

# The Establishment of the Field of “Oriental History” in Japan:

To Facilitate Consideration of East Asian Studies in Modern Japan

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## Introduction

In modern Japanese Universities the study and teaching of history is comprised of three central pillars: Japanese history, Oriental history, and Western history. These areas are reflected not only in the organization of subjects taught at universities, but also in the composition of academic societies. Even the distribution of research grants by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology makes distinction of each of these as separate academic fields.

The same division can be seen in the fields of philosophy and thought, or literature and language. It is common for universities to offer lectures on Chinese or Eastern philosophy among their philosophy courses, or place the subject of Chinese literature among their literature courses.

Among the academic organizations focused upon China or East Asia, a number of them - such as The Institute of Eastern Culture - are organized in such a way as to cover the areas of philosophy, history and literature all at once. Others, such as The Sinological Society of Japan, simply state their field of study as “sinology.”

It goes without saying that the exact form a subject takes within academia varies depending upon subject and is also dependent upon the demands of the time. However, as a writer specializing in historical studies, I believe that the individuality of modern Japanese, Asian, and Chinese studies is found within the existence of the academic field of “Oriental history,” a field the observation of which has now become second nature in Japan. In this essay I shall trace the creation of this individuality and the creation of “Oriental history” back to its initial establishment, offering some consideration of it along the way. Allow me to preface these writings by stating that all names, such as those of places and academic fields, are used as they were in their respective eras.

## I Establishment of Modern Japanese Historical Research

The establishment in Japan of the modern study of history dates back to the middle of the Meiji period, at the end of the 19th century. Historical research existed prior to this period, with a long list of prolific historians coming easily to mind. The study of history as it links directly to our system of

learning today was, however - as with many other academic fields - established during the modernization of Japan during the Meiji period. Let us look briefly at this process, starting from the organization of university learning.

In 1886 (Meiji 19), the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture announced the “Imperial University Ordinance” and changed the name of Tokyo University to the Imperial University<sup>1)</sup>. In the following year, 1887 (Meiji 20), the Imperial University Humanities University (Literature Department) established history as a subject, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture invited Ludwig Riess, (1861-1928) from Germany to lecture in history<sup>2)</sup>. Riess was a student of the historical scholar Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) at Berlin University, and he brought with him to Japan the concept of positivist history, founded in the Ranke school of source criticism. During his fifteen years in residence, Riess played a large role in the founding of modern Japanese historical research. With elements such as his focus on the use of physical historical materials, his pioneering of the history of trade between East and West, and his promotion of the business of compiling historical materials had a particularly large affect on the direction that Japanese historical research took in the years that followed.

Soon after Riess took up his position, in answer to consultations with the Principle of the Imperial University Hiromoto Watanabe, he suggested to the Humanities University that national history be founded as a subject. This was approved, and in 1889 (Meiji 22), national history was established. The result, however, was a slightly odd situation when considered from the perspective of today. The Humanities University began offering both “history” and “national history” as subjects<sup>3)</sup>. In 1904 (Meiji 34), after Riess left Japan, the history courses were again reorganized and three special training courses founded: national history, Chinese history, and Western history<sup>4)</sup>. Then in 1911 (Meiji 44), the title of Chinese history was changed to Oriental history<sup>5)</sup>, marking the appearance of the national, Oriental and Western classifications that have lasted until today.

So, up until this point — the point where Chinese or Oriental history appears as a historical subject — just what position did the history of these regions hold within academia? When Tokyo University was established in 1877 (Meiji 10), Japan-Sino literature was established as a second subject in the Humanities University<sup>6)</sup>. However, the subject also required the study of English and French literature, and was a very rough and disorganized course. Then, in 1882 (Meiji 15), a course on classic texts was added to the Humanities University, mainly teaching the four categories of classic Chinese literature (Confucianism, history, the hundred schools of thought and literature) and systems of law. This class was closed in 1885 (Meiji 18), and Japan-Sino literature was reorganized in 1889 (Meiji 22) into national literature and

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1) Tokyo University was founded in 1877 through the combination of the Tokyo Development School and Tokyo Medical School. The Tokyo Development School was reorganized into the three departments of law, literature and science (divided into universities by subject), and the Tokyo Medical School into the medical department.

2) It is recorded that these lectures only covered European history, from ancient to modern, providing in three years an outline up until the French Revolution.

3) The reason for this remains unclear, but as the early Imperial University history course was heavily philological, the decision may have focused on the merits of keeping “national history” separate, as it used Riess’ own independent historical sources.

4) At this time the organization of the Humanities University itself had changed to three departments; the philosophy department, history department and literature department.

5) The title “Oriental history” was first used in a lecture name at the Kyoto Imperial University Humanities University, established in 1906 (Meiji 39). The first Oriental history lecture was given at Kyoto Imperial University in 1907 (Meiji 40) by Konan Naito.

6) The first subjects were history, philosophy, and politics, with Japan-Sino literature handled as a separate entity.

Chinese literature. The history of China and the Orient, therefore, had been included in the Japan-Sino literature or classic text classes, in the form of reading Chinese classical texts.

Looking at the above changes from a different perspective, they also allow the process of the gradual change in the organization of the academic fields to be observed, with the national, Chinese and Western studies of the Edo period being replaced with the fields of philosophy, history, and literature.

## II The Birth and Background of the “Study of Oriental History”

Allow me to now offer an overview of how the terms “Oriental history” and “study of Oriental history” originally came to indicate a field within the study of history<sup>7)</sup>.

“Oriental history” appears first not as the title of an academic field, but as the name of a subject to be taught at secondary education (normally ages thirteen to seventeen). Michiyo Naka (1851-1908), a teacher at a normal school, is generally given as its first advocate. Naka’s friend Yonekichi Miyake gives the following account of the event. (The text has been rewritten using modern language.)

In Meiji 27 (1894), the principle of the normal school, Mr. Jigoro Kano, gathered the teaching staff from his own school, university teachers, and teachers from the advanced secondary school (later the old-system advance school) and held a research inquiry into the teaching of each subject in secondary schools (author’s note: both the subjects and the content of them). When you (Michiyo Naka) suggested during the discussion on history that foreign history should be divided into Oriental history and Western history, all in attendance agreed. This marked the starting point of the academic subject “Oriental history”<sup>8)</sup>.

To give a little additional background, in secondary education at the time the most often used textbook for teaching foreign history was “Peter Parley’s Universal History,” an American publication. This text was focused primarily on Europe and America, however, and while Persia and India were somewhat touched upon, it carried the significant problem of all but ignoring the countries that have the deepest relationship with Japan, those of East Asia such as China and Korea. It therefore was seen to be necessary to treat the history of these East Asian countries as a totally different subject.

It is particularly striking that this proposal was made in 1894, the year in which the First Sino-Japanese War started. In the 1880s, terms such as “Oriental philosophy” and “Oriental literature” had appeared, and the occurrence of the First Sino-Japanese War certainly did not directly lead to the creation of “Oriental history” as an academic subject. However, there is no doubt that the Sino-Japanese War provided an opportunity for the Japanese people to become deeply interested in the Asian continent.

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7) There are already numerous writings on how the study of Oriental history was formed - Kyushiro Nakayama’s “Review and Perspective on the Development of Studying Oriental History” (History Education Seminar Edition “Development of Historical Studies after Meiji,” Shikashobo Publishing, 1933), Yoshihiko Ogura’s “Development of the Study of Oriental History in Japan” (“Iwanami Lectures / World History” separate volume, Iwanami Shoten Publishers, 1971) and Seiichiro Yoshizawa’s “China and the Formation of the Study of Oriental History - From the Perspective of Jitsuzo Kuwabara” (Iwanami Lectures / “The Empire” Learning in Japan” Volume 3 - Magnetic Field of Oriental Studies, Iwanami Shoten Publishers, 2006). In particular the final essay by Yoshizawa links closely with the points made here, and I recommend reading it as a companion to this text.

8) Yonekichi Miyake “To Michiyo Naka, BA” (“Will of Michiyo Naka”, Dainippon Tosho, 1915).

Based upon the suggestion of Michiyo Naka, the range of historical teachings to be covered by secondary education was determined by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture<sup>9)</sup>. The following are the principal points.

World history shall be divided into Oriental history and Western history. Oriental history shall be primarily focused on China.

Oriental history shall detail the times of peace, times of war, rise, and fall of the countries of the Orient, centered on China. It shall comprise half of world history, opposite Western history.

In the teaching of Oriental history it is required to take note of the links between Japan and the countries of the orient and the results of these connections, dating from ancient times, as well as the relationships between the countries of the orient and the west. Until now, Chinese history has principally focused on the rise and fall of dynasties, telling nothing of peoples, but Oriental history must include not only the rise and fall of the countries of the orient, but also of the Chinese people, Turkic people, Jurchen people, Mongol people, and so forth.

In the 1890s, a number of textbooks were therefore written as teaching materials for “Oriental history” at secondary education, within the overall boundaries outlined above. The most influential of these was most probably Jitsuzo Kuwabara’s (1871-1931) “Secondary Oriental History,” published in 1898 (Meiji 31)<sup>10)</sup>. The strength of this textbook is thought to figure largely in the spread of the term “Oriental history.”

Michiyo Naka provided the following forward to Kuwabara’s “Secondary Oriental History.”

The inconvenience of using the name “world history” or even “universal history” and yet focusing only on the countries of Europe is nothing new. As the Empire (Japan) is placed at the furthest Eastern point of the orient, and our past, present and future are all linked most closely with the other countries of this region, our citizens should possess a clear understanding of historical events in the orient since ancient times. Though there are a great number of texts in recent years proclaiming to deal with Oriental history, all deal in detail only on China, simplifying all events beyond the boundaries of the Great Wall and often totally omitting any discussion of that vital point of contact between East and West, the Middle East. The lack of these elements makes it impossible to accurately consider the overall situation in Asia, either now or in the past, and I have always regretted this situation. Recently Mr. Jitsuzo Kuwabara, BA, penned this text, “Secondary Oriental History,” and presented it to me. Having read it, I see that some space, at least, has been given over among the historical materials to cover trading between the East and West, the rise and fall of many peoples of the orient and the ruling, wars, rise and fall of many countries<sup>11)</sup>.

If the previous “points of study” and this forward by Naka are considered together, the composition and characteristics of “Oriental history” start to emerge; that “Oriental history” is thought to be a vital component of world history, alongside “Western history,” and that it should include the history of trade between east and west and the rise and fall of many peoples, not just the Chinese.

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9) See previous annotation (8).

10) Its content, along with the teacher’s reference text “Teaching Materials for Oriental History,” can be seen in full in the “Jitsuzo Kuwabara Complete Works,” volume four (Iwanami Shoten Publisher, 1968).

11) “Jitsuzo Kuwabara Complete Works,” Volume Four, Page 3.

It is well known that Kuwabara's “Secondary Oriental History” was translated and published in China in 1899 (Guangxu 25) under the name “東洋史要” by Dongwen Xueshe in Shanghai. The forward to the text is as follows. It is a little long, but I have included the entire extract.

同學山陰樊君炳清、訊日本桑原陰陽藏君之東洋史要既成、刊有日矣。吾師藤田學士（＝藤田豐八、1869－1929）乃論述此書之大旨、而命（王）國維書其端曰、“自近世歷史為一科學、故事實之間、不可無系統。抑無論何學、苟無系統之智識者、不可謂之科學。中國之所謂歷史、殆無有系統者、不過集合社會中散見之事實、單可稱史料而已、不得云歷史。歷史有二、有國史、有世界史。國史者述關係於一國之事實、世界史者述世界諸國歷史上互相關係之事實。二者其界畧然。然其不可無系統則一也。抑古來西洋各國、自為一歷史團體、以為今日西洋之文化。我東洋諸國亦自為一歷史團體、以為東洋數千年來固有之文化。至二者相受相拒有密接之關係、不過最近世事耳。故欲為完全之世界史、今日尚不能。於是大別世界史為東洋史西洋史之二者、皆主研究歷史上諸國相關係之事實而與國史異其宗旨者也。又曩之所謂西洋史者、亦大抵不可西洋各國國史之集合者、不得稱西洋史。其稱東洋史西洋史者、必自國史雜沓之事實中、取其影響及他國之事變、以說明現時之歷史國體者也。抑我東方諸國相影響之事變、不勝枚舉、如釋迦生於印度、其教自支那朝鮮入日本。漢以攘匈奴而通西域。唐之盛也、西踰葱嶺、南奄有交趾支那、以與波斯大食、海陸相通。元之成吉思汗、兵威振於中央、及西方垂細亞、至其子孫席捲支那朝鮮、餘勢及於日本、又如日本之倭寇及豐臣秀吉、其關係於朝鮮及明之興亡者不少。然則東方諸國所以有現時之社會狀態者、皆一一有所由然、不可不察也。故欲解明現時之社會狀態、則研究東洋史其要也。桑原君之為此書、於中國及塞外之事、多採中國正史、其印度及中央亞細亞之事、多採自西書。雖間有一二歧誤、然簡而賅、博而要、以視集合無系統之事實者、其高下得失、識者自能辨之。余尤願讀是書者、就歷史上諸般之關係、以解明東方諸國現時之社會狀態、使毋失為科學之研究、乃可貴耳。”光緒二十五年十一月 海寧王國維述。

It can immediately be understood that the main points of “Oriental history” outlined here are basically in alignment with those proposed by Michiyo Naka and the area determined by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Not only that, but an awareness of such elements as history in the scientific sense of “genealogy,” the “historical body” of the orient, and the relationship between national and world history are also all included. Although Wang Guowei is given as the author of the forward, its content is clearly in the voice of Toyohachi Fujita, instructor at the Dongwen Xueshe at the time by invitation of Luo Zhenyu. It is regrettable that there is no way of knowing what Wang Guowei himself thought of the academic field of “Oriental history,” born as it was in Japan. The Fan Bingqing translation of the same work was also soon released under the name “歷代中外史要”, and it was further translated a many more times by other translators<sup>12)</sup>.

“Oriental history,” born as a textbook for secondary education, did not begin and then end simply as the name of an academic subject. As we have seen, before long it was reflected in the organization of academic fields at the Imperial University itself. To put this another way, “Oriental history” as a field of academic research was established retaining all of the unique properties it contained when first designed as a subject for secondary education.

12) Masahiro Suzuki's “Chinese Translation of “Oriental History” texts at the end of the Qing Dynasty - Consideration of Chinese translation of Jitsuzo Kuwabara's “Oriental History” -”, (Hiroshima University, “Historical Research” Issue 250, 2005) is detailed concerning the translation of Jitsuzo Kuwabara's “Secondary Oriental History” into Chinese.

### III Unique Properties of the Study of Oriental History

Before I proceed further, allow me to confirm the area taken as the “orient” by those advocates of “Oriental history.” Jitsuzo Kuwabara’s “Secondary Oriental History” divides the Asian continent into five areas. These are Eastern Asia (the area of land surrounded by the three mountain ranges of the Himalayas in the south, Pamir in the west, and Altai in the north; China and Korea are included in this area), southern Asia (India, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan), central Asia, (Russian territory of Turkestan, north of the Hindu Kush, west of the Pamir, and south of the Syr Darya), Western Asia (west of the Amu Darya, Persia, Asia Minor, and Arabia), and northern Asia (what is today called Siberia). Based on these areas he then makes the following statement in the opening of the text.

The main thrust of Oriental history is that of Eastern Asia, from past to present, but at the same time, the directly related history of southern Asia and central Asia also needs to be outlined. Northern Asia is not the site of any great changes influencing the situation in Eastern Asia, and Western Asia is indivisible from Europe, so these two areas are placed outside of the orient.<sup>13)</sup>

Therefore, while the term orient is used, it does not indicate all of Asia simply minus the west (Europe and the Americas) and Africa, but while including elements of central and southern Asian history, is primarily focused on the region today called East Asia. The fact that it was regardless called “Oriental history” and not “East Asian history” is most likely because “easy Asian history” would not have been an encompassing enough title to stand as a category opposite “Western history.” I will come back to this issue of an awareness of needing to oppose the “West” later.

It needs to be clearly indicated here that Japan is not included in East Asia. Jitsuzo Kuwabara’s “Secondary Oriental History Forward and Stipulations” explains this in the following way.

As we have national history to cover events in our own country, repetition is to be avoided, and events in Japan are to largely be omitted, aside from those that have a significant connection to other countries.<sup>14)</sup>

Therefore, that the history of Japan shall only be handled as it relates to the other countries of the orient and that national history shall exist as an independent body from it are presuppositions of Oriental history. This is an issue that cannot be reduced to a simple problem of convenience, of “avoiding repetition.” Rather, it indicates that to the creators of Oriental history, the subject was not something in which they themselves were included, but was something that had happened to other people. Indeed, it may well be possible to extend this thought paradigm into the stance toward Asia taken by Japanese intellectuals even today.

There is another unique characteristic to Oriental history that cannot be overlooked. As displayed by its constant appearance in the extracts above from Michiyo Naka, Jitsuzo Kuwabara, and Toyohachi Fujita et al, while centered on China, Oriental history was imagined with the discussion of the history of all the races of the orient to be included. Michiyo Naka’s statement, “Though there are a great number of texts in recent years proclaiming to deal with Oriental history, all deal in detail only with China, simpli-

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13) “Jitsuzo Kuwabara Complete Works,” Volume Four, Pages 17-18.

14) “Jitsuzo Kuwabara Complete Works,” Volume Four, Page 6.

fying all events beyond the boundaries of the Great Wall and often totally omitting any discussion of that vital point of contact between east and west, the Middle East. The lack of these elements makes it impossible to accurately consider the overall situation in Asia, either now or in the past,” makes it clear that the Oriental history that he envisaged was one which escaped from the focus on Chinese history.

Michiyo Naka is famous as the author of “The General History of China<sup>15)</sup>.” The work aims to give a general history of China, finishing before the start of the Mongol era, but this is because of the many problems in the historical sources for “Yuan History,” and Naka proved himself to be a practical exponent of seeking literature outside of traditional texts in classical Chinese with such deeds as personally creating an annotated translation of the “Secret History of the Yuan Dynasty.”

Creating the stage of Oriental history and placing China relative to it could only mean a greater focus on history beyond the Great Wall and the history of trade between east and west. One of Kuwabara’s greatest achievements is the major work for which he is perhaps best known, “The Achievements of Pu Shou-Geng,” which placed the spotlight on the activities of Muslim traders during the Yuan Dynasty and could be called the final destination of East and West trading history at the time.

This placing of Chinese history in perspective advanced research into materials other than those pertaining to Chinese history. Let us now look, then, at Kurakichi Shiratori, (1865-1942), founder of Oriental studies at the Tokyo Imperial University. Shiratori joined the Imperial University Humanities University History Department as a first year student just after it opened in 1887 (Meiji 20). He was Riess’ first pupil. After graduating from the history department he became a professor at the Gakushuin (“Peers School”), handling lectures relating to the countries of the orient, and he expanded the fields of research into Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, and the Western territories. In 1903 (Meiji 36), he completed a two year period of study in Europe and returned to Japan, becoming a professor at Tokyo Imperial University the following year<sup>16)</sup>. For the next twenty one years he would study and teach in Tokyo Imperial University’s Oriental Studies Department, having a great influence on the department of the period.

Shiratori’s work touched in part upon ancient Japanese history and the history of Western Asia, but its central focus was the history of areas like Manchuria and Korea, history beyond the Great Wall and of the Western regions. Aiming for this, he took the work of European scholars as his foundation and then used his superior command of Chinese historical materials to bring the level of Japanese academic research up to the same standard as that in Europe. Shiratori made the following comments concerning his own field of research:

It is only natural and right that the ones who research the orient should be the people who live there, and this fact should only increase one’s indignation that Western scholars have taken the lead into the territory of Oriental studies; to take terminology from the world of politics, invading and devastating it. If the countries of the orient were currently fading, heading toward death, then it may well be asking too much to desire that these countries cease their promotion of this academic field. But our country must aspire to not only compete with them in Oriental studies, but to go so far as to compensate in those areas in which

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15) As this work is written in “classical Chinese” it was also published in China by Luo Zhenyu in 1899. In the forward Luo Zhenyu writes, “We should be ashamed that our own history had to be written not by one of our countrymen, but by someone from another country.”

16) As stated previously, this is the year in which the academic courses were rearranged and the three pillars of national history, Chinese history, and Western history created.

they lack<sup>17)</sup>.

European scholars have been aiding in research into the orient for many years; the results of their academic research into all of the countries of Asia are truly awe inspiring. It is now normal, based on this, for scholars from our own country to learn much about the orient from the teachings of Westerners. While feeling a deep rooted respect and gratitude to Western scholars for this, intellectuals must also deal with the shame of the limited number of contributions made to worldwide academic study by the people of the orient themselves. However, the regions of Manchuria and Korea are far removed from the West, and there are many elements of them to which Western research does not yet extend. We are lucky enough to now find with these areas exposed before our field of study, and the territorial and cultural relation to our own people gives this research further special meaning. Scholars of our country must not miss this opportunity, but pour all of their powers of research into everything concerning these regions, then offer up the resulting achievements to world academia<sup>18)</sup>.

The first thing that can be taken from these comments is that Shiratori was strongly aware of European Oriental studies and was attempting to increase the domestic standard for the subject in order to complete with them, and thus thought that a region yet to be studied in depth by European scholars should be selected. While it is true that the First Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War had expanded Japanese power on the Korean Peninsula and in the northeast of China, making it much easier for researchers to actually go to these places and examine historical materials, one certainly cannot agree today with Shiratori's naive assessment of this state of affairs simply as an "opportunity." However, the point I wish to highlight here is that Shiratori's pioneering move into the fields of history in Manchuria and Korea is in complete alignment with the stance of Oriental history placing focus on regions other than China.

### **Conclusion: "Oriental History" and "Chinese History"**

How have the Chinese, then, looked upon this trend to tilt the study of the orient to countries other than China? Commentary that actually discusses the propriety of "Oriental history" as an academic field appears to be extremely limited. The modern Chinese scholar Bing Sang evaluates it as "四裔偏向", which include the academic direction taken by the west, but statements made by the scholars of the time are difficult to find. During his harsh evaluation of Liang Qichao's "Research Methods into Chinese History" Jitsuzo Kuwabara says the following:

Liang Qichao's evaluation of "Chinese history" and "Oriental history" as created by the Japanese is as follows, "其（日本）坊間之東洋史支那史等書、累々充架、率皆鹵莽滅裂、不值一盼。而現今我國學校通用之國史教科書、乃率裨販淺識之以充數、真國民莫大之恥也。" Quite an open dislike, I'm sure you'll agree. This is also quite a surprising change in attitude from Mr. Liang, who around twenty years ago promoted Japanese Oriental history in his "東籍月旦" from "飲冰室合集," even giving the high praise "条理頗整…繁簡得宜。論斷有識" to my own work "Secondary Oriental History."<sup>19)</sup>

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17) Kurakichi Shiratori's "Influence of Outsiders on Peoples of Han," ("Eastern Philosophy", 8-1, 1901)

18) Kurakichi Shiratori's "Geography of Manchurian History," Kanko-no-Jyo, 1913.

19) "Jitsuzo Kuwabara Complete Works," Volume Two, Page 476.



It is important to clearly understand here that what Liang Qichao is angry about is the spread across China of “national history” textbooks, Chinese history textbooks, written by foreigners, and that he is not criticizing “四裔偏向” Oriental history. It is certainly not unnatural, considering the political situation at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for Chinese scholars to desire the establishment of research into Chinese history by their own hands, rather than the Japanese<sup>20)</sup>. Indeed, it is likely also worth pointing out here that Liang Qichao entirely disregards the trend within Oriental history to place China within perspective in the region.

Therefore, the academic field of Oriental history was created with the aim of enveloping the history of China while also bringing in the history of other regions, while at the same time creating a study of the orient originating in the East to combat “Orientalism,” the study of the orient in Europe. The intention of Oriental history to specify the historical area of “East Asia,” and then detail historical developments within, beyond the confines of single countries was an attempt to surpass the tradition of Chinese studies up until that point, which greatly respected Confucianism, and to “place Japan in its relative place within the region, fulfilling patriotic desires.<sup>21)</sup>”

That there is no clear reaction to the formation of Oriental history in this manner is likely due to issues of the lack of and the distance from “Oriental study” in China at the time. The concept of placing their own culture into perspective within East Asia is one that is unlikely to be born from within China, where the paradigm of traditional East Asian culture holds overwhelming power. However, it is also true that the “distancing from China” that Oriental studies sought was difficult to achieve from the outside. Simply looking at the index page of Kuwabara’s “Secondary Oriental History” makes this plain

Ancient Times: Age of Expansion of the Han

Section 1: Pre-Zhou

Second 2: Zhou Dynasty

Middle-Ancient Times: Ages of Dominance of the Han

Section 1: Qin Dynasty and Beginning of the Western Han Dynasty

Section 2: Foreign Administration of Western Han Dynasty

Section 3: End of Western Han Dynasty and Beginning of Eastern Han Dynasty

Section 4: Spread Eastward of Buddhism

Section 5: End of Eastern Han Dynasty: Three Kingdoms and Jin Dynasty

Section 6: Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern and Southern Courts

Section 7: Sui Dynasty and Start of Tang Dynasty

Section 8: Foreign Administration of Tang Dynasty

Section 9: Middle and End of Tang Dynasty

Recent-Ancient Times: Golden Age of Ethnic Mongols in China

Section 1: Khitan People and Northern Song

Section 2: Jurchen People and Southern Song

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20) Zhang Binglin’s attack on Japanese scholars “與羅振玉書”, (“学林” first period 1991, later included in “太炎錄初編”) can be considered in the same context.

21) Note (7), Yoshizawa’s text page 61. Here Yoshizawa states “In the academic field of oriental history there lies the hidden question of where does Japan fit within it,” perfectly picking up one of the fundamental issues during the foundation of oriental history.

Section 3: Mongol

Section 4: Yuan Dynasty and Beginning of Ming Dynasty

Section 5: Forces Outside the Great Wall During End of Yuan Dynasty and Beginning of Ming Dynasty

Section 6: Middle and End of Ming Dynasty

Recent Times: Age of Europeans Moving Eastward

Section 1: Beginning of Qing Dynasty

Section 2: Foreign Administration of Qing Dynasty

Section 3: Move Eastward of the English

Section 4: Situation in Central Asia

Section 5: Situation Along the Pacific Coast

Putting aside the issue of suitability of these classifications, the axis of Oriental history is obviously Chinese history. Even when information from countries outside China is incorporated, the scholars of the time had no way of relaying such information apart from centering it around corresponding developments in Chinese history. It therefore stands to reason that the dividing line between Oriental history and Chinese history is a vague one. Indeed, definition of this line was difficult even for those who originally designed Oriental history as a separate academic subject from Chinese history. This is best illustrated by the comments of Shun Suzuki, who would later go on to become professor of Oriental history at Tokyo University: “If narrowed down, Oriental history can be understood to also be called the history of China, and for the Chinese it is their domestic history.”<sup>22)</sup>

## Closing

Oriental history as born in Japan almost one century ago was forced to undergo a deep and serious self-reflection regarding its methods and viewpoint after the Second World War. The study of Oriental history and the orient was severely accused of being “complicit,” after a fashion, with Japan’s invasion of Asia. The study of Oriental history after the war stood started out afresh from the starting point of these criticisms.

Recently, we here at Kansai University have initiated the creation of the “Study of Cultural Exchange in East Asia” as part of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s Global COE Program. The course will attempt to achieve both an overview and individual look at the contact, clashes, fusions and changes occurring between the cultures of the countries in East Asia, attempting to uncover a new picture of East Asian culture. In accordance with the start of these activities I believe it most pertinent to locate and consider the problems contained within Oriental history, a field created with the intent of placing Chinese history in perspective within East Asia. I look forward to hearing your comments.

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22) Shun Suzuki’s “Concerning the Recent Influence in China of Our Oriental Studies” (History Association 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary “Discussion on History of the Study of Japanese-Chinese History,” first volume, Fuzambo, 1939)