Development of Japanese Sociology and Its Asian Connection

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Introduction

In 2010, University of Tokyo Press published a book *Shakaigaku no Rekishi (History of Sociology)*, written by Prof. Tomoyuki Okui of Asia University in Japan. Advertisements of this book stress that this book is an "orthodox textbook of sociological history" as well as "good introduction to sociology."

Reading this book, we can find that 12 chapters which constitute the whole book refer to Western sociologists including August Comte, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Sigmund Freud, Georg Simmel, Èmile Durkheim, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, Alfred Shutz, Harold Garfinkel, Ervin Goffman, Jügen Habermas, Niklas Luhmann, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Zygmunt Bauman with some Japanese sociologists including Yasuda Takada, Eitarô Suzuki, and Ikutarô Shimizu.

Such a combination, that is, European classical sociologists, Euro-American contemporary sociologists and a few Japanese sociologists, has been common very among orthodox textbooks of history of sociology ever published in Japan (Atoji and Naitô, 1957; Shinmei, 1977=2007)[1]. No names of Asian sociologists except Japanese ones are mentioned in these textbooks.

Some huge books on the history of Japanese sociology have been published by old generations of Japanese sociologists (Kawamura, 1973-5; Akimoto, 1979; Kawai, 2003; Tominaga, 2004), but none of them refer to Asian studies by Japanese sociologists. To simply put, Japanese sociology seems to have had no meaningful and fruitful connection with Asian sociologists or Asian studies.

But is it really so? Did more than 130 years' history of the development of Japanese sociology have no connection with Asian sociologists or Asian

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[1] As far as I know, sociological textbooks in Asia share the same characteristics as the Japanese ones in the sense that they contain a lot of Euro-American sociologists' names and their theories, key concepts, and contributions with a few local sociologists, which will mislead their readers to think that Asian sociologies or sociologists are minor being, not to say meaningless.

studies?

This paper tries to have a brief overview of the history of Japanese sociology in connection with Asia.

1. Emergence of Empirical Sociology and the Discovery of "Japanese-ness"

The beginning of history of Japanese sociology can be traced back to 1880s. Most of sociological inquiries at that time, however, were heavily concentrated on the acceptance, introduction, and digestion of the Western sociological theories, and these theoretical studies were conducted under the name of "*Futsû Shakaigaku* (General Sociology)" or "*Keishiki Shakaigaku* (Formal Sociology)." Empirical sociological studies, on the other hand, started from 1920s, roughly later than the beginning of introduction of sociology by half a century. It is since 1920s onward that field researches in Japan have come to be conducted by Japanese sociologists like Teizô Toda[2] and Eitarô Suzuki[3].

We should remember that their academic activities were not merely empirically oriented but attempted to attain the "localization of sociology." Toda and Suzuki conducted their researches under the supposition that Western concepts and theories could not be easily applied to the reality of Japan (Sonoda, 1993). Nozomu Kawaruma, expert on the history of sociological theories in Japan, summarizes that their attempts "represented their attitudes to construct uniquely Japanese sociology which tries to study everyday life of the people in Japan by excluding speculative discussion on the principles and methods of sociology in advanced countries" (Kawamura, 1975:28). Such attitudes, in my view, contributed to the "discovery" of characteristics of Japanese society which is too common an activity in contemporary Japan. In fact, almost all the unique findings of Japanese society were concentrated from 1920s to 1940s.

Discovery of "uniqueness of Japanese society" and its conceptualization was promoted not only by the skeptical, if not denial, attitudes of the Japanese sociologists to the "universality" of the Western sociological theories or concepts but also by the empirical studies on Asia, which tried to highlight the

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[2] Teizô Toda 戸田貞三(1887-1955) is a famous sociologist of family who taught at the Department of Sociology at Tokyo Imperial University. Dr. Toda used to be a director of Institute of Oriental Culture (now Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia), University of Tokyo, from 1946 to 1947 after the WWII. Since his retirement from the Institute, no sociologists could find the post in the Institute before my appointment in 2009.

[3] Eitarô Suzuki 鈴木栄太郎(1894-1966) is a well-known rural/urban sociologist who taught at the Department of Sociology at Keijô Imperial University and Hokkaido University. Explanation about his works will be explained later in this paper.

"uniqueness of Japanese society" in comparison with other Asian societies.

From late 1930s to early 1940s, many sociologists were mobilized to Asian studies and some of them went to Korea, Taiwan or China to conduct empirical researches of village life and family under the expansion of Japanese militarism and colonialism. Representative examples are Morimitsu Shimizu's[4] *Shina Shakai no Kenkyû (Study on Chinese Society: 1939)* and *Shina Kazoku no Kôzô （Structure of Chinese Family, 1942）*, Yuzuru Okada's[5] *Mikai Shakai niokeru Kazoku (Family in Primitive Society, 1942)* which describes family life and its characteristics of Taiwanese aborigine, and Tatsumi Makino's[6] *Shina Kazoku Kenkyû (Study on Chinese Family, 1944)*. All of these monographs were not written by using original empirical data nor were they discussing Japanese society in comparative perspectives. But they similarly deepened understanding of Japanese society and promoted the development of Japanese sociology.

Eitarô Suzuki and His Korean Study

In 1940, Eitarô Suzuki published *Nihon Nôson Shakaigaku Genri (Principle of Japanese Rural Sociology;* hereafter abbreviated as *Genri*), which became one of the classical works of Japanese sociology. After two years since this publication, Prof. Suzuki went to Korean Peninsula to take up a new post of Department of Sociology in Keijô Imperial University in the spring of 1942.

The reason of Suzuki's acceptance of the appointment to go to Keijô (now the city of Seoul) was not known, but it seems that he went there due to his strong interest in comparative study of Japanese villages and Korean villages as suggested by his own remarks in *Genri* (1940:12) and his own statement that "I

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[4] Morimitsu Shimizu 清水盛光 (1904-1999) is a sociologist who used to serve for *Mantetsu Chosabu* (満鉄調査部 Research Department of Sothern Manchuria Railway Company), Institute of Humanities in Kyoto University, Kwansei Gakuin University, and Komazawa University. His publication includes *Shina Shakai no Kôzô (Structure of Chinese Society*, 1939), *Chugoku Zokusan Seido-kô （Treatises on Clan Property in China*, 1949）, *Kazoku (Family*, 1953), and *Shûdan no Ippan Riron (General Theory of Social Groups*, 1973).

[5] Yuzuru Okada 岡田謙 (1906-1969) is a sociologist and social anthropologist who stayed Taiwan for twelve years and studied Taiwanese aborigine. His publication includes *Kainantô Reizoku no Kenkyû (Studies on Li Tribe in Hainan Island*, 1944). His researches on family contributed to the development of sociology of family.

[6] Tatsumi Makino 牧野巽 (1905-1974) is a sociologist with special interest in China who served for *Tôhô Bunka Gakuin* (東方文化学院 Academy of Oriental Culture), Tokyo Normal College (now Tsukuba University), the University of Tokyo, Osaka University, and Waseda University. His publication includes *Makino Tatsumi Sakuhin-shû (Collected Volumes of Tatsumi Makino's Writings* 7 vol., 1975).

Table 1 Comparative Analysis of Rural Social Groups in Korea and Japan by Eitarô Suzuki

Criteria of Comparison	Characteristics
Administrative Groups	*Shizen-son* (自然村 natural village) in Japan is equivalent to former *dongli* (동리) in late Choson Dynasty which is the lowest administrative unit. Both administrative units are the same in the sense that their "social cohesiveness" is still strong. Social integration at county (*gun* 群 군) level is stronger in Korea.
Worship Groups	*Ujigami* (氏神 patron god) in Japan has a function of national integration while its counterpart in Korea doesn't have such a trait. In Japan *kami*（神 god) represents *ujigami*, symbol of unification of natural village, while god in Korea is familial /ansestral god.
Religious Groups	Most of the Japanese villagers are believer of Buddhism, while Korean counterparts are not. There is no functional equivalence of Japanese *danto shûdan* (檀徒集団 believer's group of Buddhist attached to some temple) in Korea.
Mutual Help Groups	*Gye* (계) in Korea is more varied, public welfare-oriented, and less religious and entertainment oriented than Japanese *kô* (講)
Neighboring Groups	Cumulative integration of social relations is witnessed among small communities in national village in Japan while no such trend can be witnessed in Korea where natural village is roughly equal to neighboring groups.
Economic Groups and Cooperative Organization	*Gye* (계) in Korea is more mutual-help oriented and more rational than Japanese kô (講). *Pumasshi* (품앗이 mutual help among villagers) in Korea is more temporal and short term than *yui* (結) in Japan.
Kinship Groups	Kinship groups in Korea are widely spread and have larger social function than those in Japan. Family size in Korea is larger than that of Japan.
Special Interest Groups	Water rights groups in Japan are important units of local governance while they are not necessary so in Korea.
Self-governing Groups	Moral integration in Korea was established based on traditional village norms (郷約 향약) while not in Japan.
Bureaucratic Groups	Bureaucratic groups in Korea are weaker and less effective than Japanese ones.

Source: Sonoda (1993: 18)

thought Korean villages could offer me good research materials" (Suzuki, 1973: 107). In fact, Suzuki put a research question of "What is the equivalent of Japanese natural village (*shizen-son*)?" at the beginning of the research at Korea and he tried to pay attention to *shakaiteki-tôitsusei* (social integrity), which is a unique concept of Suzuki who was inspired by the discussion of P. Sorokin and E.D. Sanderson in the United States.

During his roughly two year stay in Korea before his move to Hokkaido, Suzuki conducted fieldwork several times and published papers and articles including "Chôsen Nôson Shakai Bekkenki (A Note on the Glance at Korean Rural Society, 1943)", "Chôsen Nôson Shakai Chôsaki (Fieldnotes on Korean Rural Society, 1944), and "Chôsen no Sonraku (Villages in Korea, 1944)."

Among his publications on Korean villages, most outstanding ones are "Chôsen no Nôson Shakai Shûdan ni tsuite (On Social Groups in Korean Rural Society, 1943)" and "Chôsen no *Gye* to *Pumasshi* (On Korean *Gye* and *Pumasshi*, 1958)." The former paper tried to compare ten social groups that Suzuki mentioned in his book *Genri*[7], whose discussion is summarized in Table 1. Suzuki seemed to be satisfied with this paper because he mentioned that "I thought my systematic analysis of Korean villages was almost completed by the publication of this paper" (Suzuki, 1973: 89). As is easily guessed, Suzuki wanted to check the applicability of the concepts developed in Japan to Korean villages and started to conduct field researches to compare Japanese villages and Korean villages.

Of course most of the conclusions of his paper are tentative, and now a lot of doubts and suspicions are there toward the "findings" of Suzuki when a lot of research monographs were already published by native Korean researchers. As is well known, Suzuki gave it up to stick to Korean study after his move to Hokkaido when he tried to construct his original urban sociology and sociology of national society to seek for the essence of "the uniqueness of the Japanese society" and stopped his comparative researches of Asian villages.

But we should not forget that Suzuki's tremendously energetic and original intellectual efforts in Korea were strongly motivated by his project to develop uniquely Japanese social theory and inspired by his strong willingness to compare Japan with other societies in Asia to find the "uniqueness" of Japanese society.

Tadashi Fukutake and His Chinese Study

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[7] To be precise, Suzuki replaced class groups which he mentioned in *Genri* by self-governing groups to illustrate Korean characteristics.

To Tadashi Fukutake[8], China was the place for his sociological speculation. In other words, he was too young to apply his theoretical concepts to Chinese society.

Fukutake started his sociological researches in China just when Suzuki published *Genri* in 1940, and he made his vivid debut as sociologist by publishing a book *Chûgoku Nôson Shakai no Kôzô (The Structure of Rural Society in China,* 1946; hereafter abbreviated as *Kôzô*) which discussed unique characteristics of Chinese villages by using his own five-time fieldwork in East China and the second-hand data of *Hokushi Kankô Shiryô Chôsa (Data Archive of Researches on Customs and Institutions in Northern China).*

When we try to compare Fukutake's works with those of Suzuki, we can find the following characteristics.

First of all, Fukutake's basic concepts, especially those used in the first chapter "Kachû Nôson Shakai no Kôzô (The Structure of Rural Society in East China)"and the composition of chapters in *Kôzô* are similar to that of Suzuki's *Genri*. These facts suggest that Fukutake was strongly inspired by Suzuki's early works on rural sociology and that there was an atmosphere in which many Japanese sociologists try to share the basic knowledge and concepts created by themselves. To put it differently, "localization of sociology" was speedy in progress at that time.

Secondly, Fukutake used a lot of references written by local scholars in China while Suzuki didn't when he wrote his monographs on Korean rural society. These are the reflection not only of their different knowledge of local languages but of the different accumulation of researches on rural society in Korea and China. As is well known, China experienced her "localization of sociology" since 1930s (Sonoda, 1989), which contributed a lot to Fukutake's researches on Chinese rural society.

And thirdly, Suzuki tried to "apply" his concepts he created by his researches on Japanese rural society to Korea, while Fukutake tried to utilize his observations in China to understand Japanese society deeply. In fact, Fukutake published an article "Chûgoku no Nôson to Nihon no Nôson (Chinese Villages and Japanese Villages)" in 1946 in which he intended to characterize Japanese villages through the comparison with Chinese villages (see Table 2). In fact, Akiyoshi Takahashi, a rural sociologist and former student of Fukutake at the University of Tokyo, verifies our discussion by saying that "I still remember that (Fukutake) Sensei sometimes told us that he

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[8] *Tadashi Fukutake* 福武直 (1917-89) is a sociologist who taught all his life in the University of Tokyo. His sociological works include *Nihon Sonraku no Shakai Kôzô (Social Structure of Japanese Village,* 1959) and *Nihon Shakai no Kôzô (The Structure of Japanese Societ*y, 1981). He became first president of Japan-China Sociological Association until his death in 1989.

Table 2 Comparative Analysis of Rural Villages in China and Japan by Tadashi Fukutake

Criteria of Comparison	Characteristics
Family	
Composition of Family	China has more collateral families.
Paternal Power	Japan's paternal power is stronger.
Household	China's family can be easily divided by household.
Inheritance	Eldest son's single inheritance is common in Japan, while equal distribution among sons is common in China.
Clan	
Honke-Bunke (Main/Branch) Relations	Unequal in Japan, while equal division of household in China.
Head of the Clan	Head of honke (本家 main family) will be in charge of the management of the clan while the oldest among the oldest generation will be in charge of clan management in China.
Property of the Clan	There is no property of the clan in Japan (Most of the property belong to main family. China has many clan properties.
Principle of Formation	There is a hierarchical order among families in the clan but there is only hierarchical order among generations in China.
Village	
Village Property	Many village properties in Japan, only a few in China.
Boundary of Villages	Clear in Japan where villagers' identity toward community is strong, while vague in China where villager's identity toward family is strong.
Village Shrine	Clan's god can be a community's god in Japan, while clan's god and community's god are totally different in China.
Farming	Very small-scale farming in both countries, but Chinese farming is less productive per land.
Owner-tenant Relationship	Contract base in China where owner-tenant relation is evidently class relations. Japan's owner-tenant relation shows paternalistic characteristics.
Self-governance	Fewer cooperative relations in China. Self-governance in China is weak, too.

Source: Sonoda (1993:21)

could understand Japanese villages deeply through the comparison with Chinese villages and that he was surprised to see villages in Tohoku district are very different from those in his native villages as well as Chinese villages" (Takahashi, 1990:15).

In spite of his strong interest in Chinese villages, Fukutake changed his academic interest to see the democratization of Japanese villages, giving it up to study Chinese villages after WWII. Fukutake (1976: 108) himself regretted it when he reflected his 40-year study of sociology, which was also regrettable for the further development of Japanese sociology. Historical environments including lack of formal diplomatic relations between China and Japan under Cold-war Regime and the suppression of sociology in Socialist China from 1953 to 1979 also made it difficult for Fukutake to continue his Chinese study.

To sum up, both Suzuki and Fukutake, at the time of their practice of "localization of sociology" through which they tried to relativize Western concepts and theories, observed Japanese rural society from Asian perspective and promoted comparative rural sociology of Asian villages. Unfortunately, both of them had no opportunity to conduct fieldwork out of Japan. In other words, they concentrated their academic interest only in Japanese society after the WWII, and no academic enterprises were conducted to promote comparative sociology of Asian societies by them.

2. Development of Asian Studies and Widening Discrepancy between "Japan" and "other Asia" Since WWII

Some leading sociologists in Asia were educated in Japan before the WWII.

Lee Man-gap 이만갑(1926-2010), a former professor at the Department of Sociology at Seoul National University and the first generation of Korean Sociology after WWII, for example, graduated from Department of Sociology at Tokyo Imperial University in 1944. Chen Shaoxin 陳紹馨 (1906-1966), again one of the founding sociologists in Taiwan and a former professor of Sociology at National Taiwan University, graduated from Department of Sociology at Tohoku Imperial University in 1932 and obtained his Ph.D. from Kansai University[9].

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[9] Lee had a close contact with his colleagues in Japan and sometimes contributed articles to Japanese sociological journals (Lee, 1962), while Chen didn't. Such a difference can partially attributed to their different position in their local sociological communities. Lee kept his outstanding position as a leading sociologist in Korea who contributed a lot to the development of Korean sociology and his personal contact with Japanese sociologists

According to Sun Benwen（孫本文）'s *Dangdai Zhongguo Shehuixue (*当代中国社会学 *Contemporary Chinese Sociology*, 1948), among 155 professional sociologists working for academic institutions in mainland China in 1947, eight were educated in Japan[10] including Kang Baozhong 康保忠, one of the founders of Chinese sociology.

These personal connections, however, were almost lost after the WWII. Korean and Taiwanese sociology, which emerged and took their unique development path, received heavy influence from US, and most of the professional sociologists have been educated and obtained Ph.D. degree in graduate schools of sociology in the US. Chinese sociology, on the other hand, had been restricted due to her characteristics as "bourgeois science" from 1953 to 1979.

In spite of that, Asian studies in Japan after WWII, which try to capture "a variety of Asia" from ideographic approaches, developed rapidly. Institute of Developing Economies, Center for Southeast Asian Studies in Kyoto University, and Institute of Oriental Culture in the University of Tokyo became the Mecca of Asian studies and Japan Association for Asian Studies played a vital role in promoting Asian studies in Japan.

Unfortunately, however, the role played by sociologists in Asian studies was marginal and limited. University graduates of department of sociology found it very difficult to get a position in Institute of Developing Economies where political economy was rather respected. Institute of Oriental Culture in the University of Tokyo hadn't invited sociologists as their faculty member for more than half a century since the retirement of Teizô Toda. Japanese name of Japan Association of Asian Studies is *Ajia Seikei Gakkai*, literally Association for Political Economy on Asia, excluding the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, which suggests that sociology and anthropology were regarded as minor discipline in the area of Asian studies.

Japanese sociology after WWII, on the other hand, did not pay serious attention to Asia for a long time. To take graduates of Department of Sociology at the University of Tokyo as an example, only few of them are regarded as

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helped his academic activities, while Chen's position in Taiwanese sociology was a bit marginal in spite of his great contribution to the establishment of Department of Sociology at National Taiwan University in collaboration with his colleagues including Long Guanhai (龍冠海) and Yang Maochun (楊懋春). Chen' marginal position can be attributed his being *benshengren* (native Taiwanese), strong interest in cultural history of Taiwan, and his early death.

[10] Of course those from the US were dominant among Chinese sociologists in 1940s. According to Sun Benwen's book, again, 73 out of 155 professional sociologists in 1947 had experience to be educated in the United States.

experts of Asian studies including Hirokazu Yamaguchi 山口博一(expert on India), Hiroshi Komai 駒井洋(expert on Thailand), Mitsuyuki Kagami 加々美光行 and Masahiro Hishida 菱田雅晴(expert on China). Only Komai among them could get a post as sociologist in the Department of Sociology while the rest could find a post as academic researcher in Asian-study-oriented Institutes, which highlights "marginal position" of Asian studies in Japanese sociology after WWII.

Why such separation between sociology and Asian studies happened? Why Japanese sociologists lost their interest in Asian societies unlike their great seniors like Suzuki and Fukutake? I guess there are following five reasons.

First of all, many Japanese sociologists regarded sociological Asian studies before WWII as "by-products" of Japanese militarism and colonialism and they tried to escape from such historical legacy. One China expert confesses that "I thought researches in rural villages in China had been conducted under the protection by Japanese Imperial Army, and I shared the sentiment of leftists at that time that studying such imperialist rural researches is meaningless or even criminal" (Kobayashi, 1990:3). It is, therefore, quite natural that Japanese sociologists, most of whom had sympathy toward socialism and leftist mentality at that time, had critical eyes on Asian studies before WWII.

Secondly, it was very difficult for Japanese sociologists to conduct sociological field researches in Asia where anti-Japanese feeling was prevailing and it was difficult to work with local sociologists due to premature of "localization of sociology." In order to reduce cost of social research conducting out of Japan, it is necessary to find good research partners from local society, but it was quite difficult to find such partners because they were more interested in "accepting and digesting" Western, especially American, sociological theories just like post-war Japan.

Thirdly, most of Japanese sociologist hesitated to study "minor" society for their career as sociologist. Ken'ichi Tominaga (1988: 1-5) mentions that most of sociological studies in non-Western societies are apt to be categorized as "area study" which is regarded something different from "ordinal" social science under the intellectual dominance by the West, but the same phenomena could be witnessed all over Asia.

Fourthly, "modernization" and "social change" in Japan was so rapid and drastic that most of Japanese sociologists' interests were naturally focused on domestic affairs. In many Asian countries, local sociologists are apt to focus on their local society as their research target not only because of their "intellectual nationalism" but also their strong commitment to the local society which is experiencing drastic change with a lot of social problems.

Finally, and most importantly, most of Japanese sociologists at that time

regarded "Asia" as something different from Japan. For the generation of Suzuki and Fukutake, all the Asian societies were less developed with a lot of population in rural society.　Therefore it was natural for them to pay attention to Japanese as well as Asian villages to see something "special" which cannot be fully explained by Western sociology.

But their junior generations of Japanese sociology shifted their interest from rural villages to urban or national society as Japanese economy developed. Level of economic development between Japan and the rest of Asia from 1950s to 1970s prevented Japanese sociologists from having interest in other parts of Asia which was still dominated by the principle of rural society, and in this aspect, sociology showed weaker interest in Asian societies than other discipline like anthropology and political economy in Japan. Therefore, Japanese sociology didn't have a close connection with Asian studies for more than three decades.

3. The Rise of Asia and Changing Characteristics of Japanese Sociology

Since early 1980s, however, Japanese sociologists have come to pay more attention to Asia. A lot of research monographs on Asia have come to be published by Japanese sociologists who are interested in "unchanging Asia" as well as "changing Asia" (see Table 3).　In other words, economic development of Asian countries has come to stimulate academic interests of Japanese sociologists who used to presuppose the contrast "between advanced Japan and non-advanced rest of Asia," though a lot of sociological monographs were written by those who were recognized as experts of area study rather as sociologists.

Since 1990s onward, especially since the rise of China in late 1990s, "convergence" of sociology and Asian studies has been accelerating. More and more international students from Asia have come to Japan and study sociology and pick up their mother country as a target of their research. Increase of international marriage between Asian and Japanese has necessitated deep understanding of Asian families from sociological perspectives (Ishihara, 2005). Increase of foreign direct investment from Japan to Asia has become a trigger for Japanese social scientists as well as businessmen to understand local people's values and behaviors in Asia (Imada and Sonoda, 1995).

Local communities in Japan have come to accept more and more foreign residents, most of who are from Asian countries. Accordingly, more and more urban sociologists are paying attention to multiculturalism, and younger generations of Japanese sociology are energetically doing researches on

community studies to attain the ideal of multiculturalism.

Table 3 Sociological Research Monographs on Asia: 1985-1992

Authors	Year of Publication	Covering Area	Name of Publications
Ishida, Hiroshi 石田浩	1985	Taiwan	*Socio-economic Structure of Taiwanese Han Villages*
Koyano, Shogo 小谷野正伍	1987	Thailand, Indonesia	*Study on Urbanization in Southeast Asia*
Kitahara, Atsushi 北原淳	1987	Thailand	*Structure and Change of Thai Village*
Niitsu Ko'ichi 新津晃一	1989	Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Turkey	*Slums in Contemporary Asia*
Kuchiwa Masuo 口羽益生	1990	Thailand	*Traditional Structure and Its Change of Don Daeng Village*
Ichikawa Shin'ai 市川信愛	1991	Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, and others	*Dynamic Analysis of Contemporary Asian Overseas Chinese*
Ishida, Hiroshi 石田浩	1991	China	*History and Economy of Chinese Village*
Kani, Hiroaki 可児弘明	1991	Hong Kong	*Studies and Hong Kong and Its Problems*
Sasaki, Mamoru 佐々木衛	1992	China	*Society and Folk Cultuer of Modern China*

Source Sonoda (1993:24)

Introduction of large scale competitive research-educational grants called 21st Century COE (abbreviation of Center Of Excellence) Program and Global COE Program since 2002 pushed Japanese sociologists, especially those working for the department of sociology in Tohoku University, Kwansei Gakuin University and Kyoto University, to see more "changing Asia." Leaders of COE program on sociology, who are in mid-50s in the prime time of life, are mobilizing their junior sociologists to their comparative studies of Asia.

Emiko Ochiai 落合恵美子, leader of Global Center of Excellence for Reconstruction of the Intimate and Public Sphere in 21st Century Asia at Kyoto University, is claiming the necessity to construct a common understanding

throughout Asia[11], and Yoshimichi Sato 佐藤嘉倫, leader of Center for the Study of Social Stratification and Inequality at Tohoku University, established "East Asia Research Division" in his research groups from the second round of COE program[12]. Moreover, they themselves have come to publish several books and articles on comparative studies of Asia in terms of family formation and social stratification/mobility (Ochiai, et. at., 2007; Sato and Arita, 2004)[13].

Some associations focusing on Asian studies were established in Japan since 1980s. Japan-China Sociological Society (日中社会学会)[14] was established in 1982 and now she has more than one hundred members. Japan University of Social Welfare established Association for Asian Social Welfare Studies (アジア社会福祉学会) in 1997. East Asian Social Policy Studies Network[15] has been acting energetically since her establishment in 2006.

More and more Japanese sociologists have come to take part in and present papers at other Asia-wide associations or networks, including Asia Rural Sociology Association (established in 1992), The Asian Association of Social Psychology (established in 1995), Asia Pacific Sociological Association (established in 1996), East Asian Sociologists Conference (started from 2003), and Asian Social Research Association (established in 2010).

Japan Sociological Association, the biggest society of Japanese sociologists, has more foreign-born, especially Asian, members (see Figure 1) and she has come to have more presentations on Asian affairs recently (see Figure 2), which is an evidence that Japanese sociology has been changing her characteristics and has more contact and connections with "other Asia." In other words, "Asia" has come to be "significant others" to Japanese sociologists in this new millennium.

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[11] For more information, see the following URL.
https://www.gcoe-intimacy.jp/images/library/File/GCOEProposalEnglishFinal20080630.pdf
[12] For more information, see the following URL.
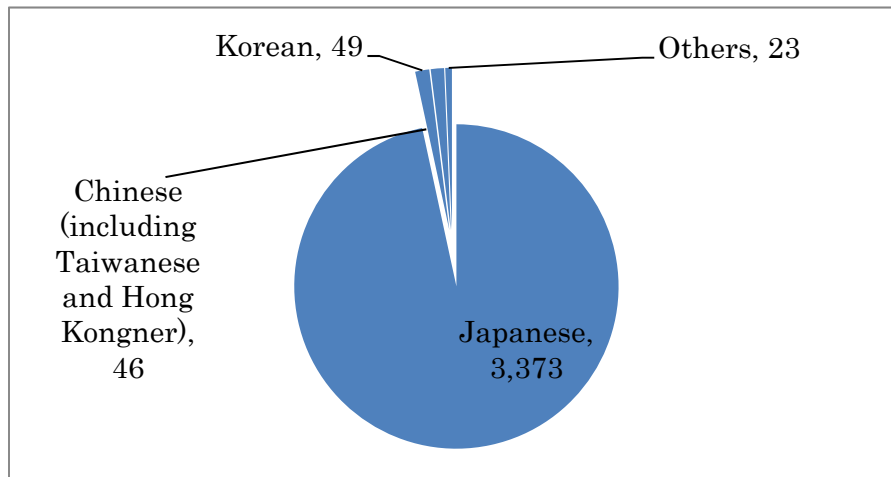http://www.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/gcoewiki/en/wiki.cgi?page=Outline+of+the+CSSI
[13] Except Ochiai and Sato, some active sociologists in Japan who are in mid-50s show very strong interest in Asian affairs. Shogo Takegawa 武川正吾, professor of social welfare in the University of Tokyo is energetically conducting comparative research on "Asian social welfare regime" and Shunya Yoshimi 吉見俊哉, professor of cultural studies in the University of Tokyo, launched a new English program called ITASIA (Information, Technology, and Society in Asia) Course in Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies when he was a dean of the graduate school. Their strong interest in Asian societies is the reflection of Japanese sociologists' interest in "emerging and changing" Asia from sociological perspectives.
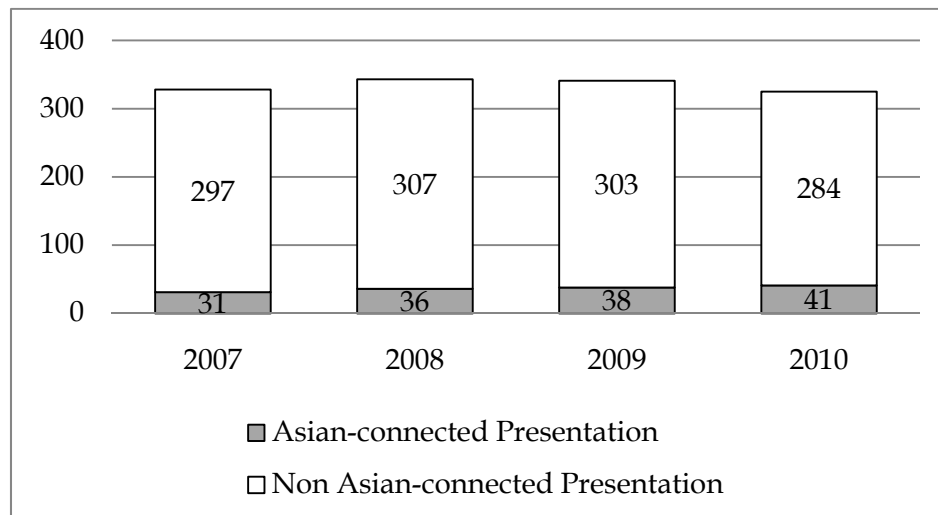[14] For more information, see http://www.japan-china-sociology.org/
[15] For more information, see http://web.mac.com/eastasia2006/eastasia/Home.html

Figure 1 Ethnic Composition of Members of JSA: 2006

Korean, 49

Others, 23

Chinese (including Taiwanese and Hong Kongner), 46

Japanese, 3,373

Source) *Member List of the Japanese Sociological Association*, May, 2006.

Figure 2 Contents of Presentation at Annual Meeting of JSA: 2007-2010

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Non Asian-connected Presentation	297	307	303	284
Asian-connected Presentation	31	36	38	41

■ Asian-connected Presentation
□ Non Asian-connected Presentation

Source) http://www.gakkai.ne.jp/jss/

Discussion

In spite of "converging trends" of Asian studies and sociology in recent years, Japanese sociological textbooks are still introducing Western classical as well as contemporary sociologists and a few Japanese sociologists as necessary and indispensable information for the beginners of sociology as I pointed out in the beginning of this paper. It's easy to criticize such "cultural lag" as Japanese sociologists' old-fashioned mindset, but I dare say that we're still need to continue our efforts to change them in a proper way.

First of all, we need to push "localization of sociology" one step ahead to create new concepts or theoretical frameworks through which we could understand our local society better and to fuller extent. As long as we use "borrowed" concepts from the Western sociology without modification, or, to put it precise, without claiming to modify them, we'll keep on taking orthodox sociological textbooks which tell little, if not nothing, about Asian sociology as granted.

The point here is whether we could create such "localized concepts or theoretical frameworks" as a breakthrough of new sociological investigation. If we created "too much localized concept" without any connection to other parts of the globe, our intellectual efforts will be categorized as those of "area study" which has little connection with sociology in general. In order to escape from such a pitfall, in my eyes, comparative sociological analysis of Asian societies is of strategically important.

In connection with this, Asian sociologists should promote to create "platform for sociological investigation" and build-up "sociological commons" to foster sociological imagination. Èmile Durkheim "discovered" integrative function of religion by comparing Catholics and Protestants in Europe. Max Weber tired to find out sociological meanings of social life by comparing world religion. Long-lasting and sincere discussion among Asian sociologists based on the common data archive, including AsiaBarometer (2003-08), East Asia Value Survey (2002-05), The Asia & Pacific Value Survey (2005-08), East Asian Social Survey (2003-), Asian Barometer Survey (2001-03, 2005-08), will be a foundation for the further development of Asian sociology with its own unique concepts and theoretical frameworks. I'm sure that Japanese and other Asian sociologists have still more to do.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance of common platform to educate and cultivate young promising Asian sociologists. Asian sociologists in their 50s and 40s now are heavily influenced by US dominance, and they are apt to look at their local societies through Western glasses[16].

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[16] Collectivism-individualism dichotomy is a typical example of this "Western glasses."

"Comparison between the West and their native country" was and still is very common psychological framework for most of the Asian sociologists. Few serious intellectual efforts are made to compare Asian societies in a pioneering way. Comparing Malaysia and China, for example, on their perceptions on nepotism will be a challenging task due to their striking difference in terms of the relationship between informants' academic background and their perceptions on nepotism (Sonoda, 2006).

Erasmus Plan in EU is now fostering EU citizen's consciousness as people in EU and promoting EU-wide academic activities and exchanges. Asia, especially East Asia, is lacking in such educational-scholarly framework through which we could find our "uniqueness" in comparison with our neighboring societies.

I strongly believe that we need Asian version of Erasmus Plan for the further development of Japanese sociology which received a tremendous influence of the West. I sincerely hope that our activity of JSPS Asia-Africa Science Platform Program "Frontier of Comparative Studies of Asian Societies" will be, though its scale and influence is still limited, a platform to think unique contribution to sociology by Asian sociologists collectively.

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