

Editor's Note

Except for Zaoxia Cheng's paper which provides a systematic critique of the U.S. policies toward Tibet based on the author's archival research both in China and abroad, the articles and book reviews in this volume focus on the history of the Six dynasties, a sub-area of the history of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties.

As is widely known, in a time span of approximately three hundred years, between the early third century and the late sixth century, a large number of regimes such as the Cao Wei, Shu Han, Sun Wu, Western Jin, Eastern Jin, Sixteen Kingdoms, Liu Song, Qi, Liang, Chen, Northern Wei, Eastern Wei, Western Wei, Northern Qi, and Northern Zhou were established in the agrarian China proper. They are collectively known as the Three Kingdoms, Two Jins, and Northern and Southern dynasties, or if Wei-Jin represents the Three Kingdoms, they are called the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties. Among all of those many regimes, the Sun Wu, Eastern Jin, Liu Song, Qi, Liang, and Chen established their capitals in Jianye or Jiankang (today's Nanjing, Jiangsu Province) for most of the period. Therefore, they together are called the Six dynasties. In other words, the Six dynasties refers to the temporally continuous six southern regimes that established their capitals in Jianye or Jiankang and occupied the territory south to the Qinling Mountains, near the Han River (middle reaches) and the Huai River.

From the perspective of macro history, the history of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties is characterized by its comparability with the Qin and Han dynasties and the Sui and Tang dynasties: profound disunity, complex ethnic relations, frequent population migrations, special social structures, changing laws and regulations, accelerated development in various areas in the South, and the highly hybrid social formations in the North. If we narrow the scope to just the Six dynasties, the historical period emerges with distinctive regional features of the South, in addition to the above-mentioned characteristics of the era in general. Therefore, the Six dynasties can reasonably be viewed as a temporal and territorial unit for research. Comparatively speaking, however, research on the Six dynasties has produced far fewer works and attracted less scholarly attention than those about the northern regimes in the same period. This lack of attention is true not only in China, but also in Japan, Korea, Europe, and the U.S. as well.

To rectify this lack of scholarship on the history of the Six dynasties, this journal invited Professor Axiang Hu from the Department of History at Nanjing

University to collect articles with broad topical appeal and rich content for this volume.

In “The Retrospect and Prospect of Sixty Years’ Researches about the History of the Six dynasties in the Mainland of China,” Tianshi Li offers comment on the existing body of research on the history of the Six dynasties since the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Li also puts forward several aspects of Six dynasties history that future researchers should pay attention to.

Xuefeng Zhang, in his “The Formation of East Asian World during the 4th and 5th Centuries: A Study Based on Chinese Sources,” analyzes the formative role of the politics and diplomacy of the Eastern Jin and Southern dynasties in developing and transforming state forms in Koguryō, Paekche, Silla, and various Wa kingdoms in East Asia. He argues that the enfeoffment system laid the foundation for the inter-state relationships, which took shape in pre-modern East Asia.

Yongping Wang’s “Rupture and Continuity: Scholar-Official Clan Culture in the Six dynasties and the Legacy of Chinese Civilization” investigates types of the scholar-official clan in the Six dynasties and its cultures in various regions. It illustrates the scholar-official clan’s actions and roles in society and explores the reasons why Chinese civilization has stood out as the sole continuous and undisrupted civilization in humankind’s history.

Axiang Hu’s “The Population Migration and Its Influence in the Period of the Eastern Jin, the Sixteen States, and the Northern and Southern dynasties” summarizes the basic situations and patterns of population migration in this historical period. The article also discusses the use of source materials and research methods. Its exploration of the impact of population migration offers an excellent footnote to Chen Yinquē’s famous assertion that “The great transformations in three centuries of the Two Jins and the Northern and Southern dynasties resulted from the massive flows and migrations of the population.”

The three book reviews focus on varied issues. In his review of *Dongjin Nanchao Qiao zhoujunxian yu qiaoliu renkou yanjiu*, Xiangjun Kong puts special emphasis on the author’s rigorous research and valuable contribution. Hu Li’s review of *Weijin Nanbeichao wuli zhidu kaolun* praises the book’s emphasis on empirical studies on rituals and demonstration of related social phenomena. Weiguang Deng’s review of *Zhongguo muzang shi* appreciates the editor’s effort to select and remark on archeological findings by referring to historical works.

In sum, the four articles on the Six dynasties in this volume both exemplifies the research interests of Chinese scholars specialized in this historical period. The three book reviews regarding publications on Imperial China show current Chinese scholars’ interpretations of historical materials, research into systems and institutions, and understanding and use of redaction criticism.