

Invention of ‘world history’ in 1949 and globalizations since the sixteenth century

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My paper will discuss two points: A) re-evaluation of the post-war discussion for the invention of ‘world history’ in Japanese high schools, B) the importance of putting the present globalization in proper historical perspective. The two are related to each other and inseparable.

A.

World history/universal history/global history (whichever you use the term) is not a new arrival. First of all, such genius philosopher-historians like Hegel, Marx, Toynbee and Wells had engaged themselves in ambitious masterpieces of world history since the nineteenth century. Secondly, though limited in time and space, several influential philosophers and historians gathered in 1942, the second year of the WWII, to discuss the modernity to be overcome and the new world history to be constructed. (In this case modernity meant the European civilization; new world history meant new world order, quite distinct from Euro-American hegemony.) It was a vain project of right-wing intelligentsia to support the current Asian and Pacific War. Thirdly comes the teaching of ‘world history’ in Japanese high schools in April 1949. At the same time the Ministry of Education (Mombusho) issued a provisional instruction. The high-school classes of world history started even before the national curriculum (学習指導要領 or course of studies: **cos**) was quite ready. So the discussion for the newly invented world history was many-faceted, full of possibilities and interesting. It was not a product of a few genius minds of the nineteenth century or right-wing intelligentsia, but a unique and important, collective product of university and high school teachers of history. And this is why I argue the invention of ‘world history’ in 1949.

The interim version of the national **cos** was issued in 1950, and the complete one was promulgated in 1952. The national **cos** has undergone seven revisions since then (1956, 1960, 1970, 1978, 1989, 1998 and 2009). The transformation of Mombusho’s first instruction of 1947 to its revised versions has been an object of political as well as educational debate. As Prof. Kibata talked on Friday, the ambitious textbook written by Uehara Senroku (上原専禄)

and his friends underwent an unhappy fortune since 1956; Mr Ishibashi today has critically dealt with the political implication and the bureaucratic enforcement of the **cos**. They are right.

However, I will focus today on its academic and educational contributions to ‘world history’ and national education. In fact, the national curriculum and the high-school textbooks have been the only fields where ‘world history’ has been discussed and practiced in earnest by serious scholars and teachers for the last 60 years.

In 1949 it was an invention to integrate the hitherto independent Oriental and Occidental histories on the one hand, and a product of post-war democracy and progressivism on the other. I quote only parts of the provisional instruction of 1949 and the interim **cos** of 1950.

文部省通牒「日本史・世界史の学習指導について」 April 1949

- ・ 社会科の一環
- ・ 現代の歴史的背景を理解させる
- ・ 歴史発展の必然性
- ・ 進歩
- ・ 事実を合理的・批判的に取り扱う態度と技能
- ・ 現在の……問題解決に必要な能力を発達させる

Straightforward embodiment of post-war democracy.

文部省中間発表「社会科世界史の学習について」 September 1950

- ・ 現実の問題解決のための学習……手がかりを世界史上の史実より取りあげ……人類発展のあとを理解する
- ・ 近代以前、近代、現代という3時代概念
- ・ 学習単元（試案）：
 1. アジア社会とヨーロッパ社会の発展にはどのような差があるか [類似点と相違点、普遍性と特殊性、近代以前の遺制を理解し批判する……]
 2. 世界はどのようにして一体化したか [ヨーロッパ社会の世界的発展、大航海、ザビエル、汽車汽船、一体化によって世界はどのように変わったか、……第一次世界大戦はなぜ起こったか]
 3. 現代の世界にはどのような問題があるか [第二次世界大戦後における世界の新情勢、正しい国際秩序、民主主義を実行する信念を育てる、現代日本の世界史的地位、世界平和と国際協力への情熱を養う、アジアの形勢の変化を世界史的に把握する……]

The heraldic tone of democratic education and faith in universal civilization failed suddenly in 1952 when the first formal **cos** was promulgated, and ‘the mission of *the nation*’

(民族使命) intervened. One can point to the shadows of the Korean War and the Japan-US Security Treaty, but these are not my topics today.

The discussion since its initiation in 1949 was, apart from more specific points, essentially about two main issues: 1) the integration of Oriental and Occidental histories, i.e. construction of ‘the world history’ as a combined history of the East and the West, and 2) the interpretation of the present (now) in historical perspective. In 1949 the two issues appeared simple and clear. History was about the progress of human civilization, the emancipation from its barbarian beginnings to the present when the West was the democratic leader; the history of the western civilization was normal and universal; the East (though proud of its histories of more than 2000 years) was peculiar and stagnant and had much to learn from the modern, western experiences. Even Marxists and Christians, both influential in the Japanese public sphere just after 1945, helped to uplift such interpretation.

In 2009 it is easy to criticise the Eurocentrism and teleology of the post-war **cos**. It was only a few years after the fall of the Japanese *ancien regime* in 1945 and in the midst of democratic movements; the tone had a natural force. Historians and Mombusho shared the belief in the destiny of the modernizing, democratic people/nation. The cold war intervened, the resurgence of Asia and the development of global economy and politics followed. I will not go into the details of each revision of the **cos** and the politics of the government intervention into textbooks, but I will emphasize that not only economy and politics but also historiographical achievements have made it inevitable to revise the **cos** of world history.

I am glad that Prof. Kibata on Friday mentioned the importance of the 1999 revision of the **cos**: I was one of the committee members and responsible to emphasize the importance of the Muslim civilization and to suggest more inclusion of Japanese history in the classes of world history. Mr Torigoe remarks (I quote) ‘as the result of continuous debates about world history since the end of WWII Japanese textbooks of world history have come to cover substantial history of various areas of the world in a meaningful way, whereas in European countries there has not been sufficient attempts to look at history of ‘others’ in history textbooks’.

B.

Now from historiographical point of view the revisions of the national curriculum of world history hinge again on 1) the East-West interrelation and the invented concept of ‘cultural sphere’ (文化圏)/‘region-world’ (地域世界), and 2) the interpretation of the present globalization in historical perspective. My argument is that the two tasks will be properly dealt with only when we discuss the three stages of globalization since the ‘long sixteenth century’

and place the present in the proper perspective of world history. I want to emphasize the importance of historical change, and oppose anachronism.

Important developments in the historical studies in the second half of the 20th century include, among others, economic history of the 1950s and 60s, social history of the 1970s, cultural, ethnic and gender histories since the 1980s, Islamic studies since the 80s, early modern and 18th-century studies of the last 20 years. Serious studies of Asian history from the 15th to the 18th centuries have been made by Mio Kishimoto, Kenneth Pomeranz, and others. Hence the vision of Eurasian history since the 15th century has been transformed.

There may be some historians who talk about the beginning of global history by the Muslims of the 7th and 8th centuries, *and* by the Mongolians of the 13th century. Certainly they were important players of East-West exchanges; they formed huge empires each that left significant heritages. But, the true integration of East and West (which involve structural transformation on both sides) started only in the 16th century when the Portuguese came to the Indian Ocean to participate in the Asian trade *and* the Genoese and Spanish sailors crossed the Atlantic and eventually conquered the Americas. The transformation was not only about the commercial expansion and/or conquest of the new continent, but also about Europe itself. The long 16th century was the century of growth in terms of population, economy, knowledge, faith, warfare and the state. Europe in 1650 looked very different from that of 1450, thanks to its relations to Asia and Americas. Europeans even acquired knowledge and capacity to explore the corners of the globe. They also developed in Europe a modern system of sovereign states (international order of Europe quite distinct from the tributary system of East Asia). Encounters with 'the other' forced humanist scholars to incorporate the exotic knowledge into their classical philosophy to transform themselves into the age of Enlightenment. Enlightenment was, as Prof. Reid on Friday discussed, not only about 'the spirit of law' or 'social contract'. It was the age of Newton, Linne, Cook and Banks as well as the British Museum and *l'Encyclopedie, ou dictionnaire raisonnee*. These are the consummate results of the first globalization since the sixteenth century: the Europeans started to wonder and learn from the outside world and reached a synthesis that they believed was rational, i.e. the start of modern sciences.

The initiative of the second globalization comes from Britain with industrial revolution and parliamentary democracy of the 19th century. The Britons started to overwhelm Europe and the others by their industrial power, free trade, their language and representative government. The counter-measure against *Pax Britannica* for this was *either* a strong nation state of protective policy (like Germany, Japan...) *or* subordination (India, Argentina...). Modern historical

science led by Leopold von Ranke was an academic product of this age of nations.

In the present age of the third globalization when supra-national powers and cosmopolitan influences are overwhelming, it may be easy to forget about what nations and states were about in the modern age. I want to stress the danger of this, because 1) the contemporary world is a result of modern history when the rivalry of powerful nation-states was the driving force; and the view to immediately connect the pre-modern period and the present world order and to forget about the age of state-system and nationalism is anachronism, denial of history; and because 2) there have recently been some global movements that herald the 'public good', which actually represent the particular interests of a few powerful states.

I may conclude my talk by a quote from Sir Lewis Namier. A Polish diaspora in England of the 20th century, friend of Arnold Toynbee, professor of history at the University of Manchester, and head of the English History of Parliament Trust, Namier is cited by E. H. Carr to have reminded him that 'historians should *imagine* the past and *remember* the future', not the reverse.

The past of the nation states are not past; global historians of this century will not forget that the future of mankind should be a cosmopolitan republic, but they should not lose historical imagination into the past when people lived for their communal identity, died for the nation, and wanted to have their names commemorated by the state.

In spite of some criticisms, the post-war discussion to invent 'world history' in Japan served as a good start for an incorporated intellectual venture. After 60 years, huge historiographical achievements have accumulated. And we are in an advantage point. Let us inherit the 'world history' venture of 1949 and develop an updated and ambitious version of 'world history' for this century.