

Symposium: *Globalizing University History Education: Diversity, Trans-borders and Intersectionality*

I. Background

In 2017, the Osaka University History Education Project successfully obtained a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) large-scale grant, under the following scheme: Topic-Setting Program to Advance Cutting-Edge Humanities and Social Sciences Research Global Initiatives. The project CI is Professor Kazuyuki Tsutsumi, and the project title is “Reinventing University History Education: International Comparison on How to Adapt Nation-State Based University History Education to Globalization”.

The primary objectives of the project are, 1) to teach a national, regional, and world history in an integrated manner beyond Euro-centric history teaching as a universal model, and 2) to diversify teaching and training methods and materials that are designed to teach history for nationals. This question spawns from recent changes in Japanese tertiary education. The Japanese government has driven the reform of history education and has also encouraged the globalization of tertiary education. More specifically, the traditional tripartite division of labor in university history education—Japanese history, Western history and Oriental history—has become obsolete and is forced to change to fit the transnational or trans-border societies in the twenty-first century. In addition, we are strongly requested to consider the training of future “global citizens” and a potential usefulness of historical studies for global agendas like SDGs.

This challenging and significant task has been globally undertaken, prompting international comparative research to identify the best possible educational models for teaching history in a contemporary, globalized world.

Osaka University is excellently placed to conduct cross-national comparative research due to its well-established international connections with universities in China, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, and the United States, as well as to implement several pilot courses arising from this project both within the university and in overseas collaborating universities. To conclude the past two and half years of our research, the symposium presents the research outcomes over five themes.

II. Objectives

This symposium will present research outcomes to conclude the project over five themes by five panels.

The first panel (A-1: Common Structures and Issues of East Asian Countries) compares the contents of history education across four Asian countries (China, South Korea, Vietnam, and Japan) that historically practiced Confucian values, to identify how national history and world history are taught in universities. It also demonstrates how historical and social structural factors impact the choice of history teaching content, the perception of university history academics regarding how history should be taught, and the manner in which each country attempts to overcome the Euro-centric model of history education by incorporating Asian perspectives.

The second panel (A-2: Different Perspectives from Europe and Beyond) will present regional differences of university history education through different cases dealt with by the first panel. The countries in question are three European countries (Sweden (a Northern Nordic country), Greece (a Southern Mediterranean country) Germany (a Central European country)) and one Southeast Asian country (Singapore). These cases from European countries will decentralize the monolithic understanding of “European” models of history education from Europe. And by doing so, the panel will provide balanced vantage points for understanding differences and similarities of history education.

The third panel (B-1: Issues of Research/Teaching Fields) presents four practices for history teaching and research at Osaka University and showcases the university’s attempt to integrate innovative research results from four fields—namely 1) Central Eurasian history in ancient times and the Middle Ages 2) Asian area studies, 3) Maritime Asian history in the early-modern period, and 4) Global economic history in modern and contemporary times—into university history education. The panel will present concrete examples of teaching global history at the university level.

The fourth panel (B-2: Teaching at Different Types of Universities and Institutes) compares history education in different types of universities and institutes. Differences in universities, such as funding sources (either public or private), sizes, levels, geographical locations and so on, shape each university’s *raison d’être* and also influence their choices of history teaching content. This panel identifies different types of universities and also demonstrates that each type creates its own history teaching practices to reflect its *raison d’être*.

The fifth panel (C: Approaches to Teaching History in the Globalizing World) critically investigates global history, particularly in terms of changing educational practices and systems. The innocuous adaptation of global history as the antithesis of national history should also be carefully scrutinized, as global history is not an ideal space free from racial, gender and class unevenness. While globalization has become part of our everyday lives, it constantly demarcates lines of race, gender, and class. Instead of considering “global” as a given framework, this panel will question what global means to whom, and will seek ways of connecting national and global histories for diverse audiences and purposes.

Through these studies, this symposium also aims at providing a multi-angled platform for discussion across nations, generations, professions (university instructors, high school teachers, and other history practitioners), and social issues influencing university history education. Hence, this symposium is free and open to the public.