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# **A New Style of Teaching/Learning for Ancient and Medieval Southeast Asian History in the Theme of Migration in Asia: Based on the Newly Edited Historical Document Sources**

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## **1. Present State of Southeast Asian History Studies in Japan**

Why is it that a great number of graduating Japanese high school students know so little about the history of Southeast Asia? Why is it often not learned or taught sufficiently in Japanese high schools in particular, where world history is a compulsory subject since 1994? It is because when teaching Southeast Asian history in Japanese high schools (or learning about it), there are complex structural problems. The problems are diverse, including the textbook itself, outdated teaching and learning methods, the university entrance exams, the curriculum for history education, the system for training teachers, and so on.

For example, in Japanese high school world history textbooks there is seldom much written on the topic of Southeast Asian history. Compared with Western or Chinese history, there is astoundingly less that is described. It is a critical point that little documentary material is used. As a result, a student will likewise find it difficult to learn the rich history of Southeast Asia from a textbook.

## **2. The Significance of Studying Southeast Asian History for Japanese High School Students**

Next, you may be wondering why this report is focused on ancient and medieval Southeast Asian history. There is a serious situation that many Japanese high school students do not know about it. In our globalized 21st century, students not only need to understand modern Southeast Asian history, but there is also a pressing need for them to have a better, deeper knowledge of ancient and medieval history of Southeast Asia.

In this present age, over a million Japanese people a year visit the various countries that make up Southeast Asia; hence, it is very important that they learn about the area's history during high school. I think that by having a fuller knowledge of each other's history, respect for one another and a relationship of mutual trust are built.

## **3. The Study of Pre-Modern Southeast Asian History Based on Historical Materials**

This report introduces a new learning/teaching method that started to be adopted in Japanese high school history classes<sup>1</sup>. This method is based on a collection of historical documents that is comprised of newly translated and edited primary sources. The "World History Historical Materials Collection (Vol. 12)" (Iwanami Shoten), edited by the Historical Science Society of Japan, was published in Japan. Over 500 researchers worked on about 3000 historical materials editing and providing new translations, explanations, and comments. In this historical collection, a great number of Southeast Asian ancient and medieval history related historical materials have been included. In order to provide students with a better and

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<sup>1</sup>Kawashima Keiichi 2013 "Getting Rid of Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheets in World History Classes: Using Q&A Format with Cooperative Learning" (Kyoto High School Social Studies Research Group Spring 2013 Meeting & Research Report); Kawashima Keiichi 2014 "How Should Students Learn Southeast Asian History?" (*Sekaishi No Shiori*, 2014 2nd semester issue, No. 63, Teikoku-Shoin) (downloadable from the Teikoku-Shoin website)

deeper understanding, I have introduced a certain amount of the material into my own world history classes and used new active learning based methods to teach. This learning method, rather than having students passively memorize historical terms, allows them to solve problems using historical materials and photographs, and through these learning tasks and activities the students learn how to think about things historically for themselves.

In many high school world history classes, it is commonplace to use fill-in-the-blank worksheets and lecture using a supplemental textbook. Since there is little detail in textbooks concerning historical events and occurrences, teachers need to provide supplementary explanations that include causes and results. Because there is also a limited amount of time in class, there is also little time for students to think about and understand the questions they are asked. The consequence of this is that many Japanese high school students are led to think of history as an academic discipline which involves simply memorizing years, names, and events.

History studies that incorporate active learning techniques are gradually becoming widespread throughout Japanese high school history education in order to change this style of learning that focuses solely on lectures. In addition, the interest of teachers and students in such method is on the rise. I introduced this style of teaching into my own classes, and held classes where students were encouraged to come up with questions based particularly on historical documents not included in the textbook. The following report represents a part of that pre-modern Southeast Asian history learning.

#### 1) Proposal for Learning Based on Historical Materials

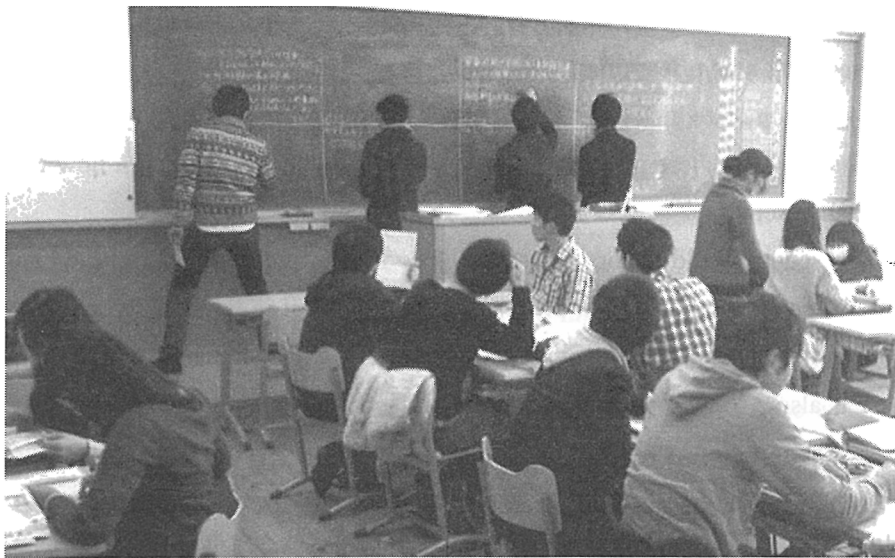
**【DBQ (Document-based Question), SBQ (Source-based Question)】**

Southeast Asian history is unfortunately considered to be an area in which students do not do well. Trying to remember lists of dynasties, capital cities, ethnicities, religions, ruins, etc., along with the complexity of the geographical situation will doubtlessly cause an immediate aversion to the subject in students. This makes Southeast Asian history a field where a teacher's awareness of the issues has a great influence on students' learning. So, what is a good way for students to learn?

Although the time period and region may differ, people are nevertheless born and raised. In the course of time, they bear children, raise them, age, and die. What is it that caused joy, anger, sorrow, and makes life worthwhile for people at the time? I think that it is important that students learn history from this kind of perspective.

Two years ago, I started using question (created by the teacher) and answer (students write a statement) style worksheets in world history classes, where students work in 3 to 5 person groups. 50-minute lesson x 2 frames = 1 set. The 1<sup>st</sup> frame's first half is 20 minutes of motivation, and the second half is 30 minutes of answering 7 or 8 questions in groups (anything left over is homework). The 2<sup>nd</sup> frame's first half is 20 minutes of students writing their answers on the blackboard, and the second half is 30 minutes of the teacher providing corrections and comments.

I participated in active learning workshops and incorporated elements of collaborative learning into these lessons, and I currently continue trial and error. However, the results from analyzing the learning attitude of students show a greater commitment to the class and a willingness to learn that allows for a deeper understanding of history, compared to conventional lectures.



【2<sup>nd</sup> Frame. Students write answers on the board.】

2) What follows are examples of studies of pre-modern Southeast Asian history, based on actual classes with additions and revisions.

① First, a map of Southeast Asia is flipped.

Q1. Question (teacher's question): If you look at the map of Southeast Asia upside-down, what do you notice?

Student A: Well, there are a lot of islands.

Student B: Borneo is encircled by the Indochina Peninsula, South China, the Philippines, the Maluku Islands, Java, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula.

Southeast Asian history is approached first from a geographical understanding. By deepening this understanding, students will become able to understand the history even more. In addition, it is important to establish the significance of the Strait of Malacca as a critical sea route. The waters of Southeast Asia as a part of the "Silk Road on the Sea" connected to the Indian Ocean and the world. In Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean*, he intentionally put a map of the Mediterranean and the surrounding world (including Africa) in upside down, because when you overturn the things you see all the time they become fresh again.

② Bronze age drums excavated throughout Southeast Asia (Đông Sơn culture)

Q2. Throughout what area have bronze drums been excavated?

Student A: Yunnan, the Indochina Peninsula, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and Java.

Q3. Why do you think that such huge bronze drums were distributed across such a wide range?

Student B: They may have taken pride in having them.

Student C: At the time, moving such huge, heavy things by ship would surely require considerable financial power and authority.

Student D: There were likely people that wanted them at all costs.

Student E: But one per family is unlikely. At most, maybe the elder's household had one or two.

Things were shipped on the waters of Southeast Asia. Although bronze drums being used as a symbol of authority by rulers is described in the textbook (*Updated World History B*, Teikoku-Shoin), I want students to consider the "thoughts" of the people surrounding these kinds of prestige assets.

③ What is a port city-state?

In 2012 the Second Congress Asian Association for World History had "Global Exchange Networks of Asia" as one of its themes with the purpose of getting a new, broader global perspective on Asian trade networks. Additionally, it was proposed that the topic should not only be viewed from the standpoint of "on land" but also "on the sea." Also, at the first congress in 2009 (Osaka), Anthony Reid who wrote "The Age of Commerce" was the keynote speaker.

Q4. The colored line that represents the maximum sphere of influence for kingdoms like those of Srivijaya and Majapahit includes not only the land but also the sea. Why has the person who created this figure decided on this representation?

Student A: This is different from a normal map.

Student B: It looks like the emphasis must be on control over the seas.

Student C: To establish hegemony they'd have to control the seas as well.

Q5. Look at the schematic diagram of a port city-state below, and list its features.

Student C: A port city has contact with the world across the sea as well as the inland. It is positioned precisely where the sea is connected to the land.

Student D: I think many things and people must have been moved using the rivers and seas.

Q6. Why would people at that time move that way?

Student A: It would be pretty dangerous to travel by sea.

Student B: So it would have to be really profitable.

Student C: There must have also been people that had no choice but to go out to sea in order to make a living.

④ Listening for the Voices that Emerge from Historical Materials

Q7. In reading the historical materials of Yijing (*Record of Buddhism as Practiced in India, The Fundamental Theory of Karma in Sarvāstivāda Buddhism*), what did he observe during his stay in Srivijaya?

Student A: More than 1,000 Buddhist monks were dedicated to learning and good works.

Student B: It's amazing that it was over 1,000. At the time, it must have been a major hub for it.

Student C: It's also said that if Chinese Buddhist monks wanted to learn more, it was good to go to India after studying in this place.

Q8. In the inscriptions of the Sukhothai Kingdom (1357, 1361/62), what is depicted?

Student D: They have fruit, fish, rice, and their elephants.

Student E: It's the same as the present-day Kingdom of Thailand.

Student F: It seems that the Buddhism is the worshipped religion and the king hopes to become a Buddha.

In the inscriptions, there are also descriptions that point to mango forests, coconuts, and jackfruit.

Q9. After reading the historical records of Ibn Battuta (*A Gift to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Traveling* (Journey of Ibn Battuta) (1356)), at the time what religions were described as prevalent in the towns on Sumatra?

Student A: Islam. A sultan who favored ulamas (scholars of Islamic law) was in power.

Student B: People from other faiths had to pay out jizya (historical Islamic tax paid by non-Muslims).

Student C: Incidentally, the country with world's largest Muslim population at present is Indonesia and not Saudi Arabia.

Q10. In reading the historical records of the Tran dynasty of Vietnam and the Mongol invasions of Japan (*Complete Annals of Đại Việt*, Vol. 6 (1479)), what is depicted?

Student D: This is a fierce battle in which the Tran dynasty defeated the Mongol army.

Student E: The battle was so bloody that the rivers turned bright red.

Student F: The Mongol army invaded even by boat. Come to think of it, they also used boats to invade Hakata Bay.

Student G: The fact that the Mongols who were mainly horse-riding nomads attacked by ship is really fascinating.

Q11. Looking at the map of Ayutthaya (1687), what do you notice?

Student A: The town is surrounded by the Chao Phraya River.

Student B: There are residential areas for Malaysians, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and Japanese.

Student C: I wonder what languages they talked to each other in.

① Ties with Japan (Japantowns, Trade by Red-Seal Ships)

Q12. Where were Japantowns located in Southeast Asia?

Student A: Ayutthaya, Thailand; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Manila, Philippines; Vietnam.

Q13. What kind of lives did they live?

Student B: It seems to me that they could utilize the ties to Japan and conduct trade and commerce.

Student C: Nagamasa Yamada is often called a Japanese volunteer army general in Ayutthaya, but he was more of a wandering mercenary.

Teacher: You'll want to read Endo Shusaku's book about him, *Road to the Kingdom*. It's really interesting.

Q14. In 1632, Morimoto Ukondayu upon visiting Angkor Wat wrote what kind of content in bokusho (graffiti) on the corridor pillars?

Student A: It was "prayers for the soul of the father."

Student B: He seems to have dedicated 4 Buddha statues.

Student: Well, I guess Angkor Wat kind of seems like it could be Jetavana Monastery (laughs).

Q15. How did he arrive in Angkor Wat?

Student C: Red-seal ships traveled there at that time, right?

Student D: He must have boarded a trade ship somewhere. Back then you could sail from Nagasaki.

Student E: Even so, that's an incredibly long trip. And if a storm came it'd get really dangerous.

Student F: Then, the red-seal ships' seafaring technology must have been exceptional.

Student G: In the end, I think I would prefer an airplane.

Q16. How do you think people who lived far from Japan reacted at the time of the decline of Japantowns as a result of the Tokugawa shogunate's policy of national isolation (embargo policy)?

Student D: I think they'd be really shocked.

Student E: If you really think about people disappearing from Japantowns one by one, it is rather sad.

#### **4. Instead of a Summary: Where is World History Education Headed**

I was deeply impacted by the words "the road to toil is paved with the good intentions of the world history teacher" (Ogawa Koji, *The Journal of Historical Studies* No. 859, 2009). It was because that applied exactly to me. It provided a great opportunity by causing me to reconsider my teaching methods.

Is it really possible that the end result of world history education is simply "toil?" Now the field is endlessly busy, and it is a difficult time for teachers to secure time for researching teaching materials. And the amount of time for covering pre-modern Southeast Asian history is often at best an hour or two. However, so as not to end up in a situation of Asian neighbors being "close yet distant," for the students who will shape our future it is a field that we want them to learn and consider slowly and carefully.

Overseas examples present many materials that Japanese world history education can refer to. In tests and textbooks such as the United Kingdom's GCSE textbook, textbooks common to Germany and France, common teaching materials for the modern and contemporary history of the Balkans, history teaching material common to Japan, China, and Korea, the AP (Advanced Placement) test, the IB (International Baccalaureate), the Abitur in Germany, and so on, there are a great many things that Japanese world history education could study and learn. It is earnestly hoped for that a world history education environment is established, where it is allowed to question students by presenting new historical materials and thinking with students, reflecting and talking about possibilities they see.