

## Book Reviews

### *Gurōbaru hisutorī to higashi ajia-shi*

#### *[Global History and the History of East Asia]*

By Masashi HANEDA

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This edited volume is the result of a three-year cooperation (2011-2013) between three renowned institutions, namely Tokyo University's Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, the National Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies of Shanghai's Fudan University, and the East Asian Studies Department of Princeton University. The volume contains 15 contributions in total, split into two overall parts of seven and eight chapters respectively. According to the introduction, Part One "Methods of a New World History / Global History" functions as an outline of the possibilities that Global History and a global view of the regional history of East Asia as method can offer, while Part Two, "Attempts of Global History", applies those ideas in a series of case studies.

The book was edited by Haneda Masashi, whose recent volume *Atarashii sekaishi e [Towards New World History]* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2011) proposed a new approach to world history, that is, using global history as a method to overcome Japanese world history (*sekaishi*), which is often criticized as nothing more than the study of a sequence of national histories with some limited comparative approaches. In his introduction, Haneda tackles the greatest challenge of the book, namely its conceptual problems. Due to difficulties of translating “global history” and its related terms, there is no attempt to find new common working definitions, and readers have to be satisfied with references to those already given by the *Journal of Global History* or by Diego Olstein in his *Thinking History Globally* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

In his own contribution to the book, Haneda offers a way to overcome conceptual gaps by defining global history as an all-encompassing form of historical narrative (*zenkyūshi*) vis-à-vis the history of singular regions (*chiikishi*). Criticizing that “East Asia” (for Haneda, Japan, Korea and China) has been mostly a Western construct, he proposes that a spatial conception of the region be embedded into a framework of an overall global history that incorporates all regions of the world. However, Haneda explicitly states that not all of the contributors to this volume necessarily share these ideas or his definitions. This is why, when reading through Part One, the reader cannot help but wonder whether the scholars involved sometimes write past each other. This might also be because the contributing scholars rather take pains to profess and advertise the uniqueness and academic success of their work and their institutions, which becomes unnecessarily repetitive. Whilst a discussion of how “East Asia” was perceived in China or Benjamin Elman’s remarks on the possibilities of global history for the early modern period of East Asian history are instructive reads, most of the contributions in Part One present rather personal views rather than provide a structured approach to a new methodology as suggested by its title.

Even though Part One already offers ideas for global approaches applied to other fields of history (such as a global intellectual history), it is only in Part Two that the possibilities of a global approach for the traditional fields of history are discussed. Here, the reader can find a case study on the cultural transfer of Buddhism explained in terms of a global history of religion. Additionally, the East Asian maritime region is considered within a global context, and also a global history of history itself is shown through the works of Tang Dynasty scholars. Furthermore, an example of global literary history exceeding the East Asian setting is given by an analysis of world literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sheldon Garon's paper on the history of saving is one highlight of this book because it does not hesitate to take the transnational into consideration. It is however unfortunate that it had to be a scholar of the United States to tackle this issue, more evidence that there is a certain discomfort in dealing with the transnational concept in China and Japan.

Another problem that arises from this volume is that even though Korean reactions to the Ming Dynasty are discussed in one contribution, scholarship on East Asian History originating from Korea is not considered at all, such as the edited volumes by Yontae Yu (et. al.), *Hamkke ilknŭn Tongasia kŭnhyŏndaesa* [*The Modern and Contemporary History of East Asia Read Together*] (Seoul: Changbi, 2016) or by Hiroshi Miyajima and Hang-seop Bae, *Tongasia nŭn myŏt si inga?* [*What time is it in East Asia?*] (Seoul: Neomeobuksŭ, 2015).

What remains for the reader is an insight into how the current trend of global history is taken on at the three participating universities. Thus it is not only a survey of a Japanese view on global history, but also gives insights on how the work of non-Japanese scholars is received and reflected in Japan. In sum, it is a stimulating read that in sharing its conceptual problems with its readers allows for further discussion and inquiry into the issues of the interplay of global and regional history. As such, the author of this review considers this book as a valuable resource for graduate level instruction.