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## “Varieties of Periodization Enrich Historical Thinking”

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Periodization is the pivotal concept of historical thinking and historical narrative, designed as a historiological tool for making the chaotic past understandable, intelligible, and meaningful by dividing it into compartmentalized rulers along the timeline.

It was developed largely in the West in the early modern period under the dominance of Christian chronology, and became a key feature of the modern Western historiography, which developed historical studies into a cognitive discipline by proposing new perspectives and varied interpretations. This contrasts strongly with the East Asian experience.

In the East Asia, periodization has rarely been proposed, before the introduction of European historical thinking in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The reason is that in East Asia, a chronology based on the combination of era name system and sexagesimal cycle has been used, and these two chronologies has also been used as periodization. And, the dynasty changes have occurred every few hundred years in the East Asian continent, which was also used as periodization.

The combination of the three compartmentalized time, namely dynastic change (every a few hundred years), sexagesimal cycle (60 years) and era name (5-30 years) has been used as periodization to look back on the past.

Decades ago, there was a discussion in Europe that those people who do not have a concept of linear time like Christian chronology could not produce any historical thinking like Europeans, because only the concept of linear time give us the proper understanding of the past.

However, East Asian have produced huge piles of historical works more than the whole of European works so far. This is why the past was looked back by boxed or

compartmentalized times as continuous stack of time. To cover the lack of linear time as a concept of historical thinking, East Asian produced the handbooks of various chronological tables as a desk companion to get the sense of linear time since 2000 years before.

Therefore, I would like to discuss the following three issues in terms of periodization.

- (1) The three stages of periodization; national periodization, regional periodization and world periodization.
- (2) The relation between chronology and periodization.
- (3) Varieties of historical charts as visualized periodization; “timeline” by Adam Ferguson (1780), “Linian tu (historical chart)” by Sima Guang (1064), etc..

My conclusion is that the invention of various periodization and periodical vocabularies will make historical research more fruitful and fertile. The past is our only resource of wisdom and storage of knowledge.