

Challenges of “Social History” in Japan: New Perspectives in History*

Mayuho HASEGAWA

In Japan, a tendency called “Social History” appeared at the end of the 1970s, bringing about many discussions concerning historical perspective. However, now thirty years have already passed since “Social History” first appeared, and we have experienced diverse upheavals in the world. For example, the end of the Soviet Union, ethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia and other countries, the tragedy of September 11th, increasing immigration and movement of refugees, rapid diffusion of the Internet, and democratic revolutions or the disorder of warfare in Arabian countries. Therefore, the time of “Social History” being regarded as a *new* movement in Japan seems to be the distant past.

However, undeniably, the “Social History” movement marked a turning point in the paradigm of understanding and the perception of the past, not only in Japan but also throughout the world. By thinking about that time, I wonder if we are able to obtain clues and useful hints for carefully reconsidering our present in transition and for stimulating our discussion about European History (*Seiyoushi-gaku*) between East Asia and Japan.

Hence, in this Forum, first, I would like to begin by talking about my encounter with this movement. Then, I will present some key historians and their typical thoughts. Finally, I would like to present some characteristics common to them and some points that have served to change historical perspective.

1. My encounter with “Social History” at the end of the 1970s

At the end of the 1970s, I was a student at Nagoya University in the Faculty of Literature, and I was just going on to the graduate course in history. At that time, I was intent on learning contemporary French history, but then I read some newly published historical works. One of them was *Muen, Kugai, Raku* (Heibon-sha, 1978),¹ written by Yoshihiko Amino (1928–2004), edited by *Heibon-sha*. The word *Muen* means having *nothing of bond*, which is derived from Buddhist terms. *Kugai* means areas ostracized from official worlds. *Raku* means a free space exempted from all guilds and taxes, and cut off from any privileged merchants. In this book, Amino takes

up diverse *asile* still existing in medieval Japan. *Asile* is a free and peaceful place of refuge or a hidden safe space that is reserved for small and poor people, permitting them to be free from all regulations and painful bondage in secular societies.

The other books are *Man Playing the Flute of Hamelin* (Heibon-sha, 1978) and *Social History of Keiri* (Chuou-Korean-Sha, 1978),²⁾ both written by Kinya Abe (1935–2008). *Man Playing the Flute of Hamelin* is about a famous old German legend: *Pied Piper of Hamelin*. The pied piper took a village's children to a distant, unknown place. In his book, Abe carefully investigated the origin and transfiguration of this famous legend going back to the 13th century with minute proofs. His other book discusses the history of *Keiri*, namely, hangmen or executioners who, as their duty in German medieval society, had to decapitate criminals. Abe was always concerned about people living on the margins or borders, wandering and traveling between the inner and outer centered societies; in other words, people regarded as outsiders or boundary men.

Amino's specialty is Japanese history and Abe's is German, but they both researched medieval history. They respected positivism, and their works demonstrated this. However, these titles, subjects, and writing styles seemed very different from the academic works formerly published. Actually, to me, their books were very interesting, charming, and understandable. These books impressed me deeply, although I do not know whether I accurately understood their attempts.

In addition, I remember that, not so long after the publication of these books, I read an article titled "Tripartite Talks: Thinking about 'Social History.'" These were three-men talks about "Social History" in a special number of *SHISO* (No. 663, Sep. 1979), a monthly journal edited by Iwanami-Shoten. The three men in it were all active historians, well known as influential researchers of modern French history in Japan: Hiroyuki Ninomiya (1932–2006), professor of the Tokyo Foreign Language University; Michio Shibata (1926–2012), professor of Tokyo University; and Tadami Chizuka (1933–2011), professor of Hokkaido University. At the time, they were near to or more than fifty years old, actively at work, and the foremost experts in French history in Japan. In addition, as historians in the second generation after World War II, they all had begun to study modern French history under Kouhachirou Takahashi (1912–82) and Hisao Otsuka (1907–96). "Tripartite Talks" was begun by Shibata, the oldest, and they concerned the contemporary, increasing tendency toward "Social History" in Japan and France. However, when I read *SHISO*, toward the end it became obvious that they were planned by Ninomiya in summer 1979, and in fact, Ninomiya was at the center of "Tripartite Talks."

What surprised me about "Tripartite Talks" was that these historians were greatly impressed by Abe and Amino's works. They all seemed to recognize the tendency toward "Social History" as an inevitable stream. Amino was a researcher of Japanese medieval history, professor of Nagoya University, located between Tokyo and Kyoto. Abe was a historian of medieval German,

professor of Hitotsubashi University at Kunitachi, far from the 23 Tokyo wards. Their historical writings shook many historians and young students, and they initiated a strong movement toward the rethinking of historical perspective. At that time, they were standing at the center of the increasing “Social History” tendency in Japan.

Actually, Abe was not a follower of the Takahashi and Otsuka school. He had never written any theory book, nor had he previously discussed manners of history. However, Abe’s book was all completely original and deserved Shibata and Ninomiya’s attention, not only because he wrote European history from an original viewpoint but also because he had consciously presented new views of Europe by describing “other” faces of the European society.

In “Tripartite Talks,” French historians reflected upon their understanding or knowledge of what “Social History” was, while showing European ways of having managed any perspective called “Social History.” As Shibata indicated, attempts called “Social History” had existed since before the 1950s in France, whether it was Jean Jaurès’s or Albert Mathiez’s.³⁾ Actually, in “Tripartite Talks,” what to think about the term “Social History” or what to imagine seemed to depend on the talker’s experience.

As I read “Tripartite Talks,” however, it was very clear that Ninomiya would have liked to present it positively, as a significant perspective, while also showing the trend flourished through *École des Annales*.⁴⁾ At that time, I did not adequately understand the importance of this perspective. Another two historians seemed not to agree completely with Ninomiya’s thinking, but neither did they consistently object to it. Ninomiya’s way of speaking was very moderate and gentlemanlike, but his argument was clear, understandable, and comprehensive. Ninomiya was very far from pedantic. Shibata and Chizuka seemed to respect him, and they listened to his talks as attentively as they could, although they had repeatedly cast some doubt toward Ninomiya from the viewpoint of economic or political history, referring to historiographies of the French Revolution or *Démographie historique* ⁵⁾ in France.

In his talk, Ninomiya used many words that had never been historical subjects in the mainstream, such as sexuality / *sexualité*, body / *corps*, reproduction / *procréation*, food / *nourriture*, cooking / *cuisine*, clothes / *vêtement*, house / *maison*, illness / *maladie*, criminal / *criminel*, death / *mort*, and mentality / *mentalité*. These were really important words, indispensable to everybody’s lives and closely related to daily human practice and behavior, or body and feeling. Ninomiya used the term *sociabilité* to reconsider ties / bonds between people. He would have liked to rethink human societies and state powers, while getting down to the *human heart* and *body* and radically reexamining all relations, all societies, and all powers from primitive, everyday points to the State’s power.

2. Three key historians and their works

In the 1970s, many historians were speaking about the new perspectives and methods, but Amino, Abe, and Ninomiya stood out from the others. No doubt they enormously impacted our generation. In this section, for understanding their challenges, I would like to provide short profiles of them and their works.

(1) Yoshihiko Amino

In the “Tripartite Talks,” Shibata referred to Amino’s book, as I have already mentioned. Amino’s research area is certainly limited in Japanese history, but I wonder if his book recalled a strong impression not only to Shibata but also to Ninomiya and Chizuka, because they had known each other and Amino since their graduate university days. In the 1950s, Amino had been an active representative of the General Committee for university students in Japan. Then, almost all the historians and students in Japan were Marxist sympathizers. During the struggle against the conclusion of the *U.S.–Japan Security Treaty* in 1950, Amino famously faced a water truck belonging to the riot police in front of the Imperial Palace Plaza. Actually, I heard about this episode from Ninomiya in the later 1980s, after coming to know him. Ninomiya, awakened to history from his high school days, must have known and respected Amino although he was younger than Amino by 6 years.

As for Shibata, he was also an active opponent of the same treaty, and he was even arrested during the anti-treaty demonstration in 1960, while he had been working as a research assistant for Tokyo University. His arrest was reported in the newspapers on the following day. Actually, when I was a graduate student, I repeatedly heard of this from Kazuhiko Kondo, an associate professor at Nagoya University, who is a historian of the British Kingdom’s modern history. Anyway, Shibata was in almost the same generation as Amino. In the 1950s, Shibata, Ninomiya, and Chizuka were all pupils of Takahashi and Otsuka at Tokyo University. They began to study modern French history under Takahashi soon after World War II.

Now, turning our attention back to Amino, he dropped out of the political front movement soon after 1960, presumably because of the deaths of many comrades under his direction. Amino had directed them under a communist program aiming at violent revolution, using a petrol bomb or maneuvering in a mountain village like *v narod*. Amino deeply blamed himself and believed that in response to their deaths, he had to pour all his energy into serious historical research. He came to devote himself solely to learning the medieval history of Japan, especially after obtaining a position at Nagoya University. After 1960, he was absorbed in studying manor account books of medieval temples. After almost 20 years’ of study, in 1978, he achieved a thick, excellent book

concerning medieval manors.⁶⁾ This was the year before *Muen*, *Kugai*, *Raku* appeared.

The important thing here is that Amino found a deep fact during his study of manor documents of the medieval temples. Needless to say, the manor system was based on the *Institution Ritsuryo* 율령제도 deriving from China's *Sui* or *Tang* dynasty. Many Japanese historians had never doubted the assumption that under this institution, people had all lived in the same place, all cultivated mainly rice, and all eaten it as a principal food, and that rice became the principal food of the Japanese from the *Jomon* period. However, Amino discovered people living in a different way even in the same medieval society. One day, by chance, Amino encountered diverse letters in a different style of writing behind papers of *fusuma*: a thickly papered sliding door for partitioning rooms in a Japanese medieval house. On the other side, there existed many traces different from what had ever been previously seen. If Amino had seen only the surface of this institution's account books, he would not have been able to discover such a world. After that, Amino began to seriously search for exterior spaces or underside areas concealed behind a surface of official documents. He was convinced that there had been diverse people not subsumed in the national institutions established in Japan's Middle Ages. He had begun to radically rethink Japan's medieval framework.

Amino searched for people living around seas or mountains in cooperation with folklorists such as Tsuneichi Miyamoto (1907–81). His concerns rapidly expanded to the history of people wandering or not needing rice, such as craftsmen, blacksmiths, entertainers, and prostitutes, in other words, people who were outsiders. They were living near the borders, not necessarily eating rice or settling in one place. Amino eventually reconsidered views that regarded Japan as one state. Furthermore, he called Japan by another word, namely *archipelago*, which comprises countless and various small islands related to each other through seafaring commerce. People living with seas even marry beyond institutional frames. Amino believed that people had various exchanges beyond distance and national boundaries—even far from each other, through diverse seas, among loose and large cultural spheres, among Okinawa, Taiwan, Korea, China, Russia, Shikkalin, and so on.

His book *Muen*, *Kugai*, *Raku* discussing *asile* is one of his many works. What is especially interesting in this book is that Amino wrote about human liberty using concepts like *Genshi no Jiyu* (Liberty of ancient times) and *Mu-shoyu* 무소유 (no possession / being perfectly free from all possessions). These are derived from the idea that human beings had liberty in primitive, ancient times and that they were freer from others' control than in our time because of having nothing. Certainly, this only seems as an idealistic dream to us. Amino borrowed such ideas from Marx, but he did not faithfully repeat Marx's original idea. Amino would have liked to extract from it a human invariable and universal liberty, to conceive of it as a creative concept and to

present it to us as a hope sent from medieval society. Anyway, what we can say now about his attempts is that this liberty differs from a belief or assumption that people can become happier through economic growth. Neither was he in favor of urging oppressed people to take up arms and fight against state powers at the risk of their lives.

Most important, however, the *asile* concept relates deeply to the consideration of the Tennou system. As a national institution, Tennou was closely connected with the *lowest people* in medieval society. Tennou protected and sacralized them at every opportunity, maybe even into the present. For example, when Shouwa Tennou (Hirohito) died, particular people called *YASE-NO-DOUJI*^{f)} appeared to carry his body at his funeral. They were regarded as *sen-min* 천민 (*humble people*) and sacralized by Tennou's paternalism in the Middle Ages. But only in medieval times? Actually, they came to be protected again after 1928. As Amino thought, Tennou and *humble people*, that is, supremacy and the lowest of the humble, are mutually linked in the Middle Ages, and this structure comes to be reinvented in the process of making the nation state after the Meiji Restoration. Amino would have liked to critically understand the origin of this structure to overcome these strange fetters, although I do not know whether Amino could perfectly understand and really overcome them. Anyway, this attempt is very similar to Marc Bloch's in *Les Rois Thaumaturges* (1924), translated as *The Royal Touch: Monarchy and Miracles in France and England* (1990).

Anyway, at the end of the 1970s, Amino was no longer an activist running toward violent revolution at the direction of Communist International as he had been in the 1950s. He was transformed into a historian groping toward a radical cultural revolution in historical recognition. He was consistently critical of the view that Japan had been a homogeneous nation from ancient times. I think that Amino remained in his position till his death. I cannot follow in his footsteps, because he is too great. But from his books, I hear his voice mourning for the dead.

(2) Kinya Abe

Kinya Abe was a professor at Hitotsubashi University, in the faculty of Social Sciences. There were well known, diverse, and charming researchers in this faculty, very different from researchers educated in the Takahashi and Otsuka school, for example, Tsutomu Rachi (1930–85) and Kastuhiko Tanaka (1934–). Rachi was also referred to by Shibata in the “Tripartite Talks.” He was a historian of modern German history and wrote a book titled *World History from Another Side of the River* (MIRAI-SHA, 1978).⁸⁾ Rachi's research concerned the 1848 revolution, and lower working people, including women. As is evident from the expression “another side of the river,” Rachi would have liked to rewrite modern German history by looking through the eyes of the lower people, vagabonds, drifters, and those not integrated into organized labor movements or

any city's regulations. He seemed to be a little close to the stance of the *New Left*, such as historians taking part in the *History of Social Movement*.⁹⁾ But Rachi did not become directly involved with them. Regretfully, I have never seen him, because in 1985, he died of cancer, too young, at the age of 55.

As for Tanaka, I have seen him and conversed with him only once in the later 1980s. He is a linguist studying Mongol, and he wrote *Languages and States* (IWANAMI, 1981). He was a stubborn opponent of English-centrism as a universal language. He seemed unconventional to me, different from any historians graduating from Tokyo University, although I cannot well explain how he was. If such an expression is possible, he seemed an eccentric lone wolf. However, Abe gave me a much stronger impression. Abe seemed, so to speak, like a solitary monk practicing asceticism. Anyway, professors at Hitotsubashi University seemed quite independent and mysterious.

To return to Abe, in his teenage years, he had actually been in a monastery somewhere in the Tohoku district. According to his later writings, his family was burned out in an air raid on Tokyo in 1945, and they lost their house, so he was taken to live in the monastery home. He stayed there, apart from his parents, for several years. He wrote that one night when he awakened at midnight and was going to the toilet in the courtyard, he unexpectedly encountered a monk taking a pistol in his hand in the darkness. He was terribly frightened and threatened. Maybe the monk thought he was a burglar or robber slipping into the monastery, but it was a great shock to him, and this scene was forever deeply engraved in his mind.

After entering Hitotsubashi University, he chose Professor Senroku Uehara (1899–1975) as his adviser, historian of medieval Europe, having studied in Vienna. Just then, Uehara had raised some arguments toward rethinking European history. In contrast, Uehara also organized the conference of National Education of Japanese teachers association and founded a society for rethinking the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty in 1959.

We have some anecdotes about the relationship between Abe and Uehara. Actually, Abe left an autobiographical book, titled *Reading History in Himself* (Chikuma, 1989).¹⁰⁾ For Abe, writing history was closely related to his life and his past. Uehara was just on the verge of retirement, but Abe learned something from him. I heard the following story from Abe himself : Abe was a final-year student, preparing for his graduate thesis. One day, he went to Professor Uehara's home to consult about his thesis title. As a student, Abe was choosing a subject, something in Roman Empire history, without thinking it over carefully. When Abe arrived at Uehara's mansion, Professor Uehara was so busy talking with visitors that he told Abe to wait beside him. Abe did not understand what they were discussing. After this long meeting, Uehara said shortly, "Whatever kind of subject you chose, you have to find something that you think you can not live since not studying

it.” That’s all. On his way home, the student Abe repeatedly thought about it. “But what is *the subject that I can not live since not studying it?*” He tried to think all night, sitting on a bench in the park near his home, but he couldn’t find an answer. Abe told me in the latter half of the 1980s, shyly smiling as if it were a joke, “I finally concluded that night, there is nothing more important to me than something to eat. I have to find that just for surviving tomorrow.” Of course in the 1950s, most people in Japan suffered from poverty and managed just to survive in destitution. For the student Abe, historical studying was still far from his life.

However, thanks to Uehara’s enigmatic words, after that time, he went on a *trip* to look for *the subject that he can not live since not studying it*. It was to be a means to discover his original question, and a subject to dig out by devoting all his energies to his life’s work. It was not easy for him to find any answer. After 15 years passed, however, a chance arose. He was able to stay in Germany, as a visiting professor, for a long enough time. This was after he had obtained a post as an associate professor of Otaru Shouka University in Hokkaido. In Germany, he encountered diverse Europeans and various documents that were very different from contemporary figures and images in Japan. He devoted himself solely to studying the archives all day. He must have been very brilliant as a foreigner in Germany. He studied hard and finally completed a brilliant doctoral thesis in German about *Deutscher Orden*, developed after the end of the 12th century. But that was not all. During his stay in Germany, he discovered many original questions, comparing his own perceptions to those of others in the past. He seriously reconsidered the differences in human relations between Japan and Germany. An encounter with Germany’s real world provided him the opportunity to reflect on the European framework. He discovered that people in Europe actually had two faces, that is, in one way, they were very accommodating, charitable, and philanthropic, but in another, they were also crudely discriminating. Why?

To Abe, it seemed to be an extremely essential question. In Japan, people had believed that European countries were the most developed and civilized. So we Japanese tried to introduce brilliant technologies and thoughts from Europe into Japan. Now, on the material side, the Japanese were getting closer to Europe, but how about on the mind’s side? Japanese intellectuals, Marxist or Christian, still believed that “we Japanese should also be like the brilliant Europeans in spirit.” They wanted to become like Europeans, and they believed that by imitating Europeans, our society could become more democratic and happy. But is that true? Becoming European? Isn’t that to become discriminatory? Isn’t there a great gulf between the principle (words) and the practice (deeds)? Would they really like to become European, head over heels, in their real minds? Abe came to think that if many intellectuals in Japan continued to see only one side of Europe, without seriously digging into the other side, nobody could understand European societies in depth. If we seriously worry about our future, we have to know the Europeans’ past and present to be on an

equal footing with them. So that is how Abe finally became caught up in *the subject that he thought he could not live since not studying it*.

First, Abe began to study the people discriminated against, living on the margins, or non-settled people traveling and wandering: *Pied Piper of Hamelin*; *Keiri* (hangman); and *Till Eulenspiegel*, composed of a series of tales about a buffoon or comedian wandering everywhere and satirizing or ridiculing people firmly bound in conventional, discriminatory societies; *kawa-hagi*, engaging in killing and flaying the skins of animals; *wolf man*, ostracized by the villagers and obliged to live as lonely as animal in the forest depths; *leprosy / Hansen's disease, prostitute*, needless to explain; *Thomas Platter*, a real person born in Switzerland, the son of poor farmer. However, Thomas was chosen and given a scholarship by the church and rose to a high rank. Late in his life, he wrote an autobiography, looking back upon his pains: the deep loneliness of *lowers* or of *impressed strangers* rising from *lower* into higher hypocritical society.

There is no precedent for Abe's world. His attainments were extremely original. Nobody can imitate his methods. Historians took off their hats to his energetic works, published one after another. But most importantly, Abe also treated the problem of the *humble poor* as Amino did. At this point, there was significant correlation between Abe and Amino. Their works resonated deeply with each other. Actually, these two medievalists repeatedly talked together, each as a medieval historian in diverse and various media. They widely propagated the attempts of "Social History" and stimulated many young students of the 1980s.

In addition, Abe finally presented an original interpretation of *sen-min* 천민 (*humble people*) in *Cosmology of Humble Poor* (Chikuma, 1987). This work concerns the ambivalent gaze, both despising and fearing people doing boundary work. Abe proposed a marvelous hypothesis for understanding this ambivalent gaze. His argument is based on a little anthropological and psychological theory, using a concept of discordance between two views. One is a view of Christianity, with linear time and the abstract belief in a revived body after death at Judgment Day. The other relates closely to perceptions arising from trembling and fearing the menaces of *Grand Nature*: the power of fire, water, wind, or catastrophe of inundation, earthquake, tsunami, frigidly cold weather, disasters, plagues, etc.

According to Abe, forcing the Christian idea on people living in non-Christian cosmology based on the reciprocal relations between Grand Nature and man, is gradually going to create discords between people's cutaneous sense and their rational perception. Under the Christian Idea, the people living on the margins, butchers, executioners, gravediggers, mouliners in the windmill cottage and so on, who are all on the border very near from the death world and be able to interface with another world, should be subordinated to the other people, because they are considered to be placed in the lowest strata. However, in real daily lives, dreads and fears of Grand Nature or

even reverence to it have never vanished. Although people might consciously believe that nature's menace has been completely domesticated and dominated by men's rational thinking and manipulation, Grand Nature yet remains uncontrollable and fearful not only in practice but also in the cutaneous sense. So dissonances between the head (consciousness) and the body (unconsciousness) have increasingly arisen since the 12th century, when Christianity repeatedly imposed its cosmology through force. In other words, sense and perception clashed each other and the friction creaked increasingly in the process of Christianization. In this process, despising or hating Nature consequently brought out the discriminating irrational mind with a scare. These frictions would occur not only at the turn from medieval to early modern times but also during modernization and industrialization.

(3) **Hiroyuki Ninomiya**

As mentioned, Ninomiya also began to study French History under Takahashi and Otsuka. In the 1950s, he was in the paradigm of Takahashi–Otsuka. In the later 1980s, with a chuckling smile, Ninomiya told me about those days. He frequently drank with Takahashi after every research meeting. One time, after passing all night together, when Ninomiya woke up in the morning, he found himself among garbage boxes in the street. Really? Unbelievable! I do not know if this anecdote is true or not, but it was very interesting for me to know something of his early days. Ninomiya found Takahashi an amusing man even in the late 1980s. I wonder if Takahashi was a very charming person in the 1950s.

Anyway, Ninomiya left a brilliant article concerning the crisis of the feudal system in 17th-century France, included in *Treatise of Economic History in Europe*, 5 vols., published in 1960 by IWANAMI. However, this article was, for him, the last based on this paradigm. I think that in 1960, Japan was at a big turning point. Times had slowly begun to change. Certainly, the great series *Treatise of Economic History in Europe* was admirably accomplished by many researchers studying modern European history under this paradigm, but the owl of Minerva flies away in the twilight years.¹¹⁾

Soon after 1960, Ninomiya went to Paris to study modern French history. He stayed there for six years. He gained precious experiences through diverse exchanges and interfaces with French historians. Ninomiya's study in France had two aims. One was analyzing the domains of some feudal lords through land registers called *cadaster*, the account books established to assign and collect taxes. The other was studying the history of riots against the stamp duty in Brittany (Bretagne) in the 17th century. Certainly these subjects came from the paradigm of Takahashi and Otsuka, but such a subject was not outdated and still prospered in France before 1970. In those days, many French historians had tackled subjects such as the relations between lords and farmers

under the Ancient Régime. French historians have the tradition of *École des Annales* established in 1929, by Marc Bloch and Lucien Fèvre, and succeeded after World War II. Furthermore, historical writings were based on positivism from beginning to end. In France, Ninomiya had the opportunity to take manuscripts into his hands for the first time. It must have been difficult to read them, but he came to read diverse manuscripts in France. Ninomiya is said to have been reading French books since his teens. So perhaps he did not feel out of place, and he could have adapted easily to the academic surroundings in France.

Still at that time, there was a great difference between Japan and France in the style of research. In Japan, most research was idealistically based on the theories of Marx and Weber. More important, France was also at a big turning point. After the independence of Algeria, times had begun to rapidly change. By 1960, French economic growth had ended, and economic stagnation was beginning. In the discipline of history, demographical history initiated by Pierre Goubert at the end of the 1950s came to predominate. Since demographic history is based on parish registers established by the church, it is a kind of quantitative study. Parish registers are useful for researching illiterate, common people's lives. Through demographic history, French historians came to understand that many important areas and subjects were as yet untouched in their past. Ninomiya certainly introduced demography, partially in his study of feudal relations history, but that is not so important in itself. Importantly, he grasped a new perception of history during his years in France: to consider the past from the side of human lives, unlimited to areas of economic and political history. As mentioned above, in those days, French historians had begun to cultivate diverse new areas.

Ninomiya's discussion was based on French historians' attempts, especially of *École des Annales*, but his view was not limited to a single perspective. In "Tripartite Talks," Ninomiya presented "French Social History" as complicated, and he temporarily classified "French Social History" into four roots: (1) *Écoles des Annales* with strong intention toward total and entire histories; (2) a series on the history of the French Revolution, beginning with Georges Lefèvre; (3) a series on economic history, such as Ernest Labrousse; and (4) the group of Roland Meunier toward "Social History" from the perspective of national government history. Most importantly, Ninomiya stressed that these diverse streams had each regarded themselves as *antitheses*. He said, "Social History is not originally a self-limited concept but it defines itself as a concept going over. So you wouldn't like to define it; it is much more significant to see the very way of going over." In Ninomiya's Japanese word, "going over" is *hamidasu*, which means *slipping out* of a sphere or *crossing a border*. It seems as a fresh and charming word to me, both now and then. Ninomiya would have liked to change himself, and at the same time he would have liked to enlarge our historians' views flexibly as to present and past, and to regenerate our historical writ-

ings. At this point, I was deeply impressed by Ninomiya's talks at the end of 1970s.

On the other hand, Ninomiya would have liked to reconsider how to overcome the spellbinding nation states. To rethink nation states, his concern was intent on human lives or areas. He thought that historians should not begin their study from any abstract frames or grand theories, but walk along and watch the world without any map. Moreover, he thought it important to rethink history as a whole, containing all areas, lower and upper, or daily and official, and through this large views' perspective, try to understand the entire society.

Actually, Ninomiya was literally an extremely radical revolutionist, especially since he continued to be a good planner for rethinking recognition and perspective until his last days. For example, as for the tendency of the linguistic turn beginning in the 1980s, from the background, Ninomiya encouraged the introduction of diverse new perspectives to Japan, by proposing diverse translations to editors and planning publications, for example, the translation of *Gender and History*, written by Joan Scott.

Anyway, Ninomiya's talk was very moderate, as I mentioned above, but he was extremely flexible and consequently radical—very far from conservatism.

3. Characteristics and changing points

These historians at the center of “Social History” left us diverse messages for reconsidering what history is. It is impossible to enclose their personal trials in a narrow frame, but if doing so would permit us to see any characteristics common to them or some changing perspectives of history, what can I say? Temporally, I would like to roughly list five points as follows:

(1) Reconsideration of the frames of nation states

In our time, the boundaries established by nation states seem extremely solid, and consequently, our consciousness is also bound within their frames. The paradigm of Takahashi and Otsuka was a comparative history based on the theories of Marx and Weber. In this paradigm, the most important things are to examine the process of transition from feudal to modern and capitalistic societies. It is one method of historical writing, and it is understandable in itself. However, in this paradigm, through comparing differences and similarities among several nation states, I wonder if it increasingly reinforces the nation-state framework. Amino and Ninomiya doubted the truism of a nation-state framework, and they would have reconsidered and overcome it. Even if their fields were limited to Japan and France, Amino's attempt to rethink the homogeneity of Japan and to regard it as an archipelago, and Ninomiya's attempt to begin from daily reality and *sociabilité* to reach the entirety of history had the same intentions, to “go over” and “slip out”

from the existing cages.

(2) Reconsideration of the assumption that an increase in producing power and material abundance brings happiness to us

Amino, Abe, and Ninomiya were of the same generation. They had all lived in destitution after World War II. Since 1960, the Japanese economy has rapidly developed. So people's lifestyles in Japan have enormously changed at least materially, including diffusion of all kinds of electric appliances, expansion of transportation facilities, rapid progress of means for communication or transmission, and improvement of hygiene and sanitation services. However, these do not necessarily bring us happiness. I wonder if the significance of their challenge consists in groping for an alternative of human liberty. Their writings are respectively very different. Understandings of past and present vary from historian to historian, but Amino's *muen, no-possession, asile*; *To me*, Abe's *reading history in himself, fear of Grand Nature*; Ninomiya's *human heart and body, sociabilité*, and *going over* all seem precious, valuable traces, and signs of their struggles to create other ways of human existence.

(3) Reconsideration of modern intellect

In Japan, until the 1960s, a research subject in history, whatever it was, was limited to adults and men. Even if historians took workers or farmers as their subjects, their eyes were intent on poor and honest men, sooner or later awakened to class consciousness. At that time, most Japanese historians were interested in general grand theories originating in Europe, for instance, Marx or Weber. They liked to see and write history based on their theses. For this, there are two reasons. One is that they could not see original documents and manuscripts, and thus depended on nothing but published books. Another is that it was not common for Japanese to travel to Europe, at least until the 1960s.

Ninomiya and Abe could stay in France and Germany long enough to become absorbed in the documents there. Through encounters with real people and original documents, we can slip out of narrow, idealistic, or ideological thinking. At the end of the 1970s, everybody could go to Europe, by whatever means, backpacking or personal trip. Hence, many students and researchers obtained documents more easily, and the tendency toward "Social History" appeared just at that turning point.

All this relates closely to reconsidering recognition in history. Actually, Amino, Abe, and Ninomiya all changed their ways to understand the past. Ninomiya wrote about it, "Otsuka said repeatedly that you had to carry a map in your hand to climb mountains," but Ninomiya realized from his stay in France that, "we will never understand anything about villages if we walk from

the beginning with any map already made.” Ninomiya said, “you have to walk first, there, above all by yourself, and you catch the rough images in your way and make your map by yourself. After making your own map, if you need to, at last you try to check the official map made by the Geographical Survey Institute.” Of course, Ninomiya would not say that the past comes into view if you solely devote yourself to reading only documents; neither would he assert that documents are no longer necessary. He wrote, “Problems consist in *modern intellect*, that is, European modern society in itself, which has been the assumption for the formation of modern social sciences, and has been universalized and composed based on them.”¹²⁾

(4) Delicate perception about others and differences

Walking by themselves permitted these historians to discover others and unknowns with more delicate perceptions. These perceptions of others were rapidly raised at that time, not only in Japan but also in Europe. Actually, it is in this tendency that “Social History,” developed through *École des Annales* in France, increasingly dug others out of their past, borrowing many clues from anthropological interpretative concepts: impurity, purification, taboo, festival, ceremony, rite / ritual, Charivari, mythology, symbol, witchcraft, exorcise, donation and conter-donation (return), local knowledge, etc. Until then, inner diversity and difference had been too ignored in the process of modernization. Understanding others involves discovering and making the same things in ourselves. To discover others in ourselves permits us to understand others.

(5) Pluralization of historical writing

As is obvious, these three key historians were very different in personality and in historical writings. Although they passed through similar times, they developed and enlarged their comprehension of human beings and the past in different ways. We can discover traces of unceasing struggles for reconsidering their historical writings. In the Japanese academic world of European history, the school established under Takahashi and Otsuka had played an important part after World War II. But undeniably, their influence on the next generation declined and changed after 1960. Actually, after 1970, many young people came to look for another way. Consequently, perspective in history and even the mode of historical writings have diversified. The challenges of these three people were also situated in the transition to the pluralization of historical writings.

Well, I presented some attempts by Japanese historians at the end of 1970s, by looking back especially on some works and thoughts of Amino, Abe, and Ninomiya. However, what I have mentioned here is only a small part. Actually, their discourses and traces are too enormous to

comprehensively understand. Here, I did not refer to another movement at the end of the 1970s. I know well that the journals of the New Left, such as *History of Social Movement*, were already being issued in the first half of the 1970s. People taking part in this journal also began to grope for alternative historical writings. Even if the trend did not appear clearly at that time, many other historians began a journey toward some new history.

I think that every movement concerned with recognition in history relates closely to the changes of the world, containing also the mode of studying conditions. For example, it is significantly easier to keep searching local archives or libraries in Europe. The development of the Internet, with the amazing progress of search engines and software since 2000, permit us to freely and easily read partially diverse printed books and documents. For example, by using research engines such as *Gallica*, created by *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, we can read almost all the content in several old precious printed books in our private offices. Of course, as far as manuscripts, we have to go to see them for ourselves. At any rate, it is all much easier than in the 1960s.

It is true that “Social History,” as I mentioned, was situated before the Internet. However, these historians’ challenges and struggles for the reconsideration of recognition in history still seem significant and stimulating to me. They showed us the importance of historians flexibly changing themselves to understand others. They also showed us that every historical writing relates inseparably to the historian’s own experience, limited to the boundary of time and place / space. I think that studying history is an endless movement for enlarging our intellectual grasp of others and ourselves that lasts forever.

Notes

- * Article is similar to the initial presented in English at the first workshop: *Korean-Japanese Forum of Western History* (Kyoto, December 17, 2013) organized by Jie-Hyun Lim (Hanyang University) and Satoshi Koyama (Kyoto University). I would like to thank Enago (www.enago.jp) in the English language review for contributing to *Odysseus*.
- 1) In Korean, *muen* (無緣) 무연, *kugai* (苦界) 고계, *raku* (樂) 약. As for 樂, first by one of translation softwares on web, a word 즐거움 appeared. But just to make sure, I tried to transform it from Korean to Japanese, and 즐거움 was transformed to *tanoshii* (楽しい) in Japanese. *Tanoshii* means in Japanese *pleasant* or *delightful*. The medieval Japanese meaning of *raku* (약) signified at least in Amino’s book is very different from *tanoshii*. *Raku* in his book means something like such as peace or asile. I chose 약 for 樂 by the advice of my colleague Masaru TONOMURA who studied about Korean residents in Japan.
- 2) Abe’s *Man Playing the Flute of Hamelin* is rewritten of articles originally run on *SHISO* in 1972. The Japanese title is 『Haamerun no hue-huki otoko』. *Social History of Keiri* is in Japanese 『Keiri no shakai shi』 in a paperback pocket edition.
- 3) Jean Jaurès (1859–1914) is called “Father of Socialism in France.” After obtaining *agregation* (certifi-

cation as professor of Universities) as philosophy, he became a member of the House of Representatives. Coming back to University, he accomplished his Doctorate thesis. Since then, he began to support the mining workers' strike at Carmaux in 1892, and he came to devote himself to the movement of Socialists. His main book is *Histoire socialiste de la Révolution Française*, 8 vols., 1901–1908. Albert Mathiez (1874–1932), a son of farmer, graduated École Normale Supérieure and obtained *agrégation* as history in 1897. Receiving the guidance of François-Alphonse Aulard (1849–1928), he finally became the professor of Sorbonne in 1926. He was interested in political history, such as Robespierre and institution of worship, during the French Revolution.

- 4) This school's name is derived from their annual journal, *Annales : Économies Sociétés et Civilisations*, issued in 1929 by Marc Bloch and Lucien Fèvre, who had been professors of Strasbourg University. They would have liked to change the old historical writings. They criticized the academic historical writings until the 19th century as pseudo-positivism. They both thought that historians should first find the questions that are significant to the historians themselves in the present and ask it to the past. This journal had to discontinue the publishing under the German military occupation during World War II, but after the war it has come back again into publication. As you know, Marc Bloch had been locked up in a prison camp and executed by Nazi in June 1944 just before D-day. With his writings and his death, Bloch became an important emotional prop for French historians after World War II. Ninomiya also left a book, with all his heart, about the life of Marc Bloch, just before his last days: *Reading Marc Bloch* (Iwanami, 2005).
- 5) The method of *Démographie historique* was presented in detail by the doctor thesis of Pierre Goubert in 1959. Demographical studies flourished since then. This method opened a new sphere of history and brought out many facts concerning the population problem under the Ancien Régime: structure of demography, such as a large number of childbirth with many deaths until the first half of 18th century, decline of death rate of babies and little children, rapid increase in population since the middle of 18th century, increase of abandoned children, start of birth control or contraception. However, Goubert, historian *des Annales*, would have liked to simultaneously think about the relation between these demographic results and other movements: economic and political problems, such as fluctuation of grains' price.
- 6) Yoshihiko AMINO, *Touji Temples in the Middle Ages and Touji Domains Mannors* (Editions of Tokyo University, 1978).
- 7) The documents concerning *YASE-NO-DOUJI* have been authorized as an important intangible national cultural property by the Cultural Properties Protection Law since 2010.
- 8) *World History from Another Side of the River : An Essay on History of Revolution in 1848*, (MIRAI-SHA, 1978).
- 9) In Japanese, this journal is named 『shakai undou shi』. It was issued by younger historians in the 1970s. They were all born after the 1940s, except for Akira KIYASU (1931–). As for this movement, see *As history and as memory: shakai undou shi 1970–1985*. In Japanese, 『Rekishi toshite, kioku toshite: shakai undo shi : 1970–1985』 (Ochanomizu, 2013).
- 10) Kinya ABE, *Reading history in himself* (Chikuma, 1989). This book was published as a series of books for teenage boys and girls. Abe's writing is always understandable, but in this book every Chinese character has kana alongside. Amino also wrote a book of the same series, titled *Rereading Japanese History* (Ochanomizu, 1991) and the continuation of it (1996).
- 11) This expression is of Hegel. Minerva is the Greek Goddess of wisdom and invention. An owl is the messenger of the Goddess Minerva in Greek Myth. He is very intelligent, but he cannot fly away in the

daylight. It is only after the twilight that even this most intelligent owl can take off. I compare here Ninomiya to an owl. So it means that when the paradigm Takahashi & Otsuka became all clearly in 1960, Ninomiya was going on a trip to overcome the limit with wisdom and memory.

- 12) Ninomiya, H., “Social History and Historical View after the War”, *Study of History*, No. 729, Special Number, 1999, p. 23. This journal is called 『Rekishi-gaku Kenkyu』 in Japanese.