

Periodizing the History of Sino-Japanese Relations

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The history of Sino-Japanese relations constitutes one part of Chinese historical science. Like the history of China's relations with other countries, it is tied to one (or more) foreign nations. For this reason, although it forms part of Chinese history, it is also different from general Chinese history because of its links to the history of other countries.

Generally, issues of periodization do not arise when narrating or researching the history of Sino-foreign relations; one can use China's historical periodization for everything, because in ancient times nothing need be said, and through modern times, as Sino-foreign relations have become both more frequent and more complex, China's actual intercourse with individual countries has remained relatively infrequent. In the great majority of cases, those states on China's borders which have had relatively considerable contact with China have been profoundly influenced by Chinese culture--in customs and social practices, in political institutions, in scholarship, education, morality, and ethics. In all these areas, they have followed Chinese patterns, even revering China as a superior land and going so far as to adopt the Chinese calendar. Although these countries have their own histories, and their social development has not been identical to that of China, there is a similar imbalance in development among the various ethnic groups living within China's actual borders. Thus, there is no problem researching their histories on the basis of the periodization of Chinese history.

The situation is altogether different when we come to the history of Sino-Japanese relations. It is well known that ever since antiquity the interchange between China and Japan has been extremely close and frequent. At certain times, though, owing to the limitations imposed by natural circumstances, as well as the backward conditions prevailing in ancient shipbuilding and techniques of navigation, China's contacts with this country separated from it by a large body of water were comparatively few. In addition, there were still on occasion artificial impediments, such as the Chinese prohibition

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against merchants going to sea in the Ming and Qing periods, or the Japanese sakoku 鎖国 [closed door] policy of the Edo period, which prevented people from traveling abroad. Yet these natural and man-made reasons did not inhibit the private interaction between the Chinese and Japanese peoples. Even when the military or diplomatic relations between the two countries were highly tense or had altogether deteriorated, friendly people-to-people, private relations did not cease. This is quite different from the more infrequent contacts between China and other states on her borders.

Chinese culture had nurtured Japan, enabling her to reduce the time necessary to move from a primitive to a civilized society, as well as to accelerate her speed of development in such areas as production and the like. Over a long, long period, Japan was deeply influenced by Chinese customs, institutions, ceremonial garb, and in many other areas. The entire upper stratum of the ruling elite in the Nara period imitated China--the more like Tang China, the better. In this there was no particularly great difference with other countries along China's borders. However, Japan was ultimately different from these other countries in that it never shed or abandoned its own native culture; although it absorbed China's advanced civilization, it only used the [new-found] strength to speed its own development and progress. In a specific era and under specific conditions, the Japanese also made use of Chinese reign titles and adopted the Chinese calendar, but Japan did have its own reign titles, domestically employed and always its own. Thus, the Chinese reign titles used under certain circumstances caused debates and confusion among Japan's ruling elite, and the latter by no means unanimously supported adopting China's reign titles unconditionally.

Furthermore, long nourished by China's more advanced civilization, Japan, although similar to China in production and culture, certainly could not wait for the reemergence of conditions precisely like those of China. Here, too, Japan differed from other countries on China's periphery, relying from first to last on its own cultural foundations and absorbing, adopting the foreign-derived civilization; and having assimilated the latter, formed its own entity. For this reason, when we speak of the history of Sino-Japanese relations, we must similarly confront the other peripheral nations that absorbed and adopted Chinese civilization; to base our conclusions solely on research and analysis of China's historical periodization clearly does not accord with actual conditions.

In other words, the history of Sino-Japanese relations has a distinctive place within the general field of the history of Sino-foreign relations. That China and Japan share a close historical bond does not mean that this relationship is identical with either Chinese or Japanese history, but it has a distinctive developmental process and order all its own. Thus, in periodizing issues central to it, we need to pay attention to and adapt our analysis to these distinctive points.

No one working on the history of Sino-Japanese relations has yet devised a method of periodizing it. We cannot rely on the periodization of Chinese history, decide the pros and cons based on China's dynastic eras, and then forge ahead with a discussion of how to divide Japan's history. Such a periodization might have real advantages, but it also has unavoidable defects. Without a firm basis in the developmental process characterizing the history of the interaction between China and Japan, one will be unable to avoid, on the one hand, producing disjointed history; on the other hand, it makes it more difficult to discuss the processes at work in Chinese history and in Japanese history when we investigate mutual and cause-effect relationships. Such an approach thus diminishes the historical function of countless things.

Many books concerned with Sino-Japanese historical relations, such as Huang Zunxian's 黄遵宪 Riben guo zhi 日本国志 [Treatise on the State of Japan] and Kimura Yasuhiko's 木宮泰彦 Nit-Chū bunka kōryū shi 日中文化交流史 [History of Sino-Japanese Cultural Interaction; originally entitled Chū-Nichi kōtsū shi 中日交通史 (History of Sino-Japanese Contacts)], follow a periodization of Chinese history and are written on the basis of successive changes in China's imperial dynasties. Although the chapters in Kimura's book are divided and linked by Chinese dynasties--Han, Wei, Six Dynasties, Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, Northern Song, Southern Song, Yuan, and Ming-Qing--nonetheless, by virtue of China's dynastic transitions, many historical facts cannot help but be discussed by dividing Chinese history into discrete eras. For example, the Japanese emissaries to the Sui and to the Tang courts only had different names originally because of the change in Chinese dynasties; in actual fact, from their commencement in 600 until Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 petitioned the emperor for their discontinuation in 894, Japanese envoys to China--be they called "Sui" emissaries or "Tang" emissaries--arrived with the same goals, set off to accomplish the same tasks, and were certainly no different in nature or form because of the changes in the political authorities in China.

This point can be most clearly seen in the fact that the first several emissaries to the Tang court in no appreciable way--numbers of people, sea routes, or organization--differed from those to the Sui court. Later, because of the development of Japan's internal productive capacities and the urgency felt in Japan for advanced civilization, the envoys dispatched to China grew ever more complex and detailed in organization, and the numbers of people involved doubled or even tripled, as compared to the earlier period. Yet, from the perspective of goals and duties, these changes represented technical transformations; and, after Japan ceased sending missions to the Tang, the popular, private exchange of merchant shipping and trade was in fact qualitatively different. However, if, based on Chinese historical periodization, we divide this history by dynasties, then we must split the qualitatively similar envoys to Sui and

Tang into two eras; while the qualitatively dissimilar governmental delegations and private traders will fit into the same category. This methodology might be further clarified, but if we bifurcate this period for purposes of periodization, it fails to accord with historical realities, fails to give us concrete knowledge essential to understanding these relations of interaction between China and Japan, and fails to explain clearly the process of historical development in Sino-Japanese relations.

Akiyama Kenzō 秋山謙蔵 has made an enormous contribution to research on the history of Sino-Japanese relations, particularly in the area of periodization. He was not obstinately attached to any periodization scheme by dynasties in Chinese history, but he made his observations and carried on his research on the basis, more or less, of economic conditions and the development of forces of production. He argued that the study of the history of Sino-Japanese relations (what he called the history of Sino-Japanese interactions) should, at the very least, bring together research on mutual exchanges in eight areas: changes in territory under control, naturalization and migration, ceremonial exchanges, wars, instances of castaways, scholarship, religion, and trade. The history of Sino-Japanese relations can thus be categorized according to the actual history in these eight areas, and it would not simply be the diplomatic contacts between the two countries.

This point of view hits the nail on the head, for in the many-faceted interactions of China and Japan, at different times certain things are more important than others. Akiyama also paid attention to social development over time, principally to the ways in which the growth of productive forces influenced Sino-Japanese contacts, although he does tend to focus, perhaps excessively, on political matters. As a result, to the extent that his research offers a periodization of the history of Sino-Japanese relations, he basically follows a division of periods according to Japanese history. He thus fails to avoid the similar phenomenon in Chinese historiographical periodization, to compare events similar in appearance but qualitatively different in actuality, arising from similarities in the time of generation and then arguing that they are of a similar type.

For example, in the roughly 200 years from the middle of the 14th century until after the middle of the 16th century, coastal regions of both Korea and China were attacked by "Japanese pirates" (wokou 倭寇, J. wakō). From this phenomenon it appears as if we have comparable events here, but in fact in the early years the "Japanese pirates" who plundered Korean and northern Chinese coastal areas for provisions and labor power were fundamentally different from the armed, illegal traders of the later period who developed the domestic Japanese commercial economy, the small number of men within the feudal government of Japan who monopolized foreign trade and later forged bonds with private and illegal Chinese merchants along the sea coast of China. In form, the attacks and plunder ultimately

had the same harmful effects on the local inhabitants of the coastal regions of Korea and China, and on destroying or inhibiting the growth of productive forces in those regions; however, in essence, these two eras of wokou activity were qualitatively different. To speak of them simply as the earlier and later period of the same phenomenon makes it exceedingly difficult to dissect and explain the actual historical events that transpired; indeed, so much so that one is forced to say that the later requests for military assistance from Japan by Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (Koxinga) and the Southern Ming movement are related to the earlier events. If we periodize merely on the basis of the two regimes in power--Muromachi and Edo--at different times, then it becomes very difficult to comprehend the relationship linking these events within the entirety of the history of Sino-Japanese relations.

Thus, the periodization of the history Sino-Japanese relations is not the same as that of Chinese history, nor does it follow that of Japanese history. The main objects of research in the history of Sino-Japanese relations, however, are China and Japan; and since the historical relations of the two countries must necessarily be deeply, closely tied to Chinese and to Japanese history, Sino-Japanese historical periodization will also be intimately connected to Chinese and Japanese history.

Given these circumstances, what standards ought we to use in finding an appropriate manner to periodize this history. What follows are my thoughts on this issue. Although I have shared views concerning the periodization I am about to offer with other scholars, it remains fundamentally my own conception, still far from mature, with many points that need further examination. I present my ideas in an effort to elicit others' thoughts in response, to further the development of my own ideas, and to provide a grounding and a basis for scholars of the history of Sino-Japanese relations in China where this field is just beginning to gain popularity. It is also intended to counteract any future attempt to borrow the historical periodization either of China or Japan which has so profoundly influenced the field heretofore.

The periodization which I shall address for the history of Sino-Japanese interaction will primarily concern the ancient (gudai 古代) and medieval (zhongshiji 中世紀) periods, prior to 1871; the year 1871 ushered in the modern (jindai 近代) era, when the two countries formally established diplomatic ties and Sino-Japanese relations entered a new time period. Unlike in earlier eras, the relationship between Chinese and Japanese history in the modern period became extremely close, and we should rightly subdivide this era into more detailed stages so as to elucidate further the actual historical interactions between China and Japan.

What then should be the primary foundation upon which to base the periodization of the history of Sino-Japanese relations? Clearly, dynastic transitions and changes in the ruling strata will not

work. I see the forces of production and social and economic development as principal bases from which to work. The beginning, growth, and intermediate transformations in Sino-Japanese relations have consistently been tied to the development of productive forces and the needs of society and the economy. Therefore, using these two criteria as the principal bases for analysis will be more appropriate to the task.

Because of differences in geography, environment, and the time periods in which civilization arose in China and Japan, the growth of productive forces and changes of a socio-economic nature were never the same in the two countries; this was particularly true of the ancient period when China and Japan were radically different. In the Warring States period, China already had an iron handicraft industry and was capable of manufacturing steel; not only did China possess iron weapons, but she also had iron implements for production (primarily in agriculture) and had indeed already entered the iron age. During the same period on the Japanese archipelago, however, a matrilineal clan society was still in place; and the economy was of the hunting, fishing, and gathering variety, featuring the use of extremely simple stone tools. Although Japan had already rid itself of the pre-ceramic age and entered the new stone age in the Jōmon period, it was still a major step away from China in terms of productive forces and the development of society.

An imbalance in socio-economic development and the forces of production in China and Japan flows like water downward until a balance is reached. The process of this flow is a historical process of relations and interactions between the two countries. Between Japan and China at this time, this imbalance already existed in the levels of productive forces and social development, and naturally the flow had to move from China to Japan; however, due to geographical impediments, and the fact that Japan was then still unable to accept China's more advanced civilization, only by chance did a small number of advanced Chinese artifacts make their way to Japan, and there was little way for them to be used or absorbed there. Thus, during the Jōmon period, the development of Japanese society was virtually inertial. For a long period of time, Japan remained stuck, straggling at the stage of a hunting and gathering economy, which explains the negligible, or indeed absent, influence of China's more advanced civilization.

In the third century B. C. E., Qin Shi Huangdi 秦始皇帝 unified China, and not only did China politically become a unified feudal state; it also underwent major developments in the areas of productive forces and its economy and society, because a number of the principal hindrances to this development were removed. These rapidly growing forces of production were transmitted through the continual passage of immigrants along the Korean peninsula to the Japanese archipelago, and they provided a tremendous shock to the stagnant, backward mode of production there. Areas near the importation of

advanced civilization were rapidly transformed from hunting-gathering economies to wetland cultivation agricultural economies, bringing to a close several thousand years of the Jōmon period and ushering in the Yayoi era. Iron and bronze wares were conveyed to Japan in the same time period. Although patrilineal social organization had also come to Japan at this time, there were still countless tribal states in Japan. The earliest arrival of China's advanced civilization to Japan from the Korean peninsula at this time had a major impact, later propelling the mode of production and society and economy gradually to develop the central and eastern regions of Japan, where there would be direct intercourse with China. Slowly, under the tutelage, encouragement, and influence of China's advanced civilization, the historical process toward unification began in Japan as well. It is from this stage that the history of Sino-Japanese relations has its first written documents.

During this period--namely, in the centuries from the Qin and Han dynasties through the reunification of China by the Sui in 589--especially following the last years of the Eastern Han, a system of feudal division formed within China; so too did a political division North and South because of warfare caused by military factions. The forces of production met an unprecedented destruction, especially during the severe chaos and confusion for well over a century following the overthrow of the Western Jin. It gave rise to a long historical era of great destruction and great reversal, although from the perspective of the entire historical process, it was still a progressive, albeit a spiral progression, whose speed remained exceedingly slow. During this time frame, Japan did not feel any influence from the chaos on the mainland because of Japan's geographical environment. Indeed, because of the intrusion of China's advanced civilization and under the influence of its stimulation, not only did Japan's productive forces progress immensely, but her society and economy as well made great strides of development and began the process toward a unified state throughout the archipelago, with a keenly felt need for an appropriate superstructure atop it. Under the circumstances of these times, there was felt the need for acquiring civilization from the Korean peninsula and, passing through there, on into China. Thus, from the Qin and Han eras until prior to the establishment of the Sui dynasty, the history of Sino-Japanese relations forged a period for our purposes of analysis.

Under the nourishing care of China's advanced civilization, when Japan reached the sixth century, it had already completely rid itself of a primitive social formation and entered the stage of slavery. The body of slaveholders in Kinki 近畿, where the imperial house was centered, had already conquered and taken control over virtually all of Japan. Although these Japanese slave owners possessed the materials and workers for production--that is, the basis of production relations were the tools of production and the slaves owned by the slaveholders, with the slaves attached to the land--yet, with the

never-ceasing development of the forces of production, this mode of control [i.e., slavery] slowly but surely found it difficult to accomodate itself; and the contradictions between slavemasters and slaves grew ever more profound with the passage of time until abscondence became the principal means of resistance.

Those slaveholders who came into rather close contact with advanced civilization began consciously to consider importing the new Buddhist thought in an effort to supplant the old uji-kami 氏神 (clan gods) and strengthen their control. In fact, their incomplete reform plans proved altogether useless. In addition, the growth of productive forces at that time had already enabled Japan to obtain directly from China necessary material and spiritual wealth, especially from China's experiences with rulership. In China at the time the Sui had brought several centuries of disorder to a close, unified the country, and formed a dynasty. Although one might argue that the Sui unification did not strike hard at the old forces, it too soon fell into the chaos of warfare and uprisings on every front. After a short period of time, the Tang dynasty seized political power in the midst of a massive peasant uprising, and it relaid the foundations for an even stronger, more stable unified state.

From the middle years of the Tang dynasty on, local feudal powers again began to rebel, and the central authorities lacked the capacity to suppress these locally powerful forces. This development ultimately brought the mighty Tang empire to its knees. Prior to its collapse, the Tang had been even stronger than the Han dynasty. This was certainly true in the political and military spheres, but it was just as true in the areas of production and the economy; it was surely the most powerful empire in the world at the time. It exerted an enormous influence upon other countries, particularly the peoples living along China's borders, with its brilliant culture and well-developed commercial economy.

Being so close to China's border, Japan, with its superstructure in the midst of establishing firm roots and stabilizing the necessary production relations, found this [i.e., the glories of Tang China] had special powers of attraction. Particularly after the Sui unified China and established a centralized state authority, a number of men among Japan's slaveholders yearningly sought various political measures and ruling techniques from China. They did not want to face the danger of uprisings in the future, and thus they decided to study China directly. Along the way, a page in the most glorious history of Sino-Japanese relations was written, as Japan sent embassies comprised of as many as 100 men to travel and study in China. This has come down to us in history as the "missions to the Sui" (qian-Sui shi 遣隋使, J. ken-Zui shi) and the "missions to the Tang" (qian-Tang shih 遣唐使, J. ken-Tō shi).

The direct results of these missions of travel and study in China were Japan's Taika Reforms of 645 and the culture of the later Tenpyō period (729-749), which occupy deservedly illustrious posi-

tions in Japanese history. Well known are the facts of the emergence of ritsuryō 律令 government and the impact of Buddhism on the state, both closely related to these events. Sino-Japanese relations in this period were closely tied up with subsequent Japanese history and had an impact on Chinese history as well.

From the middle of the Tang period forward, wars for feudal hegemony broke out. In the late ninth century, following the defeat of the Huang Chao 黄巢 uprising, central political control in the Tang was virtually exhausted. Soon, China was to fall once again into a state of division, known in history as the Five Dynasties era. At that point in time, the Yellow River delta was visited with destruction by the fighting between rival militarists and the Khitan invasion, and productive capacity in China was severely assaulted. Only in the South, under the parcellized control of separate feudal authorities, did the former production levels continue as before; the economy continued to grow, down through the late 14th century--namely, after the founding of the Ming dynasty--with the beginning of the revival of China following the devastating impact to the society and economy caused by Mongol rule. During this long period of some 500 years, the center of gravity of the Chinese economy remained in the Southeast, where a commercial economy thrived, even though during the Yuan dynasty an outdated slave-like mode of production brought suffering upon the areas in which it was enforced--during which agricultural production could not but suffer major setbacks--still commercial capitalism in various areas of the Southeast developed. The existence of local bureaucratic offices [in Guangzhou, Quanzhou, and elsewhere] known as shibosi 市舶司, set up to facilitate overseas trade, are sufficient to explain this phenomenon.

During this same period of time, Japan was implementing a land distribution system under the influence of the advanced civilization of the high Tang. With the concomitant development of productive capacity, this system was completely destroyed and replaced by feudal manors. The growth of feudal manors represented as well a relative increase in the local authority of feudal landlords (the manorial heads) and the decline in authority of the central government. The level of production continued to rise undaunted, and the continuous growth of the society and the economy made the aspirations for things from China on the part of the feudal landlords (including the central power holders) all the keener. In the past the items of civilization brought back via the emissaries to the Tang court were thoroughly divided up by the central aristocrats, with the localities not daring to question authority. No longer limited now as it was in the past, the rise of local influence brought on the decline of central power. Lacking the capacity to continue shouldering the immense expenses of emissary missions, the center had no choice but to use the excuse of the warfare in Tang China in 894 as a pretext not to send emissaries.

Thus, formal intercourse between China and Japan was cut off; but it was accompanied by social and economic development as well as

progress in shipbuilding and navigational technology. Furthermore, the life necessities of feudal aristocrats and local military leaders spawned even closer and more frequent interaction between the two peoples than ever before. There was commerce and trade not only between China and Japan, but also between Japan and the minorities peoples then living along China's periphery. Later, Japanese political authority was undermined, and the Japanese social order became unstable, but there was continued growth in the area of production. Because of this, intercourse with China grew unhindered primarily in trade and commerce, and Japan continued to feel the influence of Chinese culture.

The discontinuation of the Japanese emissaries to the Tang court was replaced many times over by private interactions. Although there were no formal exchanges between China and Japan during the Song period, there was no break in popular [or private] interactions, including trade, and Japanese Buddhist monks who came to China for periods of study. During the Yuan era, the Mongol slavemasters dispatched troops to invade Japan. On two occasions, great armies landed and attacked at Kyūshū, and yet even so official a text as the Yuan shi 元史 [History of the Yuan Dynasty] contains documents recording incidence of Japanese monks and merchants coming to China. This all explains the facts that the Sino-Japanese ties grew together with productive capacity and the development of society and the economy, and it was by no means the sort of thing that anyone, no matter how strong, could prevent or cut off.

One special point that still needs to be made is that, in the 14th and 15th centuries, armed Japanese attacked and plundered Korea and China (particularly along the northern coast); these men were called wokou in an earlier period. As noted above, the objects of these earlier incursions along the Korean and Chinese coastal regions were to take prisoners and seize foodstuffs, indicating that in certain areas of Japan at that time (principally in Kyūshū) the attacks of the Mongol armies and the resultant turmoil in Japan had given rise to shortages in labor power and food. These bands of armed Japanese were soldiers from this part of southern Japan or unemployed soldiers from other areas. Their raids were also visited upon their own local powerholders or the underlings and supporters of manorial heads, among whom there were no Chinese of course. They were altogether different in nature from the wokou to whom we now come, principally Chinese, who did not aim at plundering labor power or food supplies. I thus believe that what I have now termed early wokou belong in the first category: namely, in our discussion of the late ninth through the late 14th century. And, wokou of the later period belong in an analysis of the next time period. For this reason, it is best to divide these two dissimilar [although similarly named] phenomenon so as to enhance clarity and organization in understanding the history of Sino-Japanese relations.

This period of exchange and intercourse most deserves our atten-

tion within the history of Sino-Japanese relations. Because this interchange was wholly the private work of the peoples of the two countries, it was altogether different from interactions between the two governments. The scope of contacts was much broader and the actual interactions much more numerous, incomparably more than in the past. The growth of productive capacity and social and economic development demonstrate that the friendship between the Chinese and Japanese peoples was so strong that no force, be it human might or natural impediment, could inhibit it.

Beginning in the 15th century, straight through until prior to the modern era and the enactment of treaties between China and Japan in the 19th century, Sino-Japanese relations proceeded according to conditions appropriate to the development of both countries' productive capacities. Although artificial impediments to this were great at the time, history does not generally proceed at the behest of individuals' wills. The 15th through the 19th centuries in China belong to the era of late feudal society, also an era when capitalist production relations were beginning to sprout.

Following Zhu Yuanzhang's 朱元璋 unification of China, he first set himself the tasks of strengthening and consolidating his control. He thus implemented a stringent autocratic centralization of power, and he adopted as well policies aimed at reviving China's productive might, Chinese society, and the Chinese economy which had been devastated during the tyrannical rule of the Mongols. With the close of the 14th century, both of these aspects [political and socio-economic] had just begun to take root in the founding period of Zhu Yuanzhang's state, with no clear results yet to be seen. Seen from the prospective of social development, however, the various and sundry achievements of the early Ming concerning the rise in productive capacity and social and economic development served a major accelerating function, especially in the areas of handicrafts and the commercial and exchange economies whose speeds of growth were completely unprecedented. Because of growth in handicrafts and commerce, markets for a commodity economy expanded their scope greatly, as in the cases of the rapid progress made in shipbuilding and navigational techniques. Thus, not only did domestic trade flourish markedly; foreign trade outstripped that of the Song and the Yuan periods. With the development of a commodity economy and a flourishing domestic and foreign trade came the gradual increase in capitalist elements within the mode of production. Even though they could not rapidly develop under the exploitation and assaults of feudal authority, from the 15th century forward China's production relations began to demonstrate signs of qualitative change of the sort it had never experienced before.

After the founding generation of the Qing dynasty, the Manchu rulers began great butchery and plundering of the Chinese people, which caused brutal calamities in China's social and economic orders, compelling the regime to adopt a variety of measures to revive pro-

duction and develop productive capacity so as to consolidate the basis of their rule. With a respite to recuperate spirits during the three reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong until the early 18th century, Chinese society and economy began gradually to recover, her laboring population grew rapidly, commerce and industry in her cities also experienced growth, and capitalist elements became ever more prominent. Under the monstrous oppression and exploitations of feudalism, however, these could never achieve full maturation; and for this reason, until the Opium War, China fundamentally remained an economy primarily of small farmers, a society profoundly feudal in nature.

Until this point foreign trade had been a major source of wealth. The ruling class prior to the Song and Yuan periods never realized that foreign trade would not benefit a feudal economy based on self-sufficiency, and thus placed no restrictions on it whatsoever. They established shibosi as a way to gain profit from foreign trade and use it for purposes of enjoyment; they never thought of curtailing or restricting it. Although the rulers of China in the Ming and Qing periods were well aware of the threat posed by overseas trade to the feudal economy, they were at the same time covetous of the profits it produced. Hence, both the Ming and Qing dynasties put in force a ban on sea travel and enacted restrictions on overseas trade; at the same time, they adopted such measures as issuing various official identification papers over which they exercised a controlling, supervisory function. This effectively meant that restraints were placed on the private trade and intercourse that had been rising steadily since the late Tang; it also meant that officials would monopolize all profits to be gained. Naturally, under circumstances in which productive capacity was steadily increasing, a ban could not be absolute; and, under the restrictive control of the officialdom, Sino-Japanese private trade and interchange were never fully severed.

Just as Chinese society and the Chinese economy were entering the last stages of feudalism, with capitalist elements mounting every passing day, Japanese society was right in the midst of major transformative changes. In the late 14th century, after the Northern and Southern imperial houses merged and the military regime of the Muromachi bakufu was founded, domestic Japanese economic conditions were in shambles; continuous warfare had destroyed Japan's productive strength and prevented social and economic growth. In addition, the dismemberment of the manorial system compelled the Muromachi bakufu and the various feudal lords to transform their past practice of relying completely on their regional domains and begin to implement activities in the commercial sphere. The shōguns of the Muromachi bakufu, as well as the Buddhist temples and the territorial lords, such as Ōuchi 大内 and Hosokawa 細川, who were sufficiently mighty to exert influence and control over the bakufu, all considered monopolizing foreign trade so as to reap the immeasurable profits from

it. The largest piece of this profit was in the China trade; a single roundtrip could glean at least five or six times the investment, at most 20 or 30 times.

The Ming dynasty ruling China at this time, however, not only restricted private trade but also any trade other than tribute-trade. In other words, all routes aside from this politically motivated trade were shut down. Tribute-trade meant submitting to China and adopting the Chinese calendar. To obtain the great profit it offered, the Ashikaga shōguns resolved their financial difficulties and satisfied the living requirements of their high-level feudal lords by accepting all of the conditions China placed on tribute-trade. This was a stage in the history of the two countries' interactions when Japanese kings accepted inferior status on their own. In order that they might monopolize the China trade, the Muromachi bakufu and several great domainal lords closely controlled the distribution of licenses to engage in trade, and they restricted the armed secret trade of people living along the coast. The development of objective conditions, though, made it such that no force might hinder this trade; the wokou activity that brought upheavals along China's South-east coast in the 16th century constituted the amalgam of secret Chinese traders and secret Japanese traders.

After Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊富秀吉 unified Japan by force, he dispatched troops to invade Korea so as to disperse domestic opposition and to resolve fiscal difficulties. He even contemplated extended his war into China to obtain land and trade concessions, and he forced Sino-Japanese relations into a state of war.

From the 14th through the 17th century--the period of the Ming dynasty--relations between China and Japan were concentrated around the three items of tribute-trade, wokou activity, and helping the Koreans resist the Japanese, all of which in fact followed the emergence of social and economic growth. Japan needed to develop its economy and resolve its fiscal difficulties through trade with China; politically China wanted to retain its big nation integrity, and economically its strength was not equal to its wish. Hence, there were restrictions place on tribute-trade as well as the number of tribute ships and personnel. Later, during the war against Hideyoshi, peace was only gained when the Japanese agreed to the condition of "accepting infeudation without trade." In other words, together with the social and economic development of the two countries, the focus of relations between them underwent a transformation.

The Japanese sakoku policy of the 17th century prohibited its people from going abroad and forbade foreigners from entering Japan. Aside from a small number of specially-licensed trading ships closely controlled by the bakufu and certain great domains, foreign trade was uniformly forbidden. This compelled ships from China, Holland, Korea, and the Ryūkyūs to dock only at certain restricted, designated ports; and the number of their ships that could enter Japanese har-

bors each year was similarly limited. Under the severe sakoku policy, though, interaction between the Chinese and Japanese peoples remained alive. This situation continued intact until China and Japan signed a treaty; although changes between the two countries occurred during this period, nothing fundamental changed. Under such circumstances, the two sides had no formal official contacts, though private intercourse never declined.

Although the development of Sino-Japanese relations and the form of its expression were not the same during the period after the 15th century until 1871, still in qualitative terms they closely follow one another. They differ markedly from the political, formal intercourse of the Sui-Tang era and from the relations of free private trade that characterized the period from the end of the Tang through the beginning of the Ming.

This is how I see the periodization of the history of Sino-Japanese relations. For the convenience of research and discussion, one can of course make smaller, more subtle distinctions of shorter periods of time, but none can depart from the central pivots of productive capacity at the time and the development of society and the economy.

I must note again that the history of Sino-Japanese relations constitutes one part of Chinese history as it does one part of Japanese history, and it must be discussed and analyzed within the framework and categories of Chinese and Japanese history. Yet, because of the nature of its relationship to China and to Japan, perhaps as well to some third country, it will thus occupy different places in Chinese history and in Japanese history. From these commonalities and particularities, the history of Sino-Japanese relations must have its own periodization and cannot use a periodization appropriate only to Chinese or to Japanese history.

My thinking on this matter is far from complete; indeed, it remains rather simplistic. I am truly interested in hearing what other scholars think about this matter, so I can make revisions in my estimations. This way, I am sure, will be beneficial to the development of research into the history of Sino-Japanese relations.