

In Memoriam: Ichiko Chūzō (1913–2014)

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On 21 June, 2014, we observed the passing of one of Japan's pioneers in the field of modern Chinese history, Professor Ichiko Chūzō, just two days after the 101st birthday in his long and productive life.

Born in the city of Kofu, Yamanashi Prefecture, Prof. Ichiko moved with his family to Tokyo when he was of primary school age. Then after graduating from Urawa High School, he went on to attend the Faculty of Letters, Tokyo Imperial University, where he specialized in Asian history, completing the graduate course in 1942. His first academic position was as professor of preparatory studies at Chuo University, followed by promotion to a full university professorship and then a move in 1951 to Ochanomizu Women's University. His career at Ochanomizu University began in charge of the Asian history courses in the Faculty of Letters and Education, and included the posts of departmental head, the university's head librarian and finally university president during the four years prior to compulsory retirement. He then returned to Chuo University and served on the faculty until March 1984.

As indicated by his graduation thesis, Prof. Ichiko was first drawn to the period of transition from the Ming to the Qing Dynasties, but after going on into graduate study, he settled on the period spanning the end of the Qing Dynasty and early years of the Republican China. His first published research concerning the Boxer movement came out in two articles published in 1948 and would be followed by work on such important themes in modern Chinese history as the Hundred Days' Reform, the Taiping Rebellion and the Xinhai Revolution. From the 1960s on Prof. Ichiko's attention extended to the history of the Chinese Communist Party. From the above-mentioned works, we comprehend how much importance Prof. Ichiko attached to a positivist approach characterized by strict conformity to the rules of textual criticism.

Prof. Ichiko stands not only as a leading scholar in his own right, but also as an outstanding facilitator in the collection and provision of historiographical sources for all researchers in the field. At the time when

Prof. Ichiko was just beginning his study of modern Chinese history in graduate school, that particular period had still not been recognized as a legitimate scholarly subject by Japan's Asian history community. In his own words,

Within the Japanese academic community before the war, when I was still in grad school, there was almost nothing researched or written about modern China. On the shelves of libraries and research institutes, one was pressed to find any books on the subject, even in Chinese, and there wasn't a catalog, bibliographical review or introductory textbook to be found. For someone like me who had decided to dedicate his life to studying modern China, it became necessary to start from scratch, trying to find out if in fact any textbooks, research articles and primary sources did exist, and if so where they were located. Even what today would be considered the most readily available information at that time required almost more trouble than it was worth.

Concerning the late 40s and early 50s when he began his academic career at Chuo and Ochanomizu, "there wasn't a single book around that seemed to help in my research...making me fantasize about how great it would be if there were a large collection of books on modern China in somebody's library with permission to freely use it."

Immediately following Japan's defeat, the Toyo Bunko Foundation found itself fighting for survival and turned to sources of funding both within and without Japan to keep fiscally afloat. One of those sources was the Rockefeller Foundation in the United States, one of whose aims was to fund research focusing on change in the modern and contemporary world rather than the conventional themes of premodern history. Toyo Bunko responded in 1953 with a decision to form the Committee on the Modern Chinese Studies. The Committee got officially underway in the fall of the following year under the chairmanship of Wada Sei and five steering committee members, one of whom was Ichiko Chuzo, who at the recommendation of a member Yamamoto Tatsuro soon became the Committee's de facto executive director. The Committee began operations based on two initial objectives: 1) to conduct empirical research through the participation of a wide interdisciplinary group of scholars completely free of political influence or philosophy and 2) to introduce the findings of Japanese scholars to the West, while at the same time be-

coming acquainted with the existing work on modern China being done in the West. It was the second objective that sent Prof. Ichiko on a tour of the United States, Great Britain and France in 1955.

While in the United States, he was pleasantly surprised to find a highly developed research environment, including extensive bibliographical sources, almost too convenient for comfort, and began to consider the advantages and disadvantages of such an academic setup. At the same time, being aware that there was no way of avoiding the current tendency towards an age of convenience, he decided that the Committee should take the lead in writing introductory books and compiling reference materials for Japanese scholars.

And so, based on Prof. Ichiko's way of thinking that the field of modern China studies should be promoted not only by providing support to the small number of specialists in the field, but also making information conveniently available to researchers and students in general, the Committee on the Modern Chinese Studies was organized around the following projects. The first involved the collection of source materials, including, of course, primary source collections and research, but also such general materials as newspapers, magazines, introductory textbooks, educational texts and travelogues. The second task was to figure out how to make the materials collected readily available to users. For this purpose, cataloging was not turned over to the Library Department of Toyo Bunko, but rather conducted by the Committee staff, and users were allowed to borrow these materials and to utilize them outside, which was an exception to Toyo Bunko's general rule of usage. The next project was the opening in 1962 of a separate Reference Room, equipped with open shelves of research tools and card catalogs freely available to all users. Finally, there was the task of compiling and publishing catalogs of not only the Committee's holdings, but also catalogs of articles in related periodicals held by the Library and theme-based catalogs, the work also being done by the Committee staff.

It was during the time that these projects were getting underway that the Rockefeller Foundation withdrew funding in 1958, and the Committee turned to the Ford and the Asia Foundations for financial aid in 1962, which was also the year in which a significant number of scholars of Chinese studies raised protests against the two foundations concerning the political ramifications of their funding "for the provision of basic information to support the US government policy-making." Prof. Ichiko decided to respond to the protest movement, by personally attending "the Sym-

posium for All Scholars of Chinese Studies” and explaining why Toyo Bunko had accepted funding from the two foundations. He explained the necessity for accepting funds as arising out of Japan’s policy for funding academic institutions, which favored larger universities over smaller ones, and in the field of historical studies gave more funding to ancient and medieval studies than to research on modern history. At the same time, he defined the aims of the project as the collection of materials and the publication of research achievements, and also emphasized that the period under the project’s consideration would be 1911–1949, excluding contemporary studies from its scope. The protest movement responded that since the capital funds of both foundations were tied to the US government policy towards Asia, utilizing source materials purchased with those funds would be disgraceful. Although such criticism must have been extremely difficult to swallow, Prof. Ichiko nevertheless continued with renewed zeal to complete the projects set upon by the Committee.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities as a facilitator, Prof. Ichiko had continued his own academic contribution until the early 1990s, with the publication of theme-based catalogs on the Xinhai Revolution, the Taiping Rebellion and the Western Affairs Movement, as well as a handbook of modern China studies. In the face of criticism and protest, the efforts of Prof. Ichiko to fill its shelves with primary, secondary and reference sources will long be remembered as transforming the Toyo Bunko Library into one of Japan’s indispensable providers of information for anyone interested in the field of modern China studies.

May he forever rest in peace.

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