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Author(s)	Iwai, Jun
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## The State of History Education in Local Universities: The Case of Shizuoka University

Jun Iwai\*

### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the current state of history education in local universities by referring to the case of Shizuoka University.

In recent years, the study and value of the humanities have come under growing pressure and debate in Japan. Many Japanese universities face a decrease in the number of professors and research funds in the humanities, including history departments. In national universities, the number of professors of the humanities are rapidly decreasing compared with the number of professors of the natural sciences. This problem is more serious in local universities than large-scale research universities.

In these difficult conditions, how did we deal with history education at our university? In this paper, I will focus on two points. First, I will examine the situation of local universities by referring to the case of Shizuoka University and present the process we took to reform undergraduate history education. However, there was a limit to how far the history curriculum could be reformed, as each year Shizuoka University faced a decrease in professors and research funds. Therefore, secondly, I discuss how we set up a new society of history education, which was supported by other faculty members and high school teachers. The Society of History Education in Shizuoka (静岡歴史教育研究会) was established in 2010. I will consider the role played by the Society in bridging history research and history education, combining the efforts of high schools and Shizuoka University, and integrating Japanese History and World History into society.

**Keywords: Shizuoka University, History Education Reforms, Society of History Education in Shizuoka**

### Introduction: History Education and Shizuoka University

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the current state of history education in local universities by referring to the case of Shizuoka University.

In recent years, the study and value of the humanities have come under growing pressure and debate in Japan. Many Japanese universities face a decrease in the number of professors and research funds in the humanities, including history departments. In national universities, the number of professors of the humanities are rapidly decreasing compared with the number of professors of the natural sciences. This problem is more serious in local universities than large-scale research universities.

Local universities are subdivided into two types. The first type includes universities that have a Faculty of Humanities (人文学部), a Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (人文社会科学部), a Faculty of Law and Literature (法文学部) and so on.<sup>1</sup> This type usually offers a history major program, and therefore, have the resources to teach history. Shizuoka University belongs to this type. The second type includes universities that have either only a Faculty of Education or a Faculty of Liberal Arts; as such, it is difficult for these universities to teach history.

At Shizuoka University, history professors separately belong to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (人文社会科学部), the Faculty of Education (教育学部), and the Faculty of Informatics (情報学部). Their numbers are 7 in Humanities and Social Sciences, 3 in Education, and 2 in Informatics. In this paper, I lay stress on the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, not because I belong to this faculty, but because the majority of history professors belong to it. At this faculty, the number of history professors have decreased rapidly.

\* Professor, Shizuoka University

In these difficult conditions, how did we deal with history education at our university? In this paper, I will focus on two points. First, I will examine the situation of local universities by referring to the case of Shizuoka University and present the process we took to reform undergraduate history education. However, there was a limit to how far the history curriculum could be reformed, as each year Shizuoka University faced a decrease in professors and research funds. Therefore, secondly, I discuss how we set up a new society of history education, which was supported by other faculty members and high school teachers. The Society of History Education in Shizuoka (静岡歴史教育研究会) was established in 2010. I will consider the role played by the Society in bridging history research and history education, combining the efforts of high schools and Shizuoka University, and integrating Japanese History and World History into society.

### 1. History Education Reforms at Shizuoka University

Many Japanese universities are facing a decrease in professors and research funds. Among the national universities, this problem is more serious in local universities than large-scale research universities. First, I will compare Osaka University, a large-scale research university, with Shizuoka University, a local university. See table 1 below.

Table 1: Comparison between Osaka University and Shizuoka University

		Osaka University	Shizuoka University
A	Number of Faculties	11	6
B	Number of professors	3,242 (3rd)	715 (35th)
C	Management Grant per year	43,679,730 (4th)	9,411,730 (38th)
D	Total Research Funding per year	42,418,000	3,099,000
E	Research Funding per professors	13,080	4,330

Notes: B is data from 2017. C is data from 2016s. CDE are listed in Japanese thousand yen. ( ) indicates the university ranking of 86 national universities. Source: *The Asahi Shimbun*, October 07, 2018.

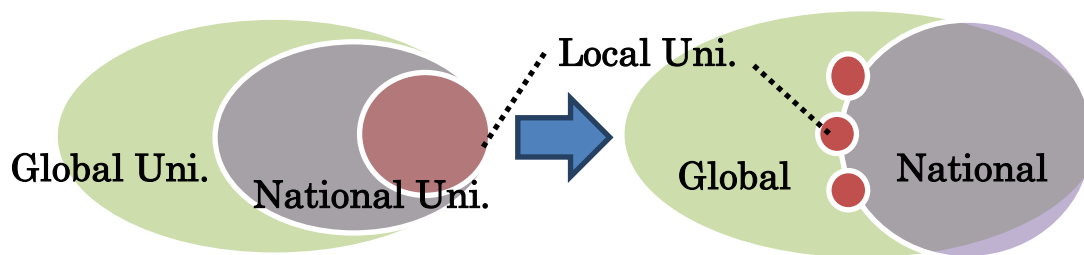
Generally speaking, there are great differences between the two universities. I am surprised to see these real and concrete numbers, but I have an opportunity for academic analysis, not to lament my condition.

The comparison of the number of professors shows a ratio of 4.5 : 1. The comparison of C shows a ratio of 4.6 : 1. The two ratios are almost the same. The comparison of D, moreover, shows a ratio of 13.7 : 1. The gap between the two universities in this article is very significant. In other words, the gap in research funding is more evident than the gap in number of professors. Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that the comparison of E shows a ratio of 3 : 1. The funding gap is also present per professor.

These great differences can be attributed to the administration of education in Japan. The Japanese government, especially the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (文部科学省), has consistently promoted the ranking of national universities since 2004.<sup>2</sup> Now, 86 national universities are divided into three ranking categories.<sup>3</sup> To be precise, 86 universities were forced to select one of three categories: the first includes 16 global research universities like the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University and Osaka University, the second includes 15 unique and distinguished national universities like Tokyo Medical and Dental University and Ochanomizu University, and the third category includes 55 local universities that originated in regional society. Obviously, Shizuoka University belongs to this third and lowest category. The practice of grouping the 86 national universities into three ranking categories serves to make the differences among these universities clear and conspicuous. However, we can and should change this three-layered structure. From the point of view of local universities, it is important to turn our sights from our local position within the state toward our overlapping position between the global and national levels (see figure 1 below). Local universities have a regional, national, and global impact, even if their scale is small. Each region is not always confined to the nation state, but functions as the connective zone between the global and national level. If we could begin to adopt this perspective, local universities would

find a new role and vision of themselves.

Figure 1: The three Categories of National Universities



It may well be that the problem does not lie in specific differences between Osaka University and Shizuoka University, but in the funding gap between the natural sciences and humanities as well as the gap between the applied sciences and fundamental sciences, including history.<sup>4</sup> To mitigate this point, historians at Osaka University and Shizuoka University can cooperate. Indeed, I have learned how history education is taught at Osaka University. Today, we sit together at the same table and discuss the same topics, and together decide the present and future of history education.

As I already mentioned, at Shizuoka University, history professors separately belong to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Informatics. Their numbers are 7 in Humanities and Social Sciences, 3 in Education and 2 in Informatics.

At the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the number of history professors has decreased rapidly. In the 1990s, 11 history professors were working, but now we only have 7. Regarding their research expertise, 2 specialize in Japanese History, 1 in Chinese History, 1 in British History (myself), 1 in Czech History, and 2 in Archaeology. Thus, we have experienced a drastic decrease. At Shizuoka University, the Faculty of Liberal Arts (教養部) was broken up in the 1990s like many other Japanese universities. On the other hand, the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences (人文社会科学研究科) was established in 1997, and so we are presently engaged not only in teaching undergraduate students, but also graduate students for the masters program.

In these difficult conditions, we looked for an efficient way to teach history at our university. First, we tried to reform our undergraduate program. Though we had previously been dividing history major students in our department into the three sections of Japanese History, World History and Archaeology in their second year, we changed this system and instead divided them in their third year. Now, many second-year students take survey courses such as Japanese history and World history. As a result, we were able to decrease the number of specialized courses offered.

However, I think these reform efforts have not been enough. Many local universities face similar difficult conditions, such as a decrease in the number of professors, research funds, and so on. Concerning history education, Ibaraki University, Shimane University, University of Ryukyus are actively operating as well as Shizuoka University and standing up to these difficult conditions.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, we should be affiliated with each other. Fortunately, we have a common association—the Association for High School-University Collaboration in History Education (高大連携歴史教育研究会)—that was established in 2015. Many members of local universities can meet and discuss their common problems. Constant cooperation between local universities is necessary.

## 2. The Society of History Education in Shizuoka

History education within Shizuoka University is closely related to society beyond the university. The Society of History Education in Shizuoka was established in December 2010 in order to change our perspective and broaden our horizons. The founding members consisted of high school teachers and professors from some faculties of the Shizuoka University. From the beginning, we were a mixed group.

Before the establishment of the Society, we had visited Osaka University and researched its way of managing its Society of History Education. We can view Osaka University as a kind of precursor of what was to become a model university of history education. Osaka University History-education Projects started in 2005. Professor Momoki and Professor Akita and other members in Osaka very kindly advised us. I would like to thank them for their useful advice and the many ways in which they helped us. Indeed, we learned many valuable insights regarding the management of the Society, especially on cooperating with high schools. However, I became aware of the differences between Osaka University and Shizuoka University. The former has over 20 professors in their Department of History, while the latter has only 7. The former is also a large-scale research university similar to a famous department store, while the latter is a small local university resembling a convenience store. Thus, I thought we needed to seek our own approach that would suit the unique characteristics of our university, which differs in many ways from Osaka University.

Today we face three major problems. The first is a shortage of professors, the second is a shortage of money, and the third is a shortage of postgraduate students. Unfortunately, our graduate school only has masters-level courses. Many other local universities face a similar situation. Instead of giving up to reform our conditions, we decided to look for solutions to the shortage. To begin with, the shortage of professors was addressed with the cooperation of high school teachers and professors from other faculties. Secondly, the shortage of money was addressed by the acquisition of a grant in aid of our university (学内裁量経費). Thanks to this grant, we could invite some guest speakers from distant areas to our Society meetings. Thirdly, the shortage in the number of postgraduate students has been addressed through the assistance of our undergraduate students. Fortunately, our university has been blessed with many eager and earnest undergraduate students.

After we started in 2010, in the course of workshops and meetings, we focused on three main aims of the Society. First, we recognized that it was essential for us to bridge the gap between history research and history education, and in addition, to emphasize regional history, especially the history of the Shizuoka Prefecture. Secondly, we realized the importance of cooperating with high school teachers. Thirdly, we came to understand the significance of integrating Japanese History with World History. Thus, we found the three objectives for the Society.

### **(1) Beyond the division between history and history education**

Once we began to hold meetings in 2010, the first topic we considered was the Collections of the House of Egawas (江川文庫). They were the regional rulers in the eastern parts of Shizuoka and the western parts of Kanagawa during the Edo period. At the next meeting, we dealt with the issue of the archaeological site of Toro (登呂遺跡). In the beginning, we focused on regional history, since many of the high school teachers were interested in regional history. After we got a grant in aid of our university, however, we were able to invite famous guest speakers like Professor Momoki as well as others to our meetings, and we began to consider various kinds of important topics beyond regional history. For example, in 2016, we met to consider how the experiences of World War II and the changes of life affected many people living in the region. We invited one speaker who studied the terrible experiences of War in the Shizuoka area and another speaker who studied a similar theme in Germany. We could then compare the regional problems in Shizuoka with European examples.

In the summer of 2017, we held the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, which focused on the lessons we learned from contemporary history in relation to history education. This time, about 60 people gathered at our university, and we enjoyed hosting the greatest number of participants in the history of the Society. In December 2018, we held the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, which examined historical sources originating in various regions of Japan and considered their applications to the history education.

Generally speaking, university professors in the Department of History are devoted to research, whereas it is said that high school teachers devote most of their time to teaching. It may seem that the two roles are different; however, having learned many valuable insights from high school teachers through our meetings, I do not think they are. In fact, we gradually came to realize that many of these teachers have a special knowledge of history and that they are often scholars as well. We professors should also strive to be good teachers in addition to being good scholars. Indeed, it is impossible to differentiate between the roles and functions of university professors of history and those of high school teachers. I think

they are equally valuable both in their knowledge and teaching of history, so we should collaborate in studying and educating. This will bring us a step closer towards bridging the gap between history research and history education.

## **(2) Beyond the Division between High School and University**

Our meetings are usually hosted with the cooperation of high school teachers and university professors. We have built close relationships with teachers of regional high schools. I think what unites us is the student, especially aiming to become a high school history teacher.

Five years ago, one high school teacher advised me to mentor history professors at our university in cooperation with high school teachers. With his advice the history teaching mentorship course (地歴教員養成講座) began in the spring of 2014. Now we hold this course ten times per year. This course consists of three parts. The first part consists of models of teaching by high school teachers, the second consists of special lectures by university professors, and the third consists of trial teaching demonstrations by students who hope to become teachers in the future.

In this course, last year we had three successful candidates of the high school teacher employment examination, and this year we have four candidates. We are currently engaged in fostering and supporting the growth of future teachers. Our funding for this course comes from a committee aimed to support the employment of students (キャリアサポート委員会) at our university.

## **(3) Beyond the Division between Japanese History and World History**

As I mentioned, one purpose of our society is to integrate Japanese History and World History. Usually, we have arranged for two speakers at our society meetings, one a specialist in Japanese History, and the other a specialist in World History.

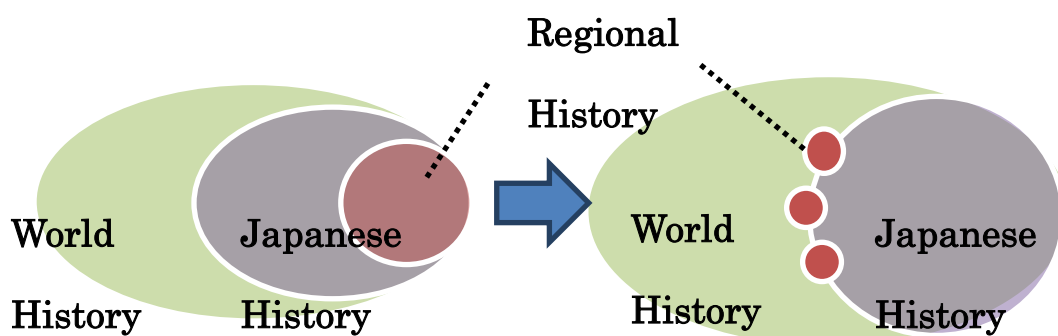
However, in the Japanese high school curriculum, Japanese History and World History have been separated for a long time. After World War II, Oriental History (東洋史) and Western History (西洋史) were integrated into World History. However, Japanese History is still separated from World History. Students in high school usually learn either Japanese History or World History, and hardly study both subjects.

The case is the same for many other Japanese universities. History professors almost always belong to the sections of either Japanese History, Oriental History, or Western History separately. Many history students are also divided into these sections.

However, the Department of History originally should not be separated in this manner. Recently, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology decided to introduce a new history subject into high school: Integrated History (歴史総合). This subject aims to integrate Japanese History and World History with a focus on modern and contemporary times. Integrated History will be introduced in 2022. This is a great transformation of the Japanese high school curriculum.

Concerning the integration of Japanese History and World History, I will advocate a new way, which takes note of regional history. In the past, regional history was usually allocated to parts of national history (see the left side of figure 2 below). But I think each region has the potential to connect with the global world. Indeed, historically, these regions sometimes traded and communicated directly with other countries. We can easily think of the examples of Rukyu (琉球), Ezo-chi (蝦夷地), and so on. I think each region is situated in connective zones (see the right side of figure 2). We may thus integrate Japanese History and World History through a focus on regional history.

Figure 2: The Relationship between World, Japanese, and Regional History



### Conclusion

To summarize, I firstly examined the situation of local universities by focusing on the case of Shizuoka University, and I presented the process by which we reformed undergraduate history education at our institution. Secondly, I considered the purposes and roles of the Society of History Education in Shizuoka, among which included promoting the coexistence of history and history education, the mutual cooperation between regional high schools and Shizuoka University, and the integration of Japanese History and World History in society. I believe the work that has been done so far shows that we can overcome the division between history and history education.

Many local universities face similar conditions with Shizuoka University, such as a decrease in the number of professors, research funds, and so on. Concerning history education, several universities are actively operating as well as Shizuoka University and standing up to these difficult conditions. Therefore, we should be affiliated with each other.

From the point of view of local universities, it is important to turn our sights from local positions within the state to overlapping positions between the global and national levels. Local universities have a regional, national, and global impact, even if their scale is small. Each region is not always confined to the nation state, but functions as the connective zone between the global and national level. If we could begin to adopt this perspective, local universities would find a new role and vision of themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Belonging to this type are Hirosaki University, Iwate University, Yamagata University, Ibaraki University, Niigata University, Toyama University, Shinshu University, Shizuoka University, Mie University, Shimane University, Yamaguchi University, Ehime University, Kochi University, Kagoshima University, University of Ryukyus.

<sup>2</sup> In 2004, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology turned national universities into independent administrative entities.

<sup>3</sup> In 2015, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology decided to divide the 86 national universities into three divisions. Of course, the three divisions were closely related to the distribution of management grants.

<sup>4</sup> In Anglophone countries, especially the United Kingdom, the gap between the applied sciences and the fundamental sciences is a great problem. Mandler, Peter 2018. "Not the Age of STEM," *The 1st British-East Asian Conference of Historians: Core and Periphery in British East Asian Histories*, 12-15 Sept., Kyungpook National University, Korea, pp. 351-366. "STEM" means science, technology, engineering and mathematics. See the essays in Freeman, Brigid, Simon Marginson and Russell Tytler (eds.) 2014. *The Age of STEM*, London: Routledge.

<sup>5</sup> Concerning history education in local universities, see *Historical Journal (Rekishi Hyōron)* in Japanese, vol. 816, 824, 2018, vol. 826, 2019.