Linnaeus, Buffon, Kant, Blumenbach and many other great luminaries of modern racial thought lived and worked in the eighteenth century. It was indeed a seminal period in the construction of European racial outlook, and as the two pervious chapters demonstrate, East Asians did not escape this development. Comprising a large segment of mankind and seen largely as a single group, they were an integral part of a new racial taxonomy and hierarchy that materialized in the final decades of that century. No wonder then, that by 1800 East Asians were perceived and described in completely different terms than a century earlier. And yet, if at the beginning of this period very few Europeans could recognize an East Asian, little of this picture changed towards its end. It was only during the late nineteenth century when Chinese and Japanese became a relatively common sight in the West, and especially in the Western imagination. Their visibility was associated with greater animosity. It was chiefly after 1800 that East Asians became the target of blatant racism and were denigrated as inherently inferior. Finally, during this period, the twentieth century in particular, even the geographical center of the discourse on East Asians transformed. It moved westward and American scholars came to be at least as important as their European colleagues in constructing racial images of these people.

In terms of broad racial division and taxonomy, after 1800 Western scholars began to share a virtual consensus concerning the unity of East Asians. These scholars remained at odds with each other regarding the number of races mankind is divided into. Nor did they agree necessarily about the sub-division of the large race which was said to be living in East Asia or about the names with which these sub-groups should be referred to. However, none of them suggested thereafter that the groups inhabiting this region did not belong to the same single large ‘stock’ or ‘race.’ In his monumental *Le Règne animal* (1817, 2nd ed. 1828) the great French anatomist and zoologist Baron Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), for example, considered East Asians to comprise the bulk of the Mongolian race which he
divided into three branches. The first branch consisted of the Chinese—“the earliest and most civilized branch not only of this race...but of all the nations upon earth.” The second branch consisted of the Japanese, Koreans, Manchus, and “nearly all the hordes which extend to the northeast of Siberia,” whereas the Tartars and Kalmyks formed the third branch (see Fig. 4.1).1

On the other side of the Channel, the physician and ethnologist James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848), Britain’s foremost writer on race during this period, held a similar perspective. Although he initially had certain misgivings about the affinity between the peoples of East Asia, the final edition of his colossal *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind* (1813, 3rd ed. 1836–47) maintains that the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese belong to the same large racial group or family as their neighbors despite their linguistic differences.2 “If we regard their physical characteristics,” Prichard noted, “one sort or stock of people, no human races bear a stronger resemblance...They all have the same physical type.”3 By the late nineteenth century, views of the affinity between the various types of East Asians remained firm. Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919), Germany’s leading naturalist at this period may serve as a case in point. In the eighth edition of his popular book *History of Creation* (1889), he divided mankind into four large groups and further divided these into 12 species and 36 races. Haeckel referred to East Asians as the Euthycomi (stiff haired) group, and, more specifically, labeled them *Homo Mongulus* (Mongolian man). Their color, he specified, is always distinguished by a yellow tone, “sometimes a light pea green, or even white, sometimes a darker brownish yellow.”4

By the turn of the century there seemed to be a consensus regarding the close ties between East Asians. The Irish anthropologist Augustus Henry Keane (1833–1912), who served as the vice-president of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, shared this outlook with a slight variation. He considered all East Asians to be Mongols. In his *Man: Past and Present* (1899), Keane divided them into southern Mongolians (Chinese) and northern Mongolians (Japanese and Koreans). In a short introduction to each racial category, he referred to the temperament of these two strains, displaying the lingering effect of Linnaeus’ initial characterization of each race in the tenth edition of his *Systema naturae*

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1 Cuvier, 1831, I: 54.
3 Prichard, 1851–60, IV: 528.
4 Haeckel, 1889; Haeckel, 1899, II: 416.