

**Reflections on the Revolution in Franch (sic):
Anecdotes and Global Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-century East Asia**

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Anecdotes were the foundation in nineteenth-century China and Japan of a consciousness of recent historical events in Western Europe: this, at least, is the contention of my presentation. To demonstrate this point, I focus on understandings of the French Revolution and its aftermath -- here construed as including events up to the Bourbon Restoration -- that circulated in forms of periodical and other popular print through the port towns of Canton, Ningbo, Shanghai, Nagasaki, and Yokohama, from the early 1830s until the early 1870s. Particular attention will be placed on how these anecdotes manifested themselves in the discourse of Japanese "restorationists" who overthrew the Tokugawa shogunate and established the new Meiji government over the course of 1867-8. From this exploration, I aim also to encourage thought concerning two corollary themes: first, concerning the materials we use to construct a connected intellectual history of revolution in the context of nineteenth-century Europe and East Asia; second, concerning the more fundamental relation between anecdotes and history during a formative period for the historical discipline in the nineteenth century.