History 214
The Genesis of East Asia

Fall 2020

During the period from 200 BCE to 1200 CE East Asia acquired its definitive modern boundaries, encompassing three unified states (China, Korea, and Japan) that shared a common cultural, linguistic, and historical heritage. Only recently, though, have scholars begun to move beyond the histories of separate nation-states to consider the long-term process of political, economic, social, and cultural interaction among these three countries (and with Central, South, and Southeast Asia as well) that generated this distinctive East Asian civilization. This course will examine recent scholarship on the formation of East Asia from the different perspectives of national history, East Asian civilization, and world history.

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Office Hours: To be arranged on-line.

Written Assignments:

Since the composition of the class and the individual backgrounds of students may vary substantially, I will reserve final decisions about the written coursework until we gather as a class. My own preference is for students to write a research paper (whether based on secondary scholarship or primary sources will vary with the student’s level of preparation) that addresses a theme or issue raised in the course of the seminar, but I will consider other options (especially given the potential problem of access to libraries).

Reading Assignments:

Most readings—possibly all, depending on copyright waivers—will be posted in PDF format on the course website. It is highly unlikely that the library reserves will be in operation. I will not order any books through the bookstore, but you might wish to obtain your own copies of the less expensive books, which I’ve indicated below.

Assigned Books Available in Paperback Editions:

Bruce L. Batten, Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500-1300 (Hawaii, 2006)  
John W. Chaffee, The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China: The History of a Maritime Asian Trade Diaspora, 750-1400 (Cambridge, 2018)  
Wayne Farris, Buried Texts and Sacred Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan (Hawaii, 1998)  
Mark J. Hudson, Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands (Hawaii, 1999)  
Sarah M. Nelson, Gyeongju, Capital of Golden Silla (Routledge, 2019)
History 214 Schedule of Readings

Note: We will have a full session with assigned readings at the first class meeting

Week 1 (October 7): Defining East Asia


Week 2 (October 14): The Problem of Korean Origins


Week 3 (October 21): Defining Japan and Japanese

Mark J. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Hawaii, 1999), 1-55, 103-244

W. Wayne Farris, *Buried Texts and Sacred Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan* (Hawaii, 1998), 1-54

Bruce L. Batten, *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interactions* (Hawaii, 2003), 1-122
Week 4 (October 28): State Formation in Korea and Japan


Gina Barnes, ed., *State Formation in Korea: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Curzon, 2001), 1-53, 179-234


Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford, 1997), 1-166

Week 5 (November 4): The Tang World Order


Farris, *Buried Texts and Sacred Treasures*, 201-239

Bruce L. Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500-1300* (Hawai‘i, 2006), 1-104

Week 6 (November 11): Capitals and Courts

Chye-Kiang Heng, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes* (Hawai‘i, 1999), 1-36


Farris, *Buried Texts and Sacred Treasures*, 123-177

Matthew Stavros, *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan’s Premodern Capital* (Hawai‘i, 2016), 1-74
Week 7 (November 18): Cosmopolitan Culture in Eurasia


Michael Como, *Weaving and Binding: Immigrant Gods and Female Immortals in Ancient Japan* (Hawai’i, 2009), 1-83, 109-197

Week 8 (November 25): The Sinographic Cosmopolis


Week 9 (December 2): The East Asian Buddhist Realm

Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (Hawaii, 2003), 55-101

Sujung Kim, *Shinra Myōjin and Buddhist Networks of the East Asian “Mediterranean”* (Hawaii, 2019)


Week 10 (December 9): The Rise of the East Asian Maritime Trading Sphere

John W. Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China: The History of a Maritime Asian Trade Diaspora, 750-1400* (Cambridge, 2018), 1-123

Yiwen Li, “Networks of Profit and Faith: Spanning the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea, 838–1403” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2017), 1-118