earlier publication of a Chinese grammar by a Chinese author attracted much attention. Though He Qunxiong pointed out the existence of Bi’s work, he could not find the work itself. But Uchida did find the work. The circumstances of the discovery, he writes, were as follows:

In the Catalogue of the London Missionary Society Collection of the National Library of Australia (2001.3), there is a work titled *Lunwen qianshuo* (Theses and Introductions). I ordered the microforms of this and another work. When it arrived, I was shocked to find that *Lunwen qianshuo* was none other than the work that I had sought for so many years, *Yanxu caotang biji*. (P. 114)

The discovery of *Yanxu caotang biji* may have been fortuitous, but because of Uchida’s investigative spirit, Fate smiled on him.

Part 2: Modern East-West Cultural Interaction as Seen from Icons

Enticing Titles One after Another A look at just the titles of part 2 piques one’s interest as to what the chapter contains. To wit,

Chapter 1: “Zixingche”

Chapter 2: An 1880 Theme Park and “Zixingche” (Roller Coaster)

Chapter 4: The Origins of Chinese Panel Comics

Chapter 7: The Word “Xiezhen” (Portrait) in China, Along with the Word “Huaxue” (Chemistry)

Chapter 8: “There Are Even Bulletproof Vests”

Chapter 9: Ironman No. 1

Chapter 11: The Clock Tower: Notes on the Expression of Time in Modern Chinese

Chapter 12: China's X-Ray Heritage

These titles had me flipping through the book to find out what they were about. Even when I initially laid my hands on this book, I found myself involuntarily dipping into Part 2 first.

“Zixingche” (Bicycle) At first glance, the title “Zixingche” does not seem in any way special. Yet surprisingly, the illustration of a *zixingche* in *Zhu qi tu shuo* (An Illustrated Dictionary of Instruments, 1627) shows that the word referred to automobiles. The question then becomes, When did “zixingche” come to designate bicycles? According to the author’s investigations, in *Jiaohui xin bao* (Church News), vol. 2, no. 92 (1870) and Zhang Deyi’s *Ou Mei youji* (Travelogue of Europe and America, 1868), the word was used to mean bicycles, but this usage seems to have been not widespread. As evidence of limited usage, we can look at the English-Chinese and Chinese-English dictionaries published by Shangwuyin Shuguan from 1902 to 1936. There we find that “jiaotache” (literally, tread vehicle) and “ziyouche” (literally, unconstrained vehicle) were used to mean bicycle, and “zixingche” does not appear at all, according to the author (p. 250). Not only that, “zixingche” was used to mean roller coaster, to one’s surprise (chap. 2).

This book, full of the author’s enthusiasm for developing a new field of research, is quite good. Unfortunately, however, there are a few places where the author’s interpretations of original passages give rise to doubts, and there are also some misprints, although not as many as in previous works. Yet these blemishes do not detract from the value of the work.

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Posttheoretical Research in the History of Japanese Thought

Review of *Riben jinxiandai sixiangshi* (A History of Modern Japanese Thought), by Liu Yuebing. Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2010. [日本近现代思想史 / 刘岳兵著. 北京: 世界知识出版社, 2010. RMB 52元, 463頁]

In 2009 Bian Chongdao and Lin Meimao arranged for the translation of a Japanese multivolume work on public philosophy, to great acclaim.¹ It is in this context that the young scholar Liu Yuebing published *Riben jinxiandai sixiangshi* (History of Modern Japanese Thought) in 2010 for scholars of Japanese philosophical thought. Liu Yuebing is one of the most productive scholars of Japan studies in China. After publishing *Riben jindai ruxue yanjiu* (Studies in Modern Japanese Confucianism) and *Zhong Ri jinxiandai sixiang yu ruxue* (Modern Chinese and Japanese Thought and Confucianism), he went on to author the 463-page opus *Riben jinxiandai sixiangshi* (A History of Modern Japanese Thought), thus producing a trilogy of comparative and specialized research in three areas of intellectual history.² His diligence in research and industry in writing have thus resulted in extensive achievements. Lacking such knowledge and not as skilled in the art of the written word, I undertake a review of *Riben jinxiandai sixiangshi* with a sense of inadequacy.

First, I must point out that Liu Yuebing's point of departure is historical research. Yet the approach of historical research is slightly different according to whether we emphasize historical thought or the history of thought. If we emphasize historical thought, we have to assume a horizontal perspective (that is, a human or modern perspective) and analyze to get at the origin of ideas—their background and philosophical undercurrents. If, on the other hand, we emphasize the history of thought, we have to assume a vertical perspective and explain ideas in their historical contexts in order to get at the transmissions and transformations of these ideas in history. Yet regardless of whether we emphasize historical thought or the history of thought, we in either case inevitably encounter a core issue, namely, how to discover and select source materials concerning the “facts.”

1 Sasaki Takeshi and Kim Tae chang, eds., *Kōkyō tetsugaku* (Public Philosophy) (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2001-2006). Sasaki Takeshi and Kim Tae chang, eds., *Gonggong zhexue* (Public Philosophy) (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2009).

2 *Riben jindai ruxue yanjiu* (Beijing: Shangwuyin Shuguan, 2003). *Zhong Ri jinxiandai sixiang yu ruxue* (Beijing: Shenghuo, Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian Shudian, 2007). *Riben jinxiandai sixiangshi* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2010).

In “Jiushi niandai Zhongguo de Riben zhexue yanjiu keti” (Topics of Chinese Research in the 1990s on Japanese Philosophy), Bian Chongdao points out, “Up to the present, there have been common weaknesses in our research. The first is a lack of study of original documents. That is, in their use of materials, scholars rely on secondary materials and do not directly refer to original sources. They thus depend on sources cited in the works of other scholars. By limiting themselves to such secondary materials, they cannot verify their accuracy, nor can they grasp the significance of sources from larger textual contexts. Hence, it is difficult to avoid being confined to others’ interpretations. . . . The fourth is that Chinese research on Japanese philosophy, which is still in its infancy, borrows heavily from the relevant research of Japanese scholars.”³ These are weaknesses that Liu Yuebing has emphasized. Why, then, does the present work stress history and in particular the issue of creating history? One reason, I think, is that he hopes to discover a new historical reality by reanalyzing the source literature; another is that he seeks to overcome the deficiencies in experience and approach of Chinese scholarship. From this we can deduce that a major feature of this book is to emphasize study of historical documents and incorporate research results in order to show the richness and possibilities of the history of thought, this in order to provide material for diverse interpretations for scholars to select and use. This will allow later scholars to write a Hegelian (or great-events) history of thought, a great-man history of thought, or a history of thought focused on various schools of thought (such as the Meirokusha, Academic, and Kyoto schools). In this regard, the scholarship of this work is valuable for the foundation it lays.

The second feature that I would like to point out is that this book organizes for us a framework for studying the history of thought. This framework is as follows:

- Chapter 1, “The Beginnings of Modern Japanese Thought”
- Chapter 2, “The Enlightenment of the Early Meiji Period”
- Chapter 3, “From the Promulgation of the Meiji Constitution to the Russo-Japanese War”
- Chapter 4, “The Development of Japanese Imperialism and the End of the Meiji Period”
- Chapter 5, “Topics of Thought in the Taishō Period”
- Chapter 6, “The Intellectual Climate of the Taishō and Early Shōwa Period”

3 Bian Chongdao, *Xiandai Riben zhexue yu wenhua* (Contemporary Japanese Philosophy and Culture) (Changchun: Jilin Renmin Chubanshe, 1996), pp. 242-243.

Chapter 7, “Issues in Postwar Japanese Thought”

The book thus considers Japanese thought from the Meiji Restoration to the early Shōwa period up to the end of World War II, going as far back as the rudiments of modern Japanese thought in the Edo period and foreshadowing all the way down to postwar contemporary Japanese thought. And in between, the author follows the structure of a Shakespearian play—introduction, complication, climax, resolution, and conclusion—to narrate history. Especially when we come to the resolution (the topics of thought in the Taishō period) and the conclusion (the intellectual climate of the Taishō and early Shōwa period), we can see how increasingly radical Japanese thought gave rise to contradictions and conflicts auguring Japan’s defeat and need for reflection.

One thing that has to be pointed out is that the focus of this book is political thought. This focus may be intimately connected with the fact that Liu Yuebing translated *Nihon no shisō* (Japanese Thought), which impressed him with its discussion of the history of Japanese political thought.⁴ Yet if we read the debates of the Meirokusha thinkers or the Taishō New Woman thinkers in their larger contexts, we see that they were intertwined with the political thought of the time, that they admit of being considered as part of the richness and possibility of the history of intellectual debate, the history of folk thought, the history of feminism, etc. In other words, the book provides us with an effective framework for studying the history of political thought, as well as a rich and possibility-filled framework for studying the history of thought in such guises as the history of intellectual debate, the history of folk thought, the history of feminism, etc. The book is thus useful as a reference and for citation.

The third feature of the book that we can point to is its rich research perspective. In China up to the present, research in the history of Japanese thought—be it the history of philosophical thought, the history of cultural thought, the history of literary trends, or comparative history and the history of cultural interaction—has focused on Confucianism, Buddhism, Shinto thought, Marxism, the Kyoto School of Philosophy, modernization thought, or postwar thought. Yet there is no work that presents the whole history of Japanese thought. But more important, while we know that the history of Japanese thought—in the transition from Confucianism to philosophy, from China to the West, and from the West to Japan—has proceeded by importing and incorporating, transforming and reproducing, we have neglected in this

4 Maruyama Masao, *Nihon no shisō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961). Translated by Qu Jianying and Liu Yuebing as *Riben de sixiang* (Japanese Thought) (Beijing: Shenghuo, Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian Shudian, 2009).

process the details of Japanese internal contrasts and intellectual shifts. Yet these details might well be the crux of intellectual history.

In this regard, this book highlights the intellectual conflicts and compatibilities of East and West, touches on the intellectual issues separating the West, China, and Japan, and focuses on the Chinese experience. In the introduction of this book, the author expends considerable space in explaining this experience, but here I think that Liu is just trying to find a new research perspective by elaborating this point of view, or what we may call Japanese thought as reflected in the Chinese experience. His basic goal is to advance from a notion of independently developing intellectual history to a notion of modern intellectual history as involving increasingly penetrating bidirectional exchange. Such bidirectionality can break through the traditional notion of premodern Japan's learning from China and modern China's learning from Japan, as well as other entrenched modes of thought in each nation, and enable us to reorder modern East Asian intellectual history from the perspective of East Asian cultural exchange.

Liu Yuebing's research has garnered much attention from Japanese scholars. Prof Azuma Jūji has written the paper "Ryū Gakuhei kyōju no kindai Nihon Jukyō kenkyū" (Prof. Liu Yuebing's Research on Modern Japanese Confucianism) specifically to introduce his work. In this book review he offers the following evaluation of Liu's work prior to the publication of the present work: "Mr. Liu's work is more of a discussion of the history of modern Japanese Confucianism than a discussion of the history of modern Japanese thought. Hence, we should regard this as a piece of research in modern Japanese Confucianism, rather than as a piece of research in modern Japanese thought. But since the history of modern Japanese thought has mostly ignored Confucianism, Mr. Liu's work will be highly valued."⁵ Perhaps the present work is Liu Yuebing's first attempt at a large-scale study in the history of Japanese thought. In reviewing his work, we must consider this fact, I think. Here I will attempt to state some issues concerning the approach of research in the history of Japanese thought.

First, what is the methodology of research in the history of thought? In the introduction to this book, Liu Yuebing asserts that our research approach adheres to a traditional way of narrating history, as opposed to that of an American history of Japanese ideas or a British Cambridge history of Japanese thought. Yet his intention is not to criticize the approach of historical research, but to express his disappointment at the state of basic historical

5 Azuma Jūji, "Ryū Gakuhei kyōju no kindai Nihon Jukyō kenkyū" (Prof. Liu Yuebing's Research on Modern Japanese Confucianism), *Tōhō*, no. 336 (February 2009): 26.

narration, the unreliability of research, the lack of introductions to necessary and common knowledge, and the paucity of translations of the basic literature. In other words, Liu Yuebing seeks to institute a thoroughgoing research approach to history. I, however, would like to ask, What is the path of development of general history on the one hand and of the history of thought on the other? These two must be strictly separated. Also, I think that the research approach to historiography is only one method of researching the history of thought, even though this approach can be considered the most important. Not only that, but for this book we have to pay attention to continuities and ruptures in the history of thought, and to the special features of Japanese thought. The continuities and ruptures of the history of thought do not align nicely with different dynasties and reign periods; history as demarcated by great historical events is not inevitably the same as the history of thought; and fending off Western thought does not necessarily entail the formation and establishment of Japanese thought. Especially when we reach the contemporary period in the study of modern Japanese thought, how do we define the continuities and ruptures of the modern period, what do we demark as principally Japanese, what falls under the rubric of thought, and what is the value and significance of history? What we need, I think, is a comprehensive overview that will answer these questions. For these questions have not been answered, and this circumstance is somewhat disappointing.

Second, what is the purpose of research in the history of thought? In this work Liu Yuebing has included a chronology of modern Japanese thought and a detailed bibliography, thus providing a model for future scholars, but this book lacks a basic introduction to the focus and issues of previous research in the history of Japanese thought and lacks an overview of research in the history of modern thought. Though one can understand his desire to present just the facts, avoid the perplexities of previous research, and give only his own opinions, this stance no doubt makes this research sink into an ocean of historical materials and issues, amid which it is difficult to discern the author's views. Indeed, what is the author's perspective for critically assessing thought? This issue may puzzle readers. Take the research on the history of Japanese thought by the Japanese scholar Maruyama Masao. As the basis of his discussion, Maruyama asks, "Why did Japan become the first nation of the East to modernize?"⁶ Here I only wish to comment that if we treat Chinese Confucian thought as a type of political thought and ignore its self-cultivation aspect, we obviously give short shrift to the Neo-Confucian

6 Maruyama Masao, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* (Studies in the History of Japanese Political Thought) (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1952, 1983), postscript.p.7

doctrines of Zhu Xi (1130-1200). Not only that, on whether the history of political thought mentioned by Maruyama can be grouped together with Confucian political assertions, we need to maintain a cautious and skeptical attitude. In any case, we have to recognize where we stake our position in our research of the history of thought. If previous research in the history of thought was strongly critical, such a critical attitude is now becoming weaker and weaker almost to the point of extinction. Of key interest is whether or not there is a specific critical attitude, namely, why the subject of our research exists and whether its logic is reasonable. In his research, Liu Yuebing seeks to collect and organize historical materials, and he has produced much admirable research full of humanistic concern and a sense of hardships. But I also have to point out that collecting and organizing historical materials is not research in the history of thought and should not be regarded as the purpose of research in the history of thought.

Third, what is the value and significance of research in the history of thought? The foundation of thought, rooted in philosophical knowledge, drives the development of history and the social climate of opinion leading to progress in society. For modern Japan, such philosophical knowledge came from the West, and on the basis of such philosophical knowledge, Japan oriented its knowledge and established the rationality and methodology of its thought.⁷ But what is the value and significance of researching the history of Japanese thought for us as researchers? Tanigawa Michio, professor emeritus of Kyoto University, once noted, “After World War II, Japanese research in Chinese history focused on how to reconstruct Chinese history as a history of development,” and he stated, “The ultimate goal of Japanese research in Chinese history is to systematize it in accord with the general view of world history.”⁸ So, must we annotate our research in the history of Japanese thought to explain how it fits into the context of a systematic Japanese, or even general world, history? While it can be said that Liu Yuebing’s notion of bidirectionality transcends this stance, how we establish our views as rational and methodological in the Western paradigm of knowledge is an important test of the success of our research in the history of thought.

Establishing one’s views as rational and methodological might involve a Japanese literatus’s working within his understanding of Confucianism, or an

7 Fujita Masakatsu, *Gendai shisō to shite no Nishida Kitarō* (Nishida Kitarō as a Modern Thinker) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998), p. 30.

8 Tanigawa Michio, General preface to “Ribei Zhongguoshi yanjiu yicong” (Translations of Japanese Research in Chinese History), in, for example, Shimada Kenji, *Zhongguo sixiangshi yanjiu* (Studies in the History of Chinese Thought), translated by Deng Hong (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 3-4.

idea beneficial for China derived from the Japanese intellectual tradition, or an idea directly imported into China from the West but also compared with its adoption in Japan. In any case, what we want to maintain is our right to interpret history. In a Sino-Japanese philosophical conference in Shenyang in 2009, Prof. Bian Chongdao asked, We are studying Japanese philosophy, but if the Japanese do not accept such a concept, what are we to do? The answer, I think, is that in our study of Japanese philosophy, we need to establish our own notions of rationality and methodology within our own logical framework.

I titled this review “posttheoretical research in the history of Japanese thought” as a criticism of postmodernism. Having immersed ourselves in the theories of the West, we have found that we have lost our own point of view and have sunken into a state of diffidence. Postmodernism is destructive, and here we are using it to undermine prior research in the history of Japanese thought operating under a different mindset. But such destructiveness helps us to break out of the conceptual ruts of Japanese scholarship. As students of the history of Japanese thought, we do not need to reject from the beginning the research approaches of the United States, Britain, or Germany, nor do we need to embrace from the beginning the research approach of the field of Japanese studies. Rather, we need to develop our own methodology by pursuing and cross-applying our approaches, while conscientiously exploring and explaining historical materials.

Somehow or other, we have to develop our own approach, and exploring historical materials is always a good first step. The research approach developed by Liu Yuebing explores historical materials to verify the facts, and in this way seeks to surmount our tendency to rely on others’ scholarship so that we can directly encounter the historical predicament. While some may think that this is a mistaken path, I think that research in the history of Japanese thought does not offer an alternate route. We must directly face the historical facts and develop an approach and perspective for research in this field. In this regard, Liu Yuebing’s informed discussion has clear import for future systematic historical research and historical case studies.

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