

## *China before and after 1949(1949-nen zengo no Chūgoku)*

1949年前後の中國 by Kubo Tōru [ed.], Tōkyō : Kyūko Shoin, 2006.

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I stayed in Nanjing (南京) for a year in 1999 and 2000. I frequently questioned my teachers when certain social phenomena began to emerge due to personal interest in the traditions and customs of the Chinese. The answers to these questions were that such social phenomena began to occur after the 1949 Liberation. For example, when I asked about the time when the social status of Chinese women (which seems distinguishably prominent comparing to that of Korean women) was raised, the answer was that it was after 1949. It is likely so, considering that it was at that time when new political, economical, and ruling ideology was established under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. However, scrutiny on such social trends reveals that they actually began to emerge sometime earlier than 1949. They perceived it as a social phenomenon totally discontinued from the past.

In order to explain the present and to find the future direction of Chinese society, it is necessary to understand the situation before and after the 1949 Revolution. For a long time I thought about the ‘continuity’ issue concerning 1949. I first became interested in this topic

after reading a paper written by Yoshihiro Ishikawa (石川禎浩), *The Formation and Development of Technocrat in the Period of Nanjing National Government, the Genealogy of Technicians of Modern China*. This paper made clear that the technocrats of the National Resources Commission (資源委員會, NRC) who led the Nanjing National Government in the construction a heavy chemical industry also led to the economic construction of ‘New China’ after 1949 without leaving China. Prior to 1949 they already had confidence in the idea of non-capitalistic development or socialization of capital. This ideological heritage of the NRC had an effect on building of a command economy system after 1949. Ishikawa emphasized the continuity of 1949.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the bureaucratic engineers of the National Resources Commission, those who participated in the Kuomintang Government and those who lived in the China during the Republic of China remained on the mainland. It is important look to the majority of “individual persons” that had to remain on the mainland, as much as the “structure of transformation” in 1949. In accordance with the point that (to a certain extent) people are affected by the “inertia of their pasts,” history, by nature, possesses continuity. People are not to be changed in a day. There is a necessity to pay attention to the continuity caused by “inertia of their pasts” that the Chinese people before 1949 usually have. This is because structural and individual transformations do not always coincide.

In preceding research, the discontinuity aspect of the revolution of 1949 has been emphasized. In contrast, “*China Before and After 1949*,” the result of joint research done by Japanese researchers at the central

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<sup>1</sup> Ishikawa Yoshihiro (石川禎浩), “Nankin seifu jiki no Gijutsu kanryō no keisei to hatten - kindai Chūgoku gijutsusha no keifu (南京政府時期の技術官僚の形成と發展-近代中國技術者の系譜, The Formation and Development of Technocrat in the Period of Nanjing National Government, the Genealogy of Technicians of Modern China),” *Shirin* (史林) 74-2, 1991. ch.5, The National Resource Commission and its heritage on the People’s Republic China, also interest in National Resource Commission. Although it is not plagiarized, it is somewhat similar with the main ideas of Ishikawa and the fact that he did not quote Ishikiwa is quite questionable.

axis and the participation of Chinese researches, had focused on continuity, while “attempting to capture the entirety of 1949 as one important turning point (p.3)”<sup>2</sup> Expectations were high having heard about such cooperative research. The fact that I am now writing this book review is purely the product of indolence as I wanted the time to look over this book before asked.

There already is two book review that introduces the contents of this book in detail and this paper does not list the detailed contents of this book, but instead laid emphasis on explaining the theme of “the continuity of 1949.”

Firstly, when understanding the China since modern age as a “Modern Nation State.” the “continuity of 1949” will become clearer. The main author of this book, Kubo Toru (久保亨), suggested “the four viewpoints of continuity and discontinuity of 1949” in the general introduction. These viewpoints are China as an empire, a modern Nation State, a socialist state, and China as a nation with new possibility (reinterpretations on modern ideas, Globalization) to overcome forecited three category. However, the question is how much of this view is reflected in the joint research. Not only this, as a relatively secondary element of 20th century China, the remnants of “China as an empire” cannot be sufficiently grade up with China as a Nation State or socialist state. Issues surrounding the Commission on Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs (蒙藏委員會) and the Minority Nationality, Oversea-Chinese Commission (僑務委員會) and oversea Chinese are included in category of ‘China as a modern Nation State’ rather than issues of the ‘China as an empire’. Because these issues are problems of the ‘national unification’ that is a core element of the modern Nation State building.

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<sup>2</sup> Uehara Kazuyoshi (上原一慶), “Syohyou : Kubo Tōru hencho, 1949-nen zengo no Chūgoku (China before and after 1949) - Chūgoku keizai kenkyū no tachiba kara (from a point of Chinese Economy Research view,” *Chikaki ni arite*, vol.52, 2007. (書評 久保亨編, 『1949年前後の中国』 中国经济研究の立場から, 近きに在りて 52, 2007).

The viewpoint of a “China as a socialist state,” limits socialism to a socio-economic system, “a socio-economic system where a planned economy and national directives takes a dominant role to move national economic progress along an axis of control.” Socialism as an Ideology or an ideal is not considered and does not possess any real meaning in reality. In addition, the author of this book has stated that socialism can be viewed as “one of many types of support systems for a modern economy.” Consequently, socialism as a socio-economic system is a means to establish a modern Nation State. So, problem of ‘China as socialist state’ also is included in category of ‘China as a modern Nation State.’

When seen in this respect, it seems that the “viewpoints that consider the continuity and discontinuity of 1949,” can concentrate in the view point of ‘China as a Nation State.’ The elements of empire, one party ruling and socialism, with the possibility of everything that goes beyond all of these are encompassed to a certain extent, but the overall pattern is the building of a strong “Modern Nation State.” Kubo Toru defined that the revolution of 1949 is the integration of removing the remnants of the Empire of Qing, a new challenge for constructing a modern nation and experimentation of one party ruling communism (p.17), but I think that there is a problem in his logic. By looking at building this Nation State, all the elements Kubo Toru defined is included. From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, by looking at China as a Nation State building it shows the continuity of before and after 1949 better.

Secondly, it is necessary to focus on the internal relationships of continuity before and after 1949. This book effectively portrays the continual phenomena or cases during the 1949 Revolution from various aspects. For instance, Chapter 1 *The Constitutional Enforcement System of the Kuomintang*, ruling the empire, the governing strategy of Sun Yat-sen, and the governing formation of the People’s Republic of China are continual in that they are not reflected by separation of powers. The

constitution of 1947 (in which the separation of the three powers was effectively realized) had been achieved in Taiwan, after approximately 60 years, in 2005.

Additionally, in Chapter 2 *From One Party Ruling to Multi-party Coalition (Qin Tuo, 襯託) System* while criticizing the unjust and biased evaluation of the 1947 The Constitution of the Republic of China (中華民國憲法) and “Constitutional National Assembly (行憲國大)” the author assesses that it holds great meaning. To pertain to the point that it established the first so-called ‘the Multi-party Ruling Coalition System’ model which one party has the superior power to rule and the rest of the small party cooperates with that party. Following it to the beginning of the People’s Republic of China, this created the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (中國人民政治協商會議) that the Democratic Parties had extensively participated in and the Multi-party Coalition (Qin Tuo) Government, the core of Chinese Communist Party, which it was founded on. Also, even in Taiwan, the Legally Constituted Authority had ensued by means of constitution and ‘the National Assembly’. The method of distributing seats in parliamentary based on region, occupation, gender, race, and religion, being adhered to by those in Taiwan and the mainland alike, explicitly shows its continuity even in today.

In Chapter 3 *Democracy Construction Association of Before and After the Establishment of the Republic, 1945-1953* looks at understanding the private merchants and industrialists, and in the private industry of the early People’s Republic of China there were the demands of long-term sustainability among industrialists and importance was placed upon this, but after the “Three Antis Movement” and “Five Antis Movement” (‘三反’ ‘五反’ 運動) and the ‘General Line for the Transitional Period (過渡時期 總路線)’ all of this was negated, while in the time of the “Double-hundred Policy” (雙百方針) <反右派鬥爭> was once again destroyed and since then is said to be partially implemented in the form of a the Open Policy. In short, a crossing between continuity

and discontinuity is apparent in the existential aspect of the private industrialist sector.

In the above manners, this book demonstrates well the continuity of before and after 1949. However, the interrelatedness of the continual cases is not clearly explained. For example, if continuity exists in that the ruling of the empire, the governing strategy of Sun Yat-sen, and the governing formation of the People's Republic of China do not reflect checks and balances by separation of the powers, how does one define this continuity? It can not be said that this was simply by chance, and it is necessary to explain from what type of interrelatedness that such continuity has come into being.

If so, what is the interrelatedness? Although it is not confirmed it can be guessed. For example, like the technocrats of the *National Resources Commission* (Chapter 5) continuity can be found in the same body that took over economic constitution in 1940's and early 1950's. Also regardless of system or ideology, there might have occurred continuity in the historical tasks. As a turning point in 1949 the power was transferred from the Chinese Kuomintang to the Chinese Communist Party. Although the political system and ruling ideology had also drastically changed, when looking into the historical tasks that China faced, the intention of the nationalism in power, ruling structure and the standpoints of the individual politicians it can be concluded that in various aspects there was continuity. This transformation of China was not so simple. Also, in the war time the desperate request for realistic needs like a food supply (Chapter 9) initiated the flow of continuity. Aside from these points, it could have been possible that other interrelatedness continuity lasted.

Thirdly, there is a need to be considerate about several difficulties that were internalized in the process of approaching to the continuity of 1949. Research on the Chinese history of the 1950s is still insufficient. For this reason without understanding the history of the 1950s, explanation about the continuity and disconnection of 1949 can be

difficult. It is urgent to further study in the 1950s. Research for the 1950's begins from the limited focus of the continuity and discontinuity of 1949 can be another problem. The study of the 1950s should be done independently and it is necessary to wait until the results of such study are finished.

The current situation of collecting materials for historical research for the 1950s is difficult. The media report and official documentation of that time that can be used as a research material describe the factual accounts too monotonously; as a result, they are not supportive as historical material (p.189). Recently, history source books that dealt with 1950's started to be published. This source books are very useful but, its defect is that it only has China's Authority's perspective drawn. Not only that, it is almost impossible to find the contents about the source books on other sources. Since, you can't take a hold of other sources beside the history source books. The State Archives of China, should allow other common researchers to manage the history sources so that inquire completed sources would show the process of making the central government policy. This is a task which needs to be solved.

This book listed the individual papers of twelve researchers, so it does not have consistency to show a holistic picture. For instance, Chapter 4, 8, 10, and 11 hardly deal with the continuity issue of 1949. This could be the weakness of a joint research. Just by the fact this book has proposed the issues, by itself it is meaningful. The issue is the continuity and discontinuity features of before and after 1949. When upper level politics and structure problem are viewed from the macro-perspective, the disconnection should be emphasized. However, when we have interest in continuity, we come to pay attention on the field of the foundational social stratum, individuals, micro-perspective, social history, and cultural history. Like this, history research can have a balance to the extent that it can be viewed holistically. This is the reason and justification to regard the continuity of 1949 as important. In addition, studying the problem of continuity and discontinuity can bring

the meanings well which have been shadowed by the issues of system and ideology of 1949.