



# The Eastern Learning Background of Liang Qichao's Enlightenment Thought

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Kuangmin Zheng

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*Translated by*  
Fang Li

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## FOREWORD BY GENG YUNZHI

Mr. ZHENG Kuangmin spent eight or nine years studying in Japan, returning to China in the summer of 1996 to conduct postdoctoral research at the Institute of Modern History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The book he now presents to readers is the culmination of his postdoctoral research.

Liang Qichao is a figure who had a significant influence on both political and academic culture in modern China. His work has long been the subject of academic attention, and in recent years, research on Liang Qichao has notably increased both domestically and internationally. However, Chinese scholars have yet to delve deeply into the intellectual connections between Liang's thought and Japanese intellectual circles. Liang Qichao spent 14 years in exile in Japan, and even excluding his visits to Australia, the United States, and other brief absences, he still resided there for over 13 years. During this period, he successively edited several influential publications such as *The China Discussion*, *Sein Min Choong Bou*, *Zhenglun*, and *Kouk Fong Po*, which greatly influenced Chinese intellectual discourse. Therefore, understanding how Japanese intellectuals influenced his thinking during this time, and to what extent, is a critical issue that requires in-depth research. However, this is not a study that just anyone can undertake; it requires two essential conditions: (1) a deep understanding of Liang Qichao and the Chinese intellectual tradition he was rooted in, and (2) a thorough grasp of the intellectual and academic background of Meiji Japan. Such understanding cannot be achieved by

simply reading books or consulting materials; it requires significant time and deep reflection. I believe that Kuangmin is one of the rare individuals who meets these criteria.

This book is titled *The Eastern Learning Background of Liang Qichao's Enlightenment Thought*. While the term “Eastern Learning” is rarely used today and is not entirely precise as an academic concept, after much deliberation, we could not find a more concise alternative. During the late Qing period, “Eastern Learning” was commonly used to refer to Japanese intellectual and academic thought. Liang Qichao himself used the term in many of his articles in this sense. Therefore, using a term that Liang himself used to describe Japanese thought in a study of his own ideas should be acceptable to the academic community. Since this research topic and title were jointly decided between Kuangmin and me, I feel partially responsible and thus offer this explanation.

The first draft of this book was completed in 1998 and passed expert review. Since then, Kuangmin has painstakingly revised the manuscript, delving deeper into the many issues involved. Over the past four years, he has made numerous additions and deletions, refining the work to a more mature state. This kind of patient, careful pursuit of higher academic standards is rare in today's academic environment.

Liang Qichao was a man of immense intellectual curiosity and exceptional learning ability, with an unusual level of energy. He absorbed Western ideas and theories through the works of Japanese scholars. At that time, Japan was in the midst of eagerly assimilating Western knowledge. Immersed in this environment, Liang Qichao, who took upon himself the mission of shaping a “New People”, was eager to impart the new knowledge, ideas, and concepts he had acquired to his fellow countrymen, as evidenced by his work in *The China Discussion* and *Sein Min Choong Bou*. However, this eagerness led to a lack of analysis, filtering, and careful digestion of these ideas. As a result, many elements of Japanese thought infiltrated the Western ideas Liang was promoting. Kuangmin's book focuses on identifying and clarifying these elements to provide a deeper and more precise understanding of Liang Qichao's thought. This is an extremely challenging task. Kuangmin has endeavored to gather works by Japanese intellectuals that influenced Liang and the magazines they published, carefully reading and analyzing them. He then compared them with Liang's writings to trace the sources of Liang's ideas and determine to what extent Japanese intellectuals influenced his understanding and

expression. This work is akin to conducting chemical analysis in a laboratory. The scientific nature of social sciences lies in this type of meticulous work, though it's precision differs from that of natural sciences.

Needless to say, such research requires extensive reading, persistent inquiry, and thoughtful analysis. This is why Kuangmin spent four more years revising the manuscript after completing the first draft, and we cannot help but admire his rigorous and realistic attitude. Over 800 years ago, Zhu Xi instructed students to “prefer thoroughness over superficiality” and to “prefer detail over brevity.” It is rare today to see such dedication to scholarship.

Of course, no research topic is ever fully exhausted. Studies on Liang Qichao and his intellectual origins, specifically the relationship between Liang's thought and that of Meiji Japan, remain subjects that require further exploration. Nevertheless, Kuangmin's book represents the most recent, solid, and reliable research on this topic. Any future scholars, whether in China or abroad, who study this subject will inevitably need to consult and reference this book. This is the success and value of this work.

October 17, 2002

Geng Yunzhi

## FOREWORD BY KŌICHI NOMURA

Liang Qichao, along with his mentor Kang Youwei, was a central figure in the political events surrounding the 1898 Reform Movement. Later, Liang's diverse activities in discourse made him one of the foremost intellectuals in modern Chinese thought. From the 1890s to the early twentieth century, Liang Qichao was a leading figure in Chinese intellectual circles, introducing new ideas while engaging in political activities and pioneering critical reassessments of traditional scholarship.

However, an important and well-known fact in Liang's political and intellectual career is that, after the failure of the 1898 Reform, he spent over a decade in exile in Japan. Operating mainly from Yokohama and Tokyo, Liang was active in politics and discourse during this time. Thus, in examining Liang Qichao, we must pay attention to the critical reality of Liang's connection to Japan and his "Eastern Learning" background, as well as the broader modern Sino-Japanese intellectual relations. Living in late Meiji Japan, Liang experienced Japanese political and social life firsthand, interacted with Japanese ideas and movements, and wove these influences into his own thought. This represents a major issue in Liang Qichao studies and the study of modern Sino-Japanese cultural and academic relations.

The author of this book, Mr. ZHENG Kuangmin, having graduated from a Chinese university, spent many years studying in Japan and, after returning to China, focused on this research. Now, with the publication of his findings on Liang Qichao, I believe his book, *The Eastern Learning*

*Background of Liang Qichao's Enlightenment Thought*, opens up a new field in Liang Qichao studies and makes a significant contribution to the academic community. Allow me to share two personal reflections on the book.

First, the author adheres to the scholarly principle of being “faithful to the sources,” collecting as much material as possible. This is evident from the extensive annotations in the book. Focusing on the theme of Liang Qichao’s Enlightenment thought, the author presents primary sources on various Japanese intellectual trends at the time—such as Fukuzawa Yukichi’s Enlightenment thought, Japanese concepts of civil rights, and Japanese national thought. He examines these thinkers’ experiences and activities, as well as the political and intellectual contexts surrounding them, from multiple angles. In doing so, the author has absorbed much relevant research from Japan, while making careful selections. Through this approach, the author has come closer to identifying the “Eastern Learning background” of Liang Qichao, i.e., the specific Japanese ideas that influenced him. Moreover, the author reveals Liang Qichao’s interactions with Meiji Japan at a deeper level. This research stands in stark contrast to arbitrary, fragmentary interpretations. Only through this method can scholarship, in any era, reveal its true significance.

Second, the author clarifies, with great insight, what Liang Qichao accepted and rejected from the various strands of Meiji Japanese thought and from the European ideas that Japan had introduced. This represents an important achievement, not only in Liang Qichao studies but also in the broader field of Sino-Japanese cultural relations.

Intellectual exchange is inherently complex and subtle, no matter the stage on which it unfolds. Moreover, both Japan and China were swept up in unprecedented currents after the arrival of modern Europe. Japan’s search for a path forward was full of twists and turns. Liang Qichao’s activities and reflections were driven by his desire to find a way for his country and people to escape their crisis. He engaged with Japanese ideas and discourse to absorb European thought. The resulting interplay of acceptance, opposition, and struggle constitutes a kind of intellectual and spiritual drama, one that also raises fundamental questions about Sino-Japanese relations. Exploring Liang Qichao’s “Eastern Learning background” provides valuable material even for those seeking to reassess Japan’s modern history.

Given Liang Qichao’s multifaceted nature as a thinker, the subject matter and scope of this book are necessarily broad. From this perspective,

there are still areas within the book's theme that await further exploration, and the balance between detail and simplicity in some sections may not always be ideal. Additionally, questions remain about how to situate this subject within the broader framework of Liang Qichao studies and modern Chinese intellectual history. These are likely areas for the author to explore in future research.

I believe this book will advance research in this field, and at the author's request, I have written the above as a foreword.

(Translated by Zhongjiang Wang)

Tokyo, Japan  
May 2000

Kōichi Nomura

## ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

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**LI Fang** is currently Advisor of Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) program at Xi'an International Studies University. He has received his Ph.D. in Education from the University of Alabama, M.Ed. in Education from the University of Cincinnati. He is member of the American Translators Association (ATA), the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT), the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC), the National Association for Interpretation (NAI), the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA), the American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association (ATISA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the American Counseling Association (ACA). Dr. Li has been accepted into 15 academic

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# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Liang Qichao's View of Japan During the Hundred Days' Reform Period and the Situation After Exile in Japan</b>	<b>1</b>
1	<i>Liang Qichao's Views on Japan During the Hundred Days' Reform</i>	1
2	<i>Exile in Japan to Save the Emperor</i>	24
<b>2</b>	<b>Fukuzawa Yukichi's Enlightenment Thought and Liang Qichao</b>	<b>59</b>
1	<i>The Influence of Fukuzawa Yukichi's Life and Mentorship on Liang Qichao's Thought</i>	59
2	<i>Fukuzawa Yukichi's Initial Contacts with Western Civilization</i>	69
3	<i>Fukuzawa Yukichi's "Western Civilization as the Goal" and Liang Qichao's The Distinctions Between Three Realms of Civilization and Barbarism</i>	75
4	<i>The Form and Spirit of Civilization</i>	88
5	<i>Influence of Fukuzawa Yukichi's "Individual Independence Leads to National Independence" on Liang Qichao</i>	99

<b>3</b>	<b>Nakamura Masanao's <i>Self Help</i> and <i>On Liberty</i> and Liang Qichao's Thought of "Renewing the People"</b>	113
1	<i>The Life and Enlightenment Thought of Nakamura Masanao</i>	113
2	<i>Nakamura Masanao's Translation of <i>Self Help</i> and <i>On Liberty</i></i>	142
3	<i>Nakamura Masanao's Influence on Liang Qichao</i>	153
<b>4</b>	<b>Japanese Civil Rights Thought and Liang Qichao</b>	167
1	<i>Japanese Civil Rights Thought and Rousseau of the East</i>	167
2	<i>The Ethics of Nakae Chōmin and Rousseau's Theory of Popular Sovereignty</i>	185
3	<i>The Influences of Nakae Chōmin's Positive Views of Liberty on Liang Qichao</i>	203
<b>5</b>	<b>Japanese Nationalism and Liang Qichao</b>	231
1	<i>The Emergence of Japanese Nationalism After the First Sino-Japanese War</i>	231
2	<i>The Influence of Takata Sanae's Translation of World Politics at the End of the Nineteenth Century and Kazutami Ukita's Ethical Imperialism Thought on Liang Qichao</i>	246
3	<i>The Influence of Katō Hiroyuki's Competition for the Rights of the Strong (強者の権利の競争) on Liang Qichao</i>	271
<b>6</b>	<b><i>The Theory of the State</i> as an Organic Entity and Liang Qichao</b>	311
1	<i>Liang Qichao and the Translation of The Theory of the State by Hirata Tosuke and Hiratsuka Teijirō</i>	311
2	<i>Bluntschli's The Theory of the State and Its Influence on Japan</i>	320
3	<i>The Influence of Bluntschli's Philosophy on Liang Qichao</i>	344
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	367
	<b>References</b>	387

## INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese society has been plunged into a severe crisis. As foreign powers deepened their invasion of China, the closed doors of the nation were gradually opened, leading to significant changes in politics, economy, and ideology. In their quest to find resources suitable for survival, Chinese intellectuals embarked on a path of learning from the West. Beginning with Wei Yuan's call to "learn from the West to counter the West" and Feng Guifen's proposal to "adopt Western Learning," the scope of China's "emulation of the West" expanded. Initially focusing on technology and tools, it later extended to governance, law, and ideology, eventually culminating in efforts to reform the entire culture. By the end of the nineteenth century, the defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War dealt a severe blow to Chinese intellectuals. They believed that Japan's rapid rise to power was due to its successful learning from the West through reforms aimed at national strengthening. Moreover, they reasoned that, since China and Japan were both Asian countries with similar language, ethnicity, customs, and conditions, it would be easy to imitate Japan's model. As a result, learning from Japan's successful experience, and through Japan, learning from the West, was seen as a highly efficient choice at the time. Under their advocacy, a significant shift occurred in China's pursuit of "Western Learning," as it took a new path of learning from the West via Japan. Liang Qichao was a key advocate and practitioner of this approach.

Liang Qichao (1873–1929) was a leader of the Reform Movement in modern Chinese history and one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers. Prominent modern Chinese politicians and literary figures, from Mao Zedong, Chen Duxiu, and Lu Xun to Hu Shi, Guo Moruo, and Zhou Zuoren, were all profoundly influenced by him. In this sense, Liang Qichao had an almost unparalleled impact on China from the late Qing Dynasty to the early Republic. Due to his significant position, the study of Liang Qichao has always been a focal point of scholarly attention, both in China and abroad.

During the Hundred Days' Reform, Liang Qichao advocated learning from Western ideas through Japanese translations. However, he did not fully engage with the study of "Eastern Learning" until after the failure of the reform when he fled to Japan. At that time, while studying in Hakone, Japan, with his peer Luo Pu, he devised a method for reading Japanese books, which he called the "method of comprehending Japanese via Chinese." With this method, Liang Qichao claimed to be able to understand Japanese texts in a short time. Of course, what Liang meant by understanding Japanese was specific to himself—he focused not on pronouncing individual words but on comprehending the content of Japanese books. Since most of the Japanese books Liang read at the time were written in a Chinese-style script, given his talents and strong foundation in Chinese studies, it is likely that he could grasp the gist of these Japanese texts within a short period. It was by utilizing this "method of comprehending Japanese via Chinese" that Liang Qichao extensively read Japanese books and translations of Western works, thereby embarking on the path of "Eastern Learning." Through his study of Japanese works, Liang Qichao gained an understanding of the West via Japan, thereby shortening the distance between himself and Western ideas, broadening his perspective, and reshaping his intellectual framework. During his more than ten years in exile, Liang Qichao delved into a wide range of Japanese ideological schools, absorbing ideas from various factions of Japanese thought, all of which deeply influenced his own intellectual development. He disseminated these ideas through publications such as *The China Discussion*, *Sein Min Choong Bou*, and *Xinxiaoshuo*, which had a profound impact on China.

Since Liang Qichao understood Western thought through the lens of Japanese translations and works, the Western ideas he absorbed were "Japanized" to some extent. Thus, one could say that the influence

of Western thought on modern China was, to some degree, mediated through Japan.

In recent years, Chinese scholars have made significant progress in studying Liang Qichao. There is now a consensus that the Western ideas and concepts Liang introduced to China were influenced by Japan. However, there is still a lack of research on the specific schools of thought and the precise nature of the Japanese influence on Liang Qichao. In the field of intellectual history, tracing the origins of a thinker's ideas has been extensively explored by overseas scholars. To the best of my knowledge, Naoki Hazama of Kyoto University has led a team of fifty researchers since 1993 in a project titled "Liang Qichao—On the Process of His Reception of Western Modern Civilization via Japan". Similarly, French sinologist Marianne Bastid-Bruguère has been conducting research in this area, including a paper titled, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Concept of the State—On the Translation of Bluntschli's The Theory of the State*, which explores the influence of Azuma Heiji's *The Theory of the State* on Liang Qichao and modern China. In addition, numerous other overseas researchers are also pursuing studies in this field, with notable achievements. Such research is invaluable not only for understanding the historical status and significance of thinkers but also for fostering deeper communication and understanding between different cultures, allowing for mutual enrichment.

More than a decade ago, I studied in Japan. During my ten years there, I read several works on the history of Japanese political thought, and I have long desired to conduct research in this area. During my doctoral studies, I received guidance from professors such as Shōji Takada, Hisao Hama, Yūzō Mizoguchi, and Kuniyasu Kondō, and made some preliminary inquiries into Liang Qichao's experiences in Japan. However, due to the vast range of topics Liang engaged with and the sheer volume of Japanese books he read—many of which are difficult to access due to the passage of time—I could only scratch the surface of the topic at that time and was unable to conduct in-depth research. Two years ago, after returning to China and joining the postdoctoral research program at the Institute of Modern History at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences under the guidance of Prof. Geng Yunzhi, I resumed this research project. To gather more materials, I returned to Japan, where I received valuable advice from scholars such as Kazuo Furushima, Naoki Hazama, and Miyamura Haruo. Before my departure, they generously gave me their writings and papers, which provided a solid foundation for my research. Upon

returning to China, I secluded myself in my study and dedicated myself to writing. During the scorching summer, drenched in sweat, I meticulously cross-referenced the Japanese originals and gathered materials from various sources, enduring significant hardship. Given the time constraints and the vast amount of Japanese literature Liang Qichao engaged with, I, with my limited knowledge, am keenly aware of the inevitable errors and omissions. Nevertheless, as a humble scholar with no other means to repay the motherland that nurtured me, I am determined to persevere in my studies. Although I recognize my intellectual limitations, I dare not give up. Despite facing personal difficulties at home, I persisted through many challenges, and by October 1998, the manuscript was finally completed. Though this work may not be perfect, I hope that esteemed scholars will forgive my inadequacies and appreciate my intentions. If this book can serve as a stepping stone in the study of the history of Sino-Japanese relations, I will consider it a great honor.



# Liang Qichao's View of Japan During the Hundred Days' Reform Period and the Situation After Exile in Japan

## I LIANG QICHAO'S VIEWS ON JAPAN DURING THE HUNDRED DAYS' REFORM

Following the devastating loss in the First Sino-Japanese War, the Qing Empire, accustomed to considering itself the ruler of all nations and heavenly supreme, faced an unexpected defeat at the hands of Japan, a seemingly insignificant island country. This incidence shocked the entire Chinese society. Faced with humiliations of territorial concessions and indemnities, the Chinese intelligentsia found themselves compelled to shift their foci toward Japan. With the deepening concern for Japan, the idea of referring to its Meiji Restoration and imposing political reform for the sake of survival suddenly flourished, and a way of learning from the West via Japan was generally advocated. This paradigm shift was not limited to reforming scholars like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, even certain high-ranking officials within Qing's imperial court (e.g., Zhang Zhidong) shared similar sentiments. The core belief driving this inclination was the notion that Japan's rise to power was attributed to its adept assimilation of Western ideas. Given the cultural and lingual similarities between Japan and China, proponents argued that emulating Japan directly, rather than learning from the West, would yield more expeditious outcomes. Under the influence of these advocates, a transformative shift occurred in China's orientation toward the acceptance of foreign cultures and ideas. This marked the advent of a groundbreaking change known

as “Dongxue” (东学, Eastern Learning), a process of absorbing Western culture through the intermediary of Japan.

Liang once noted, “The decline of Qing regime has been drastically exposed after the Hundred Days’ Reform, then followed by invasion of Eight-Nation Alliance. The youth begin to study overseas, and due to the neighboring advantage, Japan has become a popular destination. Besides, during 1901–1902, the translation and publication industries were particularly prosperous in China, regularly published magazines were more than a dozen. When a new book was released in Japan, translators were actively engaged in its Chinese edition. The import of new ideas is like a raging fire.”<sup>1</sup> Liang played a pivotal role in promoting this idea. During his exile in Japan, he managed publications like *The China Discussion* (清议报), *Sein Min Choong Bou* (新民丛报), and *Xinxiaoshuo* (新小说, *New Novels*) as platforms to introduce new thoughts to the Chinese audience. “Despite strict prohibitions by the Qing Court, these magazines earned wider readership, with numerous reprints circulating in inland of China”.<sup>2</sup> They had a profound impact in modern era of China.

Liang Qichao’s articles drew heavily on references from Japanese authors or translated works from Japanese into Western languages. It is also what Zhang Pengyuan (a scholar from Taiwan province) has coined “Western knowledge in Japanese.”<sup>3</sup> Given Liang’s acceptance of Western culture was primarily acquired through Japan, his decade-long assimilation in Japan and its culture has undeniably influenced his own thoughts. Thus, a clear understanding of the impact of Japan’s culture during the later period of Meiji era on Liang’s ideology has becomes a crucial topic in the study of Liang Qichao and the history of Sino-Japanese relations. There are limited studies on questions like: To what extent did Liang know about Japan before he was exiled? And what did his knowledge about Japan affect him? In other word, what are the origin of “Dongxue” and Liang’s attitude toward it? This section attempts to offer analysis on these issues.

<sup>1</sup> Liang Qichao: *An Overview of Qing Dynasty Scholarship*, in *Collected Works from the Ice-Drinker’s Studio* (hereafter referred to as *Collected Works* for all subsequent chapters), Special Issue No. 34, Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Zhang Pengyuan: *Liang Qichao and the Revolution at the End of the Qing Dynasty*, *Institute of Modern History Monograph Series* (3rd ed.), Vol. 11, Academia Sinica, June 1981, p. 39.

Liang Qichao learned about Japan primarily through his mentor Kang Youwei, whose works *Record of Japan's Political Transformation* (日本变政记) and *Japanese Bibliography* (日本书目志) significantly influenced Liang Qichao. During his lectures at Wanmu Cottage (万木草堂), Kang offered a course titled "Successes and Failures in the Political Changes of All Nations," in which he included *Record of Japan's Political Transformation* as part of the curriculum.<sup>4</sup> Liang, sharing similar views with his mentor, advocated for emulating the Meiji Restoration in his work *General Views on Reform* (变法通议). Kang's other work, *Japanese Bibliography*, left a more profound impact on Liang. The book was compiled with the assistance of Kang's disciples including Ou Jujia and his eldest daughter Kang Tongwei, categorized over 7,100 Japanese books published around 1887. These books were classified into fifteen categories: physiology, science, religion, history, politics, law, agriculture, industry, commerce, education, literature, language, fine arts, novels, and military references. Scholars like Murata Yujuro believed that Kang might not have personally reviewed all these books due to vast volumes, but his annotations indicated that he had perused a considerable proportion, which is unquestionable.<sup>5</sup> During Wuxu Reform (戊戌变法, aka Hundred Days' Reform), in his article *On Japanese Bibliography* published in the newspaper *The Chinese Progress*, Liang introduced this book and praised the benefits of acquiring Western knowledge through translated Japanese works. This immersion not only broadened Liang's understanding of Japan but also acquainted him with various Japanese classics and translated works, such as *The Theory of the State* by Johann Caspar Bluntschli, *History of Philosophy (Histoire de la philosophie)* by Alfred Fouillée (translated by Nakae Chōmin), *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles (translated by Nakamura Masanao), *Outline of a Japanese Constitution (Kokken hanron)* by Azusa Ono, *Command Theory of Law (Houritsu meirei ron)* by Itō Miyoji, *On Code of Laws* by Hozumi Nobushige, and *Guide to the Study of Political Economy (Guida allo studio dell'economia politica)* by Luigi

<sup>4</sup> Chen Huaxin: *Several Issues Regarding Kang Youwei and "A Study of Japan's Political Reforms"*, in *On the Hundred Days' Reform Movement and Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao*, Guangdong People's Publishing House, 1985, p. 274.

<sup>5</sup> Murata Yūjirō: *Kang Youwei and "Dongxue"—On "A Japanese Bibliography"*, in The Tokyo University, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Foreign Languages (Ed.) *Research Bulletin – Collected Papers from the Chinese Language Section*, Vol. 40, No. 5, 1992, p. 6.

Cossa (translated by Yoshiro Sakatani). Certainly, during the period of the Hundred Days' Reform, Liang could not have read all these books. However, given Kang's book summaries, which undeniably left a deep impression on Liang. After his exile to Japan, Liang resumed a meticulous reading of these books, integrating these authors' ideas into his own writings, thus exerting a profound influence on China's modernization. Subsequent chapters in this book will delve into this influence. Seen from this, Liang naturally gained a considerable amount of knowledge about Japan through *Japanese Bibliography* and during his study in Wooden Cottage.

Besides, Liang Qichao's knowledge of Japan also derived from the translated books he encountered during and after the First Sino-Japanese War.

Liang Qichao had two pivotal opportunities for extensive exposure to translated books. First, during his trip back home after getting married in 1892 (Guangxu 18). Second, during his tenure as the secretary for Qiangxuehui (强学会, aka Society for the Study of National Strengthening).

In 1892, having studied under Kang for over a year, Liang embarked on a journey to Beijing for the imperial examination in February and got married at the age of twenty. Although he did not pass the examination, on his way back home, he encountered readings such as *Gezhi Huibian* (格致汇编, aka *The Chinese Scientific and Industrial Magazine*) by John Fryer, and got to know about Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau (abbreviation of Jiangnan General Machinery Manufacturing Bureau, 江南机器制造总局). Liang Qixun (Liang Qichao's younger brother) noted this in his *Notes from Manshu Studio in the Year of Wuchen*:

In 1892, when my brother was twenty, our dad passed away on the twentieth day of lunar January. During spring Metropolitan Examination, Li Biyuan was the Chief Examiner and he appreciated my brother's talent, so Li decided to admit my brother. But he declined the favor, and in that summer, together with my sister-in-law, Li Huixian [Li Biyuan's cousin], we returned home and resided in countryside for a year or so. In addition to Chinese classics, my brother also purchased translated books from

Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau, as well as various diaries of diplomatic personnel and books like John Fryer's *Gezhi Huibian*.<sup>6</sup>

It is still being determined how much knowledge related to Japan in the Western books purchased by Liang Qichao at that time. Still, we can find clues from his *Bibliography of Western Learning* (西学书目表) and *Epilogue of Bibliography of Western Learning* (西学书目表后序) and other articles. We will talk about this connection later. On New Year's Eve of Guangxu 18, Liang said in a letter to Wang Kangnian, who passed the imperial exam in the same year, "Since half a year, I had been reading in the mountains."<sup>7</sup> The books he had read in the mountains should rightly include the newly purchased translated books. This year should be the beginning of Liang's self-study of Western books (including Japanese knowledge).

Liang Qichao's second significant exposure to translated books during his tenure as the secretary for Qiangxuehui (强学会, aka Society for the Study of National Strengthening), which was founded by Kang Youwei in Beijing after the signing of the *Treaty of Shimonoseki* (马关条约). In addition to Kang, Liang, Mai Menghua, and other reformists, Qiangxuehui was supported by the bureaucratic layer at the time. According to Kang's *Self-Compiled Chronicle*:

In early July, I arranged a gathering with Ciliang and invited several guests, including Yuan Shikai (aka Weiting), Yang Rui (aka Shuqiao), Ding Lijun (aka Shuheng), Shen Zipei and his brother Shen Zifeng, Zhang Xiaoqian (aka Xunzi), and Chen [name unclear]. During the meeting, we agreed to a donation, with each person making a charitable contribution, and we quickly raised several thousand taels of silver. Liu Kunyi, Zhang Zhidong, and Wang Wenshao each donated 5,000 taels, and even Song Qing and Nie Shicheng contributed several thousand taels as well.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Liang Qixun: *Notes from Manshu Studio in the Year of Wuchen*, in Ding Wenjiang & Zhao Fengtian, *Chronological Biography of Liang Qichao*, Shanghai People's Publishing House, August 1983, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Liang Qichao: *Letter to Wang Rangqing*, in *Wang Kangnian's Letters to Friends and Teachers*, Vol. 2, Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1986, p. 1828.

<sup>8</sup> Kang Youwei: *Self-Compiled Chronicle of Mr. Kang Nanhai*, in Jiang Guipi (Ed.), *Collection of Mr. Kang Nanhai's Posthumous Works* (2nd ed.), Vol. 22, Hongye Book Co., Ltd., June 1986, pp. 34–35.

In addition, some Anglo-Americans also gave their support. According to the *Self-Compiled Chronicle*:

Timothy Richard, the Englishman, also came to the association. Since the beginning of the meeting, the Chinese scholar had communicated with Westerners. British and American Ministers were willing to give their full support to Western books, charts, and implements, and by doing so, these became increasingly massive.<sup>9</sup>

Liang Qichao's knowledge of the West and Japan naturally increased because of the translation of Western books and contact with the British and Americans. According to Timothy Richard's memoirs, Liang once became Timothy's private secretary.<sup>10</sup> Zhang Pengyuan supposed that (Liang) "was very valued by Timothy, and Rengong (Liang's courtesy name) must have heard of some Western common sense through osmosis during two years of contact. In addition, Rengong participated in Timothy's translation of Robert Mackenzie's *The 19th Century: A History* (泰西新史览要) and unconsciously received numerous Western political and historical insights."<sup>11</sup> However, less than three months after the founding of Qiangxuehui, it was inspected and banned by the Qing Government. As the clerk of the Society, Liang got to "live in it for a few months," while "it was well equipped to translate Western books," so he" was able to browse through all of them in his spare time, and then became more and more ambitious to write about them".<sup>12</sup> Liang said, "hundreds of books were translated within a few years," at that time, the books translated in China could be divided into two categories, one of which was the Western books translated by the Jiangnan General Machinery Manufacturing Bureau; the other was translated by Tongwen Guan (同文馆, aka School of Combined Learning) and Western church. He said: "So far

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy Richard: *Forty-Five Years in China*, in Jian Bozan (Ed.), *Wuxu Reform*, Vol 3, Shenzhen Guoguang Press, 1953, pp. 554-555.

<sup>11</sup> Zhang Pengyuan: *Liang Qichao and the Late Qing Revolution*, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Liang Qichao: *A Self-Narrative at Thirty*, in *Collected Works*, Anthology No. 11, p. 17.

20 years, about 300 kinds of books could be read.”<sup>13</sup> Among these translated books, “what Chinese official bureau translated most were military and political class.” Because “people used to think that China was better than the Westerners in all respects except military.” The books translated by the Western Church were “mainly about medicine because most priests were doctors.” “Only a few translators translate Western political books.” Furthermore, “there were no complete books on the official system, the academic and the agricultural systems.”<sup>14</sup>

So, how much knowledge of Japan was there in such translated Western books? We can find clues in the *Bibliography of Western Learning* written by Liang Qichao.

According to the preface of *Bibliography of Western Learning*, Liang Qichao wrote *Bibliography of Western Learning* in response to his disciples, Chen Gaodi, Liang Zuolin, and his younger brother Liang Qixun, who asked him what Western books to read and the order of reading. At that time, Liang Qichao had compiled four volumes of bibliographies and one volume of notes.<sup>15</sup> However, *Bibliography of Western Learning* was not listed in Liang's *Collected Works from the Ice-Drinker's Studio* (饮冰室合集), and I haven't found it for a while. So now I rely on the attached volume of *Chinese Literary History research-(Literary Revolution)* and *The Eye of the People* (中国文学史研究—(文学革命)と前夜の人々—) written by Masuda Wataru, a Japanese scholar. According to its attached volume, Liang divided translated Western books that he had ever read into Arithmetic, mechanics, electricity, chemistry, acoustics, optics, Qi theory, astronomy, geology, general science, zoology, botany, medicine, cartography, history, governmental system, law, agriculture, mining, industry, commerce, military, shipping, travelogues, magazines, studying natural phenomena to acquire knowledge, books of Westerners, books that cannot be classified, and so on. There were 352 kinds of books recorded in *Bibliography of Western Learning*, in addition to the record, block-printed edition in the collection, books that had not been translated and printed recently and books that had been lost in the Complete Library in the *Four Branches of Literature* (四库全书) before

<sup>13</sup> Liang Qichao: *Introduction to the Catalogue of Western Books*, in *Collected Works*, Anthology No. 1, p. 122.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 124.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

commercial intercourse. Liang may have read most of these books, some of which he also commented on. After reading Timothy's *History of the Transformation and Prosperity of Various Nations* (列国变通兴盛记) (published by the Christian Literature Society for China), he commented that: "its name was very moving, but only the two articles documenting Russia and Japan were worth reading, others were descendants of extinct countries left behind in the mistaken belief that they flourished, so it was not good enough for the name."<sup>16</sup> After reading *The 19th Century: A History*, he compared Western history with Chinese history and then advocated reform: "Since Napoléon Bonaparte, the French Emperor, initiated the disaster, Europe has suddenly generated momentum, and therefore renewed, the old customs before it was seen as the same in today's China. It was well documented in *The 19th Century: A History*, recently translated by Englishman Timothy Richard. Only Europe changed dramatically and flourished within a hundred years."<sup>17</sup>

After reading Timothy's *General Commentary on One of the Eight Stars* (八星之一总论), he contradicted the claim that China's overpopulation and advocated the adoption of "New Western Agrarian Law" for the operation of agriculture. "Drawing close to Japan to examine the reasons behind its transformation, and reaching far to Europe and America to understand the origins of their legal systems. In pursuing the practical knowledge of the Three Ancient Eras, one seeks to preserve the fertile lands of the Heavenly Court."<sup>18</sup>

Hence, Liang Qichao had indeed read these books carefully. Spurred on by the failure of the First Sino-Japanese War, some Japanese books were more likely to attract his attention. Among them, *Shizhimen* (史志门) which was published by Guangxuehui (广学会, formerly The Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese), contained *The Complete Chronicle of Sino-Japanese Wars* (中东战纪本末), which was co-authored by Young John Allen and Cai Erkang, the contents of which recorded the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. *Xuezhimen* (学制门) (which was also published by Guangxuehui) contained *Education in Japan* (文学兴国策, in two volumes), which

<sup>16</sup> Liang Qichao: *Reading the Study of Western Learning*, in Jian Bozan (Ed.), *The Hundred Days' Reform*, Vol. 1, Shenzhou Guoguang Publishing House, 1953, p. 455.

<sup>17</sup> Liang Qichao, *General Views on Reform*, in *Collected Works*, Anthology No. 1, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Liang Qichao: *Preface to the Farmers' Association Newspaper*, in *Collected Works*, Anthology No. 1, pp. 130–131.

were written by Young John Allen. It was edited according to the letters from Mori Arinori, a Minister of Japan to the United States at the beginning of the Meiji era, the president of Yale University, the president of Amherst University, the president of Princeton University, and the other 13 celebrities of the American education community. To revitalize Japan, Mori Arinori asked them for advice on education in Japan and compiled their replies into the book entitled *Education in Japan*, published in New York in Meiji 6 (1873). This book was translated by Young John Allen and transcribed by Ren Tingxu into Chinese, and then published in Guangxu 22, the year after the Sino-Japanese War. This book was a companion volume of *The Complete Chronicle of Sino-Japanese Wars*. These two books attempted to take the defeat of the Sino-Japanese as an opportunity to educate China, thereby promoting reform.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Liang would gain much knowledge about Japan from these books. In addition, among the books written by Chinese people, there are *National History of Japan* (日本国志) and *Miscellaneous Poems of Japan* (日本杂事诗) by Huang Zunxian, *Illustrative History of Japan* (日本图经) by Fu Yunlong, *Japanese Annals* (日本志) by Yao Wendong, *Military Strategy of Japanese Geography* (日本地理兵要) by Yao Wenlin, *The Monograph on the Japanese Coup* (日本政变考) by Gu Houkun, and others. Based on these books, Liang gained a better understanding of Japan at that time.

Thirdly, Liang Qichao also gained Japanese knowledge from Huang Zunxian and Japanese friends who worked in *The Chinese Progress* (时务报).

In 1896 (Guangxu 22), Liang Qichao first met Huang Zunxian, who was 49 then. Huang has served as a Counselor in Japan, Britain, and the United States of America and has traveled overseas for more than 20 years. In 1896, the General Administration planned to appoint Huang as an ambassador to the British Minister. He had defended against Sir Robert Hart, the British, the minister of the tax bureau of Chinese Customs when he held a Consul General of Singapore. Hence, he suffered from gossip and failure. On the 19th of the same month, Huang was awarded the title of an ambassadorship to the German as a circuit intendant (Dao).<sup>20</sup> Although he was later unsuccessful, Huang's ability was highly

<sup>19</sup> Refer to: Masuda Wataru, *A Study of Chinese Literary History: The People of the Eve of the "Literary Revolution"*, Iwanami Shoten, July 25, 1967 (Showa 42), pp. 373-374.

<sup>20</sup> Wu Tianren: *Chronological Biography of Mr. Huang Gongdu of the Qing Dynasty*, Taiwan Commercial Press, July 1984, p. 105.

valued by the literati then. According to *Sponsor Discount* (保荐人材折) written by Xu Zijing, Huang was a kind person “who was a man of great knowledge and refinement and sought the feasibility of his words and the effectiveness of his actions.”<sup>21</sup> At that time, Huang had already deeply studied Japan. During Guangxu 4 and 5, he had already begun to write the *Annals of Japan*.<sup>22</sup> After the completion of the book, it was given to the Head of Ministry (aka Yamen, 衙门) of Foreign Affairs, Li Shaoquan, Zhang Xiangtao, and Huang himself.<sup>23</sup> After reading Huang’s *Annals of Japan*, Liang praised his book and hated to read it too late:

Chinese people needed to learn more about Japan. Liang Qichao read *National History of Japan* written by Huang Zunxian and was delighted to praise Huang after reading it: Thanks to Huang, we know Japan and the nation’s strength today. He also fiercely blamed Huang that Huang’s book didn’t spread ten years after he wrote it. Therefore, we now understand China and know the reasons for China’s weakness. Chinese people remained poorly informed about Japan, didn’t learn from it, didn’t defend, and didn’t worry or fear, to such a point today.<sup>24</sup>

Five years later, Liang Qichao reminisced in Japan when he read Huang Zunxian’s *National History of Japan* and noted that, it was the time of “talking about China’s current situation without a clear history.”<sup>25</sup> But that was many years later when Liang arrived in Japan. Before 1898, Liang still thought that “the situation of Japan could be known from this book.”<sup>26</sup> Before the Reform Movement of 1898, when Liang began

<sup>21</sup> Xu Zijing: “Memorial of Recommending Talented Individuals on April 25th, the 24th Year of Guangxu Reign,” in *The Reform Movement of 1898*, Vol. 2, p. 336.

<sup>22</sup> Wu Tianren: *Chronological Biography of Mr. Huang Gongdu of the Qing Dynasty*, Taiwan Commercial Press, July 1984, p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Liang Qichao: *Postscript to Japan National History*, in *Collected Works*, Anthology No. 2, p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> Liang Qichao: *New People*, in *Collected Works*, Special Issue No. 4, p. 55.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* Concerning the evaluation of *National History of Japan*, Di Ziping in his *Pingdengge Shibua* said: “The book *National History of Japan* is revered throughout the country as a treasure. From then on, scholars who recite it can speak confidently about foreign affairs without feeling lost, like being in a fog—its contribution is great.” Wang Zhonghou in his *Huang Gongdu Poems and Anecdotes* said: “Not only is it a pioneering work for our country’s compilation of the *Japan National History*, but it also

to write *Bibliography of Western Learning*, he included Huang's *National History of Japan* and *Miscellaneous Poems of Japan* in his must-read list. In the monthly curriculum of the Hunan Current Affairs School, regardless of whether extensive or intensive reading, it was necessary to read *National History of Japan*,<sup>27</sup> which showed that Liang attached great importance to this book then.

In 1896 (Guangxu 22), Huang Zunxian was impeached by a censor, Yang Chongyi, because Qiangxuehui was investigated by the Qing Government. Therefore, he took the initiative to continue the previous idea, jointly revitalized the industry, and planned to start a new newspaper. In March, he wrote a letter to Liang Qichao and invited him to co-found *The Chinese Progress*. On August 9, *The Chinese Progress* was founded in Shanghai, at the intersection of Simalu and Shilu. According to *The Roster of the Newspaper Office* (本馆办事诸君名氏表) of *The Chinese Progress*, the Chief Editor was Wang Kangnian, the Chief Commentator was Liang Qichao, the English translator was Zhang Kunde, the French translator was Guo Jiayi, the Japanese translator was Kozyo Satakichi, and the Managing Director (in charge of printing and bookkeeping) was Wan Huangchunfang. Kozyo Satakichi, who styled

set a precedent for the Japanese to compile a complete history of their own country." Dai Jitao in his *On Japan* said: "Many Chinese students went to study in Japan, and aside from Mr. Huang Gongdu's *Japan National History* written 30 years ago, I have not seen any other book specifically discussing Japan." Fu Sinian in his *Postscript to Mr. Fu Mengzhen's Collection* said: "The *National History of Japan* was completed before the First Sino-Japanese War, and in the fifty years since, no other book has replaced it." Zhou Zuoren in his *On Renjinglu Poems* (published in *Yijing*, Issue 25) said: "The chapters on Academic Records and Social Customs, which span four volumes, are unprecedented works, and to this day, they remain unparalleled, containing many excellent ideas and profound insights." Liang Rongruo in *The Biography of Ten Literary Figures* said: "After the Sino-Japanese War, this book gained widespread popularity. Kang Youwei and the Guangxu Emperor both read it in detail, which inspired their enthusiasm for the Reform Movement." Huang Yankai in his *Qifan Essays* said: "Mr. Huang's *National History of Japan* is rightly considered the only work that diplomats have written for their superiors as a diplomatic report since the beginning of our nation's diplomatic history. To call it unparalleled is not an exaggeration." All of the above are cited from Wu Tianren's *Chronological Biography of Mr. Huang Gongdu of the Qing Dynasty*.

Japanese scholar Masuda Wataru also praised Huang Zunxian's astonishing enthusiasm and effort in learning foreign cultures, as demonstrated in *Japan National History*. See Masuda Wataru, "On Huang Zunxian," in Masuda Wataru's *Chinese Literary History Research—The Literary Revolution and Predecessors*.

<sup>27</sup> Wu Tianren: *Chronological Biography of Mr. Huang Gongdu of the Qing Dynasty*, p. 54.

himself Tantang, was born in 1866 in Kumamoto City, Japan. Since six, he was enrolled in the Chinese academy of Takezoe Shinichirō. At 19, he went to Tokyo and enrolled in the First Higher School but dropped out due to illness. Afterwards, he continued to study Chinese on his own and joined *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shinbun* (东京日日新闻, aka *Tokyo Daily News*). Then, he went to Shanghai, where he became acquainted with Wang Kangnian and worked as a Japanese interpreter for *The Chinese Progress*. According to *Biographies of Various Families* (各家小传) of *Letter from Teachers and Friends of Wang Kangnian* (汪康年师友书札), Kozyo Satakichi “always did his job well” in *The Chinese Progress*. The articles in *The Chinese Progress*, including those from *Min’yūhō* (民友报), *Yomiuri Shinbun* (读卖新报), *Nihon Shinbun* (日本新报), *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi* (东京日日报), and *Kokumin Shinbun* (国民新报) were all translated by him. Liang became acquainted with Kozyo Satakichi while working as Chief Commentator in *The Chinese Progress*. The relationship between the two was recorded in a few existing documents, but we can still get some information from it. In 1897, on the tenth day of the first lunar month of Guangxu 23, Kang Youwei went to Guilin and stayed in Fengdong, discussing the opening of Sacred Society with Tang Jingsong and Cen Chunxuan. At that time, Kang had written to Liang in succession to discuss the opening of schools, the translation of books and newspapers, road construction, and other affairs in Guangxi. Liang mentioned Kozyo Satakichi in his reply to his mentor:

Japanese books contained nearly half of the same characters as Chinese, which was easy to translate into Western languages, but from my point of view, only a few Chinese people are proficient in Japanese. These people all have good incomes; how could they be hired in Guilin? Hence, the trend is to look for someone in Japan. During 30 years of the Japanese Restoration, almost no Japanese read Chinese books (Chinese people always think that it was easy for Japanese to learn Chinese, but it is not. Because Japanese found Chinese language hard to understand, so they have created *Iroha* to replace it. When it has become popular, rarely of Japanese could be proficient in Chinese). Only a few Japanese who are good at Chinese but are also conservative, they must have refused to translate the books that I wanted to be translated. This is what Kozyo Satakichi has described. Therefore, the situation in Japan could be worse, too.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Liang Qichao: *Letter to Kang Youwei on March 3*, in *Chronological Biography of Liang Qichao*, p. 78.