

A Summary of the Research Reviews of East Asia Tongwen Academy of Japan

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Abstract

East Asia Tongwen Academy was the largest and oldest institute of culture & education opened in foreign countries in the Modern history of Japan, and many scholars have done researches into this special school. This paper summaries most of the scholars' study achievements so far obtainable, which are classified into three types, namely, comprehensive studies, studies of the graduation expedition and other special topic studies. Based on the researches, the author points out three issues that could be further researched into: 1) The real nature of the academy; 2) The historical study of China in modern times; and 3) Japan's tradition of learning from foreign cultures.

Keywords

East Asia Tongwen Academy of Japan, Summary of Research Review, Problems

1. Brief Introduction to East Asia Tongwen Academy of Japan

Japan set out its series of preparatory work for its "grand ambition" of appropriating China and unifying the whole Asia into one. Some of their major tasks include establishing schools, learning Chinese language and culture, better understanding of China's actual conditions and reserving personnel for their potential plan to invade China.

1.1. Founding of the Academy

From the middle of the 18th Century to the early years of the 19th Century, Japan set out its series of preparatory work for its "grand ambition" of appropriating China and unifying the whole Asia into one. Some of their major tasks include

establishing schools, learning Chinese language and culture, better understanding of China's actual conditions and reserving personnel for their potential plan to invade China [1].

In May of 1900, a Tongwen Academy, initiated by Konoe Atsumaro, the then president of the House of Peers in Japan, was established in Nanjing by an UGO so-called East Asia Common Culture Association. The Academy was originally named as Nanjing Tongwen Academy, with the purpose of "learning and understanding the national conditions of China, China's politics, economy and culture, and strengthening Sino-Japan trade and communication." In August of that year, due to the impact from the Boxer Movement, the Academy was forced to move to Shanghai and renamed as East Asia Tongwen Academy. The East Asia Common Culture Association, the Academy's administrative, was originally formed by merging two associations in November of 1898, one was East Asia Association and the other is Common Culture (Tongwen) Association. Since 1899, the East Asia Common Culture Association got its annual fund of 40,000 yen in the name of secret service expenses from Japanese Ministry of Foreign affairs to keep school routines. The key members of the Association then included the important politicians in Japan like, Inukai Tsuyoshi, Kishida Yin Hong, Konoe Atsumaro, Konoe Fumimaro, Ouchi Chozo, etc., most of whom later held important positions in the Academy.

The Academy mainly focused on China's national conditions, and the courses offered then included Chinese history, geography, literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, covering nearly all the subjects in the art and science fields. From 1900 to 1920, the Academy only recruited students from different prefectures in Japan, and the annual enrolment was from 50 to 100 students, whom were assigned to study at three departments, namely politics, commerce and agriculture & industry and were offered three-year courses all related to China's economy and commerce. From Sept. of 1920, the Academy started to recruit Chinese students in the Commerce Department, offering them 4-year courses, which terminated in 1931 when the Anti-Japanese War broke out. In 1939, with the approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Academy was upgraded into a university.

1.2. Special Feature of the Academy: Graduation Expedition

The most special feature of the Academy was its intensive focus on grass-root field research in addition to their textbook knowledge. During the 46 years of its existence in China, they trained nearly 5000 graduates, all of whom were required to do practical works (the same as the current study tour in the Japanese educational system) in their final semester or the final year of their school life. The students covered nearly every part of China excluding Tibet, researching into every aspect of China's local politics, economy, commerce, history, geography, culture, transportation, customs, etc. They gathered and compiled their research reports and submitted them to the Japanese political and military circles,

which later served as the most important resource of intelligence for Japanese aggression against China. Most of the graduates from the Academy were later directly or indirectly involved in the Aggressive War against China.

After moving to Shanghai, the Academy changed its campus for several times, first in Tuisheng Road (August of 1900-April of 1901), later in Guishu School at Gaochang Temple Street (May of 1901-July of 1913), and finally in Hongqiao Road of Xujiahui for nearly 20 years (April of 1917-Sept. of 1937). After the August-13 War in Shanghai broke out in 1937, the Hongqiao campus was burned into ashes and the Academy had to move to a campus in Nagasaki in Japan for some time. During the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945), the Shanghai Jiaotong University moved to the inland city of Chongqing [2], the Academy took the opportunity and occupied this campus for its own use, and continued running the school (April of 1938-Sept. of 1945) until Japanese surrender in 1945, and the Academy was forced to a close in China [3].

1.3. “Extension” of the Academy—Inherited by Aichi University in Japan

After the shut-down of the Academy in China, with the active work of its alumni and the support from East Asia Association, the former staff and teachers of the Academy, along with the students who once studied overseas, co-established the current Aichi University in Toyohashi of Aichi Prefecture in November of 1946. In 1947, the University accepted the 30,000 books once stored in the Academy, which literally functioned as the main part of the University Library. In addition to this, the former students’ school records and other original files of the Academy were secretly sent back to Japan and housed in the Library of Aichi University. All this offered a very good reason for Aichi University to take the Academy as its “biological parents”, and this conspicuously indicates that Aichi University is basically the extension and development of the Academy on the Japanese land. That Aichi University stands out in Japan as the key academic center of Chinese studies is inseparable from this part of history of the East Asia Tongwen Academy.

2. Researches into East Asia Tongwen Academy in Recent Years, the References as well as an Analysis

In recent years, many scholars from both China and Japan are researching into the Academy, and the writer of this paper, on the basis of the content of the researches, classified their productions into the following three categories (see **Table 1**).

Summary of the Major Research Results related to East Asia Tongwen Academy, chronologically made in Dec. of 2014.

2.1. Researches into the Overall History of the Academy

Major publications include: Introduction to Shanghai East Asia Tongwen Academy, a paper by Su Zhiliang (Archives and History, 1995.5), the references

Table 1. Summary of the major research results related to East Asia Tongwen Academy, chronologically made in Dec. of 2014. (items in the-above table will not be listed in the references of the article.)

No.	Time	Writer	Title	Content	Focus	Publisher	References
1	1990	Cao Maotang	A Brief Introduction to East Asia Tongwen Academy	About one part of the Academy's history	Comprehensive research	Selected Historical Materials of Xuhui District, Shanghai (1990.05)	Not specified
2	1995	Su Zhiliang	Review of East Asia Tongwen Academy	About the initiation, development at different stages of the Academy, and their historical functions	Comprehensive research	Archives and History (1995, 05, P39-45)	Materials the author collected while in Japan, including A General Introduction to the International Studies at Aichi University, History of East Asia Tongwen Academy, etc.
3	2004	Zhou Dexi	On the Nature of East Asia Tongwen Academy	About the relations between East Asia Common Culture Association and the Academy, as well as how the Academy was launched and shut down.	Comprehensive research	Journal of Lanzhou University (Social Sciences Edition) (2004, 5, P71-74)	Related literature in China and Japan
4	2006	Zhou Dexi	Study of East Asia Tongwen Academy	About the social background of the Academy when it was launched in China, as well as its enrolments, curriculums, teachers and students, facilities, financial support, the daily routines and campus changes	Comprehensive research	Doctoral Dissertation of Nankai University (2006)	Related literature in China and Japan
5	2000	Memorial Center of East Asia Tongwen Academy	Exhibition and Study held by the Memorial Center of East Asia Tongwen Academy	Exhibiting the school history, holding lectures, researches into the school history, regularly publishing books and magazines related to the Academy	Comprehensive research	School history exhibitions, educational leisure bases to the public, organizations that are researching into the history of the Academy	The location for the exhibitions and bases is in the campus of Aichi University, Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture. The major exhibited items are the original archives and documents
6	1989	Yoshihisa Fujita (Japan)	The Routes Taken by Students from East Asia Tongwen Academy in Their Graduation Expeditions	Introduction to the routes the students took in their graduation expeditions in China	Graduation Expeditions		East Asia Tongwen Academy Research Center at Aichi University
7	2000		A Research into the Graduation Expeditions of East Asia Tongwen Academy	Introduction to the graduation expeditions by 5000-odd students to almost every part of China excluding Tibet	Graduation Expeditions	Chinese Literature and History (2000, 1, P95-98)	The existing materials related to the graduation expeditions of the Academy which are housed in Japan

Continued

8	2000	Edited by Shanghai Friends Association, FengTianyu as the Chief Editor	Record of the Graduation Expeditions of East Asia Tongwen Academy	Specific introduction to the details about the records of the nine times of graduation expeditions to Shanxi, Mongolia, Sichuang, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Hongkong, Beihai, etc.	Graduation Expeditions	The Commercial Press (China), 2000, translated by Yang Hua, etc.	The original materials before 1935 related to the graduation expeditions which are housed at Aichi University
9	2001	Yoshiyuki U (Japan)	A Study of the Graduation Expeditions of East Asia Tongwen Academy	A systematic analysis and evaluation of the graduation expeditions done by the students	Graduation Expeditions	Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2001, 1	Related materials and archives that are housed at Aichi University and Fudan University.
10	2012	FengTianyu, Liu Bolin, Li Shaojun	Selected Materials of the Research Result about the Graduation Expeditions of East Asia Tongwen Academy in China (Volume I, II, III)	Comprehensive records of China's topography, transportation, geography, the people's livelihood, economy, politics, customs and practices, etc.	Graduation Expeditions	Social Sciences Academic Press (China) 2012. 11	Materials related to the Graduation expeditions housed both in China and Japan
11	1997	Shan Guanchu	The Preliminary Study of the Political Feature of East Asia Tongwen Academy, and a Comparison with the Western Churches in China	Expounding the unique nature of school-running on the basis of comparison	Special topic	Archives and History (1997)	Related materials related to the purpose and nature of the Academy
12	1998	Fang Jianchang	The Discovery and Value of the Archives of East Asia Tongwen Academy	The first-time introduction to the thousands of original archive materials of the Academy housed in The Bailin Temple Branch of the National Library of China for Ancient Books	Special topic	Archives and History (1998, 5, P52-59)	The school documents and materials related to the graduation expeditions of the Academy from 1036-1945, which are now housed in The Bailin Temple Branch of the National Library of China for Ancient Books
13	2002	Zhao Wenyan	Shanghai East Asia Common Culture College and Modern Japan's Aggression against China	An expounding of the nature of the Graduation expeditions which involved the students to search for the data needed by the Japanese invasion to China and trained the graduates to serve the invasion war	Special topic	Journal of Historical Science (2002, 9, P52-53)	Materials related to the nature of the Academy.
14	2011	Su Wei	The Study on East Asia Institute Collections in Nanjing Library	A systematic study of the books and materials that were handed over to China in 1946 when the Academy was shut down, which are now housed in Nanjing Library	Special topic	Scientific Information Development and Economy (2011, 27, P72-74)	The 100,000-odd books of the Academy that are now housed in Nanjing Library.

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15	2006	A project of the University History Research Group, Shanghai Jiaotong University	Selected Materials about the Relations between Shanghai Jiaotong University and Xiasha Association, Its Consortium Juridical Person	A trace to the historical relationships between Jiaotong University and East Asia Tongwen Academy, and a reflection upon the communication and co-operation between the two organizations in their pursuit to strengthen the Sino-Japan friendships	Special topic	Non-Official publication	The administrative archives, Newspaper digests, interviews of the alumni that are now housed in the Archives of Shanghai Jiaotong University and collected by the University History Research Group
16	2009	Marikiyo Matayoshi (Japan)	Shanghai East Asia Tongwen Academy and Okinawa	An introduction to the close contacts and exchanges among Shanghai, East Asia Tongwen Academy and Okinawa	Special topic	Journal of Hebei Normal University (2009, 9, P43-46)	Related literature
17	2014	Zhang Xiaoya	The Archives of Japan's East Asia Academy (College) in Xi'an Jiaotong University	An introduction to the photos and documents of East Asia Tongwen Academy, which are now housed in the Archives at Xi'an Jiaotong University	Special topic	History and Archives (2014, 4, P125-127)	Pictures, archives and document data that are now housed in the Archive at Xi'an Jiaotong University [4] [5]

of which are mainly based on the materials collected by the author while studying in Japan; A Study of East Asia Tongwen Academy, a doctoral dissertation by Zhou Dexi in 2006, which offers a systematic and comprehensive expound on the following aspects, including social background when it was founded, the school structure, the administrative, the funding resources, the enrolments, the curriculums, the teachers and students, the teaching, the graduation expedition, the campus changes, etc., and this dissertation mainly used the existing research results from both China and Japan for references; series of books and magazines about the history of the Academy, edited and published by the alumni association named Japanese Shanghai Friends Association as well as the East Asia Tongwen Academy Research Centre at Aichi University (See **Table 1** for details, No. 1-5).

2.2. Researches into the Most Special Feature of the Academy: The Graduation Expedition by the Students, in Which the Academy Took Great Pride

The graduation expedition required the students to do grass-root field researches into various parts of China, and they totally took more than 700 routes and covered nearly every part of China excluding Tibet. The most representative productions include: *The Research Routes in China by Students from East Asia Tongwen Academy*, a book written in 1989 by Yoshihisa Fujita, a famed Japa-

nese scholar; *Records of the Graduation Expedition by Students from Shanghai East Asia Tongwen Academy*, a monograph edited and published by Japanese Shanghai Friends Association in 2000; Investigation into the Graduation Expedition in China by Students from Shanghai East Asia Tongwen Academy, a paper by Feng Tianyu, a Chinese scholar, published in *Chinese Literature and History*, a Chinese journal in 2000; *Selected Translation of the Students' Investigation Results about China from East Asia Tongwen Academy (Volume I, II and III)*, a monograph published by Social Sciences Academic Press (China) in Nov. 2012; *A Study of the Graduation Expedition in East Asia Tongwen Academy*, written by Yoshiyuki U, a Japanese student studying in China and published by The Commercial Press in 2000, in which the author introduced the specific conditions about the investigations done the students in their graduation expeditions and offered some evaluations (see **Table 1** for details, No. 6-No. 10).

2.3. Researches into a Certain Aspect Related to the Academy

The aspects that have already been researched into cover the following, historical background of the Academy, nature of the school, final home and value of its books and archives, compiling the selected materials related, research centers in memory of the Academy, etc. Major research results include: East Asia Tongwen Academy in Shanghai and Okinawa, a paper written by MarikiyoMatayoshi, a Japanese scholar, translated into Chinese by Chen Jun, and published in *Journal of Hebei Normal University (Educational Science Edition)* in Sept. of 2009; Shanghai East Asia Common Culture College and Modern Japan's Aggression against China, a paper by Zhao Wenyan published in *Journal of Historical Science* in Sept. 2002; The study on East Asia Institute Collections in Nanjing Library, a paper by Su Wei published in a journal named *Scientific Information Development and Economy* in 2011 (27th edition), referencing the 100,000-odd books of the Academy that are now housed in Nanjing Library; The Discovery and Value of the Archives of East Asia Tongwen Academy, a paper by Fang Jianchang, published in a journal named *Archives and History* in May of 1998, referencing the school documents and materials related to the graduation expedition of the Academy, which are now housed in The Bailin Temple Branch of the National Library of China for Ancient Books; *Selected Materials about the Relations between Shanghai Jiaotong University and Xiasha Association, Its Consortium Juridical Person*, a non-official publication, referencing the administrative archives, newspaper digests, interviews of the alumni that are now housed in the Archives of Shanghai Jiaotong University and collected by the University History Research Group; Memorial Center of East Asia Tongwen Academy at Aichi University, which is an organization, located in the campus of Aichi University, Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, that specializes in studying the history of the Academy, and mainly exhibits and studies the original archives and documents of the Academy housed in Aichi University [6] (see **Table 1** for details No. 11-No. 17).

3. Some Issues Which Await Further Researches

3.1. Disparities Still Exist Regarding the Goals and Nature of the Academy among Scholars from China and Japan

From the historical perspective of higher education, East Asia Tongwen Academy could be viewed as a very special school, which was established by the Japanese people and recruited fine students from Japan, but the campus of the school was in a foreign country and the curriculum was focused on knowledge related to China and Chinese culture, which lasted for 46 years. After its shutdown in China in 1945, it turned to be the base for Aichi University, which is also worldly famed for its studies of and researches into China. All this presents a question to us: what are the goals and the nature of this special school? To the answer of this question, three views are prevalent, which can be classified into what follows: firstly, most of the Japanese scholars take it simply as an ordinary university which devoted itself to promoting cultural exchanges between China and Japan; secondly, most scholars from China view the Academy as a well-planned organization that, while highly holding the banner of learning Chinese culture, actually was collecting the data needed for its perspective aggression against China as well as training the personnel that would play big roles in its coming aggression. It reserved data for the war and manned the war as well; thirdly, some scholars from both China and Japan hold the stand that the Academy focused on learning culture in the early history of the school, but gradually evolved into an organization that served the aggression. After a comprehensive analysis of many archive materials, material objects and different research results, the writer of this paper stands on the side of the second view.

3.2. In Fact, a Study of the History of the Academy Can Open a Very Important Window to Understand the Culture and National Conditions of China in the Modern Time

The graduation expeditions done by the students and teachers from 1900 to 1945 were large-scale, well-organized and systematic grass-root field researches into nearly every part of China excluding Tibet, and their research results just function as a special “encyclopedia” that recorded the social reality of China from late years of the Qing Dynasty to the period of the Republic of China, which offers comprehensive and detailed research reports and precious pictures about the human geography, customs and practices, social life, and historical constructions during that period of time. One typical example is a very detailed research record of the famed Nestorian Monument in China which is now housed in The Stele Forest in Xi’an, which was done by a graduate of the Academy. Some scholars hold the view that the depth and width of this research far surpasses what Chinese counterparts did at that time in the same regard. In the past ten years, the writer of this paper has received many experts from different fields, like architectural history, mining and metallurgy, urban planning, etc., who came to our archives to consult the materials related to the Academy, which clearly shows the

academic and social values of the Academy and its research records. Therefore, with further digging into the historical data related to the Academy, their research results will definitely serve many fields of academic research as well as the social development of China.

3.3. While Researching into the History of the Academy, We Should Also Pay Much More Attention to the Determination and Efforts the Japanese Have Made in Learning Chinese Culture

Ever since the Sui and Tang Dynasties when Japan sent their envoys to China to learn Chinese culture, Japan has been modestly learning from China and the western countries and absorbed the foreign fine cultures and social management experiences to strengthen itself. The Academy has carried this tradition to the ultimate extent and did profound, thorough, comprehensive and systematic research into China and Chinese culture. Unfortunately, up till now, we do not have anything worthwhile to report, among Chinese people, in our awareness to learn from Japan in their perseverance, determination and serious attitude towards scientific research and study. In recent years, many people, on one hand, blindly followed the suit and yelled the slogans to resist Japanese commodities, and on the other hand, many others went on shopping spree to hunt for Japanese commodities. Just from this, we could get a rough idea that China still has a long way to go to realize its slogans like “Learning from foreign merits on technology to restrict foreign’ invasions!” and “Learning from the competitors!”

4. Conclusion

East Asia Tongwen Academy was founded in China by Japanese in 1900. This paper summaries most of the scholars’ study achievements for the Academy so far obtainable, which are classified into three types, namely, comprehensive studies, studies of the graduation expedition and other special topic studies. Based on the researches, the author points out three issues that could be further researched into: 1) The real nature of the academy; 2) The historical study of China in modern times; and 3) Japan’s tradition of learning from foreign cultures.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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