

Feature Article **【專題論文】**

Chinese History in the Age of Globalization 全球化時代的中國史

Young-Tsu WONG
汪榮祖*

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* Distinguished Professor of History, National Central University.

Abstract

This paper deals with a particular discipline in Asian studies, namely, Chinese history, in the age of globalization. It includes a review of the writing of Chinese history in the traditional as well as in the modern time and an analysis of why and how to integrate the unique Chinese history into the universal human experiences of the past. The author argues that the homogenous world does not need a monotonous culture. Cultural pluralism would serve the global age well, and Chinese history should be able to facilitate mutual understanding among nations in the age of globalization.

摘要

此文將專注東亞範疇中的中國史研究，首先回顧中國史研究的傳統經驗以及在現代所受西方影響的經驗，而後在回顧過去與現在的經驗之餘，設想如何建構全球化視野的中國史研究。作者認為全球化並不需要一元化的文化，多元文化可以適用於全球化時代，中國史也大有助於全球化時代國與國之間的相互瞭解。

Introduction

It is well known that China has a history of several thousand years, but the main block of it from ancient times through the imperial period was written, with few exceptions, by government-appointed "historiographers" (*shiguan* 史官). This unique feature easily invites modern critics to denounce the bureaucratization of Chinese historiography. Etienne Balazs, for example, said in contempt that Chinese history "was written by officials for officials," and thus concluded that the salaried historians inevitably praised their own dynasty while blaming the preceding one.¹ Such criticism disregards the fact that the paid historians' duty was to do their best to tell the true story for the sake of learning the proper lessons from historical examples, as if a carriage driver learns lessons from other's mishaps on the road. Hence, history is usually compared to a "mirror," helping one to see his appropriateness or inappropriateness by looking at it. If history is inaccurate, how is it possible to draw a proper lesson or to see the mirror without being caricatured? In addition, history was perceived as a reflection of glory or shame, right or wrong, good or bad in the past so the reader could learn correct and appropriate historical lessons. In this regard, moral judgments in the Confucian mold were hard to prevent. Nevertheless, Chinese history in traditional China, however truthful or not, by and large served the imperial ruler and his bureaucracy, or an aide to run government. It seems quite appropriate to address traditional Chinese history as "dynastic history."

Under the influence from the West in modern times, the traditional Chinese world of historiography was crumbling. In 1902, the reformer Liang Qichao 梁啟超 first made fierce attacks on the dynastic system of histories, which he

¹ Etienne Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, edited by Arthur F. Wright (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 132, 135. Cf. Etienne Balazs, "L'histoire comme guide de la pratique bureaucratique," in William G. Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleyblank (eds.), *Historians of China and Japan* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1961), p. 78.

compared to a senseless royal genealogy. Instead, he advocated for a Western-style national history. Moreover, he taught essentially Western methods for historical studies while teaching at the prestigious Tsing Hua University during his final years. His fame and prestige helped set the tone for the modernization of Chinese historiography. Subsequently, the rise of a Western-style academic system in China and the return of Western-trained historians from abroad further enhanced the Westernization of history curriculum in modern China.² Simply put, Western historiography emancipated Chinese history from its tradition and inspired Chinese historians to embrace "national history" and its methods.

Indeed, the model of "national history" (*guoshi* 國史) written in Western mold prevailed, accelerating with the rise of nationalism after the May Fourth Movement, 1919. Professor Zhu Xizu 朱希祖 of the prestigious Peking University, for example, declared in the 1920s that his goal was to reform the traditional Chinese historiography by borrowing concepts and methods from Europe and America.³ All the same, the newly launched historical journals in many parts of China took the Western model, such as He Bingsong 何炳松's *Shidi xuebao* 史地學報 (Journal of History and Geography), launched in 1917 with the declared purpose of emulating the American "new history." The historical profession, not just in Beijing and Nanjing but also in other parts of China, was overwhelmed by Western historiography.

The study of national history in modern China has since honored and admired the positivist approach to historical writing, in particular the Rankean methodology, such as criticism of source materials, archival research, fact-finding, and the search for truthful past. On the positive side, modern Chinese

2 Cf. Chen Yiai 陳以愛, *Zhongguo xiandai xueshu yanjiu jigou de xingqi* 中國現代學術研究機構的興起 (The Rise of Modern Chinese Academic Institutions) (Beijing: Jiangsu Jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002).

3 Quoted from Liu Longxin 劉龍心, *Xueshu yu zhidu: xueke tizhi yu xiandai zhongguo shixue de jianli* 學術與制度：學科體制與現代中國史學的建立 (Scholarship and institution: The academic system and the establishment of modern Chinese historiography) (Taipei: Yuanliu chuban gongsi, 2002), p. 136.

skeptics, especially Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, questioned the reliability of the ancient Chinese history, which in his view was replete with myth and legends.⁴ On the downside, however, modern Chinese historians, in particular Fu Sinian 傅斯年, who tried desperately to make history a scientific discipline, had been so preoccupied with archaeological excavation and archival source materials that he believed "history is nothing but historical materials" (*shixue ji shiliaoxue* 史學即史料學). With sufficient source materials, Fu insisted, Chinese history could be transformed into something as scientific as biology or geology. The impressive archaeological findings at Anyang further enhanced Fu's conviction that scientific history was obtainable.⁵ Fu seemed to have echoed J. B. Bury's dictum that "[history] is herself simply a science, no less and no more."⁶ Incidentally, Bury left his followers around the world cold-footed when he at last abandoned the famous dictum in his later years by admitting that "scientific history" was impossible after all.⁷

Indeed, scientific history as Fu understood it is beyond anyone's reach. Consequently, the study of Chinese history, though professionalized, has since become increasingly fragmented. Talented historians have been able to exhaust primary sources and acquire significant findings in highly specialized subjects. Here are a few outstanding examples. The early Qing-period historian Meng Sen 孟森 answered numerous specific questions with regard to the Manchu institutions on the basis of documentary sources and meticulous textual criticism.⁸ Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, thanks to his remarkable skills in using and illuminating historical sources, established his fame as the leading historian in the

4 Cf. Liu Qiqian 劉起鈞, *Gu Jiegang xiansheng xueshu* 顧頡剛先生學述 (An Account of Mr. Gu Jiegang's scholarship) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), pp. 102-112.

5 See for example Xu Guansan 許冠三's *Xin shixue jiushinian* 新史學九十年 (Ninety Years of the New History) (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1986), chapter 7.

6 See John B. Bury, "The Science of History," in Fritz Stern (ed.), *The Varieties of History* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 223, 210.

7 John B. Bury, *Selected Essays* (New York: Freeport, 1968), p. 70. Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 285-286.

8 See Meng Sen 孟森, *Ming Qing shi lunzhu jikan huibian* 明清史論著集刊 (Collected Historical Studies of Ming-Qing History) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1959), p. 167.

field of the Sui-Tang period.⁹ Chen Yuan陳垣 was known for his mastery of bibliography and for his skills in textual research in men and events with regard to religious matters during the Yuan and Ming period.¹⁰ Cen Zhongmian岑仲勉 set the record straight by ascertaining the actual practice of the "equalization of land system" (*juntianzhi*井田制) during the period of disunity.¹¹ By citing exhaustively the newly excavated artifacts and hand-written manuscripts from the caves of Dunhuang敦煌, Xiang Da向達 pinpointed the precise influence of the Western Regions (Xiyu西域) on the city of Chang'an長安.¹² Marshaling multi-language materials, Han Rulin韓儒林 confirmed every name of the persons and the tribes of Genghis Khan's "Thirteen Wings" (*shisanyi*十三翼).¹³ Most historians, however, being less able, accomplished very little, except for assembling and compiling historical sources into chronicles.

Chinese history in the Marxist mode also claimed to be scientific. Marxism made its way to China during the May Fourth era, and the Marxist interpretation of Chinese history has carried great weight ever since the founding of PRC in 1949. But Karl Marx's theory of history, such as the evolution of human society in five stages,¹⁴ derived mainly from the experiences of the West, is difficult to fit the Chinese particularity. Marxism is not really a scientific law capable of universal application. Even though Guo Moruo郭沫若 claimed to have fitted the

9 Cf. Young-Tsu Wong汪榮祖, *Shijia Chen Yinke zhuan* 史家陳寅恪傳 (A biography of the historian Chen Yinke) (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005), pp. 80-137.

10 For details see Chen Yuan陳垣, "Kaifeng yicileyejiao kao 開封一賜樂叢教考 (A Study of the Jewish religion in Kaifeng)," in *Chen Yuan shixue lunzhu xuan* 陳垣史學論著選 (Selected Historical Works of Chen Yuan) (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 1981), pp. 65-108.

11 See Cen Zhongmian岑仲勉, "Yuxisheng nianpu huijian pingzhi 玉谿生年譜會箋平質 (Questions to Annotated Chronological Biography of Li Shangying)," in *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 歷史語言研究所集刊, 15 (1948), pp. 281-313.

12 Xiang Da向達, *Tangdai Changan yu xiyu wenming* 唐代長安與西域文明 (Tang Dynasty Changan and the Western Region Civilization) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1957, 1979).

13 Han Rulin韓儒林, "Chengji sihan shisanyi kao 成吉思汗十三翼考 (Studies in Genghis Khan's Thirteen Wings)," in *Qionglu ji 穹廬集* (My Collected Works) (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 1-17.

14 For a concise account of Marxist conception of history see David McLellan (ed.), *Marx: the First 100 Years* (London: Frances Pinter, 1983), pp. 57-102.

progress of Chinese society into the Marxist scheme,¹⁵ his findings were as arbitrary as they are controversial.¹⁶ After so many years of practice, a recent Marxist historian in Mainland China finally admitted that "in the process of constructing a Marxist historiography in China, we embarked on a wrong road and paid a heavy price for it."¹⁷

After the Second World War, Chinese historians gradually learned from the West how to use social sciences in historical research. As the distinguished Annalist Fernand Braudel prominently declared, the social sciences, such as geography, sociology, economics, psychology, and anthropology, were close neighbors of history.¹⁸ Consequently, books and articles of Chinese history were replete with statistics, charts, and jargon. Historical facts were forced into theories or models, having little, if any, story to tell. Then no sooner had they been told about the revival of the historical narrative by Lawrence Stone and Peter Burke¹⁹ than the Chinese historians were dumfounded by the postmodern views of history that virtually reject objective truth and consider history as fictive as literary works,²⁰ which debunked everything they had learned from the

15 Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Zhongguo gudai shehui yanjiu* 中國古代社會研究 (Studies in Ancient Chinese Society) (Beijing: Beijing Renmin chubanshe, 1954). In this book Guo saw the progress of the Chinese society in four stages, namely, the primitive commune of the Western Zhou, the slavery of Eastern Zhou, the feudal society of the Spring-Autumn period, and the capitalist society of the post-Opium War period. He matched the first four Marxist stages to Chinese historical periods and looked forward to the final realization of communist society.

16 Albert Feuerwerker, "China's History in Marxian Dress," in Albert Feuerwerker (ed.), *History in Communist China* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), pp. 14-44.

17 See Zhang Guangzhi 張廣智, *Xifang shixueshi* 西方史學史 (History of Western Historiography), 2nd ed. (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2005), p. 391. Cf. Helmut Fleischer, *Marxism and History* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969).

18 Fernand Braudel, *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

19 See Lawrence Stone, "The revival of narrative: reflections on a new old history," in *The Past and the Present* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 74-75. Peter Burke, "History of Events and the Revival of Narrative," in Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), pp. 233-248.

20 For sharp reactions to postmodernism see Du Weiyun 杜維運, "Houxiandai zhuyi de diaogui 後現代主義的弔詭 (The Paradox of Postmodernism)," in *Hanxue yanjiu tongxun* 漢學研究通訊, 21, 1 (No. 81) (Feb., 2002), p. 2; and Huang Jinxing 黃進興, *Houxiandai zhuyi yu shixue yanjiu* 後現代主義與史學研究 (Postmodernism and Historical Studies) (Taipei: Sanmin chuju, 2006), pp. 1, 38-44, 80-88, 156-162, 222.

modern West in the first place. The rising postmodernism in the 1980s at last awoke Chinese historians to see the problem of the slavish borrowing from the West.

Then, in which direction should the research and writing of Chinese history go? Perhaps it is about time to deliberate a new perspective beyond the Western national history as well as the traditional dynastic history to serve the age of globalization. Our project of considering the new horizons of East Asian studies in the global age provides such an opportunity. East Asia as a field of study was once successively dominated by the Sinic world order and Japanese imperialism. What followed next were essentially the Americanization of East Asian studies in terms of perspectives, theories, and methodologies. The time has come to adopt first and foremost a global perspective for East Asian Studies to be instrumental in facilitating the process of world homogenization. Such agenda could help contribute to the integration of the rising Asia into the rest of the world not just on the physical or economic level but also on the cultural or spiritual level. Chinese history is a particular discipline in the realm of East Asian studies, on which this paper shall focus.

The Changing World toward Globalization

One may argue that mankind had global contacts back to the very remote past, but only with the increasing intercontinental, international, and intercultural activities in the modern time could people around the world assume that globalization has come of age. Indeed, in this particular age, as we witness, not only is the world becoming smaller but also worldwide connections are closely linked. Strictly speaking, however, it is still unclear whether this new era will truly lead to the globosity that would demolish territoriality and spatially linked sovereignty. The concept of nation-state and the passion for nationalism remain

strong. In the last analysis, the philosophical and psychological gaps of various nations and cultures around the world have not yet been bridged. A genuinely worldwide integration remains a goal to reach.

Long-distance trade began very early in human history, but global commerce came in a much later time. The expansion of colonial empires in the nineteenth century resulted in a surging globalization parallel to a free trade imperialism rather than an integrated global economy. Big power rivalry only politicized globalization, generating oppression, resentments, and nationalism. The Great War ended the European era, and self-determination, collective security, and free trade seemed to have moved onto globalization. But none of these worked out well. The clash in 1929 intensified protectionism, thus diminishing world trade. Fascism was a fanatic version of imperialism, and the World War Two that defeated Fascism launched the "American Century," Americanization transformed much of the world into the process of globalization in the postwar era. A planned new global order, however, unexpectedly broke into two rival camps. Only the collapse of the Soviet block in the 1980s ended the "bipolar" international system. Although the U.S.-led global order has not yet been clearly defined and the global issues, such as human rights, environment, and trade, become ever more complicated, a new thrust in globalization is propelled by the frequency of transoceanic flights and the increase in the volume and velocity of internet, data processing, and electronic media, all of which facilitate the togetherness of the one world.²¹ Nevertheless, whether the emerging new type of globosity would turn out to be a central feature of history and universal human experiences still deserve our close attention.

It is true that the geographical space of the world at the present time has become ever smaller due largely to the transformation of transportation and

21 For a concise history of globalization see Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Peterson, *Globalization: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), esp. chaps. v and vi.

communication. Less time and money are needed to do border-crossing travels. International cooperations are flourishing and the world economy is more integrated than ever before. But a faster globalization also accelerates worldwide cleavages, inequalities, and frictions. International cooperations have often come together with national competitions, and a global social structure is not at all in sight. Nor will the political structure of nation-states likely disappear. Moreover, locality remains a matter of fate. In short, there are still undeniable differentiations in this age of globalization.

Obviously, technology and communication alone cannot bring forth world homogenization. We would have to reach certain global conformity through moral consensus and some sort of common standards. To be sure, global transformation is mainly inspired and encouraged by the West in general and America in particular, but globalization cannot be equated with Westernization or Americanization. The standards to which the world might conform must be sought from mutual understanding, reconciliation, and adaptation among all concerned nations and cultures. To reach this goal, we must endeavor to decipher national discrepancies and cultural diversities in the era of fast communication and the increasingly integrated world economy. A worthwhile and workable globosity, however, could not simply depend upon political co-operations and economic integration. Cultural differences between the East and the West, as well as the North and the South, have to be seriously dealt with.

Shall we work toward a worldwide cultural homogenization? In view of the fact that the global communication and economical integration have eliminated much of the cultural differences in clothing, food, housing, travel, and entertainment, Kenneth Boulding assumes that the life style of humanity would be getting increasingly more similar.²² Although Boulding was not so sure how a common language for all could be obtained in the foreseeable future, the English

22 Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Meaning of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964), p. 18.

language seems to have already done much of the job. In other words, for Boulding, cultural universalism seems within reach. Likewise, Arnold Toynbee optimistically anticipated that the men of future would be the descendents of Confucius, Lao-tzu, Socrates, as well as Plato.²³ But Mike Featherstone, a more recent writer, is not so sure, as he writes that "It would be impossible to identify an integrated global culture without the formation of a world state—a highly unlikely prospect."²⁴ Nevertheless, in my opinion, globalization should not and need not lead to one monotonous culture. The world of humanity could not be as precise and as regulated as those in the world of nature. Johann Gottfried Herder once said, "nature separated by language, customs, character, let no man artificially join together by chemistry."²⁵ Although Herder did not perceive the unprecedented process of globalization, which diluted the differences in language, customs, and character, such differences would never totally disappear, nor need to be. Most importantly, historical experiences of every nation or culture are unique. With no evidence of showing his knowledge of the German philosopher, Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 in the early twentieth-century echoed Herder that history is one of the few most essential elements to retain the distinct character of a nation or a culture. History in this sense constitutes the real substance of national essence, upon which a nation relies to survive and continue.²⁶ Differences in historical experiences made the minds and the languages express in markedly different fashion.²⁷ "Human minds and affairs," as Zhang put it, "can never be universally generalized like geometry, physics,

23 Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trail and the World and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 85.

24 Mike Featherstone, "Global Culture: An Introduction," in Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), p. 1.

25 Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p. 159; see also Young-Tsu Wong 汪榮祖, *Kangzhang helun 康章合論* (A study of Kang Youwei and Zhang Binglin) (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1988), pp. 55-56.

26 Cited in Xu Fu 徐復, *Qishu xiangzhu 墟書詳注* (A detailed annotation to the book of urgency) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 831-832.

27 Zhang Binglin 章炳麟, *Qiwulun shi 齊物論釋*, in Zhang Binglin, *Zhang Taiyan quanji 章太炎全集* (The complete works of Zhang Binglin), vol. 6 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 1985), pp. 28-29.

acoustics, and chemistry."²⁸ Zhang's remark also reminds us of Giambattista Vico, who distinguished the World of Minds from the World of Nature, or the outer knowledge from the inner knowledge. Vico's inner knowledge is the *Scienza nuova*, or New Science, which elevates the "science of mind" to the same level as "science of matter."²⁹ Even if globalization may one day truly cut through national and ethnic boundaries, the unique history still should not and need not be ossified. If distinct historical experiences are not to be universalized, historical particularities should definitively be maintained in the process of globalization. Distinct histories, however, would not prevent the world from homogenization; on the contrary, they would facilitate it through mutual understanding, and the distinct Chinese history is no exception.

A Chinese History for the Age of Globalization

If various particular histories and cultures could flourish in the global age, there would be nothing wrong for globalism to embody, in Isaiah Berlin's term, "cultural pluralism." Cultural universalism, by contrast, could entice cultural hegemony and may anticipate a colorless monotonous humanity or an arbitrary common truth of mankind. At the present time, few, if any, continue to take Westernization for globalization. In short, globalism is not marked by universal traits that leave only trivial particularities.

The question that follows is how will Chinese history be written in the new era so as to let the particularities of the Chinese historical experiences serve the age of globalization? First of all, we must acquire a global perspective that goes

28 Zhang Binglin 章炳麟, "Shehui tongchuan shangdui 社會通詮商兌," in *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (The complete works of Zhang Binglin), vol. 4 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 323.

29 See Wang Rongzu (Young-Tsu Wong), *Shizhuan tongshuo* 史傳通說 (Studies on historiography) (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1988), p. 198.

beyond the conceptual frameworks of dynastic and national history mentioned above so as to juxtapose the pieces, to borrow the McNeills' term, and help construct a pluralistic and plausible "human web."³⁰ Chinese history would provide the rest of the world with highly informative knowledge for mutual understanding. Webs of interaction have been taken as a "centrality" in human history.³¹ In the rather isolated premodern world, connections of distant people mainly took the form of chance encounters. Mankind has missed more than one opportunity to weld the East and the West together; in fact, many possibilities failed to turn into realities for one reason or another. For instance, Alexander the great once climbed across the mountains into India, penetrating deep into Punjab in 326 BCE. Despite a mutiny which forced him to retreat to Babylon, he was not discouraged. His plan of an even larger scale of expedition was called off only because of his premature death at the young age of 33. Had he lived longer, he would have likely made contacts with the Chinese people and their brilliant thinkers during the age of Warring States (403-221 BCE). Had the Greek philosophers met with their Chinese counterparts, it is not farfetched to suggest that a spectacular Sino-Hellenic culture or civilization could have been born. When being informed of an empire lying far west, Governor Ban Chao班超of late Han dispatched Gan Ying甘英 to set off an exploratory mission in 97 CE. Gan reached Parthia near the Caspian Sea, but he was misinformed by the natives that it would have to take as long as three-year voyage over the Mediterranean before reaching the destination, the Roman Empire. He was discouraged and headed home with his mission unaccomplished. Had Gan Ying been determined enough to move forward, the link between Loyang and Rome would have been almost surely established in a much earlier time.

For still another missed opportunity, Bishop Alopen of Antioch led in 635 a Nestorian Mission to Chang'an, the capital of the Tang dynasty, where the

30 John R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003).

31 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Nestorians were allowed to build an abbey. Many Chinese, including scholars and officials, seemed enthusiastic about this new faith. In 781, reportedly, thousands of the Chinese attended the Nestorian council held in the Tang capital.³² Only because the Tang court's preoccupation with internal problems at the time allowed the chance slip by, the Nestorian Christians did not serve as the match-makers to bring the Chinese and Byzantine empires together. Buddhism and trade, however, successfully connected Tang China to some parts of the world, in particular Asia, beginning from the sixth and seventh centuries.

After many centuries went by, during which international link between the East and the West, the Mongols rose to build a Eurasian Empire in the thirteenth century. Thanks to a wonderful communication system, direct travels became possible between East and West, and Marco Polo whose description of Chinese life and culture won the hearts and minds of many Europeans. The fall of the Mongol Empire suddenly ended the communication between Europe and Asia. It was not until the sixteenth century, thanks to geographical discovery, that a Sino-European linkage was reconnected to an unprecedented extent. The Jesuit father Mateo Ricci arrived in China to preach Christianity and successfully baptized a number of distinguished Confucian scholars, such as Xu Guangqi徐光啟 and Li Zhizao李之藻. But the notorious ritual controversy brought Ricci's particular approach to preaching Christianity to an unsuccessful end, as well as killing Ricci's dream for a Chinese Christianity.³³ China also missed the opportunity to catch up in time with Western science and technology. At last, China was forced to enter into "the family of nations" in the mid-nineteenth century. Because of her repeated military defeats and socio-economic weakness, however, China had little significant political cooperation with the rest of the world, still less meaningful competition or even rivalry to speak of in the age of imperialism.

32 Cited in Kuang Schü徐子明, "What the World's History Might Have Been," in *Yixing Xu Ziming xingsheng yigao* 宜興徐子明先生遺稿 (The Works of Late Dr. Schü Kuang) (Taipei: Huagang chubanshu, 1975), p. 3.

33 For details see Donald W. Treadgold, *The West in Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 8-12.

What was plentiful was blind enmity. While the Chinese knew very little of the world, the rest of the world had scant interest in knowing China. For most parts of the twentieth century, to many political and intellectual leaders in the West, China remained a "mysterious Middle Kingdom." Although Chinese history has been taught and studied in major European and American universities since the end of World War Two, it is often considered a part of regional study rather than an integrated part of human history.

With the rise of China as a world power in this emerging global era, it seems essential to link the Chinese to other peoples in the world, so as to communicate information for mutual understanding and help set standards for all. The Internet advances the transmission of information, but no better information would facilitate understanding than historical knowledge. One may see in the mirror of history what China really looks like. In this sense, Chinese history would help ensure world homogenization by minimizing fear, insecurity, and suspicion, while enhancing the shared goal and value in the process of globalization. Economic integration and communication links alone could not complete a single cosmopolitan human web, which connects one people with another in the forms of friendship and cooperation rather than enmity, competition, and conflict. If so, we could then rely on the knowledge of the past to better understand the world of the present.

Secondly, thinking globally, we must add at least two new dimensions to Chinese history, namely, the dimension of human sufferings and that of environment. Like others, Chinese history is replete with wars, battles, rebellions, uprisings, disease, and natural disasters. Yet the sentiments of the enormous human sufferings derived from violence and tragedy are rarely substantiated in history books. For instance, the Taiping rebellion in the nineteenth century, arguably the worst civil war in human history, caused no less than 20 million people dead during a period of 15 years. Yet most modern studies of the subject focused on campaigns, institutions, and ideology, while giving a little space, if

any, to the trauma in the wake of war and violence.³⁴ When the rebellion was over, the most prosperous regions in southeast China were severely devastated. So many towns and villages had no trace of living beings. This writer's own ancestors at Jinde旌德 in south Anhui province virtually all perished in 1859, when the Taipings besieged the town for more than 40 days, followed by a bloody massacre. Those who escaped to the hills and woods eventually died of hunger. Only one male in my ancestral family survived simply because he was out of town. "Nowhere in the southeast China has not filled with tears and blood," as Shi Dakai石達開, the Wing King of the Taiping Kingdom, noted in a famous poem, "when my ambition is still far from fulfilled."³⁵

This great human tragedy began in June, 1850 when Hong Xiuquan洪秀全 started his rebellion at Jintian金田 in southwest China. From the outset, the casualties on both sides ran extremely high. The weapons were used not just spears and swords but also guns and cannons purchased from foreigners. Four top Qing commanders were killed at the battle of Yong'an永安 in April, 1852, the Manchu general Wulantai烏蘭泰 died from wounds during the siege of Guilin桂林, almost all the officials from governor onward were killed and murdered when Wuchang武昌 fell in January, 1853, and the Governor-general Lu Jianying陸建瀛 together with nearly 20, 000 banner troopers were massacred after the fall of Nanjing (Nanking). On the Taiping side, the loss of lives was equally huge. The West King Xiao Zhaogui蕭朝貴 followed the South King Feng Yunshan馮雲山 to be killed in the battle. The Taiping's northern expedition from Nanjing was eventually annihilated in its entirety at the beginning of 1855, and the western expedition, though initially successful, lost Wuchang at last on

34 See for example Franz H. Michael in collaboration with Chung-li Chang, *The Taiping Rebellion: History and documents* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976, c1966).

35 The poem can be found in Shi Dakai石達開, *Shi Dakai quanji*石達開全集 (the complete works of Shi Dakai) (Taichung: Putian chubanshe, 1971), p. 30.

14 October 1854. No one really knows the death and wounded figures following the years' seesaw battles around Wuchang.³⁶

The fratricidal fights within the Taiping Kingdom in 1856 spilt blood and tears no less than a major military campaign. When the two Taiping kings, Wei Changhui 韋昌輝 and Qin Rigang 秦日綱, taking orders from the Heavenly King, suddenly attacked the palatial residence of the East King Yang Xiuqing 楊秀清, not just the king himself but his associates, including women and children, were mercilessly slaughtered. The king's severed head was hung high from a pole in the street.³⁷ As an unnamed Irishman, who served as a mercenary, witnessed the horrible scene: "the dead bodies were in some places five and six deep; some had hung themselves and others were severely scorched from the explosions of the powder bags thrown in." He saw in the following weeks the "people were brought to the execution ground in parcels of fives, tens, hundreds, and thousands,³⁸ who were all beheaded. All the women and children also, any one who had eaten of No. 2 [East King]'s rice suffered."³⁹ Hong Xiuquan would not end the killing here; he lured Yang's 6, 000 bodyguards into a trap and killed them all. For the next three months, the horrendous slaughter virtually put to death everyone related to Yang, including 500 woman soldiers, in one way or another without mercy. In early October, 1856, on his way back to Nanjing from Wuchang, the Wing King was in anger over the senseless killing. Before long, however, his life was threatened and hastily escaped from Nanjing on the same day of his return. Still his wife and children stayed behind were unable to escape from death. Estimates of the number of dead in this bloody episode range from

36 See Franz H. Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, pp. 69, 97, 103-104, 123, 153; cf. Young-tsu Wong, *Zouxiang shijie de cuozhe: Guo Songtao yu Dao Xian Tong Guang shidai* 走向世界的挫折：郭嵩燾與道咸同光時代 (Frustration over reaching out the world: Guo Songtao and late Qing China) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), pp. 15-24.

37 For the story of this bloody power struggle see Jen Yu-wen 簡又文, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 294-295; Jonathan D. Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), p. 242; Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, pp. 109-115.

38 Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, p. 243.

39 Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 243-244.

20, 000 to 40, 000; however, a recent scholar compared different sources against the then population in Nanjing and concluded that 20, 000 was the more likely number.⁴⁰ "How terribly sad the fratricide is," as the Wing King sighed in a poem.⁴¹ Under Shi's pressure, Hong Xiuquan executed both King Wei and King Qin. But the two executions did not prevent Shi from breaking with Hong, and the subsequent mutual slaughters between the different Taiping factions were particularly senseless, causing what the philosopher Nietzsche called the "pointlessness of suffering." The Qing government forces under the leadership of Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 and Zeng Guoquan 曾國荃 finally pinned down the Taipings in Nanjing, and captured the city on 15 July 1864 following the three horrible days of street fights. Of no less than 100, 000 Taiping men and women, except for those committing suicide, were all executed, including the capable leader Li Xiucheng 李秀成, by the order of the Zeng brothers. "This slaughter," as Franz Michael noted, "was the combined result of the fanatical Taiping defiance and of the policy of Tseng Kook-fan [Zeng Guofan]."⁴²

In retrospect, the intense battles and prolonged civil war left much of South China in ruins, not to speak of the countless lives lost. After Suzhou had fallen into the rebels' hands, the governor and ten of his associates committed suicide, 20 to 30 percent of the city dwellers were murdered, and another 20 to 30 percent drowned themselves in the wells or hanged themselves over the beams. The aftermath slaughtering and suicides appeared especially horrifying. The rich and wealthy Suzhou, having more than 3.41 million tax payers in 1830, of whom only 1.28 million remained in 1865, a loss of almost two-thirds of the

40 See Xu Che 徐徹, "Tianjing shijian zhong Wei Changhui sharen wenti xintan 天京事件中韋昌輝殺人問題新探 (A new study regarding how many people were killed by Wei Changhui during the Nanjing incident)," in Shehui kexue zhanxian bianjibu 社會科學戰線編輯部 (ed.), *Zhongguo jindaishi yanjiu luncong* 中國近代史研究論叢 (Research papers on modern Chinese history) (Changchun: Jilin Renmin chubanshe, 1981), pp. 60-71. The author points out that it was impossible for Wei to kill all 20,000 men; the figure he believes is the total death toll of the incident.

41 See Shi Dakai, *Shidai quanji*, pp. 30-31.

42 Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, p. 174.

population.⁴³ A foreign businessman found the city almost empty in the wake of war and littered with rotten bodies and white bones.⁴⁴ Similarly, Yangzhou揚州, perhaps the most affluent city in eighteenth-century China, was also devastated by the Taiping war. An epidemic afterward raised the death rate even higher. An anonymous author who lived in Yangzhou between February and July 1853 saw for himself the fall of the city into the hands of the Taipings and vividly described the subsequent epidemics as the death toll ran so high that the "bodies piled up like hills and blocked streets and alleys."⁴⁵ None of the 16, 000 Taipings lived to see the recapture of Anqing安慶 by the government on 5 September 1861. In the year that followed, Chen Yucheng陳玉成, one of the younger generation of the Taiping kings, was captured and executed on June 4. Shi Dakai, who had fought alone for six long years, surrendered to the Qing authorities in Sichuan, wishing that his execution would spare the lives of his remaining 2, 000 men. At the age of 33, he was sentenced to death by the slow process of slicing the limbs before beheading. But none of his men was spared as Shi had pled. The cruel reprisals, in particularly the horrendous killing of the captives, drew strong protests from the foreigners in China. In fact, the government troops even killed the ordinary people who were suspected to have willingly subordinated themselves to the enemy.

The terrible Taiping story is merely one of numerous catastrophes recorded in Chinese history. Indeed, the records of wars, violence, killings, murders, famine, epidemics, disasters, and devastations are abundant, but the historians had rarely labored to describe lively and in detail the sufferings of the people, let

43 According to *Suzhou fuzhi* (The gazetteer of the Suzhou prefecture), the precise population figure of the prefecture was 3,412,694 in 1830, and when the war ended in 1865, only 1,288,145 left, a dramatic reduction of almost two-third of population. See Gao Jiyan高紀言 et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng: Jiangsu fuxianzhi ji* 中國地方志集成：江蘇府縣志輯 (Collected gazetteers of China: The section on Jiangsu), vol. 13 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1991), pp. 343-344.

44 The eye-witness account appeared in a Shanghai newspaper on 13 January 1865.

45 Anonymous, *Guangling shigao* 廣陵史稿 (a draft history of Yangzhou), in *Siku weishoushu jikan* 四庫未收書輯刊 (A series of books not included the Four Treasuries), vol. 2 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1997), 4, 16, p. 13.

alone analyzing the miserable state of minds. We need to know a lot more about how the people in historical time dealt with misfortune, pains, cruelty, fear, trauma, and anxiety. When these unique Chinese experiences of not so unique human sufferings add to global history, we would surely enrich tremendously the universal knowledge of human sufferings.

As for the environmental issue, the impact of nature on human life is decidedly global. The interactions of man and nature are destined to have worldwide implications. The role nature has played in historic China can contribute significantly to understanding the environmental history as a whole. Chinese perceptions of, and reactions to, the severely cool weather during the transitional period from Ming to Qing China in particular would enrich a global knowledge of the "Little Ice Age" in general, which had devastating effects on the seventeenth-century world. The study of ecological exchange between China and the rest of the world can reveal the physical attributes of past environments in a more complete fashion, and enable us to know better the changing climate, distribution of plants as well as animals, and the transformation of landform in a global space during historical time.

Ecological changes in history could bear lasting imprints on living beings and human culture, such as the effects of epidemic diseases or lost forest coverage, to say nothing of drought and flood that wrought catastrophes to living beings. Studies on China's historical ecology can no doubt help understand the past environmental processes leading to the present time.⁴⁶ Take forest cover, for example, which was fast disappearing during the five hundred years from the mid-Ming through the Qing. At the outset of the Ming, forests in north China remained nicely covered.⁴⁷ The population explosion plus urbanization, which demanded endless fuel and construction materials, slowly and steadily exhausted

46 Cf. Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

47 Walter C. Lowdermilk and Dean R. Wickes, *History of Sail Use in the Wu T'ai Shan Area* (Shanghai: North China Branch of Royal Asiatic Society), pp. 4-5.

woods and trees. Before long, the forest cover along the Great Walls was quickly shrinking. In late Ming China, woodcutting had penetrated into deep forest in the remote regions in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan provinces.⁴⁸ The persistent deforestation gradually wiped out exceedingly large wooded areas throughout China, so much so that her landforms had been changed and resulted in severe sandstorms and other natural disasters, such as flood and drought, in modern China.⁴⁹

Cleaning forest for farming inevitably reduced the living space of animals of various sorts. Many species, including panda, had already faced the danger of extinction before the seventeenth century,⁵⁰ and the starving tigers came out from mounds to hurt people. During Ming-Qing China, in a vast area south of the Yellow River, the shrunken forest compelled herds of tigers to search for food in villages and towns. A record shows that a tiger had once intruded into a residence in Hangzhou.⁵¹ By late Ming, the tiger menace was heightened in the Yangzi Delta, and it continued into the Qing period. When the Qianlong Emperor ruled China in the eighteenth century, villagers still needed to set up traps for catching intruding tigers.⁵² Not until mid-Qing, following persistent search and hunting, that finally kept tigers out of sight, so much so that eventually the fierce animal

48 Refer to Lan Yong 藍勇, "Ming Qing shiqi huangmu caiban 明清時期皇木採辦研究 (The acquisition of woods for the imperial court during Ming-Qing China)," in *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究, 6 (1994), pp. 86-98.

49 Refer to Ding Jianmin 丁建民, and Xu Tingbi 徐廷弼, *Woguo de senlin* 我國的森林 (Forestry in our country) (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1985).

50 Cf. He Yeheng 何業恆, "Da xiongmao de xingshuai 大熊貓的興衰 (The Panda Story)," in *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中國歷史地理論叢 (Collected Essays on Historical Geography), 4 (1998), pp. 10-11. For the ecological consequences of land clearance in late imperial south China see Robert B. Marks, *Tigers, Rice, Silk, and Silt: Environment and Economy in late Imperial South China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 309-332.

51 See Chen Jiru 陳繼儒, *Hu hui* 虎薈 (Tiger Talks), in Wang Yunwu 王雲五 et al. (eds.), *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成, vol. 1364 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983).

52 Xu Qiucai 許秋垞, *Wenjian yici* 聞見異辭 (Strange things heard and seen), vol. 2 in *Xinwenfeng chubanshe* (ed.), *Congshu jicheng sanbian* 叢書集成三編, vol. 67 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe 新文豐出版社, 1996).

also faced the danger of annihilation.⁵³ The tiger crisis provides us with another example of China's ecological problems.

An ecological perspective of Chinese history, including ecological crises, relations between men and nature, environmental consciousness and policies, and epidemic diseases and their socio-cultural effects, can no doubt contribute to knowing the more comprehensive and balanced past environment in global space. It remains a challenge to pursue and parse a global ecology with a cross-cultural dimension. Without China, environmental history will inevitably end up incomplete, having only regional significance and possessing no meaning outside the locale. It is necessary, even required, to press on heading in the direction of understanding the role and place of nature in human life in the fashion of crossing boundaries and cultures.

Finally, how can Chinese history be really integrated into global history? To be sure, world history has been written for a long time, but it has been essentially the history of the West. The famous *Outline of History* by the celebrated writer H. G. Wells, though claiming "being a plain history of life and mankind," gives only a sketchy coverage of "the early history of China" and admits that "Chinese history is still very little known to European students, and our accounts of the early records are particularly unsatisfactory."⁵⁴ Yet, Wells' *Outline of History* was a popular text for the study of world history in pre-WWII China since the availability of its Chinese translation in 1928.⁵⁵ The noted *Historians' History of the World* in twenty-five volumes has assembled enormous amounts of materials, but largely a combination of numerous separate national histories.⁵⁶ Garraty and

53 Cf. Lan Yong 藍勇, "Qingchu Sichuan huhuan yu huanjing fuyuan wenti 清初四川虎患與環境復原問題 (The threat of the tiger and the question of environmental reviva)," in *Zhongguo lishi dili lunji* 中國歷史地理論叢 (Collected essays on Chinese historical geography) 3 (1999), pp. 203, 210.

54 See Herbert G. Wells, *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*, vol. 1 (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1971), p. 150.

55 Herbert G. Wells, *Shijie shigang* 世界史綱 (The Outline of [world] History), Liang Sicheng 梁思成 et al. (trans.) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935).

56 Henry S. Williams (ed.), *The Historians' History of the World: A Comprehensive Narrative of*

Gay's multi-volume *History of the World* compartmentalizes different regions in volume one and then the rest two volumes in chronological form, in which the flow of Chinese history is disrupted from time to time.⁵⁷ Many of the other texts by and large fall into the similar category of un-satisfaction. The Chinese historian Zhou Gucheng 周谷城 tried his hand at compiling a world history with emphasis on national and cultural inter-relations among different regional entities, in particular Europe's relations with Asia. Zhou had the ambitious intention of dispelling Euro-centric interpretation of world history, namely, the spread of the Western civilization to the rest of the world. Zhou, however, did not complete his work as he planned, ending abruptly at the Industrial Revolution. The author was also inclined to adopt a determinist view of history with in mind the Marxist scheme of societal development.⁵⁸

To integrate Chinese history into world history is, no doubt, a formidable task. Professional historians nowadays are mostly specialists who rarely gain the mastery of a worldwide spectrum of historical knowledge. It is not at all easy for them to select from the massive sources of information and prevent lopsidedness of judgments. In addition, the recent trend toward the deconstruction of historical knowledge, as well as the tendency toward a fragmented history, likewise runs counter to any global perspective. Histories, in other words, took priority over history. Moreover, nationalism that has not much receded made a fair and just global perspective all the more difficult to pursue. But the global age needs a global history to legitimate it. Perhaps we may at least begin with a global history of modern world, in which the family of nations appeared to be ever more closely connected human web. Hopefully, the growing globalism would at last make the

the Rise and Development of Nations as Recorded by the Great Writers of All Ages (London: The Times, 1907-1908).

57 John A. Garraty and Peter Gay, *A History of the World*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972).

58 Zhou Gucheng 周谷城, *Shijie tongshi* 世界通史 (A General History of the World), 2 vols. (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000).

world truly a village of diverse people and pluralistic culture, and Chinese history is not only fully integrated but also an inalienable part of human knowledge.

Conclusion

Up to the present time, globalization goes little beyond trans-continental links, political cooperation and economical integration. Philosophical and psychological gaps among nations and cultures are still being bridged. For a genuine global age to come about, we need to find world homogenization by deciphering national discrepancies and cultural diversities before setting common standards for generally accepted conformity.

We are working for a global perspective for East Asian studies, and this paper deals with Chinese history, a particular field in East Asian studies. It is an attempt to move Asia into the global age in the moral, cultural, or spiritual sense. For several thousand years, Chinese history had served the Chinese world only. In the recent past, thanks to the influence from the West, Chinese history became a national history written according to the conceptual framework of the West in general and America in particular. It seems timely to pursue a new perspective, but a global view of Chinese history is not to universalize the particular traits of the Chinese historical experience. Rather, it is desirable to wedge the Chinese particularity into a pluralistic human web. The particular Chinese stories of human sufferings and ecological disasters are destined to enrich our global knowledge. The trauma of misfortunes befallen on the Chinese in the past, the role the nature had played in historic China and the Chinese memory and coping of their living conditions can help understand the global history in a major way. Meanwhile, in order to overcome the shortfalls of nationalist aspirations, academic specialization, and postmodern nihilism, we historians are duty-bound to make Chinese history truly a part of world history rather than a separate

sinology. Hopefully, Chinese history will be written to provide the rest of the world with informative knowledge for mutual understanding.♦

♦ Responsible editor: Pei-Shi Lin (林沛熙).

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