

# **The Middle Ages in Japanese Textbooks**

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This paper was read at the Twentieth Medieval Workshop of the Joint Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America and the Medieval Association of the Pacific held 5-7 April 1990 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The special theme of the workshop this year was 'Mutual Images : Medieval Europe and Pre-Modern East Asia'. The task assigned to me was the Middle Ages in Japanese Textbooks. In order to tell how the Middle Ages was being taught in Japanese Textbooks, I showed a chart of illustrations. Although illustrations cannot tell the whole story of what the textbooks say, they may serve as a guide to have an image of it. The chart concerns foreign countries this time, and I should like to make a similar chart of Japanese middle ages, if opportunity allows.

It is fascinating to know how the middle ages are taught to boys and girls at schools in foreign countries. But it is not easy to show how it is being done: there are so many countries in the world and the middle ages extend over more than a thousand years. Furthermore, there are so many subjects that should be described for each country as well as for each century of the middle ages. The way I approach this problem is to show the chart of illustrations in Japanese textbooks. Although illustrations can not tell the whole story of what the textbooks say about the middle ages, you will get some images from them about what Japanese textbooks present concerning the middle ages.

Taking this approach, I have listed the illustrations of the middle ages for the history of foreign countries in Japanese textbooks. There are nineteen different textbooks approved by Japanese Ministry of Education for high schools, and the number of publishers is seven. One of them publishes five different textbooks, another four, and each of the others publishes two. Each textbook has from eight to ten coloured pages at the very beginning, where from ten to twenty-six coloured illustrations are shown. Those for the middle ages are about the half of the total; the percentage is comparatively high, because medieval things are visually beautiful: architecture, paintings, ceramics etc. Besides coloured illustrations, each textbook has many more monochrome illustrations. The difference between the coloured and monochrome illustration is ignored in the chart you have in your hand. The figures in the brackets tell you the number of the textbooks in which the illustrations appear. Some of you might be perplexed when the number is more than nineteen, eg. 'walled town [24]'; this means there are more than one illustration in one or several of the textbooks.

The middle ages in the chart are described as extending from the sixth century, though including the period at the end of the fifth century after the year of coronation of Clovis as the first King of the Franks. This is really

an epoch-making event for the formation of the European medieval world from the chaos of the Germanic migrations. This medieval world ends at the end of the fifteenth century, so that the Renaissance and Reformation are not referred to in the category of the middle ages. Japanese textbooks generally coincide with this way of periodization of Europe.

But demarcation is complicated in the world of Asia. Some textbooks (called them Group A) relate the history of Asian countries from the very early years to the end of the eighteenth century, and start a new chapter from the nineteenth century. Other textbooks (Group B), however, explain the later history of Asia after the description of the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe, because the sixteenth century stands coordinate in Europe as well as in China and other Asian countries. The third category of textbooks (Group C) divides the whole description into three parts: the first part extends from the ancients to the thirteenth century; the second part includes the fourteenth to the eighteenth century when European powers invade Asian and African areas; the third part begins with the nineteenth century. There are, however, several variations on each category group. For instance, some textbooks include the period from the ancient to the seventh or eighth century in the first part, and cover Asian countries from the ninth to the end of the eighteenth century in the second part, although putting in the same part historical descriptions from the fifth to the fifteenth century for European countries. Then the last part goes on to describe Europe from the sixteenth century and Asian countries after the nineteenth century.

In view of these differences, I set a line of demarcation of the middle ages from the sixth to the end of the eighteenth century as far as Asian and African countries are concerned. It is partly due to a comparative point of view in the world history that I set the sixth century as a starting point of the middle ages in Asian countries as in Europe. In a word, the European middle ages are from the sixth to the fifteenth century and Asian and African middle ages from the sixth to the eighteenth century.

It is necessary to add another few words about the geographical sections in the chart. Recently it is getting more recommended to teach history not as a history of one country but a part of the world history. The world history consists of several cultural circles each of which has the same religion as well as the similar manners and customs in a way of living. Therefore, this method of teaching history is useful for understanding the correlations among historical matters in the worldwide scale. As cultural circles or areas coincide with geographical areas in most cases, Japanese textbooks generally divide nine geographical sections: West Europe, East Europe, Egypt and West Asia, Central Asia and India, South-East Asia, East-Asia including China and Korea, Africa, Central & South America, and Oceania. As China has such an important place in Japanese history, a section for East Asia being divided into two, China is listed in a separate section. In order to conserve the space, and to condense the material, the chart combines several districts disorderly for convenience's sake.

Finally, I will show you a few slides as samples of the illustrations in Japanese textbooks<sup>1</sup>. As your reporter is a she, here we find seven slides all of which concern Asian women. Besides these slides, there are several scenes where women are working in Europe. Most of them come from the famous Book of Hours, known as *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. Since it is so famous, and most of you are already familiar with it, they are not shown here. It is said generally that not so many illustrations of women are shown in textbooks, as history is written generally according to the men's world.

As a conclusion, I could say that Japanese textbooks are starting to describe the middle ages from a wider point of view: (1) the demarcation of the period is becoming more flexible, as shown from the sixth to the eighteenth century, and the European way of demarcation for the middle ages which is normally from the sixth to the end of fifteenth century, which has

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1. indicate \* in the chart

# Subjects of Illustrations on the Middle Ages

## West Europe

Century    6            7            8            9            10            11            12

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### Subjects

#### Political Life

Clovis I  
(481-511)[1]

Karl der Grosse  
(768-814)[13]

Otto I der Grosse  
(936-973)[1]

Investiturstreit[6]  
(Humiliation of  
Canossa etc.)

Norman Conquest[11]  
(Bayeux Tapestry)

Castles[3]

Crusades([11-13th  
cent.])[8]

Lords and Knights[8]

#### Social & Economic Life

##### Town Life

##### Country Life

Plan of Manor[19]

Ploughings[3]

#### Religion

Benedictus of Nursia(480?-547)  
& his Rule(539)[4]

#### Art & Culture

Church Buildings[16]

Romanesque Church[14]

Monument inscribed by Rune Characters  
in Sweden[2]

## East Europe

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### Byzantine

Cathedrals[22]

Baptism of Prince of Kiev,  
Vladimir I(980-1015)[1]

Castles and Towns[3]

Ikon[3]

Mosaic[18]

# in Japanese Textbooks

13

14

15

16

17

18

Golden Bullie  
(1356)[6]

Captive of Bonifatius VIII  
(1303)[1]

Edward I's Parliament  
(1295)[1]

Hundred Year's War[9]

Wat Tylor &  
J. Ball(1381)[6]

Jeanne d'Arc  
(1412-31)[11]

Black Death  
(1348-49)[3]

Walled Town[24]

Town Plan[1] Marc Pole[7]

Merchants & Artisans[10] Guild Examination to Craftsmen[4]

Town Life[2]

Agricultural  
Labour from  
Miniatures[5]

Agricultural  
Labour from  
Psalters[4]

Agricultural  
Labour from  
Books of Hours[11]

Village Scenes[4]

Dancing of Peasants[1]

St. Francis  
(1181-1226)[1]

J. Wycliffe  
(c. 1320-84)[1]

Labour of Monks[2]

J. Huss  
(1369?-1415)[7]

Gothic Church[19]  
Plan of Gothic  
Church[1]

Stained Glass[10]  
Sculptures[2]

Universities[15]

Thomas Aquinas  
(1225?-74)[2]

Paintings of  
'Dance of Death'[3]

Story of Chivalry[3]

## Abbreviations

cent.	century
e.	early
m.	middle
l.	later
b.	built
rep.	repaired
W. paint.	Wall-painting

Heraldry of Russian Emperor[1]

Egypt & West Asia

Century	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Subjects							
Political Life							
	Muhammad (7570-632)[10]	Mecca, Kaba Temple	Pilgrims, Worship Scenes[24]				
			Koran[11]				
			All (656-61)[1]				
			Muawiya[1]	Castle of the Arabs in Spain[1]			
			(661-80)				
			Army of the Arabs[2]				
							Mamluk (Mamluke), Turkish slave soldiers (9-19th cent.)[5]
Mosque		Mosque of the Umayyads in Syria[1]		Mosque of Cordova[4]		Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo(10th cent.)[6]	Mosque of Seljukids[2]
		Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem(7th cent.)[6]					
			Minaret of Abbasids[1]				
Social & Economic Life							
Town Life				Town of Baghdad[6]		Bazaars, Merchants, Shops & Stalls[7]	
						Ships of Merchants[13]	
						Hospitals & Pharmacies[3]	
Science & Learning						World Map(c. 930) [3]	World Map (c. 1154)[1]
							Ibn Rushd (1126-91)[2]
						Ibn Sina (980-1037)[1]	
						Illustrated Sources of Islamic Studies[4]	
						Alchemist's Distiller Woodblock (10-12th cent.) [3]	
Art & Culture							Pitcher with Crystal Handle[1]
							Bridge of Seljukids (12th cent., Iraq)[1]
Drama & Literature							Umar Khayyam's poem (c. 1040-1123)[1]

America, Africa, Oceania

North & Central America						Indian's Family House in New Mexico[1] (about 800 rooms in the House, b. 919-1130)	
			Tolteca Pole (8-12th cent.)[1]				
						Maya Civilization[5]	
						W. paint. from the Site	
						Festival Procession	
						Part of Architecture	
						Palace, Shrine, Observatory	
South America							
Oceania							
Africa							
West							
Central							
East							Christian Church in Ethiopia[1]

Alhambra Palace  
in Granada[12]

Mohmet II[1]

Attack of King Suleyman to East Europe  
(1520-56)[8]

Procession of Sultan[1]

Shah Abbas[1]  
(1587-1629)

Army of Ottoman Empire[1]

Rumeli hisari, Fortress, b. by Ottoman Army  
for the Attack of Constantinople(15th cent.)[1]

Suleyman Mosque in Istanbul(1543)[10]  
Isfahan Mosque in Iran[12]

Town of Isfahan(1.17th cent.)[1]

Astrolabe in Cairo[3] Catalan World Map(1375)[2]

Map of Islamic World,  
the Center is Kaba Temple(1551)[1]  
Observatory in Istanbul[4]  
Navigation Map of Piri Reis,  
Ottoman Admiral(1513)[3]

Ceramic Platter[1]  
Arabesque Design[9]

Miniature Paintings(16th cent.)[1]

Arabian Nights[2]

Aztec Calendar[1]

Inca Civilization[8]

Site of Fortified Town in Peru  
Site of a Fort in Cuzco in Peru

Megalithic Site[2]

Building in the Ponape Islands  
Statues in Easter Island(9-17th cent.)

The Maori[2]

Carved Mask

King of Mali  
Kankan Musa(1312-37)  
His World Map[2]

Mosque of Marrakesh Morocco(b. 13-16th cent.)

Bennin Empire(13th cent.->)  
King and his follower  
Brass Sculpture(15th cent.)  
Town of Bennin(e. 17th cent.)

Site of Zimbabwe Shrine in Monomotapa Kingdom(c. 12-17 cent.)[4]

Great Mosque in Kenya

(b. 1450)

Central Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia I

Century 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Countries

Central Asia  
Timurid Empire

Tibet Sron btsan sgam po.  
King of Tibet(7-849)[1]  
Letters & Paintings of Tibet[2]

India Site of Ellora Temple(4-12th cent.)[1]  
Site of Ajanta Temple(6th cent.)[8]  
Dance of Sufies[5]

South-East Asia  
Cambodia

Laos

Burma

Buddhism Tower of  
Pagan Period  
in Burma[1]

Vietnam

Thailand

Malaya

Indonesia

Site of Borobudur  
Buddhism Temple in Java(8-9th cent.)[14]

Korea

Hunting Scene of Warriors  
in Ko-ku-ryo 高句麗  
W. paint of a Tomb[5]

Inlaid Ceramics of  
Ko-ryo Period[6]

Riding Warriors  
in Sin-ra 新羅  
W. paint of a Tomb[2]\*

Temple of Sin-ra  
in Kyong-ju(慶州)  
(b. 6th cent.; rep. 8th cent.)[4]

Wood-block Painting of  
Buddhism Text  
高麗大藏經[5]

Timur  
(1336-1405) [11]  
Town of Samarkand [1]  
Site of Observatory  
in Samarkand [1]  
Site of Bokhara [1]  
Teon-Kha pa  
(1357-1419) [1]

Mausoleum of Timur  
in Samarkand [4]

Potala Palace in Lhasa  
(b. 7th; rep. 17th cent.) [5]

Painting of Lamaism Buddha [1]

King's Tomb of Tughlukids  
(1320-1413) [1]

Babur  
(1526-30) [2]  
Akbar  
(1556-1605) [4]

Shah Jahan  
(1627-58) [1]

Early Islamic Architectures [6]

Statues & Paintings of Hindu God of Siva [8]

Hindu Temples [3]

Sivaji  
(1674-80) [1]

Agra Castle [1]

Taj Mahal [16]

Mughal Paintings  
(16-17th cent.) [11]

Raj put Paintings [6]

Angkor Thom in Cambodia  
(b. 9th; rep. 12-13th cent.) [2]  
Angkor Vat in Cambodia  
(b. 12th cent.) [15]  
Khmer Characters [1]

Buddhism Tower in Laos  
(b. 1565) [1]

Monument for the Victory  
over Yuan Invasion  
in Vietnam [1]  
Tzu Now Characters  
(13-14th cent., Vietnam) [4]

Monument for Rama Khanheng,  
Inscribed by Thai Characters  
(1292) [1]  
Thai Characters [2]

Great Statue of Buddha of Ayutaya  
in Thailand [1]  
Japanese Settlement of Ayutaya  
(c. 17th cent.) [1]

Great Mosque in Kuala Lumpur  
in Malaya (Sultan Suleyman Mosque) [2]

Marionette in Indonesia [5]

Ri Song-Kye [1]  
李成桂

Japanese Invasion  
to Korea by Hideyoshi's  
Army (1592-93, 97-98) [3]

Picture for Agriculture [1]

Invention of Hangul (1446) [9]  
Instrument to measure  
Rainfall [3]  
Powerful War Ships  
invented by 李舜臣 [11]

Pictures of Everyday Life in  
Ri-tsi Joson [2]  
Weaving  
Dancing & Magic

East Asia II. China

Century 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Subjects

Politicals

Life

Yang Di(604-18)[2]  
煬帝

Tse-t'ien-wu-hou(690-705)[3]  
則天皇后

Auan Zong(712-56)[1]  
玄宗

Tai Zhu(960-76)[3]  
宗太祖

Wang An-shih(1021-86)[7]  
王安石

Great Revolt of Hang Chao(875-84)[1]  
黃巢

Examination for Higher Officials. (from Sui Period to 1905)科學[10]

Tang W. paint. of Tombs: [12]

Embassy from Foreign Countries from the Tomb of Prince 尊懷太子 (a. 7th cent.)

Dancing Scene from the Tomb of Prince 淮安靖王李壽\*

Serving Ladies from the Tomb of Princess 永泰公主 (e. 8th cent.)\*

Uyghur Noblemen in W. paint. from Tomb of Turfan(8-9th cent.)[3]

Uyghur Lady Playing Go 碁, painted on Silk from Tomb of Turfan[1]\*

Hunting Scene of Warriors from the Tombs of

Liao Kings and Queens in Ching-ling 慶陵

(c. 10-e. 12th cent.)[1]

Life of a Landlord in Sung Period

from the Tomb of Land-lord[1]

Social & Economic

Life

Lady's Maids in Iranian Fashion in Tang Period[9]\*

Picture for Silk Beating  
低練圖(e. 12th cent.)[3]\*

Picture of Higher Society[2]

Feast of High Officials

in Later Tang Period(10th cent.)

Salon of Sung Knight Society

Busy Life in the Town of 開封

(Ching-ning-sang-he-tu

清明上河圖) in Sung

Period[15]

Selling Tea at a Stall[1]

Guild Hall of 山陝西會館[1]

Town Life

Country Life

Picture of Agriculture[1]

(in W. paint. of Tun-huang 敦煌)

Picture of Agriculture in Sung

Period[7]

Illustration for Reclaimed

Fields in Sung Period[1]

Great Canal(b. 584-610)[1]

from the North to the South

Customs of Various Tribes in China: [9]

Warriors of Tu-chueh(552-74); Liao(816-1125) Noblemen going for Hunting;

Hu-ren riding on Camels; Officials, Preachers, Court Ladies in Hsi-hsia;

Jurchin's Fashion

Science

Religion

Monument of Christian Mission[2]

Buddha's Statues in Tun-huang 敦煌 - Yun-kang 雲崗 - Lung-wen 龍門[10]

Pagoda of Buddhism Temple in Xi-an 西安(慈恩寺)[5]

W. paint. of 敦煌(Tributing from the Western Countries of China)[6]

Hsuan-chuang 玄奘(7600-64)[2]

Chu Hsi(1130-1200)[1]

朱熹[1]

Art &

Culture

Tang Ceramics used for being

buried in Tombs 唐三彩[15]

Ceramic Factories and Working Scenes in Jing-de-zhen 景德鎮[8]

Masterpieces of Chinese Ceramics

from Sung to Ming Period[10]

Paintings in Sung Period

Preaching for Women (copy from 7th cent.) [12]\*

女史箴圖

花鳥月圖[12]

Tutor teaching two children at Home[1]

Publisher of Moral Books[1]

Letters and characters of Various Tribes in China[50]

(Kitan, Hsi-hsia, Jurchin, Tu-chueh, Uyghur, Mongol,

h Phags-pa, Tibet)

Calligraphy of Yen Chen-ching 顏真卿(709-857)[1]

International

Relations

Ships for Missions & Students to China in Tang and Ming Period 遣唐使船・遣明使船[5]

Japanese Comparative Figure for Capital City Plans

of Tang Dynasty and Japan[7]

- Mongol Khans  
Chinggis Khan (1206-27) [9]  
Ogotai Khan (1229-41) [1]  
Khubilai Khan (1260-94) [4]
- Hong Wu Di (1368-98)  
洪武帝 [1]  
Zi Jin Chen Palace (b. 1402-24)  
紫禁城 [5]  
Tian Tan 天壇  
Shrine for Emperor's Warship (rep. 1420, 1530) [3]  
Land Survey Books 魚鱗圖冊 (from Sung to Ching Period) [9]
- Li Zi-chen (1606-45)  
李自成 [1]  
Nurhaci (1616-26) [2]  
Kang Xi Di (1661-1722)  
康熙帝 [2]  
Yong Zheng Di (1722-35)  
雍正帝 [1]  
Qian Long Di (1735-95)  
乾隆帝 [10]  
Country Palace of Ching Emperors 坤明園 [1]  
East Gate of Shan-hai-Kuan 山海關東門 [1]  
Advisers for Ching Emperors [28]  
Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)  
Xu Guang Qi 徐光啓 (1562-1633)  
Adam J. Schall von Bell (1591-1666)  
Town of Su-chou 蘇州 (photo.) [3]  
Twon of Hang-chou 杭州 (photo.) [1]

Paper Money & Silver Pass  
in Yuan Period [14]

Special Hair Style 弁髮 & Barbans in Ching Period [7]

Picture for Agriculture in Ming Period [1]  
Illustrated Book: [21]  
Industrial Implements and Machines called 天工開物 (17th cent.)

Compass: [3]  
Guns: Sung & Ming Periods  
Guns: [3]  
Sung, Yung, Ming Periods

Observatory [3]  
Peking Palace in Ming Period  
Peking Observatory by Ferdinand Verbiest  
World Map [3]  
坤輿万国图 (1602 by Matteo Ricci)  
坤輿全图 (1674 by Verbiest)  
皇舆全览图 (1. 17th cent.)

Shrine of Goddess protecting Sea-farers in Macao [1]

Drama & Literature  
Yuan and Ming Periods [6]  
Rashid al-Din  
(1247?-1318) [1]

Paintings  
in Ming Period  
戴其昌 et al. [2]

Western Style of Chinese Ceramics  
by Castiglione (1688-1766) [2]  
Dictionary of Five Languages in China called  
五体清文鑑 (Jurchin, Tibet, Mongol, Uyghur,  
China, m. 18th cent.) [1]  
Collections of Chinese Classics 四庫全書 and  
their Libraries (m. 18th cent.) [2]

Japanese Pirates off the Coast of China 13-16th cent. [4]  
Ships to repress Japanese Pirates [1]

Yuan Army [13]  
Yuan Invasion to Japan  
Yuan Invasion to Europe  
War Ships of Yuan

Ships of Cheng Ho 鄭和 [2]

been the universal standard, is no longer in the premier position; (2) a way to describe history according to a cultural circle helps us to have a large picture of the detailed movements and relations of the medieval world. In short, Japanese textbooks aim to teach history as a subject to cultivate thinking abilities rather than to accumulate voluminous bodies of knowledge. This point should be appreciated, although there is much vox populi against present Japanese textbooks, for the Japanese invasions of Asian countries are not described properly, especially in the field of modern history. This paper cannot discuss anything about this problem, leaving it as a later problem. But I have shown you how many and what kinds of illustrations you will find concerning the foreign middle ages in Japanese textbooks, as a help to let you know how the middle ages of your country is taught at Japanese schools. If given another chance, I would like to do a parallel study of the Japanese middle ages as it is presented in Japanese textbooks.