

A Brief Introduction to Series of World History in Contemporary Japan

Research Institute for World History

The Japanese historiography has been producing lots of achievements on the study of world history. This is divided into two categories. One is the textbook of world history for the high schools, while the other was compilation of series of the histories of individual area of the world.

The former achievement has been introduced abroad by Masao Nishikawa, a Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo, and others. But the latter achievement has not been introduced outside of Japan. Here we will try to characterize the whole series that have been published after the Second World War.

1. Under the strong influence of Marxism: Up to 1968-69

Complying series of world history started already since the end of the 1940s, the initiative of which was taken by several famous historians. Most of the series of world history in this period were under strong influence of Marxist history. This trend lasted until 1968-69 when the student movement against the established academism occurred.

1) The first important compilation of world history that appeared in Japan after the WWII was produced at the end of 1940s and only one series appeared in the 1950s.

① *Sekai no Rekishi (History of the World)*, 6 volumes, ed. by Namio Egami, Kentaro Murakawa, Noboru Niida, Shigeki Toyama, Bokuro Eguchi and Senroku Uehara, published by Mainichi Shinbun, 1949-1954 (『世界の歴史』全6巻、毎日新聞社、1949-54年) .

This series was composed of 6 volumes; each had the title of “The Dawn of history,” “European history”, “Asian history”, “Japanese history”, “Modern history” and “How to view the history”. This series tried to overcome the pre-war world history that was too Japan-centric.

② *Sekai Kakkoku Shi (National Histories of the World)*, 17 volumes, published by Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1954-1987 (『世界各国史』全28巻、山川出版社、1954-87年) .

This was the collection of national (or regional) histories of the world from the ancient times. Although it had no intention to be world history, each national (or regional) history was of the best standard of that time. As there were not enough historians who studied histories out of Europe, lots of non-historians were the authors of the collection that appeared in the 1950s.

2) At the end of the 1950s, Seibundo Shinkosha published *Sekaishi Taikei (Outline of World History)*, edited by Kenichi Nakaya, Kentaro Murakawa, Kentaro Hayashi, Bokuro Eguchi et al, 17 volumes, 1957-60 (『世界史大系』全17巻、誠文堂新光社、1957-60年) .

This was the collection of articles on the history of individual area of the world. The main topics were “Greece and Rome”, “India and South East Asia”, “The Islam”, “East Asia” and “The Russian Revolution”.

3) At the beginning of the 1960s, there appeared two series of world history from famous publishers simultaneously. Both were of high standard, reflecting the achievements of historical studies that were reached by the end of the 1950s.

① *Sekai no Rekishi (History of the World)*, 17 volumes, edited by Shigeki Kaizuka, Kentaro Murakawa, Sinpei Ikejima, published by Chuo Koronsha, 1960-62(『世界の歴史』全17巻、中央公論社、1960-62年).

Since each volume was written by several specialists, there was no consistent viewpoint running through a volume. But the stories told in each volume were so interesting that it attracted many readers.

② *Sekai no Rekishi (History of the World)*, 17 volumes, edited by the editorial staff of Chikuma Shobo, published by Chikuma Shobo, 1960-62(『世界の歴史』全17巻、筑摩書房、1960-62年).

Each volume of this series was written by about 10 specialists. Every author wrote on his/her favorite theme. The modern part of the series was composed of the volumes dealing with the French Revolution, Southern Asia, the 19th century Europe, Imperialism, Inter-war period and contemporary age.

4) In the 1960s there appeared several series of the world history. The 1960s was a flourishing period of world history.

① *Dai Sekaishi (Grand History of the World)*, 26 volumes, written by Kenichi Nakaya, Michio Shibata, Shigeto Toriyama, Yozo Horigome et al., published by Bungeishunju, 1967-69(『大世界史』全26巻、文芸春秋、1967-69年).

Each volume was written by one author. This series distinguishes itself by including 6 volumes written on Japanese history.

② *Sekai Rekishi Series(Series of World History)*, 25 volumes, edited by Yuji Aida, Namio Egami, Harushige Kouzu, Souichi Tominaga and Shikazou Mori, published by Sekai Bunkasha, 1968-70(『世界歴史シリーズ』全25巻、世界文化社、1968-70年)

Basically this series was targeted at general readers, but the annotations which the specialists added to each book were quite useful for learning in classes.

③ *Sekai no Rekishi (History of the World)*, 25 volumes with a supplementary volume, edited by Shigeki Kaizuka et al., published by Kawade Shobo, 1968-72(『世界の歴史』全25巻、別巻1巻、河出書房、1968-72年).

It was composed of cross regional approach and regional approach according to the chronological order; for example, vol.8 the Age of Absolutism, vol.9 Ming and Qing Dynasty, vol.10 French Revolution, vol.11 Glorious Europe, vol.12 Light and Shade of American Continents, vol.13 South East Asia, vol.14 India and the Middle East, vol.15 Modern China, vol. 16 the Age of Imperialism. Each volume was written by individual author who belonged to the "Kyoto school".

④ *Iwanami Kouza Sekai Rekishi (Iwanami Lectures on World History)*, 31 volumes, edited by Yuzo Itagaki, Hidemichi Ota, Takashi Saito, Michio Shibata, Yozo Horigome et al., published by

Iwanami Shoten, 1969-71(『岩波講座世界歴史』全31巻、岩波書店、1969—71年).

This is the best achievement of world history in 1960s. It is divided into ancient times, medieval times, modern times and contemporary times, and each time has several volumes. Each time has its “general view” and then follow articles on European, Asian (non-European) history. This is the collection of specialized articles on the given topic and lots of articles were of the first standard at the time. It tried to place the Japanese history in the perspective of, first of all, Asian and then Euro-American history, showing that we have to advance hand in hand with Asian people. It was also the best product of the Japanese Marxist historians.

2. Losing strong influence of Marxism: the 1970-80s

Since the end of the 1960s, when university students protested the established academism in Japan, the Marxist history came to be challenged by the new approach of cultural and social history.

① *Jinrui Bunkashi (History of Human Culture)*, 17 volumes, edited by Shozaburo Kimura, Masao Mori et al, published by Kodansha, 1973 (『人類文化史』全7巻、講談社、1973年) .

Though emphasizing the progress of culture, this series was written on not cultural history itself, but the development of world history.

② *Seikatsu no Sekai Rekishi (World History of Life)*, 10 volumes, edited by Yozo Horigome and Shinji Maejima et al, published by Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 1975-76 (『生活の世界歴史』全10巻、河出書房新社、1975—76年) .

This series pays special attention to historical aspects of life, such as “Civic life in poleis”, “In the shade of the Islam”, “The Industrial Revolution and people” and so on. With this approach, it attempted to reconsider the existent perception of history and to depict a new world history from the viewpoint of everyday life of people.

③ *Sekai no Rekishi (History of the World)*, 25 volumes, edited by Yoshiro Masuda, Shigeto Toriyama et al., published by Kodansha, 1976-78 (『世界の歴史』全25巻、講談社、1976—78年) .

This is the best achievement of world history in the 1970s. The characteristics of this series is that, though narrative, it included histories on African, South Asian, Latin American and Arabic regions that were written on the basis of the newest achievements of historical studies in Japan.

④ *Sekai Gendaishi (Contemporary History of the World)*, 37 volumes, published by Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1976- (『世界現代史』全37巻、山川出版社、1976年—) .

This is the collection of national (or regional) histories in the modern and contemporary age. Although it has no intention to be world history, each national (or regional) history gives reliable information to build world history.

⑤ *Ningen no Sekai Rekishi (World History of Human Being)*, 15 volumes, edited by Koichi Horikoshi, Masao Mori et al, published by Sanseido, 1980-85 (『人間の世界歴史』全15巻、三省堂、1980—85年) .

This series aims to describe world history from the viewpoint of mentalities of human being

observed from pleasure, distress and desire. By using pictures and graphics, these 15 books attempt to represent feelings of human being regardless of time and space.

⑥ *Minzoku no Sekaishi (World History of Nations)*, 15 volumes, edited by Masao Oka, Namio Egami and Koji Inoue, published by Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1983-91 (『民族の世界史』全15巻、山川出版社、1983-91年) .

This is an approach to world history through the viewpoint of nation and nationalism. It aims at overcoming national histories, stories of nation states, by placing “nation” and “nationality” in a specifically historical setting of world history. So the world is not divided into nations but into regions and historical background of “nations” are also investigated.

⑦ *Visual ban Sekai no Rekishi (Illustrated History of the World)*, 20 volume, edited by Yuzo Itagaki, Osamu Naruse, Sadao Nishijima, Masao Mori and Toshio Yamazaki, published by Kodansha, 1984-89 (『《ヴィジュアル版》世界の歴史』全20巻、講談社、1984-89年) .

Although this series contained numerous illustrations, it was orthodox in historical method. It tried to show the best achievements of world history after the *Iwanami Kouza Sekai Rekishi*.

⑧ *Atarashii Sekaishi (New World History)*, 12 volumes, written by Sadayoshi Ito, Minami Yoshizawa, Shingo Minamizuka, Hiroyuki Kotani, Yoichi Kibata, Hideki Masutani, Susumu Fujita, Takashi Okakura, Toru Shimizu, Daizaburo Yui, Masayuki Yamauchi and Yoshiaki Yoshimi, published by University of Tokyo Press, 1986-89 (『新しい世界史』全12巻、東京大学出版会、1986-89年) .

This series tried to find new frontiers of researching and narrating world history through widening the perspective of individual historical studies. Each volume is written by one author. Most of the authors are originally Marxist but try in this series to find new perspectives beyond Marxist historiography. Some typical topics are “untouchables”, “traditional transformation”, “individuals and communities”, “people’s society”, “identities of national minorities” and “modernization”.

3. After the Collapse of Socialism: From the 1990s to the present day

Series of world history in this period is characterized by the mixture of Marxist history, social history and postmodern history.

① *Sekaishi heno Toi (Inquiries into World History)*, 10 volumes, edited by Michio Shibata, Yuzo Itagaki, Hiroyuki Ninomiya, Minoru Kawakita, Akira Goto, Hiroyuki Kotani and Takeshi, Hamashita, published by Iwanami Shoten, 1989-91 (『世界史への問い』全10巻、岩波書店、1989-1991年) .

This series was the sincere amalgam of Marxist history and social history. It was not intended to describe world history but to investigate important methodological or individual topics in world history such as history and nature, technology, human movement (including migration), social association, discipline and integration, popular culture, authority and power, structuring the world, religion in history and state and revolution.

② *Chiiki kara no Sekaishi (World History of Regions)*, 21 volumes, edited by Yuzo Itagaki, Kazumichi Ohe, Koichi Kabayama, Mamoru Tonami and Masao Nisikawa, published by Asahi Shinbunsha, 1992-94 (『地域からの世界史』全21巻、朝日新聞社、1992-94年) .

This series, criticizing the ethnocentrism and Euro-centrism, tries to construct world history from the viewpoint of regions. Volumes from 1 to 18 deal with histories of individual regions, such as China, West Africa, Latin America. The final two volumes deal with the historical problems which emerge from connections between the world and regions, explore methods of describing world history.

③ *Kouza Sekaishi (Lectures in Modern World History)*, 12 volumes, edited by The Historical Science Society of Japan, published by University of Tokyo Press, 1995-96 (歴史学研究会編『講座世界史』全12巻、東京大学出版会、1995-96年)

This series attempts among others to depict a new world history which sheds light from the historical perspectives upon the problems that humankind has yet to solve. Although each volume relies on the existing achievements of historical studies, it critically examines them to discover new perspectives. The reconsideration ranges from the fifteenth century to the present day, including the Japanese history, thereby the authors aspire to create a world history which should not be mere miscellanea of national histories.

④ *Sekai no Rekishi (History of the World)*, edited by Koichi Kabayama, Mamoru Tonami, Masayuki Yamauchi, 30 volumes, published by Chuokoronsha, 1996-99 (『世界の歴史』全30巻、中央公論社、1996-99年) .

This series is a collection of volumes written by one or several specialists. Although this series is narrative, there are some volumes that reflect well the recent studies of social history in Japan. Among the topics are renaissance and the Mediterranean world, rise and fall of Latin American civilization, peoples and societies in Africa, challenge of modern Islam and traditions and development in Southeast Asia.

⑤ *“Minami” kara mita Sekai (World History Viewed from the ‘South’)*, 6 volumes, edited by Yoichi Kibata, Toru Shimizu, Yoshiko Kurita et al, published by Otsuki Shoten, 1999 (『「南」から見た世界』全6巻、大月書店、1999年) .

This is a unique history of the world. It describes the history of the “South” of the world and challenges the conventional world history that are dominated by the view from the “North”. Although roughly compiled chronologically since the 16th century, each volume is simply composed of independent articles.

⑥ *Iwanami Kouza Sekai Rekishi (Iwanami Lectures on World History)*, edited by Koichi Kabayama, Minoru Kawakita, Norihiko Fukui, Mio Kishimoto et al., 29 volumes, published by Iwanami Shoten, 1997-2000 (『岩波講座世界歴史』全29巻、岩波書店、1997-2000年)

Approximately thirty years after the publication of the predecessor, *Iwanami Lectures on World History*, and “active discussions on world history” evoked by recent changes in the world, especially the end of the Cold War, this series is aimed at describing a new world history. In comparison with the previous series, each volume tries to apply various new research methods for integrated comprehension of individuality and synchronicity. Moreover, in view of the fact of the expulsion of Japanese history in the conventional series on world history in Japan, it

attempts to include Japanese history as a part of world history.

⑦ *Chiiki no Sekaishi (World History seen from Regions)*, 12 volumes, written by Norihiko Fukui, Mio Kishimoto, Hiroshi Takayama et al., published by Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1997-2000(『地域の世界史』、山川出版社、1997－2000年).

This is an ambitious experiment of composing world history from the viewpoint of regions. It analyses “region” from various points of view, such as relations between historical researches and area studies, the multilayered structure of regions, nations, languages, religions, the formations and variations of cultures and regions, and regions beyond the limits of states. In sum, it questions the conception of region itself. For example, the vol.7 titled “The Regional History on Movement” discusses the mobility of humans. This movement of humans provides a new regional perspective and changes the old structure of area. Moreover, “Diaspora”, “Exile” and “Refugee” create new conceptions of region. Through these discussions, it can show the historical processes between human and region.

⑧ *Sekai Kakkoku Shi (National Histories of the World)*, 28 volumes, published by Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1998- (『世界各国史』全28巻、山川出版社、1998年－) .

This series is a new version of the above-mentioned *Sekai Kakkoku Shi (National Histories of the World)*. Although the concept that it is the collection of national (or regional) histories of the world from the ancient times is unchanged, each volume represents the best standard of the late 20th century.

Supplement:

It should be noted that in the recent decades there appeared dictionaries on world history that are different in the character from those made for the university entrance examination that had a long history itself.

- ① *Kadokawa Sekaishi Jiten (Kadokawa Dictionary of World History)*, ed., by Masao Nishikawa, Hiroyuki Kotani, Shingo Minamizuka et al., Kadokawa Shoten, 2001
- ② *Yamakawa Sekaishi shojiten (Yamakawa Concise Dictionary of World History)*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2004
- ③ *Rekishigaku Jiten (Encyclopedia of Historiography)*, ed., by Koichi Kabayama, Hido Kuroda, Minoru Kawakita, Mio Kishimoto, Tsugitaka Sato, Tomoyasu Kato, Isamu Ogata, Shingo Minamizuka and Hirofumi Yamamoto, Kobundo, 1994-

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