

REVIEW ARTICLE

GREAT WALL?: OVERCOMING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN EURO-AMERICAN AND SINO-JAPANESE SINOLOGIES

Atsushi Kotera

University of Tokyo

E-mail kotera@ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp

The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han.

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INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the nations of Europe and North America take the lead in the majority of disciplines in the academic world today. In most fields, unless a scholarly work makes reference in some way or other to the findings of Euro-American research, it is not considered worthy of mention. It is not, however, so common for the accomplishments of Euro-American scholars to be taken up by Japanese and Chinese scholars working in the field of ancient Chinese history. Presumably one reason for this is that in East Asia, especially in Japan and China, there are long and rich traditions of scholarship on Chinese ancient history that reach back to premodern times. Yet to just what extent is the research of European and American scholars referenced in the introductory books and general surveys concerning ancient Chinese history that are published in Japan and China?

My purpose in posing this question is not to claim that the level of European and American scholarship on ancient Chinese history is low. Needless to say, there have been more than a few eminent researchers in Europe and America, such as Edouard Chavannes, Bernhard Karlgren and others, who have made great contributions to the field of ancient Chinese history. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the reason such a situation persists is that Euro-American research on ancient Chinese history constitutes a separate constellation of scholarship that is virtually distinct from that of Japan and China; in other words, a wall appears to exist between Sino-Japanese and Euro-American researchers.

On the other hand, while Sino-Japanese researchers into Chinese ancient history have certainly produced a massive body of scholarship, when we consider the extent to which these Sino-Japanese scholars have been able to make their findings known to the world at large, it is not necessarily the case that they have been as successful as their European

and American counterparts. In short, it seems that the present state of ancient Chinese historical research might be described as one in which something of a gap exists between the accumulation of a body of research and the ability to make these findings available.

Given this situation, it was of great interest to me to learn that an overview concerning the empires of Qin and Han, such as the volume presently under review, had been written, particularly since its author is well known even in Japan and China. I expected that I would learn something from the work about how these empires are understood in Europe and America, where this book is published. Since I assume that the principal readers of this essay will be individuals who are part of the English-speaking world, I would like to incorporate into my review an introduction to postwar Japanese research, especially in regard to theories of the Qin and Han empires.

THE FIRST KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE QIN-HAN EMPIRES: A FOCUS ON OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

As is clear from even a cursory reading of this book, there are two keys to the author's understanding of the Qin and Han empires: non-Han ethnic groups and the great families (豪族 *haozu*). From their inception, the Qin and Han empires attempted to suppress and appease both of these forces, but their efforts were of limited success. In the end, the argument goes, these two forces caused the decline of the Qin and Han empires and eventually led to their destruction.

The author's framework is as follows. After enduring military suppression at the hands of the Qin and Han empires, non-Han ethnic groups such as the Xiongnu and the Qiang submitted and were relocated to areas in the interior. They provided military and economic support to the empires, but eventually rose in revolt against them, acting internally as a force that brought the Qin-Han regime to its collapse. In spite of the repeated policies of suppression and appeasement that the Qin-Han empires pursued against them, the great families accumulated knowledge of Confucian learning, sending members of their clans to the centers of the empire as bureaucrats. In the rural peripheries, meanwhile, they made peasants into dependents, turning them into private armies. Eventually, the families became sufficiently autonomous to undermine the administration of the Empire. Lewis understands the relationships of the non-Han ethnic groups and the great families with the Qin-Han empires as having proceeded in parallel.

The author considers a broad range of primary sources and advances large-scale theories on the basis of his solid consideration and rigorous analysis of evidence. He trains his sights on the non-Han peoples, who functioned first as external Others to the Qin and Han Empires and later were internalized, and on the great families, who were internal constituents of empire. His focus on these two principal actors of the era allows us to glimpse the keen discernment he brings to the field of ancient Chinese history.

The schema by which an empire collapses due to the external and internal pressures of foreign ethnic groups can be seen as one in which the relationship of the Germanic peoples to Rome has been overlaid onto the relations of the Xiongnu and other non-Han ethnic groups to the Qin-Han empires. This sort of explanation seems to be one that can be understood readily by Western readers, who would be familiar with Roman history.

Nevertheless, the recruitment of non-Han ethnic groups for military service and their resettlement to the Chinese interior are phenomena that become salient not in the Qin-Han era, but rather later in the period from the end of the Eastern Han to the Three Kingdoms and Western Jin period. For this reason, it is generally more common for this schema to be applied to the period from the Western Jin to the Sixteen Kingdoms. As examples of significant research by Chinese and Japanese scholars on the non-Chinese northern peoples, the following two works may be mentioned: Uchida Ginpū's *North Asian history: the Xiongnu* and Ma Changshou's *The Northern Di and the Xiongnu*.¹ Uchida Ginpū has written about the Southern Xiongnu, a group that Lewis takes up in detail in his book. Uchida argues that after the Southern Xiongnu submitted to the Han, the authority that their *chanyu* ("supreme leader") wielded over the various tribes diminished. He also notes how once the Southern Xiongnu *chanyu* had submitted to the Han, a new strategy was turned to, which sought to enlist the military support of the newly ascendant Wuhuan and Xianbei in order to invade China. A detailed study of the northern tribes' state administrative structure during the Wu Hu and Sixteen Kingdoms Period can be found in Tanigawa Michio's *A historical study of the formation of the Sui and Tang Empires*.² Although the time period under its consideration is the Sui and Tang, Chen Yinke's *Draft of a brief treatise on the origins of the Sui and Tang systems* is a seminal work on the relationship between the Han people and the northern non-Han ethnic groups.³ There, Chen Yinke terms the Tang dynasty power group the "Guanlong bloc," seeing it as a fusion of non-Han and Han peoples forged under Yuwen Tai of Western Wei that he argues stood in opposition to the "Shandong old gentry" who represented ethnic Han aristocrats.

Unlike the ethnic groups living on the western side of the Eurasian continent, those on the eastern side rapidly assimilated with the surrounding society. For this reason they have not received the same amount of scholarly attention as, say, ethnic groups that existed within the Roman empire. With regard to the resettlement of non-Han ethnic groups into the interior during the Han dynasty, the general tendency in the Sino-Japanese academic world has been for the rebellions of the Qiang to be discussed as little more than an index of the decline of the Eastern Han. Readers may also entertain doubts about whether the permeation of ethnic groups into the Han was as influential as the author of this book claims it to have been. However, in recent years, there has been a movement in Japan as well in which scholars such as Misaki Yoshiaki 三崎良章 have argued that the role played by non-Chinese in ancient China should be more favorably assessed. We might say that the work under review happens to coincide with this trend.

With this in mind, there are several occasions in the book where Lewis explains the Qin and Han empires with reference to European history. The author draws upon the example of the ancient Greeks defining themselves in terms of contrasts with their Persian enemies, to explain how through the Qin construction of the Great Wall, the Chinese people and the northern peoples came to be defined as "central" and "outer" respectively, distinguished

1 Uchida Ginpū 内田吟風. *Kita Ajia shi kenkyū: Kyōdo hen* 北アジア史研究—匈奴篇. Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1975; Ma Changshou 马长寿. *Bei Di yu Xiongnu* 北狄与匈奴. Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1962.

2 Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄. *Zui Tō teikoku keisei shiron* 隋唐帝国形成史論. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1971.

3 Chen Yinke 陈寅恪. *Sui Tang zhidu yuanyuan lüelungao* 隋唐制度渊源略论稿. Chongqing: Guoli Zhongyuan Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo Zhuankan, 1944; Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1954.

from one another not only in geographic but in cultural terms (pp. 58–59). Elsewhere, he contrasts the practice in ancient Rome, medieval Europe, and India, where rulers displayed themselves to their people, with the early Chinese situation wherein there was instead a tendency to conceal the ruler from the ruled; while gates, towers, and other tall works of architecture constructed within the cities rendered imperial authority visible, the first Qin emperor did not tell anyone of his whereabouts (p. 80). Similarly, Lewis introduces a comparison to the physiocrats of early modern Europe to illustrate how in the Qin and Han era, it was thought that agriculture was the sole true source of wealth, and that manufacture and commerce therefore needed to be carefully controlled lest peasants abandon their farms and thereby bring detriment to the state (p. 106). There is nothing wrong with drawing these sorts of analogies as a way to make ancient Chinese history more readily intelligible to European and American readers. However, when such explanations of the resemblances between the two phenomena are made, it is often the case that their similarities are but superficial while their true nature is completely divergent. In such cases it is necessary for the author to clarify this fact, even if only in a footnote. For example, the ancient Chinese concept of “inner” and “outer” was completely different from the corresponding concept in ancient Greece, for it was based upon the unique concept of *hua* and *yi*, which entailed elements beyond ethnicity. The scope of *hua* and *yi* could be shifted and transformed in rather flexible ways; it was not always the case that those living in the central plains or the Han people were invariably equated with *hua* or *xia*. Overly simplistic comparisons between the histories of Europe and China may instead lead to misunderstandings, and thus it is essential for them to be made with care.

THE SECOND KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE QIN AND HAN EMPIRES: THE GREAT FAMILIES

There is a vast amount of research by both Japanese and Chinese scholars on the question of the great families in the Qin-Han era because of its link to the question of how we ought to grasp the ancient Chinese empire: a link that reveals itself most sharply in the matter of periodization. Here I would like to center my remarks around the major research accomplishments of postwar Japanese scholars, with the aim of introducing this body of work to European and American scholars.

The framework that Lewis adopts in this book recalls the argument on the dissolution of the Qin and Han empires that Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi advanced from the 1940s to the 1960s. His research appeared in the following three articles: “A history of government in the Qin and Han,” “On the ‘Dizizhi’ chapter of *Guanzi*: a consideration of the relationship between the ancient autocratic system and various social groups,” and “One viewpoint for grasping ancient and medieval Chinese history.”⁴ These three articles are all included

4 Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi 宇都宮清吉. “Shin Kan seijishi” 秦漢政治史. In vol. 4 of *Shina chiri rekishi taikai* 支那地理歴史大系. Tokyo: Hakuyōsha, 1941; “Kanshi teishi shokuhen ni yosete: kodai sensei taisei to shakai shoshūdan to no kankei ni tsuite no kōsatsu” 管子弟子職篇によせて—古代専制体制と社会諸集団との関係に就いての考察—, *Nagoya Daigaku Bungakubu kenkyū ronshū: shigaku* 名古屋大学文学部研究論集: 史学, no. 10 (March 1963); “Chūgoku kodai chūseishi haaku no tame no ichi shikaku” 中国古代中世史把握のための一視角. *Chūgoku chūseishi kenkyū* 中国中世史研究. Tokyo: Tōkai Daigaku shuppankai, 1970.

in his *Research in Chinese ancient and medieval history*.⁵ In these articles, Utsunomiya conceives of the autocratic authority of non-consanguineous leaders, which possessed some legalistic characteristics, as something that stood in opposition and contradiction with the communitarian village society that was structured on familial values premised on the ethical code of filial piety and fraternal devotion. He argues that the principal economic foundations of the Qin-Han empires lay in the village society, but that the empire dissolved through the advancing acquisition of land by the great families, leading in the third century to a “medieval” society of aristocratic great families and clans of distinguished lineage.

The question of how to interpret the relationships between the great families and the Qin and Han empires and the peasantry has been an extremely important issue not just for Utsunomiya, but for many researchers in ancient Chinese history from postwar Japan and contemporary China too. If we go back to the World War II era, Naitō Konan made the following periodization in his *A history of ancient China* and *A history of medieval China*: the period up through the middle of the Eastern Han he defined as “antiquity” (*jōko* 上古); the latter half of the Eastern Han through the Western Jin he identified as the first transitional period; and then the Sixteen Kingdoms through the mid-Tang as the medieval period; the late Tang and Five Dynasties as a second transitional period; the Song and Yuan dynasties as the first part of the early modern period; and the Ming and Qing dynasties as the later early modern period.⁶ He argued that a massive gap in the areas of politics, economics, and culture divided the Tang and the Song. Scholars such as Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, in his *Research on the social and economic history of the Han dynasty*, and Miyazaki Ichisada 宮崎市定, followed the Naitō hypothesis.⁷ Maeda Naonori, on the other hand, focused attention on the ownership of large tracts of land and labor by slaves and semi-slaves in an article entitled “The end of antiquity in East Asia,” originally published in April 1948.⁸ Maeda argued that the disappearance of this practice in China came in the late Tang, around the ninth century, at which point “antiquity” ended and the medieval period, characterized by the labor of independent peasants and tenant farmers, began. This theory was extremely influential on such scholars as Nishijima Sadao. The biggest difference between the theories of Naitō and Maeda lies in the question of whether or not it is possible to recognize a periodic division at the end of the Eastern Han. After World War II, there was a protracted and spirited debate over the issue, and no conclusion had yet been reached when interest in the topic of periodization itself subsided toward the end of the Cold War.

There has been a tremendous amount of research in postwar Japan on the issue of the Qin-Han empires, a body of work that Higashi Shinji has organized in his “Theories of the

5 Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi. *Chūgoku kodai chūseishi kenkyū* 中国古代中世史研究. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1977.

6 Naitō Konan 内藤湖南. *Shina jōkoshi* 支那上古史. Tokyo: Kōbundō 弘文堂, 1944; *Chūgoku kinseishi* 中国近世史. Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1947.

7 Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi. *Kandai shakai keizaishi kenkyū* 漢代社会経済史研究. Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1955.

8 Maeda Naonori 前田直典. “Higashi Ajia ni okeru kodai no shūmatsu” 東アジアに於ける古代の終末. *Rekishi* 歴史 1-4, April 1948. The article is also included in his *Genchōshi no kenkyū* 元朝史の研究 [Research in the history of the Yuan dynasty] Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku shuppankai, 1973.

Qin and Han empires.”⁹ In Japan, if a scholar were going to make an argument about the Qin and Han empires, it would be assumed that he or she would take such scholarship into account. Perhaps they are not consulted in such detail outside Japan, but nevertheless it seems desirable to me that a scholar have an understanding of such representative works of postwar Japanese historical scholarship as the following: the aforementioned Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi’s *Research in Chinese ancient and medieval history*; the so-called “earlier thesis of Nishijima,” which is presented in Nishijima Sadao’s “A consideration of ancient Chinese empire: Han Gaozu and his distinguished retainers”;¹⁰ the so-called “Nishijima new theory,” which is presented in his *The formation and structure of ancient Chinese empire: research into the twenty-rank peerage system*;¹¹ also Masubuchi Tatsuo’s *Ancient Chinese society and state: social history research into the process of Qin and Han empire formation*;¹² and Kimura Masao’s *The formation of empire in ancient China: especially the fundamental conditions for its establishment*.¹³

In his “earlier thesis,” Nishijima Sadao analyzed the group structure of Liu Bang, the first Han Emperor, from the very outset of his troop marshaling, and argued that Liu Bang’s initial group was characterized by a patriarchal familial system of slavery. This type of formation first appeared during the transitional period of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States eras, after the collapse of the clan system, and Nishijima’s theory asserts that the ability of Liu Bang to gather together non-blood-related individuals into such a collective reflects the special characteristics of the period. In Nishijima’s view, while the Han Empire inherited the state structure of the Qin Empire, it was also characterized by this type of patriarchal familial slave system power structure. However, Nishijima’s earlier thesis came under harsh criticism from scholars such as Masubuchi Tatsuo. Masubuchi criticized Nishijima’s concept of a “familial slave system,” and argued that Liu Bang’s collective was rich in elements of vagabond (*youxia*) society, and that it derived from chivalrous customs that were based on personal spiritual bonds. He held that these were then organized into a patriarchal bureaucratic administrative system. In its emphasis on individual spiritual human bonds, Masubuchi’s theory was tremendously influential on subsequent research into ancient Chinese history, but it nevertheless tended to be somewhat deficient in providing a logical explanation for how this system that depended on the chivalrous customs of the “wandering braves” switched over into a bureaucratic system with the emperor at its peak. Setting this issue aside for the moment, after Nishijima’s earlier thesis was subject to the criticisms of Masubuchi and others, Nishijima rescinded it and proposed his “new thesis.” This theory sees the fundamental structure of the Qin and Han empires as

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- 9 Higashi Shinji 東晋次. “Shin Kan Teikokuron” 秦漢帝国論. In Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄, ed., *Sengo Nihon no Chūgokushi ronsō* 戦後日本の中国史論争 [Contentious debates on Chinese history in postwar Japan]. Nagoya: Kawai Bunka Kyōiku Kenkyūjo, 1993.
- 10 Nishijima Sadao 西嶋定生. “Chūgoku kodai teikoku no ichi kōsatsu: Kan no kōso to sono kōshin” 中国古代帝国の一考察—漢の高祖とその功臣—. *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 歴史学研究 141 (September 1949).
- 11 Nishijima Sadao. *Chūgoku kodai teikoku no keisei to kōzō: nijūttō shakusei no kenkyū* 中国古代帝国の形成と構造—二十等爵制の研究—. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku shuppankai, 1961.
- 12 Masubuchi Tatsuo 増淵龍夫. *Chūgoku kodai no shakai to kokka: Shin Kan teikoku seiritsu katei no shakaishiteki kenkyū* 中国古代の社会と国家—秦漢帝国成立過程の社会史的研究—. Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1960.
- 13 Kimura Masao 木村正雄. *Chūgoku kodai teikoku no keisei: toku ni sono seiritsu no kiso jōken* 中国古代帝国の形成—特にその成立の基礎条件—. Tokyo: Fumaidō, 1965.

being one of individual and personal rule of the people by the emperor, and argues that in order to establish this sort of ruling relationship it was necessary on the one hand for the pre-Spring and Autumn era ruling clans to be disintegrated, and from them to emerge a patriarchal monarch, and on the other hand for the ruled clans to dissolve their ethnic bonds and emerge as discrete peasants. Nishijima's new thesis also identified the heterogeneity of *junxian* 郡縣 (commandery and prefecture) rule, evident from the fact that it was possible for some *junxian* to retain their old traditional order. Kimura Masao conjectured that at the foundations of the formation of autocracy and the imperial and *junxian* systems of rule in ancient China lay relations of production that might be called a national productive unit. Geographic conditions such as the dryness of the climate and the flooding of the great rivers were background factors contributing to the emergence of these relations of production. The initial stage saw the appearance of primitive city-states centered around primary agricultural areas, but as productive power developed, secondary agricultural lands that were premised upon large-scale and extremely artificial flood-control and irrigation systems began to appear widely as extensions of primary agricultural areas, particularly in the vast and flat expansive plains and basin lands of northern China. It was there that the first prefectures were established, which in turn became the foundation for the establishment of national productive units. This type of productive relations necessarily gave rise to an imperial nation-state system where authority was concentrated centrally.

With regard to the relations between nation state, the great families, and the peasantry, a new framework called "the communitarian position" was constructed in Japan primarily during the 1960s and 1970s. The representative advocate of this point of view, which takes the relationship between totalitarian power and the community as its fundamental axis, is Tanigawa Michio. In an article entitled "Standpoints and methods for research into medieval Chinese history" that he co-authored with Kawakatsu Yoshio, Tanigawa advances the Utsunomiya theory, and views the village communities that formed the foundation of the Qin-Han empires as predominantly consisting of rather flat relationships among autonomous smallholders; these were then reorganized into the great family communities that transcended the keen sense of social class opposition between the large landholders and the minor peasants.¹⁴

Stimulated by Tanigawa's communitarian theory, another set of communitarian theories appeared that sought to determine how Marx's model of an Asiatic mode of production might be situated in ancient Chinese history. While criticizing Tanigawa's communitarian theory, Goi Naohiro discussed the social class structure of Han dynasty villages in his essay "Ancient Chinese history and the community: on the theories of Tanigawa Michio."¹⁵ He proposed that the Zhou Dynasty clan-based city-state communities disintegrated, giving way to the emergence of new communities centered around patriarchal, powerful local families. This theory differs from that of Masubuchi Tatsuo, discussed below, which holds that the city-state communities were completely disbanded only to be

14 Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄 and Kawakatsu Yoshio 川勝義雄. "Chūgoku chūseishi kenkyū ni okeru tachiba to hōhō" 中国中世史研究における立場と方法. In *Chūgoku Chūseishi Kenkyūkai* 中国中世史研究会, ed., *Chūgoku chūseishi kenkyū* 中国中世史研究. Tokyo: Tōkai Daigaku shuppankai, 1970.

15 Goi Naohiro 五井直弘. "Chūgoku kodaishi to kyōdōtai: Tanigawa Michio shi no shoron o megutte" 中国古代史と共同体—谷川道雄氏の所論をめぐって—. *Rekishi hyōron* 歴史評論 255 (October 1971).

then merged into new human formations. In his article “A memorandum on research into the ancient history of China,” Tada Kensuke argued that the postulation of a micro-managed mode of production by minor peasants was nothing but an illusion, for they had not in fact won for themselves any true autonomy from the community.¹⁶ Rather, their mode of production was confined to what Marx termed the Asiatic community stage. In Tada’s view, the chieftain class comprised great families of the old type that continued the legacy of the former Six States aristocracy through the early Han and preserved the vestiges of the old clan-based systems to a significant extent. He held that the authoritarian states of Qin and Han dissolved this chieftain class while consciously and forcefully siphoning off the functions of the micro-communities. Moreover, he believed that the period from the Qin and Han through the Sui and Tang constituted the total system of slavery of the Asiatic mode of production, which Marx had presented in his “Forms Which Precede Capitalist Production.” In his “Notes on ancient Chinese states: taking into account recent critiques of various theories,” Ōta Yukio criticized the theory of Yoshinami Takashi and Watanabe Shin’ichirō that is discussed below, while at the same time conceiving of the stratification of Han dynasty society as the development of contradictions between the principles of state rule and reality.¹⁷ Ōta argued that the frequent employment of policies to suppress the grand families and to aid the poor peasants was an attempt to keep these contradictions in check within the framework of the community. In his “A reconsideration of Shang Yang’s reforms,” Ōta analyzed the reforms of Shang Yang, and on the other hand pointed out that a state like Qin lagged behind the various states of the central plain in its productive power, and was therefore a place where private ownership had yet to be consolidated and where the dissolution of the city-state system was still lagging.¹⁸ While collective ownership persisted, they imported the advanced agricultural methods of the states of the central plain, and took on an autocratic character in order to siphon off the resultant increased wealth to the centers of power. This argument is based upon a comparison with the kingdom of Tian Qi, which Ōta argues possessed both advanced agricultural techniques and high productive power, and yet because of its patriarchal system failed to establish absolute monarchy and ultimately was unable to become a unified empire like the Qin.

In response to these theories by Goi and others, Yoshinami Takashi wrote “The dual structure of the former Han empire and periodization,” “The minor peasant and the community in the process of the formation of the Qin-Han Empires,” and “The unfolding of the establishment of imperial power in China” – all of which were then reprinted in *Research in the history of Qin-Han Empires*.¹⁹ In these articles, Yoshinami criticized the communitarian

16 Tada Kensuke 多田隼介. “Chūgoku kodaishi kenkyū oboegaki” 中国古代史研究覚書. *Shisō* 史叢 12 (October 1971).

17 Ōta Yukio 太田幸男. “Chūgoku kodai kokka ni kansuru nōto: saikin no shosetsu e no hihan o fumaete” 中国古代国家に関するノート—最近の諸説への批判をふまえて—. *Rekishi hyōron* 歴史評論 357 (January 1980).

18 Ōta Yukio. “Shō Ō henpō no saikentō” 商鞅変法の再検討 *Rekishigaku kenkyūkai* 歴史学研究会 ed. *Rekishi ni okeru minzoku no keisei* 歴史における民族の形成 [The formation of ethnicity in history]. Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1975.

19 Yoshinami Takashi 好並隆司. “Zenkan teikoku no nijū kōzō to jidai kitei” 前漢帝国の二重構造と時代規定. *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 歴史学研究 375 (August 1971); “Shinkan teikoku seiritsu katei ni okeru shōnomin to kyōdōtai” 秦漢帝国成立過程における小農民と共同体. *Rekishi hyōron* 歴史評論 279 (August 1973); “Chūgoku ni okeru kōteiken no seiritsu to tenkai” 中国における皇帝権の成立と展開. *Shisō* 思想 644

thesis that Tada and others had advocated, instead presenting his grasp of imperial power as having a dual structure: composed of an equalizing system of per capita relations of rule between the Emperor and the people on the one hand, and patriarchal relations between the emperor and household heads on the other. Moreover, he argued that a society based upon royal property peasants used for reproduction was not Marx's "Asiatic community". Instead, Yoshinami saw it as an agrarian community that shows the characteristics of small-scale agricultural management: the latter being the step that precedes the foundation of the Marxian "classic community". Furthermore, he held that East Asia during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period was a complex society composed of Eastern agricultural peoples, Western peoples who were primarily agricultural but also somewhat nomadic, and Northern nomadic peoples. The control structure of the Qin was a system of class control that synthesized the despotism of the Northern nomadic peoples and the "democracy" of the agricultural populations. Because patriarchal aspects were deemed superfluous, Confucian scholars – who constituted the "democracy" of the agricultural peoples – were ejected, while the totalitarian legalists were adopted. The Han Empire carried on elements of the Qin Empire, but from the reign of Emperor Wu onward, Confucian thought progressed and the absoluteness of monarchical power began to subside. In the Eastern Han, as Confucianism came to recognize the absoluteness of imperial power, the Emperor and the common people settled things by unifying their contradictions within the realm of heterogeneity and came to have internal contradictions within homogeneity. Nevertheless, China lost its power to unify the East Asian world, and came to devote its attentions solely to the stability of its own society.

In his "From the Qin-Han empires to the legal code nation states of Sui and Tang: an experimental theory about the form of absolutist states in China and the formation of serf systems," as well as in his "The legal code in China and the structure of society," Watanabe Shin'ichirō followed in the footsteps of Nishijima's earlier thesis (which had argued for a patriarchal domestic slave system), while also criticizing it.²⁰ Based upon a schema proposed by Engels that sees a transition from community ownership to private ownership, he held that from the Qin-Han period to Sui-Tang, management by small peasants had not achieved autonomy from the state or from wealthy peasants; land ownership had advanced no further than demesne, and the fundamental essence of this kind of state rule grounded in the agricultural class could be defined as a national slave system.

There were also scholars who concluded that the growth of the great families' power varied from region to region, such as Tsuruma Kazuyuki, who held that management by minor peasants was dominant in the new prefectures that were established by national power beginning in the Warring States period, while management by great families saw

(February 1978). These three articles were then reprinted in *Shinkan teikokushi kenkyū* 秦漢帝国史研究. Tokyo: Miraisha, 1978.

20 Watanabe Shin'ichirō 渡辺信一郎. "Shinkan Teikoku kara Zuitō ritsuryōsei kokka e: Chūgoku ni okeru sen-sei kokka keitai to nōdosei keisei ni kansuru ichi shiron" 秦漢帝国から隋唐律令制国家へ—中国における専制国家形態と農奴制形成に関する一試論—. *Atarashii rekishigaku no tame ni* 139 (August 1975); "Chūgoku ni okeru ritsuryōsei to shakai kōsei" 中国における律令制と社会構成. In *Rekishigaku kenkyūkai* 歴史学研究会, ed., *Sekaishi no shin kyokumen to rekishizō no saikentō* 世界史の新局面と歴史像の再検討 [New aspects of world history and reconsiderations of images of history]. Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1976.

growth in the pre-existing older prefectures; see his “Water utilization laws from Qin to Han and the management of on-site agriculture.”²¹

Toward the end of the Cold War, there was an all-around decline in the Marxist inclination of Japanese research, and “master narratives” such as historical periodization retreated into the background. Research that made use not just of textual resources that had been passed down for generations but also newly excavated historical materials became the mainstream. Scholars such as Kudō Motoo 工藤元男, Tsuruma Kazuyuki, and Fujita Katsuhisa 藤田勝久, have begun to engage in debates about the nature of the Qin-Han empires, based upon what newly excavated textual sources can tell us about the actual conditions of regional administration from the Qin to Han.

Meanwhile, in China as well, the 1950s saw a fierce series of debates on the issue of forms of land ownership. Hou Wailu, for example, argued that the system of land ownership in the Han dynasty was one of national ownership by the feudal state in which the imperial house was the supreme landholder; see his “Issues in the form of ownership systems in Chinese feudal society: a discussion of the laws of development in Chinese feudal society.”²² Yet Hu Rulei 胡如雷 was critical of this point of view and argued that land was privately held; see his “An essay concerning forms of land ownership in Chinese feudal society: a consideration of the opinion of Mr. Hou Wailu.”²³ Jiang Quan 江泉, in turn, advocated an eclectic theory that combined state and private ownership of land, holding that state ownership of land attained only a temporary predominance, which gave way to ownership by landlords as social and economic development took place; see “An essay on the forms of land ownership in the Han dynasty.”²⁴ All three of these essays are reprinted in *A collection of debates on the issue of forms of land ownership in Chinese feudal society*.²⁵ As the theory of state ownership of land and the theory combining state and private ownership of land suggest, there were opinions that did not so clearly recognize the autonomy of the great families: a reflection of the debates over periodization that took place in China at the time.

As a reflection of the increase in newly excavated historical materials, a revised edition of Tian Changwu and An Zuozhang’s *History of Qin and Han*, first published in 1993, was

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- 21 Tsuruma Kazuyuki 鶴間和幸. “Shinkanki no suirihō to zaichi nōgyō keiei” 秦漢期の水利法と在地農業経営. In *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai 歴史学研究会, ed., Sekaishi ni okeru chiiki to minshū (zoku)* 世界史における地域と民衆 (続) [Locality and the masses in global history (continued)]. Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1980.
- 22 Hou Wailu 侯外卢. “Zhongguo fengjian shehui tudi suoyouzhì xingshi de wenti: Zhongguo fengjian shehui fazhan guilu shangduì zhì yì” 中国封建社会土地所有制形式的问题—中国封建社会发展规律商兑之一. *Lishi yanjiu 历史研究* 1954-1 (January 1954).
- 23 Hu Rulei 胡如雷. “Shi lun Zhongguo fengjian shehui de tudi suoyouzhì xingshi: dui Hou Wailu xiansheng yijian de shangquan” 试论中国封建社会的土地所有制形式——对侯外卢先生意见的商榷. *Guangming ribao 光明日报* 13 September 1956.
- 24 Jiang Quan 江泉. “Shilun Handai de tudi suoyouzhì xingshi” 试论汉代的土地所有制形式. *Wen shi zhe 文史哲* 1957-9 (September 1957).
- 25 Nankai Daxue Lishixi Zhongguo Gudaishi Jiaoyanzu 南开大学历史系中国古代史教研组 eds. *Zhongguo fengjian shehui tudi suoyouzhì xingshi wenti taolunji* 中国封建社会土地所有制形式问题讨论集. Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1962.

released in May 2008 by the same publisher.²⁶ However, the fundamental claims it makes are identical to those of the earlier edition, stipulating, for example, that all landholding from the Warring States period to the Qing was by feudal landlords. The book uses the following periodization: Spring and Autumn period (clan-based city-states) to the period from Warring States to Emperor Wu of the Western Han (early stage of a feudal despotic centralized nation state, the first stage of Qin-Han); the period from Emperor Wu of the Western Han to Wang Mang (early stage of a feudal despotic centralized nation state, the middle stage of Qin-Han); the period from Eastern Han to Three Kingdoms (early stage of a feudal despotic centralized nation state, the last stage of Qin-Han). While Tian and An's book occasionally depicts the rebellions of non-Han ethnic groups as class struggle, in its assertion that the Eastern Han dynasty declined because of a variety of problems caused by the great families and non-Han ethnic groups, as well as in its portrayal of the great families, its points of view correspond in several ways to those of Lewis.

This sort of view of Qin-Han history is also contained in such works as Jian Bozan's *History of Qin and Han* and Lin Jianming's *History of Qin and Han*.²⁷ In spite of the fact that more than a few of the fundamental issues that are covered in Lewis's book have already been addressed and problematized in the works of Japanese and Chinese scholars mentioned above (as well as others), it is a pity that so little of this scholarship appears in Lewis's bibliography.

At this point, the reader will have already discerned that, excepting the frequent appearance of Marxist terminology, there are many important points in the scholarship discussed above that are relevant to the content of the work under review. For a long time, one of the great questions pursued by those carrying out research on ancient China in postwar Japan was how to situate the great families and peasantry vis-à-vis the absolute power of the emperor, and as a result of that positioning, whether the periodization should be placed at the end of the Eastern Han. As I have already noted, the issue of how to understand the role of the great families in the Qin and Han empires also constitutes an important component of Lewis's book.

Lewis actually makes more reference to Japanese and Chinese research than most academic works on China published in Europe and the United States. Regrettably, however, I cannot help but feel that if Lewis had engaged in more dialogue with the Chinese and Japanese research that I have introduced above, his book would have yielded even more plentiful and fruitful results.

OTHER ISSUES

I should mention incidentally that the book under review is the first of a series of six volumes titled *Imperial China*. I must admit that I have some reservations about the absence of attention to the Shang and Zhou dynasties in this series, though of course this is not a criticism of Lewis's book. Granted, it may be difficult to accommodate the Shang and Zhou periods to the rubric of "Imperial China." Nevertheless, it is certainly the case that these

26 Tian Changwu 田昌五 and An Zuozhang 安作璋. *Qin Han shi* 秦汉史 1993, rev. edn. 2008.

27 Jian Bozan 翦伯赞. *Qin Han shi* 秦汉史 1947; Lin Jianming 林剑鸣. *Qin Han shi* 秦汉史 1989.

periods form the foundation for understanding the “Imperial China” that took shape thereafter. Moreover, it is also possible to understand the span of time from the Warring States period, prior to the Qin unification, to the mid-Western Han as a single continuous span of history. For this reason, it is commonplace in the research that I have introduced above for authors to ground their discussions of the Qin and Han empires in a consideration of the Warring States period, and occasionally even the earlier Spring and Autumn and Shang/Western Zhou periods. On this point, I would like to heartily commend Lewis for devoting a reasonable number of pages to discussing the Warring States period. Yet even though Lewis certainly cannot be faulted, I feel the omission of a volume on “The pre-imperial period” from this series is somewhat regrettable.

Related to this point, in the work presently under review Lewis does not so much emphasize the “unification” by the first Qin Emperor but instead focuses his attention on regionalism. This approach conforms to recent trends in Japanese research, and is one with which I am largely sympathetic. Furthermore, Lewis quotes extensively from excavated materials: another practice that has become common in recent surveys produced in Japan and China, and one that attests to the high quality of his book. Many images are also reproduced in the book, including several of excavated materials, such as the Mawangdui silk paintings and Han dynasty stone reliefs. This is something that deserves praise, for although they appear in black and white, these illustrations communicate to the reader vivid images of the Qin-Han period.

Before I read this book, I was concerned that Euro-American biases toward China (or to the non-European world as a whole) would to some extent cast their shadow on its pages. To my surprise, there was virtually no trace of such bias. In this way, I was pleased to have been deceived in my expectations.

I have heard it said that great works of Euro-American research do not differ so much in their findings from the great works of Chinese and Japanese scholarship. This is not to say that Euro-American scholarship is but a rehash or remaking of Sino-Japanese scholarship. Instead, I think it means that when scholars conduct meticulous research using the same historical documents, it is not surprising that there should be some degree of commonality in their conclusions, no matter who carries out the research. This is precisely the impression that I was left with upon reading Lewis’s book. We can expect that it will have a great impact on European and American understandings of the Qin-Han empires. However, while they do not diminish my estimation of the book, there were a few places that gave me pause. I will list below the points that caught my eye.

Chapter 1. On p. 7, Lewis suggests that the Yellow River has consistently been murky since ancient times, but researchers active today in historical geography and environmental history often stress the fact that the Yellow River originally flowed clear. At first, the Yellow River was called simply “the River” (*he* 河, or *heshui* 河水), and only began to be called “the Yellow River” in the Tang Dynasty: a name that became firmly established in the Song Dynasty. In her recent work *Agrarianism and the birth of “yellow earth”*, Hara Motoko points out the misunderstandings concerning “yellow earth” or loess that have been propounded most notably by Ferdinand von Richthofen.²⁸ She argues that “yellow

28 Hara Motoko 原宗子. *‘Nōhon’shugi to kōdo’ no hassei* 「農本」主義と「黄土」の発生. Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 2005.

earth” is not fertile, and is originally not yellow in color; the fertile soil that exists today in parts of Shaanxi Province and elsewhere was not something that came into being “naturally” but was rather the product of human activity that improved the quality of soil, fertilizing it over the course of many years of cultivation. In addition, although Lewis notes that he is recounting views of the Han to the Tang dynasties, his description of the Yangzi River basin seems to over-emphasize its backwardness (p. 9). In recent years, views have changed to the point that the phrase “Yangzi River civilization” has come into being, and some scholars contend that since Neolithic times the areas near the mid-stream and lower reaches of the Yangzi River went through their own sociocultural development while simultaneously maintaining connections with the Yellow River basin. Admittedly, in the Qin-Han period, it is likely the case that the Yangzi River region lagged behind the midstream and lower reaches of the Yellow River in its development. Yet I would like to state that it may not always be appropriate to frame the midstream and lower reaches of the Yellow River region as an advanced region and the Yangzi and other areas as backward regions.

Chapter 2. Although it is certainly the case that there are historical documents that refer to the Qin as barbarians or savages, it is also true that there are states other than the Qin that were also described using such terminology. With regard to these forms of expression in historical documents, it is necessary for us to consider bias in the compilation of these materials.

Chapter 3. Lewis writes that in the early years of the Han, the dynasty controlled only Guanzhong (p. 66). While Lewis no doubt is aware of it, I think it is worth pointing out that Sichuan and the western areas of the six states of the former Eastern areas were also *junxian*.

Chapter 5. Concerning the system of ranks used in the Han dynasty, Lewis explains, following Nishijima Sadao’s theory, that “ranks determined status in the village, reflected in the seating and distribution of meat and wine at banquets sponsored by the state” (p. 110), and that the twenty ranks used during the Han period helped to form an age-based status hierarchy in village society. While I do not believe that Nishijima’s theory should be wholly rejected, it does contain some elements that cannot be accepted in their entirety. This is something that many scholars have pointed out and discussed in various ways, and thus more attention is necessary when invoking it.

Chapter 8. Lewis writes that there is a dearth of “systematic mythology with elaborate tales of the origins of the universe or the deeds of the gods” in China (p. 204). While this is a true statement, I would like to observe that the notion, once frequently invoked, that China lacks mythology, seems a bit old-fashioned these days. Studies of Chinese mythology were already being carried out at a very high level in the first half of the twentieth century by Wen Yiduo 聞一多, but it was not until after the Second World War that the field was established as a discipline: something in which researchers such as Yuan Ke played a great part. In postwar Japan as well, Itō Seiji 伊藤清司 has been an active researcher in Chinese mythology, and Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, doyen of the study of bronzes, has constructed mythologies of the Shang and Zhou eras on the basis of bronze inscriptions. I would like to suggest that those readers who are interested examine the work of Yuan Ke, which addresses these sorts of questions concerning the existence of mythology in China.

Chapter 9. It seems that the *Shi ji* is grasped in this chapter as a private composition by father and son Sima Tan and Sima Qian (pp. 214–18). However, as mentioned elsewhere in Lewis's book, both of these men occupied the office of Grand Historian/Astrologer, the person in charge of historical records. Opinions in support of the view that the *Shi ji* is not simply an individual work, but rather a text that strongly maintains the characteristics of a public record, are quite in favor today. In addition, in comparing the Daoist thought (*dao jia*) of the Warring States, Qin, and Han periods with the (religious) Daoism (*dao jiao*) of later generations (where it is arrayed alongside Confucianism and Buddhism), it is true that Daoist thought was the origin of (religious) Daoist practice, but the two, while resembling each other, are distinct entities (p. 209).

Bibliography. Inasmuch as this is a book published for the Euro-American market, it is to some extent unavoidable that the bibliography is weighted heavily toward European and American works of scholarship. Even so, Lewis's book refers to more research from outside the Euro-American world than do many others by Western sinologists. Though it may seem to be a harsh statement, researchers from East Asia will surely find it a dubious proposition that one could nevertheless write a proper survey without making more use of such materials. Among the works that I have acknowledged in footnote 29 are some that give lists of works published mainly by researchers from Japan and China, and so I would like to suggest that those who can read Chinese characters refer to them. As I said at the outset, a gulf seems to remain between the research of scholars in the Sinographic sphere and those in Europe and the United States. Of course, to look at it from the other perspective, this book will serve as a good guide to the findings of European and American researchers, whose work is not necessarily consulted so much in Japan and China.

CONCLUSION

While I may seem to have indulged in niggling criticism or in asking for the impossible, my review is not a complete rejection of the main currents of this book. When I consider what a great impact it will have on an understanding of the Qin and Han empires in the English-speaking world, I feel obliged to make these points.

While there are many aspects of the work's approach and points of departure that make us appreciate its aptness, there are also many ways in which its arguments overlap with earlier work by Chinese and Japanese scholars, making me think that an engagement and dialogue with the history of Sino-Japanese theories of these problems is necessary. For this reason, I have deviated somewhat from the typical format of a review to introduce research into ancient Chinese history centered on the findings of postwar Japanese scholarship. However, when I reflect back on my own position, the necessity of engaging in dialogue with the research of other countries is something that holds true for Japanese scholarship on Chinese history too. As I read this book, I was made to feel keenly the need for deepening academic exchanges between East Asia and Europe and the United States.

Finally, the cover photographs for Lewis's book are a terracotta military figure from the tomb of the first Qin Emperor and a *wu zhu* coin. These are artifacts frequently brought

up in both Japan and China when discussing the Qin and Han empires, and so there is no need for readers to raise their eyebrows in a fuss over the specter of Orientalism. It shows that the artifacts chosen to explain the Qin and Han empires are universally regarded.²⁹

29 In drafting this review article, the following works were especially helpful: Jian Bozan 翦伯赞. *Qin Han shi* 秦汉史. 3rd edn. Shanghai: Dafu chuban gongsi 大孚出版公司, 1947; Lin Jianming 林剑鸣. *Qin Han shi* 秦汉史. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 1989; Misaki Yoshiaki 三崎良章. “Goko Jūrokkoku: Chūgoku shijō no minzoku daiidō” 五胡十六国—中国史上の民族大移動—. Tokyo: Tōhō shoten 東方書店, 2002; Nishijima Sadao 西嶋定生. *Chūgoku no rekishi 2: Shinkan teikoku* 中国の歴史2 秦漢帝国. Tokyo: Kōdansha 講談社, 1974; Ogata Isamu 尾形勇 and Hirase Takao 平勢隆郎. *Sekai no rekishi 2: Chūka bunmei no tanjō* 世界の歴史2 中華文明の誕生. Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha 中央公論社, 1998; Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄 ed. *Sengo Nihon no Chūgokushi ronsō* 戦後日本の中国史論争. Nagoya: Kawai Bunka Kyōiku Kenkyūjo 河合文化教育研究所, 1993; Tian Changwu 田昌五 and An Zuozhang 安作璋 eds. *Qin Han shi* 秦汉史. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1993, rev. edn. 2008; Tsuruma Kazuyuki 鶴間和幸. *Chūgoku no rekishi 03: faasuto enperaa no isan – Shin Kan teikoku* 中国の歴史03 ファーストエンペラーの遺産—秦漢帝国—. Tokyo: Kōdansha 講談社, 2004; Yuan Ke 袁珂. *Zhongguo gudai shenhua* 中国古代神话. Rev. edn. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1960.