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Adjusting to the New World

**Japanese Opinion Leaders of the Taishō Generation
and the Outside World, 1918-1932**

Dick Stegewerns

Adjusting to the New World

Japanese Opinion Leaders of the Taishō Generation and the Outside World, 1918-1932

PROEFSCHRIFT

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Note on transcription and usage

Japanese, Korean and Chinese names have been rendered with the family name preceding the given name in accordance with East Asian practice. The romanisation of Japanese words and names follows the Hepburn system. With a few exceptions, such as the ‘established’ transcriptions of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, Chinese words and names have been romanised according to the *pinyin* system.

Unless it is specified otherwise or evident from the direct context, the terms ‘the war’, ‘wartime’, ‘prewar’, and ‘postwar’ in this book are used in relation to the First World War. The term ‘interwar’, when not explicitly used within the European setting of the interbellum of 1918-1939, refers to the time period 1918-1932, i.e. from the end of World War One to the official Japanese recognition of Manchukuo (the latter point in time being roughly equal to the start of the so-called ‘Fifteen Year War’).

I have omitted the place of publication of Japanese books unless they were published outside Tokyo. Neither do I specify the place of publication of books from the various university presses. The collected writings of Yoshino Sakuzō (*Yoshino Sakuzō Senshū*, 15 vols. & 1 supplementary volume, Iwanami Shoten, 1995-97) are abbreviated as *YSS*.

INTRODUCTION

JAPANESE VIEWS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The aim of this work is to shed light on the intellectual conceptualisation of ‘the national self’ and the outside world as a key factor in foreign policy changes in prewar modern Japan. The research is focussed on Japanese views of itself and the various Asian and Western others during the period 1918-1932 and is based on case studies of contemporary opinion leaders. After an analysis of their fundamental notions of mankind, civilisation, history, progress, modernity, and the relations between individual and society, between society and the state, and between the state and international society, I chronologically trace continuities and discontinuities in their image of Japan and their views of the outside world as they anticipate and respond to such diverse stimuli as the First World War, the new format of multilateral treaties, the decline of the pro-imperialist ‘civilisation’ discourse in favour of a new anti-imperialist ‘ethnic nationalism’ discourse, the increased power of the United States, the threat of an increasingly nationalist Asian neighbour, and the challenge to the ‘Anglo-Saxon world order’ by communist Russia and fascist Italy. In doing so I will try to answer such questions as how in this timeframe the Japanese defined world order and what they considered to be the rules of and the conditions for taking part in this world order. I will analyse which countries they were aware of and thus formed the Japanese outside world and how they ranked these visible countries and Japan itself within this world order. Moreover, I will trace what they considered to be Japan’s main aims in this world, and which countries they considered to be models, allies or enemies from the viewpoint of the accomplishment of these foreign policy aims.

The approach I have adopted is distinct in the sense that I take an in-depth look at contemporary opinion leaders, sometimes referred to as the *Taishō bunmei hihyōka* (*Kulturkritiker* of the Taishō period), and thus do not focus on the politicians, diplomats and military men that were directly involved in the decision-making process or implementation of foreign policy. Moreover, I do not limit my scope to those few men who, often because of their somewhat atypical ideas, stand out from our present day perspective. The main criterion in the selection of my case studies has been the popular influence in their day. Accordingly I neither deal with the authorities on diplomatic history and international law writing for such specialised journals as *Gaikō Jihō*. Instead I have ended up with a small group of opinion leaders with a wide scope of attention and a disciplinary background invariably different from international relations, whose major common feature is that they commented on international relations and foreign policy on a continual basis during the whole or most of the period 1918-1932 in the main popular written media of their day. Since I adopt a long-term perspective of certain opinion leaders which not merely includes their most famous books and articles but tries to cover all their publications relevant to the subject, this research gives a more accurate picture of the changes their opinions underwent. It gives detailed answers to questions pertaining to the ‘when’ and ‘why’ in changes of attitude, pays attention to contradictions and inconsistencies, and it attempts to demonstrate the relative weight of one opinion within the chaos that a person’s views of the outside world often tend to be. In contrast to various related studies which focus on Japanese views of the national self or a specific country, in the case of the interwar period most often China and the United States, I try to give a total picture of Japan’s intellectual map of the world (which, of course, did not cover the whole world). And finally this work places opinion leaders’ views of the outside world firmly within the natural environment of their total outlook on man, society, history and progress in order to clarify the strong interconnections.

Apart from the contribution this work attempts to make to the scholarly debate on the reasons for the changes in Japan's foreign policy in particular and on continuity and discontinuity in prewar modern Japanese history in general, it also addresses Japanese ideas on nationalism, regionalism (including Asianism) and internationalism. In this sense my research is in dialogue with the steadily increasing recent literature on the issues of national identity, transnational regional identity, and the dilemma between nationalism and internationalism, both in general and in the specific case of Japan. It is to be hoped that it will not merely help us in understanding the historical development of Japanese attitudes towards the outside world and their own nation, as there are also lessons to be learned from Japan's first experience in the 1920s and 1930s with a world order based on multilateral treaties and institutions. Although this research refrains from offering predictions about the future, it carries an implicit argument about Japan's reaction to the outside world in our present age of increasing integration and globalisation.

CHANGE, CONTINUITY, AND DIVERSITY IN JAPANESE VIEWS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The Manchurian Incident of September 1931 and the subsequent official recognition of the puppet state Manchukuo in 1932 are generally considered to be an important watershed in modern Japanese history and the former is often positioned as the start of a 'Fifteen Year War', in which Japan's violent reaction to the rise of Chinese nationalism and its challenge to the world order of the day, the so-called Versailles-Washington system, eventually led to its ruin.¹ Research dating from before the Second World War up until this day has come up with very diverse reasons for this change in policy. Some scholars have advocated a combination of arguments such as the increasing Chinese nationalist threat and Soviet communist threat to Japan's position in Manchuria, the deep economic and financial crises of the 1920s aggravated by the mismatch of the lifting of the gold embargo and the Wall Street Crash and the ensuing Great Depression, and the rise of economic protectionism and the formation of regional economic blocks.² Others have emphasised more structural arguments such as the aggressive character of Japan's foreign policy ever since the beginning of the Meiji-period (1868-1912),

1 Although the Tokyo Tribunal judged Japanese war crimes dating back to 1931, the overall narrative of a 'Pacific War' which was imposed on Japan during the American occupation resulted in 1941 being generally assumed as the start of 'the war', a view which has proven to be extremely tenacious. Left-wing Japanese scholars who pointed out the fact that China and not the United States functioned as Japan's main opponent and thus stressed the continuous nature of Japan's aggression instead introduced the term *jūgonen-sensō* (Fifteen Year War) into the Japanese vocabulary, which ever since has occupied a prominent place in the Japanese academic and popular discourse on the war and has even appeared in a few officially recognised text books. The concept of a 'Fifteen Year War' itself has been almost completely absent in Western academia, but recently there are more and more instances of books and workshops which define the period 1931-1945 as either 'wartime Japan' or 'imperial Japan'.

2 Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism - The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931*, Harvard University Press, 1965; Satō Seizaburō, 'Kyōchō to jiritsu to no aida - Nihon', in Nihon Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nenpō seijigaku 1969 - Kokusai kinchō kanwa no seiji katei*, Iwanami Shoten, 1970; Hosoya Chihiro & Saitō Makoto, eds, *Washinton Taisei to Nichi-Bei kankei*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978.

nation and state formation and nationalist education on the basis of the strongly exclusionist ‘emperor system’ ideology, the weak basis for ‘democratic’ party rule, and the comparatively autonomous position of the armed forces within the framework of the Meiji Constitution, or the inevitable aggressive imperialist nature of mature capitalist societies.³ Yet others have pointed out more incidental circumstances such as the unpopularity and thus instability of the party cabinets at the beginning of the 1930s because of the lack of appealing party leaders and a series of scandals involving the established political parties.⁴

As yet there is anything but consensus on the problem which element contributed most to the change in foreign policy in 1931 and, therefore, many historians seem to have chosen for a neutral combination of most of the above-mentioned arguments. Nonetheless, seldom has there been any persuasive explanation as to how such a swift and drastic volte face in Japan’s policy was possible. This has caused some scholars to cast doubt on the image of 1931 as a clear-cut watershed. Are the image of the Japan of the 1920s as an internationally cooperative country and the image of the Japan of the 1930s as an aggressive and extremely nationalist nation not oversimplified and have the continuities not been lost sight of when discontinuity was so much emphasised? In the first decades after the Second World War Japanese Marxist scholars have somewhat contradictorily pointed out the many cases of liberal intellectuals who from their point of view recanted in the 1930s although they at the same time often emphasised that even in the 1920s these same figures can be ‘exposed’ as nationalists and imperialists.⁵ Recently there have also been several studies emphasising continuity in the sense that even after 1931 the ‘Taishō Democracy system’ was still intact.⁶

This research also stresses continuity, although it does not go so much into the institutional side and it definitely is not aimed at passing a moral judgment on the historical personae being studied. On the basis of extensive reading of diverse Japanese primary sources from the first half of the past century, I became increasingly convinced that the general picture which so much stresses discontinuity between the democratic 1920s and the militaristic 1930s needed considerable elaboration.⁷ In the first place, I found there was a need to make a

3 This line of argument is most prominent in Japanese Marxist and Chinese and Korean nationalist treatments of prewar modern Japan, but the continuing international debate on the question whether ‘Taishō democracy’ was groundwork or facade and whether Japan’s aggression was a strongly supported national policy or an aberration proves that the notion of structural fallacies in prewar Japanese society and state system remains strong everywhere. For an analysis of the ‘Taishō democracy’ debate, please refer to chapter 1.

4 Banno Junji, ‘Seitō seiji no hōkai’, in Banno Junji & Miyachi Masato, *Nihon kindaiishi ni okeru tenkanki no kenkyū*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1985; Itō Yukio, *Taishō Demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987.

5 Most representative is Shisō no Kagaku Kenkyūkai, ed., *Kyōdō kenkyū - Tenkō*, 3 vols, Heibonsha, 1959-62, a vast body of research into ‘the recantation’ of prewar socialist and liberal intellectuals by their postwar equivalents, who on the whole are not as critical of their predecessors as some of the more hardline Marxist scholars and opinion leaders are.

6 Sakai Tetsuya, *Taishō demokurashii taisei no hōkai*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992; Inoue Toshikazu, *Kiki no naka no kyōchō gaikō*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1994. However, the latest ‘tour de force’ in the field of Japan’s foreign policy during this time period, Hattori Ryūji, *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō 1918-1931*, Yūhikaku, 2001, once again stresses the usual turning points of 1918 and 1931.

7 In quite a number of works on Japanese society or state policy which take the 1931 Manchurian Incident

distinction between all those critics and activists who used to be lumped together and earmarked either ‘the Taishō democrats’ or ‘the reform faction’.⁸ It is true that the majority of those who were thus labelled shared for a certain period of time an identical agenda in the field of internal reform, namely the introduction of ‘general’ (male) suffrage and the curtailment of the influence extended by the civil and military bureaucracy.⁹ However, when one takes a closer look at this group of intellectuals, one becomes aware of huge differences in their basic outlook. Within this seemingly unified group there existed varied ideas on the relations between man and society, between society and state, and between the Japanese state and international society, which were so fundamentally different that it was rather surprising that their advocates had been able to stand next to one another on the common ground of internal political reform. When after the First World War the issue of general suffrage ceased to be the main political issue and the more pressing issues of social reform and Japan’s reaction to the changing outside world demanded most attention, the ranks soon began to fall apart.

Japan was not only faced with the fact that its Pacific neighbour and rival had suddenly become world power number one, it also had to cope with the fact that the new world order was not merely a shift in hierarchy but also a change in content. The United States was not just another Western imperialist and colonialist nation. To start with it had its history of colonisation and anti-colonial struggle and, within the group of imperialist powers, it was a relative newcomer who was more willing to opt for economic expansion through open competition than for the secure but extremely costly form of expansion through the occupation of territory. In the postwar new world order, which of course had come about as a result of a whole set of vectors but of which the United States had nevertheless become the leader, such honourable national aims as imperialism and militarism had become negative concepts overnight and instead of ‘civilisation’ (the Western connoted *bunmei*) it was now ‘ethnic nationalism’ (*minzokushugi*) which dominated the discourse on international relations. This posed serious problems for Japan since it could not

as their point of departure, there is hardly any justification for doing so and some usually offer nothing more than a short introductory chapter which endorses the stereotype of the democratic internationalist 1920s. Miles Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order - Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan*, University of North Carolina Press, 1982; Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War - The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941*, Cornell University Press, 1987. Even Louise Young’s very impressive *Japan’s Total Empire* (University of California Press, 1998) in my opinion overemphasises discontinuity while not giving much evidence for the pre-1931 period. Sandra Wilson in her *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931-33* (Routledge, 2002) mainly stresses continuity, in the sense that ‘the Manchurian Crisis of 1931-33 did not constitute a turning-point for all or most Japanese’. However, she also points out that this period did form a defining moment for progressive intellectuals and political activists and a turning point in the relation between state and society, and concludes by saying that Japanese society and politics were significantly, but not irreversibly, changed by the Manchurian Crisis.

8 Shinobu Seizaburō, *Taishō Demokurashii-shi*, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1954-59; Ōta Masao, *Zōhan Taishō Demokurashii kenkyū*, Shinsensha, 1990; Itō Takashi, *Taishō-ki [Kakushin]-ha no seiritsu*, Hanawa Shobō, 1978; Sharon Minichiello, *Retreat from Reform - Patterns of Political Behavior in Interwar Japan*, University of Hawai’i Press, 1984. A major revision of the one-sided image of a ‘Taishō Democracy’ can be found in the edited volume by Sharon A. Minichiello, *Japan’s Competing Modernities - Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930*, University of Hawai’i Press, 1998, which shows the first decades of the past century in Japan in all their diversity.

9 Matsuo Takayoshi, *Futsū senkyo seido seiritsushi no kenkyū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1989.

turn the Chinese or Korean ‘ethnic national right of self-determination’ (*minzoku jiketsuken*) into a Japanese right of expansion or annexation. The prewar narrative had been so convenient because it gave Japan ample opportunity to deny the existence of ‘true civilisation’, that is Western modernity, in China or Korea and provide Japan with the unique task to go over there and ‘enlighten’ them, but it was not possible to deny the ‘natural’ fact of the existence of the Chinese and Korean ethnic nations.¹⁰ These nations were not slow to react to the external changes and before long Japan was confronted by an upsurge in nationalistic anti-Japanese agitation in both countries.

At first the Japanese government chose to adjust itself to the new world order, as is best symbolised by the fact that it accepted an invitation to the Washington Conference of 1921. It acquiesced to go all the way to the Atlantic in order to settle issues relating to the Pacific and the Far East. It is not so difficult to see why: although Japan had to recognise its inferiority to America and England in the form of the different ratios in naval armament and the curtailment of its interests, rights and privileges on the Asian continent, the mere fact that the United States functioned as the medium between Japan and China implied that Japan’s core interests were safe. Nobody ever mentioned Korea, because just like all other colonies dating from before the war it was pragmatically exempted from the new ‘ethnic nationalist’ discourse, and neither was the United States inclined to impose harsh demands on Japan concerning Manchuria, since it was not willing to risk a war with Japan on behalf of China. From the Japanese point of view the decision for a policy of ‘international cooperation’ within the so-called Washington System was probably not heartfelt and was rather a rational calculation: with its still immature and dependent economy it did not dare to run the risk of international isolation or economic sanctions, let alone a war with America. However, the Washington System was not functioning in a vacuum. China gradually regained its footing and by the end of 1928 could even once again call itself a formally unified state in the sense that, notwithstanding a fair amount of continuing internal strife, it now at least had one internationally recognised central government dominated by the nationalist Kuomintang. No longer satisfied with the ‘good offices’ of the United States, the Kuomintang had long since directly demanded the Japanese give up their position in Manchuria, a demand which now became official state policy.

It was during the years 1926-1928, at the time of the Northern Expedition by the

10 I will not go into the invariably hotly debated issue of what the criteria and date of origin are of ethnic nations in general and the Japanese, Korean and Chinese nations in particular, and merely follow the pattern amongst contemporary Japanese opinion leaders of referring to the people of these three countries in terms of distinct ethnic nations (*minzoku*), although especially in the case of China it will be clear that by using ‘ethnic nation’ in the singular, they accordingly ignored the actual state of an immense ethnic variety. I am aware that in this sense I go against the conclusion of Oguma Eiji’s influential *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen* (Shinyōsha, 1995) that the myth of a homogeneous Japanese ethnic nation was mainly a postwar fabrication. Although there was of course a fair amount of colonialist and imperialist debate of an inclusive nature, most of it seems to have been inspired by ambition or opportunism and not by any true feelings. In the overwhelming majority of usages of *Nihon minzoku* or *waga minzoku* outside of these specialist discourses, it will be hard to find any traces of Korean or other colonial subjects (imperial fellow-countrymen). Instead, *Chōsen minzoku* is regularly mentioned. Moreover, the fact that in the whole colonial period of some 35 years there were hardly any Japanese men who married Korean women should be sufficient evidence how genuine Japan’s assimilationist ideas were.

Kuomintang, that the appearance of unity within the above-mentioned group of ‘Taishō democrats’ was definitely broken. Most intellectuals had become aware of the fact that a wait-and-see policy, in line with the many new multilateral treaties in which Japan had pledged to solve its disputes with other countries by peaceful means, implied that Japan’s position in Manchuria would become untenable in the near future. This, and thus not the Manchurian Incident of 1931, is the moment when each of them had to relinquish the internationalist rhetoric that used to mask internal differences and had to show their true colours.

TWO GENERATIONS

In my research I have mainly focussed on members of the generation born between 1870 and 1880, namely on naval officer Mizuno Hironori (1875-1945), economist Horie Kiichi (1876-1927), and political scientist Yoshino Sakuzō (1878-1933).¹¹ One of my main conclusions is that one can often see a strikingly similar evolution from proud imperialists to somewhat doubting imperialists, to supporters of the Washington System on the basis of a strong awareness that a new world had come about (although the content ascribed to this new world tends to vary considerably), and finally to anti-interventionists concerning China on the basis of the recognition of Chinese national rights (even if hardly any of them considered the Chinese to be truly equal to themselves). Another conclusion is that this development in the Taishō generation’s views of the outside world is concomitant to or preceded by an identical evolution of their views in the field of national society, which resulted in the moral conviction that although they, as middle-class intellectuals, still could not feel the proletariat as equals to themselves, they at least ought to treat them as equals with equal rights. This book also includes a case study of philosopher and social scientist Sugimori Kōjirō (1881-1968), a member of a younger generation. Through my research into the perceptions of both the outside world and national society embraced by this representative of what I have termed ‘the Early Shōwa generation of opinion leaders’, I discovered that the two generations of Japanese opinion leaders active in the 1920s on the one hand did share many insights but on the other hand differed on fundamental questions.

In previous research ample attention has been given to the division between those politicians, diplomats, military men and opinion leaders who supported ‘internationalism’ and ‘universalism’ and those who supported ‘nationalism’ and ‘particularism’. The criterion usually adopted to decide whether someone belonged to the former group or the latter was the degree to which the person in question supported the so-called ‘Washington System’.¹² I reject this

11 In order not to make this book top-heavy I have omitted my case study of Mizuno Hironori, although I refer to him every once in a while. For a short overview of Mizuno’s views of the outside world, see my ‘The Break with Europe - Japanese Views of the Old World after the First World War’. In Bert Edström, ed., *The Japanese and Europe - Images and Perceptions*, Japan Library, Richmond, 2000: pp.46-53.

12 The notion of ‘double diplomacy’ (*nijū gaikō*) and the dichotomies of Shidehara diplomacy versus Tanaka diplomacy and cooperative diplomacy (*kyōchō gaikō*) versus autonomous diplomacy (*jishu gaikō*) are in most cases based upon this criterion. Although the level of research has progressed from a crude division between a ‘good’ Foreign Ministry and Minseitō and an ‘evil’ Imperial Army and Seiyūkai (and

approach. In the first place the awareness amongst the Japanese of the whole set of Washington treaties as a ‘system’ was weak. Moreover, it does not sufficiently take into account that Japan’s foreign policy at the time was all about China and that support of ‘the Washington System’ was a secondary question which mainly came to the fore in relation to the primary question that was alternatively labelled ‘the China Question’ (*Shina mondai*), ‘the Manchuria and (Inner) Mongolia Question’ (*Manmō mondai*), or ‘the Continental Question’ (*tairiku mondai*). It was the very direct threat of the Chinese nationalist movement to the Japanese interests on the continent, in the form of economic boycotts and the military Northern Expedition, which ultimately forced the opinion leaders to take position and, some years later, made Japan plunge itself headlong into a disastrous military adventure. Therefore, I prefer a more solid and imminent criterion.

The criterion I use when examining the views of the outside world of various opinion leaders is not so much concentrated on the question whether one supported a policy of ‘international cooperation’ or a policy of ‘autonomous diplomacy’, which are defined in relation to America and Britain, but whether one was willing to cooperate with China or not. Such a distinction can in some cases add up to an identical result as the former distinction between ‘universalists’ and ‘particularists’, but in many cases it does not. On the one hand there were numerous calls for a ‘cooperative’ policy in line with the Nine Power Treaty of the Washington Conference which were aimed at a common front of the main treaty powers against China. On the other hand there were many who advocated ‘an autonomous policy’ away from the Nine Power Treaty in order to support China against ‘the imperialist powers’. Accordingly, I prefer to term someone ‘universalist’ and ‘internationalist’ when he recognises Chinese (ethnic) national rights and is able to found his international programme on the basis of Sino-Japanese relations on an equal footing, if not at present at least in the very near future. In the same way, I term somebody’s programme ‘nationalist’ or ‘particularistic’ when it ignores Chinese national demands and it is based on the assumption of unequal Sino-Japanese relations; Japan at the top, China at the bottom.

Using this criterion, I discern a division along generational lines into a universalist ‘Taishō generation’ which at least by the mid-1920s had incorporated the argument for Sino-Japanese relations on an equal footing into its writings and, in sharp contrast, a younger and particularist ‘Early Shōwa generation’ which by the same time more and more openly manifested its unwillingness to let China go its own way. This generational division which came fully out into the open at the time of the debate on Japan’s China policy in the latter half of the 1920s has strengthened me in my view that we should not consider the Manchurian Incident as a watershed in Japanese views on the outside world and on foreign policy. In my opinion there was no drastic change in opinion in 1931, neither on the national nor on the personal level. The shift in the majority opinion amongst the intelligentsia had already taken place earlier and became evident during the years 1926-27. Moreover, it had not been sudden but very gradual and did not involve many cases of ‘recantation’. Therefore, I would rather characterise the Manchurian Incident as the logical and predictable outcome of a long-term development in the previous decade, namely the gradual natural shift in power and influence from a withering older generation, which had been able to come up with universalist solutions, to an up-and-coming younger generation, which

a somewhat absent Imperial Navy) to more detailed attention for distinctions amongst the various factions and individual opinions within these institutions, the criterion itself does not seem to have considerably changed.

did not know how to compromise and opted for radical means to attain Japan's particularistic aims. Although I reject the idea of the Manchurian Incident as a watershed in the intellectual history of prewar modern Japan, this of course does not mean that I dispute its political significance. Merely considering the fact that in the wake of the incident the surviving prominent representatives of the Taishō generation of opinion leaders were silenced – a development which also provides a clear-cut finishing point to the timescope of my research on this generation - and the representatives of the Early Shōwa generation were encouraged to relinquish completely the self-censure they had observed during the anti-imperialist 1920s, its impact as an important political turning-point is manifest.

An awareness of generational differences for the period under review is rare. Although there are a few instances of studies on the intellectual history of prewar modern Japan which also emphasise the factor 'generation', most of these stressed the existence of a distinct 'early Meiji generation' and a 'mid-Meiji generation' and have not elaborated on the existence of distinct later generations.¹³ The military and (reformist) bureaucratic representatives of this early Shōwa generation have sometimes been defined as the 'total war generation', but I find the vocational restriction of this 'generation' too limited and also think that the element of total war-thinking of this generation does not set them apart from the Taishō generation.¹⁴

CONTEMPORARY OPINION LEADERS

Except for the fact that I place strong emphasis on the importance of the factor 'generation' in my research into the intellectual history of prewar modern Japan, the methodology that I use is fairly traditional; it is comparative research on the basis of a series of case studies of opinion leaders, which is rooted in the philological traditions of the two Dutch and Japanese universities where I was trained. In the sense that I focus on intellectuals and predominantly use written sources, I cannot help being aware of the fact that I am somewhat going against the tide of a great part of recent scholarship, which so much stresses mass (popular) culture and society at large and often makes use of non-written and anonymous sources. Nevertheless, I think that in this field of study there is still much to say in favour of the approach I take. In the first place, although the social influence of thought remains impossible to measure exactly, there can be no doubt that the influence of the intellectuals in prewar Japanese society was extremely great. By the 1910s a nation-wide infrastructure had come into being by which 'intellectual services' were being supplied and consumed. A select group of intellectuals, of whom many affiliated to the most prominent national and private universities, wrote on a

13 Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan - Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*, Stanford University Press, 1969, Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought - From Samurai to Salary Man*, University of California Press, 1981, and Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, Princeton University Press, 1985: pp.196-207.

14 See for instance Aochi Shin, ed., *Jinbutsu Shōwa-shi - Sōryokusen no hitobito*, Chikuma Shobō, 1978. However, I find the vocational restriction of this 'generation' too limited and also think that the element of total war-thinking of this generation does not set them apart from the Taishō generation. See my 'The End of World War One as a Turning Point in Modern Japanese History'. In Bert Edström, ed., *Turning Points in Japanese History*, Japan Library, London, 2002: pp.152-57.

permanent basis for both the elite and the mass media and they did numerous lecture tours a year around the country and the colonies. In the light of this huge demand for the services of intellectuals, they themselves could not help but be keenly aware of their distinct and prominent position as opinion leaders, a position crowned by the lofty label of *bunmei hihyōka*. I have translated this term in earlier articles as ‘civilization critics’ in order to prevent the interpretation that these men, who mainly commented on political and social questions, were occupied with literary and art critique. However, considering the facts that Takayama Chogyū in his 1901 article ‘Bunmei hihyōka to shite no bungakusha’ introduced the term as a translation of the German ‘*Kulturkritiker*’, that in interbellum Japan ‘civilization’ (*bunmei*) and ‘culture’ (*bunka*) had a very wide scope (see for instance the series *Meiji Bunka Zenshū* that covers almost all aspects of modern life) that tended to overlap to a large and very subjective extent, and that the term *bunmei hihyōka* was accompanied with a lofty status, it may be better to choose neither for ‘civilization critics’ or ‘culture critics’ nor for the neutral ‘opinion leaders’, but to opt for the somewhat otherworldly ‘*Kulturkritiker*’. Tsuchida Kyoson, Tanaka Ōdō and Hasegawa Nyozeikan strove themselves to become *bunmei hihyōka*, but many others were labeled in the same way by various, often unspecified criteria. Iida Taizō has observed that one of the main characteristics of this influential group of opinion leaders was a combination of academism and journalism.¹⁵

Another reason why I chose for case studies of intellectuals is the result of earlier research which was aimed at an analysis of the debate in major magazines and newspapers at the time of foreign events which had a direct impact on Japan’s foreign policy. Even though in my present research I still pay considerable attention to the social environment and the discourse in the media which both to a large extent determine the form and content of individual expressions, I find that mass sources, and especially anonymous ones, often do not tell the whole story. Whereas mass sources are indispensable in determining the social receptivity of an individual author’s thoughts and can very well reveal what changed, they often do not tell when exactly and why. In my opinion what is needed are ‘case studies’ which keep track of one person over a long period of time in order to answer such analytical issues. In the case of prewar modern Japan, a period for most of which oral history no longer is a serious option, this means that one often ends up with the intelligentsia. They were the main group, especially in the field of perceptions of the outside world, who left us a workable body of non-anonymous sources. Whereas anonymous ‘mass sources’ tend to be reactive and reinforce the general picture we already had, ‘individual sources’ often function as eye openers: they reveal continuities that the general picture does not provide, show changes which are never ‘on time’ but always too early or too late and usually for the ‘wrong’ reasons, and logical and ideological inconsistencies which the general picture tends to hide from us suddenly spring up everywhere. On the basis of accumulation and comparison of a series of such case studies a different ‘general picture’ can be obtained, which is a lot more diverse and more helpful in drawing conclusions on a recreated ‘contemporary’ basis.

A precondition to try to recreate this ‘general picture’ of course is that one has to start by

15 Iida Taizō, ‘Hasegawa Nyozeikan ni okeru [Bunmei hihyōka] no seiritsu’, 2 parts. *Hōgaku Shirin*, vol.72, no.2 (August 1974): pp.1-18 & vol.73, no.2 (December 1975): pp.55-90. For a list of *Kulturkritiker* of the Taishō period, see Iida, ‘Taishō-ki bunmei hihyōka chosaku ichiran’. *Hōgaku Shirin*, vol.80, no.3-4 (March 1983): pp.179-211. A good indication of who at the time were considered to belong to this group is the overview of contemporary thinkers and commentators (*Gendai shisō hyōronka sōran*) that the prominent general magazine *Kaizō* listed each year.

selecting the cases to be studied neither on the basis of their present-day political correctness or incorrectness nor on the basis of interest in the light of present day scholarly or political debates, which are so prone to fashion, but on a sound analysis of their contemporary popularity. Some who we remember were close to invisible in their day while those who were very prominent then mean nothing to us nowadays. Thus the research for this dissertation and related articles features, apart from the omnipresent and inevitable icon of ‘Taishō democracy’ Yoshino Sakuzō, such forgotten celebrities as economist Horie Kiichi, former navy officer Mizuno Hironori, and philosopher and social scientist Sugimori Kōjirō. In the same vein, apart from the comparatively well-known politician Nakano Seigō and nationalist activist Ōkawa Shūmei, my next research project in which I will concentrate on opinion leaders of the ‘Early Shōwa generation’ will feature poet and ultra-nationalist ideologue Mitsui Kōshi, publicist Murobuse Kōshin and economist Takahashi Kamekichi for the simple reason that, no matter what their official trade or scholarly training was, they all wrote extensively on international relations in general and Japan’s foreign policy in particular and all enjoyed a very wide readership, often writing for several or most of the major general magazines and newspapers of their day. As a result of my aim to cover all materials the selected opinion leaders wrote on the topic of foreign relations during the period under attention, my sources vary from monographs and contributions to edited volumes, ‘national’ newspapers such as the *Ōsaka* and *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, *Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun*, *Tōkyō Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* and *Jiji Shinpō*, highbrow ‘general magazines’ (*sōgō zasshi*) such as *Chūō Kōron*, *Kaizō*, *Daisan Teikoku*, *Tōhō Jiron*, *Gakan*, *Kaihō*, *Warera*, *Bunka Seikatsu*, popular magazines such as *Taiyō*, *Bungei Shunjū* and *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*, more specialised newspapers and journals such as the *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, *Kokumin Keizai Zasshi*, *Keizai Ōrai*, *Jitsugyō no Nihon*, *Ekonomisuto*, *Shinjin*, *Rikugō Zasshi*, *Gaikō Jihō*, *Kokusai Renmei*, and *Teiyū Rinri*, women’s magazines such as *Shinjokai*, *Fujin Kōron*, *Fujin no Tomo* and *Fujin Saron*, scholarly publications such as *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, *Tetsugaku Zasshi*, *Mita Gakkai Zasshi*, *Mita Hyōron* to private writings such as diaries, recollections and letters.

NATIONS, NATIONALISMS, AND INTERNATIONALISMS

Before entering the central part of this work I should end this introduction by going into the problem of distinguishing various types of nations, nationalisms, and internationalism - all of which were key concepts in the period under discussion and accordingly feature prominently in this book – and explaining how and why I have made distinctions in my translation of the related Japanese terms. In my introduction to the edited volume *Nationalism and Internationalism in Imperial Japan* I make a case that it is better to avoid strictly dividing modern Japanese history between the two categories of nationalism and internationalism on the grounds of the inclusive and mutually sustaining nature of the two ‘isms’.¹⁶ However, there is an equally important reason for avoiding this deceptively dichotomous view of history. As Aira Kemiläinen has pointed out, the differences of the various meanings and interpretations of the term ‘nation’ in the

16 Dick Stegewerns, ‘The Dilemma of Nationalism and Internationalism in Modern Japan - Autonomy, Asian Brotherhood, International Cooperation or World Citizenship?’. In Stegewerns, ed., *Nationalism and Internationalism in Imperial Japan*, RoutledgeCurzon, London, 2003: pp.3-16

various (European) languages are anything but minor and have to be kept carefully apart.¹⁷ The Japanese language, to which the various meanings and interpretations of the term ‘nation’ and its derivative ‘nationalism’ were introduced from the West, presents no exception to this rule. One might say that it has fared better than the English language, by making a distinction between for instance *kokuminshugi*, *kokusuishugi*, *minzokushugi*, and *kokkashugi*. Nonetheless, one also has to admit that not all Japanese continuously and faithfully observe the distinction between these terms – especially at times when one or more of the terms have been recently introduced to the language – and, moreover, one must also concede that most of the Western research on modern Japan has not been terribly helpful either by bringing all of these terms once again down to that one English term ‘nationalism’. I will refrain from offering any definitive translations, but I will present some provisional translations for the three most common nationalist ‘isms’ that pop up every once in a while in these pages.

In my view *kokuminshugi* (derived from *kokumin* – the political nation) is the nationalism in which the claims of the nation (in the sense of ‘the people’) are favoured over the claims of the state and can best be translated as *popular nationalism*.¹⁸ Others have opted for *civic nationalism* or *liberal nationalism*, but I find these to be respectively too small or too wide a translation for *kokuminshugi*. Its counterpart is *kokkashugi* (derived from *kokka* – the state), a concept of nationalism (arbitrarily) where the claims of the state are favoured over the claims of the people and for which I consider the translation of ‘statism’ most correct.¹⁹ However, there is a considerable problem in the fact that *kokkashugi* also is the ‘nationalism’ used in conjunction with or in opposition to ‘internationalism’, in which case it often lacks most of its statist connotations. The Japanese language regrettably has no neutral term for ‘nationalism’, in the sense of a term that does not favour either the state, the nation or the ethnic nation. The editors of the *Chūō Kōron* tried to solve this problem by proposing the very neutral *jikoku honi shugi* (‘one’s own country as standard-ism’) in relation to ‘internationalism’ in the 1921 feature on ‘A Critique of Nationalism Versus Internationalism’ (*Jikoku honishugi tai kokusai kyōdōshugi hihan*), but almost none of the prominent opinion leaders that partook in this debate cared to use it and the term never made it into the Japanese language.²⁰ Therefore, in this case in which *kokka*

17 Aira Kemiläinen, *Nationalism - Problems concerning the Word, the Concept and Classification*, Kustantajat Publishers, Jyväskylä 1964.

18 Here I of course bump into the problem that the term ‘popular’ has two meanings, but let it be clear that in this instance it is has no connection to ‘popularity’, let alone ‘populism, but has the meaning of ‘based on the people’, as in ‘popular government’ and ‘popular vote’. In relation to this, one may also wonder whether ‘Nationalist Party’ is a correct translation for the Chinese Kuomintang and one should not rather opt for ‘National Party’ or ‘People’s Party’.

19 Rebecca E. Karl, who in her writings on Chinese nationalism severely criticizes various theorists on Chinese nationalism and nationalism in general for conflating statism and nationalism into one isomorphic ‘nationalism’, proposes ‘nation-statism’ as a translation for the Chinese equivalent of ‘*kokkashugi*’, but I cannot help feeling that ‘the state’ and ‘statism’ are not the same thing as ‘the nation-state’ and ‘nation-statism’. If they were it seems that there would not have been any need to specify the state and statism with the prefix of ‘nation’ (*kokumin*). Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging the World – Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, Duke University Press, Durham 2002, pp.17-26.

20 *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.2: pp.39-72. Nowadays many try to evade this troublesome matter by adopting the katakana ‘*nashonarizumu*’, which however once again brings along with it the problem that, as in the English original, it can cover so much.

(the state) is used rather in the sense of *kuni* (country), it is better to translate *kokkashugi* as plain ‘nationalism’. The last main variety of ‘nationalism’ is *minzokushugi* (derived from *minzoku* – the ethnic nation), which originated somewhat later than the other two terms. While the term *minzoku* was introduced into the Japanese language at the beginning of the twentieth century under the influence of the German concept of ‘Volk’, both *minzoku* and *minzokushugi* only became widespread after the predominantly American advocacy of ‘the (ethnic) national right to self-determination’ (in Japanese *minzoku jiketsu shugi*) after the First World War.²¹ In Western research on modern Japan this term has been thrown on the heap of ‘nationalism’ just as often as it has been confusingly translated as ‘racism’ but, echoing Kevin Doak’s publications on the subject, I would like to stress the necessity to stay as close as possible to the meaning of the original Japanese and to insist upon the term ‘ethnic nationalism’ as its only proper translation.²²

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- 21 Just like Louis Menand makes mention of the fact that the term ‘ethnicity’ in early twentieth century America was indiscriminately used in alternation with ‘race’, in the case of Japanese writings up till the 1910s one also has to be very flexible when translating, since the meaning of the terms *minzoku* and *minzokushugi* had not yet crystallized out and many Japanese publicists used them on the basis of their own ‘unique’ interpretation. Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club – A Story of Ideas in America*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 2001, p.392.
- 22 Kevin M. Doak, ‘Ethnic Nationalism and Romanticism in Early Twentieth Century Japan’, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.22, no.1 (Winter 1996): pp.77-103; ‘Building National Identity through Ethnicity - Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After’, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.27, no.1 (Winter 2001): pp.1-39 and his recent *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan – Placing the People*, Brill, Leiden, 2006. Especially Frank Dikötter’s works have stood out for a strong preference for ‘race’ over ‘ethnicity’. Although his research deals with modern China and I am definitely not a specialist in that field, I cannot help feeling that from both a contemporary and a present day point of view the use of ‘ethnicity’ or ‘ethnic nation’ instead of ‘race’ would in most cases have been more appropriate or correct. See Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, Stanford University Press, 1992 and Dikötter, ed., *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, University of Hawai’i Press, 1997. As for, ‘ethnic

Having thus configured the various ‘nationalisms’ to some extent, let me briefly dwell on the various ‘internationalisms’. In the abovementioned *Chūō Kōron* debate, for instance, one stumbles over such terms as *kokusaishugi*, *kokusai kyōdōshugi*, *kokusai kyōchōshugi*, *kokusai renmeishugi*, *sekaishugi* and *kosumoporitanizumu*. The differences between the first four ‘internationalisms’ are not all that pronounced, although in my findings ‘*kokusaishugi*’ is the one most used in an abstract sense while the other three have a more concrete frame of reference. Thus *kokusai kyōchōshugi*, *kokusai kyōdōshugi* and *kokusai renmeishugi* often have the connotation of international cooperation with the Western powers (most likely within the framework of the League of Nations and/or the Washington Treaties), while some advocates of *kokusaishugi* may also have had an eye for ‘lesser gods’ such as China. However, as I will stress below, in contrast to the often minor differences between these four ‘internationalisms’, one has to be keenly aware of the potentially strong anti-internationalist contents of *sekaishugi* and *kosumoporitanizumu* and accordingly I have rendered these two terms not as ‘internationalism’ but as ‘cosmopolitanism’.

nationalism’, I am aware that in recent academic debate on nationalism the term ‘ethno(-)nationalism’ seems quite popular, but I cannot see why we all of a sudden should have ethno-nationalism while we lack corresponding terms like cultura-nationalism, econo-nationalism, libera-nationalism and so on.

CHAPTER 1

STAGE AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the setting in which my four case studies lived, thought and acted, I will in this chapter outline the national and international framework of the interwar period in Japan (1918-1932) and the infrastructure through which these opinion leaders provided their intellectual services to society. Bearing in mind Ian Nish's observation that "For the Japanese, 'interwar' probably applies most appropriately to the period between the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, a battle of tremendous destruction, and the war with China, which started in 1937 and became very cruel",¹ I deem it necessary to start with a short overview of the debate on continuity and discontinuity in modern Japanese history and, in particular, on the question whether the end of World War One is a turning point in Japanese history or not. By doing so, I want to emphasize that my definition of the timeframe demarcated by the end of World War One on 11 November 1918 and the Japanese government's official recognition of Manchukuo on 15 September 1932 as 'the interwar period in Japan' is anything but undisputed and that there are various other periodisations which, moreover, give these same fourteen years a quite different character. Nonetheless, this historiographical introduction also serves the purpose of providing the overture to my description of this timeframe as a distinct period in modern Japanese history, in both the country's external relations and internal relations. Thus I at least hope to make the case that the end of World War One functions as a turning point in Japanese history as well, and accordingly to justify starting out this study in 1918. In contrast to this starting point I will not go so much into my finishing point of 1932, not merely because I consider it not as drastic and as clear a breaking *point* in time as 1918, but mainly because the following chapters will describe in detail the long-term *process* of the gradual shift in prominence from the Taishō generation to the early Shōwa generation that in my opinion formed the major cause for the turning point of 1932.

1 Ian Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, Praeger, Westport, 2002: p.1.

1 THE UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND OF THE INTERBELLUM

1.1 The Debate on Continuity and Discontinuity in Modern Japanese History: The Case of 1918

Although turning points are an essential element of historical explanation and distinguish history from mere chronicling, it will hardly be necessary to mention that periodization is nonetheless a very tricky thing. In the first place, mankind itself is characterized more by continuity than discontinuity. Turning points in one's life will not be many. A majority of those asked to pinpoint a crucial turning point in their life might be at a serious loss to come up with an answer. As with man, so with his history. Often there are more reasons to reject than to advocate a certain moment in time as a turning point, whether in political, social, economic or intellectual history. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that in the trade of history-writing, commonly characterized as a discussion without end, discussion is especially fierce when it comes to periodization and many historical works seem to be predominantly concerned with refuting certain 'turning points' and/or establishing new ones. Still, regardless of historical reality, man needs a fair amount of simplification and label-marking in order to structure and digest the vast amount of information with which he is confronted nowadays. He needs neatly divided compartments, he needs periodization, sometimes merely based on the very basic wish to have a historical dividing line between right and wrong or good and evil. Over the centuries, historians have responded to this demand from society and come up with periodizations, whether for national histories or for world history.

The one I unfailingly provide in my lectures on modern Japanese history and the history of international relations in East Asia is 1918. From a Western point of view this might seem an obvious thing to do. Revolutions and wars tend to be the most popular signposts for turning points in national histories and world history. In this case we have both the end of a period of great upheaval, alternatively termed the First World War or the Great War, and the end of the Russian, German and Austrian empires, so one is bound to expect a turning point at this moment in time. Indeed, many historians provide exactly that. To restrict ourselves to a few prominent Western historians, Eric Hobsbawm treats the First World War as the turning point from the end of 'the age of empire' to 'the age of extremes' and E. H. Carr characterizes 1919 as the beginning of the interbellum, also termed 'the twenty years' crisis'.² The historical overview of the Western world by Palmer and Colton, endorsed 'in case of historical emergency' by the History Department of Leiden University, also makes a fresh new start in 1919 and speaks of 'the dawn of a new world order'.³

However, Japan of course is an entirely different story. I will not go into the debate whether modern Japan is East or West, or both, or neither and thus a pure Japanese entity. Suffice it to say that in Japanese secondary education Japanese history is taught entirely separate from world

2 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* and *The Age of Extremes - A History of the World, 1914–1991*, Vintage Books, New York, respectively 1989 and 1996; E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939 - An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, Harper Collins, New York, 1981 (first published in 1939).

3 R.R. Palmer & Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World*, sixth edition, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1983.

history, and that in university the traditional tripartite division between national history, Western history and Eastern history persists until this very day. Within this context, and considering the fact that many Japanese during the first years of the First World War spoke of the Great European War, it would seem far more natural to ignore or reject 1918 as a turning point in Japan's national history. It is also interesting to see that many Western scholars in the field of modern Japanese history follow in the footsteps of their Japanese confrères.⁴ Thus, apart from the question of whether the end of World War One was a common turning point in the history of the modern (Western) world—after all, all turning points are open to question—there is also the question of whether Japan was part of this modern world. Was Japan a part of and thus predominantly swayed by *sekaishi* (world history) or was Japan in a *kokushi* (national history) league of its own?

No Turning Point

In dealing with the question of whether 1918 was a turning point in Japanese history or not, I will first consider those interpretations that give a negative answer to this question on the basis of a particular Japanese periodization. It is hardly necessary to mention that the easiest option to create a distinctly Japanese history is to use the *nengō*, the system of linking a time period to the reign of an emperor. Within this framework 1918 is neither more nor less than the seventh year in the reign of Emperor Taishō. The majority of scholars on modern Japan indeed use the terms Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa as convenient adjuncts to give a general indication of what time period they will generally be dealing with, adding or deducting years at their own whim. However, there are also quite a few cases of works which adhere exactly to the reign years. Influential books by Shinobu Junpei and Shinobu Seizaburō, on the diplomatic and political history of the Taishō period respectively, needed some introduction to get to the events of 1912 but they cut their story short exactly at the point of the demise of Emperor Taishō.⁵ During the past fifteen years or so this somewhat odd phenomenon has been most marked in the many books dealing with the Shōwa period. In the wake of, or sometimes even anticipating, the death of Emperor Shōwa Japanese publishers treated us to loads of overviews of the years 1926–89, the most notable probably being the *Shōwa no rekishi*-series published by Shōgakukan.⁶ And even in the West, scholars and publishers seemed to be perfectly at ease to link a period in Japanese history to one individual, judging by titles such as *Showa - An Inside History of Hirohito's Japan*, *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito* and *The Age of Hirohito - In Search of Modern Japan*.⁷

4 The most common way to divide up Japan's modern history is probably to use the turning points of 1868, 1905, 1932, 1945, and, recently, 1989. See, for instance, the various contributions to Peter Duus, ed., *The Cambridge History of Japan. Volume 6 - The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, in which 1905 and especially 1931/2 and 1945 feature prominently while 1918/9 is absent.

5 Shinobu Junpei, *Taishō gaikō 15-nenshi*, Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai, 1927; Shinobu Seizaburō, . *Taishō seijishi*, 4 vols, Kawade shobō, 1951–52 and *Taishō demokurashii-shi*, 3 vols, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1954–59.

6 *Shōwa no rekishi*, 10 vols, Shōgakukan, 1988–89. The most recent prominent contributions to this 'nengō-view of history' are Handō Kazutoshi's bestseller *Shōwa-shi*, Heibonsha, 2004, and the 25 volume DVD-book series *Shōwa Nippon – Ichioku nisenman-nin no eizō* (Kōdansha, 2004-05).

7 Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Showa - An Inside History of Hirohito's Japan*, The Athlone Press, London, 1984;

Considering the fact that we almost completely lack books that deal with ‘The age of Mutsuhito’ or ‘The age of Yoshihito’ in their title, one wonders whether Hirohito was so outstanding that he deserved this special honour or that these days we merely are more prone to cash in on the death of famous persons?⁸

Another ‘typically Japanese’ way of periodization which leaves 1918 somewhere in the middle is the idea of a **Taishō democracy**. Although Imai Seiichi has published a book under this title which deals exactly with the Taishō years 1912–26 and thus seems to be part of the *nengō* camp,⁹ most scholars who advocate the use of the term Taishō democracy are flexible and tend to include significant parts of either the Meiji period or the Shōwa period as well. On the one hand we have those who emphasize the structure of democracy. They view party cabinets as the main characteristic of a Taishō democracy that lasts from the First Movement to Protect the Constitution of 1912 (or in some cases, the inauguration of the Hara cabinet in 1918) until the bloody end of party cabinets in 1932.¹⁰ On the other hand we have those whose focus is more on ‘the spirit of democracy’. They tend to stress the factor of a popular force: a civil society that challenges the powers of the authoritarian state. The latter group usually has the Taishō democracy commence with the Hibiya Riots of 1905 and come to an end with the Peace Preservation Law of 1925.¹¹ The idea of a Taishō democracy was somewhat out of favour during the 1980s but it is interesting to see that it has recently gained a new lease of life in a slightly different form. First of all there is the variant of **imperial democracy** (1905–32) advocated by Andrew Gordon. He draws up a new scheme for the interpretation of pre-war modern Japanese history which is characterized by continuity in the form of the adjective ‘imperial’ yet shows discontinuity in the form of a division into the three distinct periods of imperial bureaucracy, imperial democracy and imperial fascism. The period of imperial democracy is sandwiched between the major turning points of 1905 and 1932 and thus, like most interpretations of Taishō democracy, attaches less importance to the changes occurring in 1918.¹²

Another alternative to Taishō democracy has lately been advocated by Arima Manabu in

Carol Gluck & Stephen R. Graubard, eds, *Showa - The Japan of Hirohito*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1992; Daikichi Irokawa, *The Age of Hirohito - In Search of Modern Japan*, The Free Press, New York, 1995.

- 8 The only exception to the rule that I know of is A. Morgan Young, *Japan under Taisho Tenno, 1912-1926*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1928.
- 9 Imai Seiichi, *Nihon no rekishi 23 - Taishō demokurashii*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1966.
- 10 Oka Yoshitake, ‘Taishō demokurashii no kitei – Matsumoto Gōkichi [Seiji Nisshi] ni kanren shite’. *Sekai*, no.171 (January 1960): pp. 190-201 and *Nihon kindaiishi taikai 5 – Tenkanki no Taishō*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1969; Itō Yukio, *Taishō demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987; Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan - A Historical Survey*, 3rd edition, Westview Press, Boulder, 2000; Richard J. Smethurst, ‘Japan’s First Experiment with Democracy, 1868-1940’. In G.R. Andrews & H. Chapman, eds, *Social Construction of Democracy, 1870-1990*, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1995: pp.71-89.
- 11 Shinobu Seizaburō, *Taishō demokurashii-shi*, 3 vols, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1954-59; Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii no kenkyū*, Aoki Shoten, 1966; Kinbara Samon, *Taishō demokurashii no shakaiteki keisei*, Aoki Shoten, 1967; Matsuo, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974; Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii-ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974 (revised edition *Shinpan Taishō demokurashii-ron – Yoshino Sakuzō no jidai*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1995); Kinbara, ed., *Kindai Nihon no kiseki 4 - Taishō demokurashii*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1994.
- 12 Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, University of California Press, 1991.

the form of a period labelled **the empire amidst ‘internationalization’** which lasts from 1905 until 1924, exactly the same time span Matsuo Takayoshi and other specialists would term ‘the Taishō democracy’. In contrast to Gordon, Arima does not question the ‘Taishō’ of Taishō democracy but rather the ‘democracy’, which he thinks is a concept that is contaminated by the post-World War Two state-of-mind and accordingly hides historical reality. Instead he emphasizes a different ‘mode of thinking’ which arose in the ‘post-Russo–Japanese War era’. This mode of thinking was characterized by a new international outlook, which nonetheless simultaneously implied a strong reconfirmation of nationality.¹³ However, the modes of thinking during what Arima calls the two victorious ‘post-wars’ in this period, respectively the post-Russo–Japanese War and the post-World War One eras, seem to me hardly to be of an identical character and, moreover, the reasons for the ending in 1924 of this new mode of thinking are left completely unclear.

There is one other ‘particularly Japanese’ way of periodization making use of the word ‘Taishō’, which is somewhat exceptional in the sense that, as far as I know, it has only been used by Western scholars. It is the concept of a **Greater Taishō** introduced in the 1970s by Tetsuo Najita and J. Victor Koschmann. In their view the period 1900–30 was ‘a major conflictual moment’ in Japanese history, and thus definitely not the smooth and secure transitional phase on the way to democracy as advocated by the modernization theorists. Najita and Koschmann confess that there are no convenient benchmarks to demarcate this thirty-year period which they term ‘a system of events containing a coherent set of internal identities’,¹⁴ but more fatal to the concept of a Greater Taishō seems to be the fact that this ‘coherent set of internal identities’ remains rather vague. Ever since this concept has hardly been used, until it was picked up by Sharon Minichiello in her introduction to the edited volume on *Japan’s Competing Modernities* (1998). She reiterated that Greater Taishō was a conflictual period, namely that of several ‘competing modernities’, but in contrast to the inventors of the concept she posed that the years 1900–30 constituted ‘a coherent historical period’ that had ‘a clear beginning and ending’.¹⁵ However, the benchmarks one can discern in her article, such as the formation of the Seiyūkai, the marriage of Crown Prince Yoshihito, East Asian disenchantment with the West, the London Naval Conference and the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Hamaguchi, are anything but clear. The coherence of the period is further undermined by the fact that she mentions the ‘takeoff points’ 1905, 1906, and 1917–20. And, to make things even more confusing, in the same essay she simultaneously uses the concept of ‘Taishō democracy’, which in her view spans from 1919 until 32 and within which the Universal Manhood Suffrage Law of 1925 functions as its central accomplishment.

But the one who has been willing to stretch ‘Taishō’ the most is Bernard S. Silberman in the influential edited volume on Taishō democracy entitled *Japan in Crisis* (1974). His description of ‘Taishō’ as ‘a period of conflict and confrontation’ and ‘the ubiquitousness and

13 Arima Manabu. *Nihon no kindai, 4 – [Kokusaika] no naka no teikoku Nihon, 1905–1924*. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999: pp.7-38.

14 Tetsuo Najita, ‘Introduction - A Synchronous Approach to the Study of Conflict in Modern Japanese History’. In *Conflict in Modern Japanese History - The Neglected Tradition*, Tetsuo Najita & J. Victor Koschmann, eds, Princeton University Press, 1982: p.11.

15 Sharon A. Minichiello, ‘Introduction’. In Minichiello, ed., *Japan’s Competing Modernities - Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900–1930*, University of Hawai’i Press, 1998: p.2.

omnipresence of the bureaucracy',¹⁶ is at odds with Gordon's interpretation, but quite close to that of Silberman's contemporaries. It is rather his demarcation of Taishō which is exceptional: " (...) Taisho did not end with the demise of the parties in the early 1930's but rather (...) is descriptive of the era between, approximately, 1900 and the beginning of the Pacific War (...). One can only conclude (...) that 'Taishō democracy' and 'Shōwa fascism' were not two distinct phenomena but were patterns of behavior stemming from shared assumptions about the nature of politics and society".¹⁷ Since this interpretation is also very much concerned with the question of whether 1931/32 is a turning point in Japanese history, this is not the right place to go into Silberman's argument too deeply. Let me just note that in my opinion this broad sweep of some forty years ignores the fact that within this period one can distinguish several generations who clearly did not share the same 'assumptions about the nature of politics and society'.

Another way of taking most of the first part of the twentieth century as a whole and passing over the hub of 1918 without much ado, is to identify this period as **the age of Japanese imperialism**. Post-war Japanese Marxist scholars have been rather keen to portray Japan predominantly as an imperialist nation. Within their accounts the years 1905–31 were usually distinguished as merely a phase within the intrinsically imperialist history of modern Japan, namely that of imperialism engendered by capitalism in its mature stage.¹⁸ On a non-Marxian note, Takeuchi Yoshimi, the increasingly influential scholar of Lu Xun, Asianism and Japan's attempt at 'overcoming modernity', nonetheless saw a straight line from the first years of the 20th century, when Asianism turned decisively nationalist, statist, imperialist and aggressionist, to the end of World War Two. In his famous essay on prewar Asianism he characterized Japan as a latecomer capitalist nation that time and again sought to cover its internal deficiencies by means of external expansion and in 1945 ultimately had to face the devastating effects of this policy.¹⁹ Whereas recent studies have shown an even stronger tendency to distance themselves from postwar Marxist studies, symbolized by a clear predilection for 'empire' over 'imperialism' as the focus of their attention, the concept of 'latecomer imperialism' is regularly used in order to explain prewar and wartime Japan without considering any fundamental changes at the end of World War One.

Post-war Western scholars on modern Japan have often been considerably less harsh on the country than their predominantly Marxian native colleagues. They were often quite enchanted by the Meiji period (and sometimes by the Taishō period) and, far from scolding the country as imperialist and capitalist, were perfectly willing to present Meiji Japan as a sound model of modern development to other 'late developers'. Apart from the heretic Donald Calman who was

16 Bernard S. Silberman, 'Conclusion - Taishō Japan and the Crisis of Secularism'. In Silberman & Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 1974 (Reprint edition in the Michigan Classics in Japanese Studies series, Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1999): pp. 439, 447.

17 Ibid.: pp. 438, 453.

18 See, for instance, Tōyama Shigeki, Imai Seiichi & Fujiwara Akira, *Nihon kindaishi*, 3 vols, Iwanami Shoten, 1975-77 and the abovementioned works by Shinobu Seizaburō.

19 Takeuchi Yoshimi, 'Nihon no Ajiashugi'. In Matsumoto Kenichi, *Takeuchi Yoshimi 'Nihon no Ajiashugi' seidoku*, Iwanami Shoten, 2001: pp.71-73, 81-82. Originally published as the introductory essay to Takeuchi's compilation of Asianist sources *Gendai Nihon shisō taikēi*, 9 - *Ajiashugi*, Chikuma Shobō, 1963.

so bold as to trace the origins of Japanese imperialism all the way back to the beginning of the Meiji period - to be more specific 1873, the year of the *seikanron* (the debate whether to invade Korea or not)²⁰ - the large quantity of recent scholarship also seems to agree on 1905, the victorious end of the Russo-Japanese War, as the true takeoff point for Japanese imperialism.²¹ Moreover, whereas Hobsbawm indicated that the Western 'age of empire' ended with the First World War, the majority of scholars on modern Japan seem to be perfectly at ease to speak of 'imperial Japan'. Although there seems to be a division into at least three camps, the one using 'imperial' in the mere sense of the formal name *Dai Nihon Teikoku*, the second using 'colonial empire' as the criterion, and the third stressing 'imperialism' as the criterion, there seems to be an unspoken consensus that the Japanese age of empire or imperialism extends until the end of the Second World War, which seems to suggest that 1918 was not a point in time when 'imperial Japan' underwent any basic transformation.²² Andrew Gordon, as mentioned above, is of course a good example of scholars who argue that emperor and empire were foremost on the prewar Japanese mind, since he detects continuity for the whole period 1868-1945 in the one word 'imperial'.²³

There have been various other broad-sweep periodizations of Japan's history of the first half of the twentieth century that skip 1918, such as 'the era of modern economic growth, 1906-30', 'the era of national mission, 1905-45', 'the era of political change, crisis and war, 1905-45' and Gary D. Allinson's rather unorthodox 'period of integrating the nation, 1890-1931',²⁴ but for reasons of brevity I will not dwell upon these here.

20 Donald Calman, *The Nature and Origins of Japanese Imperialism - A Reinterpretation of the Great Crisis of 1873*, Routledge, London, 1992.

21 This opinion is concisely summarized by the eminent scholar on Japanese imperialism Peter Duus in his 'The Takeoff Point of Japanese Imperialism'. In Harry Wray & Hilary Conroy, eds, *Japan Examined - Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1983, pp.153-57. In Japan it was also endorsed by Kitaoka Shinichi in his influential maiden work *Nihon rikugun to tairiku seisaku, 1906-1918 nen*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978.

22 These three camps have 'imperial Japan' start in respectively 1868, 1895, and sometime between 1895 and 1905, although there are some exceptional periodizations which either go back all the way to 1800 or conversely limit it to the wartime period.

23 In his more recent textbook *A Modern History of Japan* (Oxford University Press, 2002), however, Gordon reserves the label 'imperial Japan' for the period 1905-1945.

24 Respectively Kazushi Ohkawa & Henry Rosovsky, *Japanese Economic Growth - Trend Acceleration in the Twentieth Century*, Stanford University Press, 1973; Nomura Kōichi. 'Kindai Nihon ni okeru kokuminteki shimeikan - Sono shoruiki to tokushitsu'. In Nomura, *Kindai Nihon no Chūgoku ninshiki*, Kenbun Shuppan, 1981: pp.3-46 (originally published in *Kindai Nihon shisōshi kōza 8 - Sekai no naka no Nihon*, Chikuma Shobō, 1961); Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2nd edition, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1998, and Gary D. Allinson, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Japanese History*, Columbia University Press, 1999.

1918 as a Turning Point in Japanese History

Instead I would like to consider a few interpretations and periodizations of modern Japanese history that do treat 1918 as a major turning point but do so only on the basis of particular Japanese circumstances. It will not be surprising that most of these interpretations accordingly go straight to the heart of the concept of a Taishō democracy. First of all, I should probably mention Maruyama Masao, the authority on Japanese political and intellectual history, who immediately after the war started to publish a series of articles in which he tried to structurally analyze what went wrong with Japan before the war. I will not discuss his conclusions here, but it is interesting to see that he identifies 1919—what others would later treat as the height of Taishō democracy—as **the starting point of Japanese fascism**. The years 1919–31 are accordingly labelled the first period of ‘fascism from below’, a preparatory period that leads to a second, mature period of fascism from below, 1931–36, and ultimately culminates in the period of consummation of fascism and ‘fascism from above’, 1936–45.²⁵

Another concept, which emerged at the beginning of the 1970s as a direct reaction to the wave of late-1960s studies on the Taishō democracy, was that of **the era of the reform faction**. It was introduced by a revisionist group of Tokyo University affiliates, led by Itō Takashi, who emphasized the limitations of Taishō democracy and eventually rejected the general characterization of the Taishō period as a time of democracy. Instead they argued that the period from 1918 to the mid-1930s was best represented by a ‘reform generation’, a new generation which emerged in the latter part of the Taishō period and which was not so much looking for democracy as for reform, whether to the left or to the right.²⁶ Although the concept was quite influential during the 1970s and 1980s, in Japan as well in the West, it is rather a pity that Itō himself in his central volume on the ‘reform faction’ does not go beyond enumerating countless reform societies and hardly focuses on linking them more closely, thus failing to give the concept a more solid backbone.²⁷ In my opinion, ‘reform’ is too all-encompassing. The Rōsōkai, for instance, is of course a good example of all sorts of different creeds assembled in one room, but one should not forget that it was a short-lived experiment (1918–21) and shortly after everybody returned to their own more sectarian factions. As intellectuals the ‘reformists’ shared a common stage and were in close contact, but as political actors there were very clear dividing lines. Moreover, emphasis on the rise of the reform generation during the 1920s often makes analysts ignore the facts that in this period a previous older generation still held sway and various ‘reformists’ only took over during the late 1920s–early 1930s. Sharon Minichiello adopted Itō’s framework in her research on Nagai Ryūtarō, but rather surprisingly does not once mention it in her introduction to the *Competing Modernities* volume, which partly deals with the same

25 Maruyama Masao, ‘Nihon fashizumu no shisō to undō’. In Maruyama, *Gendai seiji no shisō to kōdō*, expanded edition, Miraisha, 1964: pp.29–87. An English translation of this article, ‘The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism’, can be found in Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, expanded edition, Oxford University Press, 1969: pp.25–83.

26 See Itō Takashi, ‘Nihon [Kakushin]-ha no seiritsu’. *Chūō Kōron - Rekishi to Jinbutsu*, 1972.12: pp.28–53 and the review of four ‘Taishō democracy’ books by Itō and Arima Manabu in *Shigaku Zasshi*, vol.84, no.3 (1975): pp.60–72.

27 Itō Takashi, *Taishōki [Kakushin]-ha no seiritsu*, Hanawa Shobō, 1978.

period.²⁸

A rather exceptional contribution to this periodization debate has been made by Sheldon Garon, who has pointed out that the years from 1918 to 1945 constitute the period in Japan's modern history in which the state behaved most autonomously vis-à-vis the social classes. In his opinion, the concept of **bureaucratic autonomy** can function as 'a promising means of describing the continuities between the apparently democratic 1920s and the authoritarianism of the 1930s and war years'.²⁹ Once again, I cannot help having strong doubts as to how substantial this phenomenon is, especially when Garon himself already admits that the direction in which this autonomous bureaucracy was working changed considerably over the years.³⁰

The most recent and the most passionate advocacy of 1918 as a turning point in modern Japanese history has emanated from Frederick R. Dickinson. His book, framed around the concept of **national renovation**, deals predominantly with the political struggles in Japan during the war period, in Dickinson's words 'a battle for national identity'. Notwithstanding, it seems that the main case he wants to make is that Kenseikai leader Katō Takaaki was the one and only true democrat of the age, that Katō's intentions in confronting China with the notorious Twenty-One Demands were nothing but praiseworthy (in the sense of the incredible detour of imperialism in the service of democracy), and that the real culprits were army leaders Yamagata Aritomo, Terauchi Masatake, Tanaka Giichi and, last but definitely not least, Katō's political rival Hara Takashi of the Seiyūkai. On this, in my view very unconvincing basis, Dickinson also turns his gaze to the postwar period. Here his continuing attack on Hara takes on a somewhat universalistic tone when he starts by pointing out:

Particularly ironic is the fact that 1919 is identified not, following the histories of Europe and America, as the year of Versailles but as one year in the life of the Hara regime. For the most dramatic steps towards representative government in Japan in that year came not through Hara's efforts but as a consequence of the Great War and its denouement, the Paris Peace Conference. In fact, by 1919, the Seiyūkai and its president had surrendered their role as the most powerful champions of representative government in Japan to a much more formidable proponent: Woodrow Wilson.³¹

Nonetheless, in the end Dickinson's definition of 1918/19 as an important turning point in modern Japanese history is based solely on internal political factors. It is characterized as a turning point in the sense of a prelude to the late 1920s when the Seiyūkai would 'accelerate its battle against reform', becoming more and more undemocratic and imperialist, and the Kenseikai

28 Sharon Minichiello, *Retreat from Reform: Patterns of Political Behavior in Interwar Japan*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1984.

29 Sheldon M. Garon, 'State Autonomy and Labor in Modern Japan'. *Working Papers in Asian/Pacific Studies* (Duke University), vol.86, no.2 (1986), p.8.

30 Ibid.: pp.3-21; Sheldon M. Garon, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1987.

31 Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention - Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919*, Harvard University Asia Center, 1999, p.217.

would ‘increasingly embrace the new political and diplomatic trends’.³² Dickinson’s first observations on a changed world order that was of overriding influence on developments in Japan deserved a better conclusion than this simplified scheme of heroes and villains, which ignores a tremendous amount of historical facts. To give just two instances, it was the Kenseikai which opposed Hara’s postwar policy of non-intervention in China and made the slogan ‘a strong foreign policy towards China’ a central part of its opposition campaign, and it took a long time to bring Katō into line with the popular demand for unconditional ‘universal’ (read: male) suffrage.³³

The End of World War One as a Turning Point in World History and thus in Japanese History

However, there are others who are more consistent in linking post-war changes in the (Western) world and in Japan, and accordingly have come to the conclusion that 1918 was a turning point in ‘world’ history and thus in Japanese history. It is hardly surprising that we can find most of the advocates of this line of thought among specialists on diplomatic history and economic history, two fields in which a broad, global analysis is indispensable. The most conspicuous representative on the side of the diplomatic historians is Akira Iriye, who already in his maiden work *After Imperialism* (1965) pointed out that ‘...the collapse of the diplomacy of imperialism as a mechanism of power politics, and the consequent **search for a new order** provide a meaningful context in which various countries’ foreign policies can be analyzed’.³⁴ He thus makes sure to distance himself from several particularist explanations. For instance he criticizes as ‘inadequate’ any analysis that originates from the viewpoint of ‘what went wrong in the 1920s’, in the sense of preparing the revival of Japanese expansionism. Such an analysis assumes that ‘foreign policies are autonomous and continuous’ and ‘international relations are seen simply as a mechanical sum total of isolated national policies’. Iriye by contrast emphasizes the fact that no nation has complete freedom of action:

It has only a given number of alternatives, and this range of possible action is often determined by extranational factors, such as considerations of alliances and ententes, *as well as what are generally regarded as legitimate and plausible goals of foreign policy*. Japanese expansionism, even if it did exist in the abstract, would take different forms as conditions change in the concepts, practices, and patterns

32 Ibid.: p.237.

33 Although almost forty years have passed since its publication, the best introduction in the English language to Katō Takaaki and the Kenseikai (later Minseitō) still is Peter Duus’ *Party Rivalry and Political Change in Taishō Japan*, Harvard University Press, 1968. In Japan Naraoka Sōchi is the most recent and prolific author on the subject. In a concise overview of Katō’s diplomatic vision he also concludes that it was only at the end of 1923 that Katō finally gave up clinging to the Twenty-One Demands and made the diplomatic policy of the Kenseikai more moderate and coherent. Naraoka, ‘Katō Takaaki no gaikō kōsō to Kenseikai, 1915-1924’. In Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nihon gaikō no kokusai ninshiki to chitsujo kōsō (Kokusai Seiji, no.139, November 2004)*: pp.74-90. See also his recent *Katō Takaaki to seitō seiji – Ni-daiseitōsei e no michi*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2006.

34 Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism - The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921–1931*, Harvard University Press, 1965: p.vii.

of international relations. Changes in these variables, which constitute what one may call *the framework or system of diplomacy*, will often modify the content and expression of a policy.³⁵

On the basis of a drastic change in this international ‘framework or system of diplomacy’ Iriye clearly designates 1918 as a major turning point. The end of World War One universally implied the end of the age of imperialism (or, in the words of Kitaoka Shinichi, ‘classical imperialism’) and the start of a new **era of economic foreign policy**, also termed the **era of economic expansionism** (1918-31), as distinct from the preceding imperialist and succeeding militarist eras of expansion.³⁶ Hattori Ryūji in his noteworthy multi-archival study of prewar Japanese foreign policy stresses in an identical tone that Japan could not be but directly influenced by the advent of a ‘new global standard’ and accordingly perceives a distinct period in Japan’s foreign policy starting in 1918 and lasting until 1931.³⁷

In Japanese there is also extensive literature dealing with either the diplomatic history or the economic history of **the interwar period in Japan**, which is identical to the extent that it obviously takes 1918 as a major universal starting and turning point but is exceptional in that it tries to find continuity between the 1920s and 1930s where many others in different disciplines tend to ‘take a break’ in 1931 or 1932.³⁸ On the contrary in Western scholarship the timeframe of ‘interwar Japan’ seems neither widespread nor outspoken, as it is mainly limited to the fields of culture and society and in many cases is not placed within a distinct international ‘interwar’ framework.³⁹

The last advocate of a periodization of modern Japanese history that takes 1918 as a major turning point for non-particularist reasons is Michael Barnhart. He describes the years from 1919 to 1941 as the period of **the search for economic security**. His focus is on the international postwar trend toward total war thinking, a lesson many countries learned during

35 Ibid.: p.2. Emphases added.

36 Ibid.: p.3; Irie Akira, *Nihon no gaikō*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1966; Akira Iriye, ‘The Failure of Military Expansionism’. In James William Morley, ed., *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*, Princeton University Press, 1971: pp.107-38; Iriye, ‘The Failure of Economic Expansionism, 1918-1931’. In Bernard S. Silberman & H. D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 1974: pp.237-69. For Kitaoka’s periodization of Japanese expansionism, see his *Nihon rikugun to tairiku seisaku*: pp.1-2.

37 Hattori Ryūji, *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō*, Yūhikaku, 2001.

38 Representative examples are Irie Akira & Aruga Tadashi, eds, *Senkanki no Nihon gaikō*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1984; Hosoya Chihiro, *Ryōtaisenkan no Nihon gaikō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1988 Nakamura Takafusa, ed., *Senkanki no Nihon keizai bunseki*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1981; Ōishi Kaichirō, *Senkanki Nihon no taigai keizai kankei*, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1992; Ishida Ryūzō, *Senkanki Nihon zaisei no kenkyū*, Seisansha, 2001 and Miwa Ryōichi, *Senkanki Nihon no keizai seisakushiteki kenkyū*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2003.

39 The most conspicuous recent studies making use of this timeframe include Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Interwar Japan - Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics*, University of California Press, 1996; Elise K. Tipton, ed., *Society and the State in Interwar Japan*, Routledge, London, 1997; Harry D. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity - History, Culture and Community in Interwar Japan*, Princeton University Press, 2000 and Barbara Sato, *The New Japanese Woman - Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan*, Duke University Press, 2003.

World War One. He discerns a group of ‘total war officers’, such as Ugaki Kazushige, Nagata Tetsuzan, Suzuki Teiichi, and Ishiwara Kanji, whose actions were mainly inspired by the quest for autarky in the sense of a self-sufficient Japanese empire. In Barnhart’s view these officers were exceptional to the extent that they were endowed with a predominantly economic outlook towards China and Manchuria, instead of a predominantly strategic outlook. However, unfortunately for these men, this same outlook led them to walk a thin line between the means of Sino-Japanese economic cooperation and the end of Japanese regional leadership, which time and again proved incompatible.⁴⁰

1.2 The New World Order of the Postwar Period

As one may gather from the various subjective statements in my discussion of the debate on whether 1918 is a turning point in Japanese history, I tend to side with those who see the changes brought about by the First World War as being of such influence on the Japanese state, society and people that we can speak of a major turning point. Usually I do not stress the most often mentioned benchmark in the year 1918, namely the advent of the ‘first true party cabinet’ in the form of the Hara cabinet. In the first place, I am not so sure whether it was the first. At least five cabinets led by a party leader and/or primarily supported by a political party preceded it, so it all becomes very much a matter of definition. But what is more important in my opinion is that it was the logical result of a long-term development. One can see it coming years ahead and many indeed did at the time. I prefer ‘real’ turning points, namely moments in time when people are startled by what has suddenly happened around them, and which forces them to regauge their position and to adjust their opinions and sometimes even their vocabulary. Japanese primary sources from the 1910s and 1920s have led me to believe that the end of World War One indeed is such a moment.

Anti-Imperialism and Non-Colonialism

So, what are these sudden - and mainly external - changes that took the world and Japan by surprise? Here I cannot help echoing some of the scholars I have already mentioned. First of all, I have to mimic Hobsbawm and Iriye by referring to the end of the good old imperialism of yore and its concomitant world order. The war had made the United States affluent - it had become the world’s greatest creditor nation - and powerful. The Americans suddenly found themselves on top of the world, while Europe lay devastated and ruined at their feet. Moreover, the mighty empires of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia had crumbled to pieces, the latter even fallen victim to a communist revolution. This inversion of the former international (pecking) order could not remain without substantial effects. Because of its latecomer and former-colony character America’s foreign policy preferences were intrinsically different from those of the West European colonial empires. This is not to say that the United States was not prone to expansionism, which was evident from such comparatively recent acquisitions as

40 Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War - The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941*, Cornell University Press, 1987.

Hawai'i and the Philippines, but colonialism never enjoyed the luster it had in the Old World and there always was a strong anti-colonialist lobby. As the combined effect of American policy preferences and the huge psychological shock the immense casualties and damage the war had caused to the European nations, the honourable pastimes of imperialism and expansionism all of a sudden became contaminated words and acquiring new territory and establishing new colonies were no longer condoned. The majority of political, military and intellectual leaders around the world were aware that what Akira Iriye termed 'the framework of diplomacy' and the according 'legitimate and plausible goals of foreign policy' had irreversibly changed overnight. The officers of the Kwantung Army in the early 1930s were also keenly aware that the annexation or colonization of Manchuria, in line with the comparatively recent examples of Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1910), was out of the question in the post-1918 setting and saw themselves forced to create the cumbersome facade of an autonomous Manchu-led state in order to effect Japanese control. However, that even such fake-acting was no longer accepted within the new world order was brought home to them by the fact that Manchukuo hardly obtained any more international recognition than the equally misjudged Italian renewed colonial effort in Ethiopia. Although I would like to avoid sounding too deterministic, it can hardly be called coincidence that Japan's anachronistic action proved to be the impassable stumbling block to the many Sino-Japanese peace efforts of the late 1930s and thus can duly be considered the self-inflicted but nonetheless fatal cause of the demise of its empire.

Internationalism, Open Diplomacy, and the New Multilateral Framework of International Relations

In hindsight we may tend to take for granted the establishment of the League of Nations in January 1920 as just another historical fact, but it should not be forgotten that many contemporary opinion leaders were completely taken by surprise by this revolution in the field of international relations. The carnage of the Great War had of course brought the trusted concept of the balance of power, including the political and military leaders that had implemented it, into great discredit, but not everybody thought it had turned bankrupt and most foresaw a continuation of this system of international relations in some amended way or another. However, the state by the end of the 1910s had lost so much of its former absolute sovereignty, to national society on the one hand and international society on the other, that the way back to 'business as usual' proved impossible. The bilateral treaties, often completely or partly secret, and the French speaking diplomatic elite that concluded these, hardly seemed in line with the postwar trends of mass democracy and socialism and became the object of severe criticism and distrust. And this sentiment later only aggravated when the new Soviet government, notwithstanding the protest of the other powers, seriously offended against the dictates of diplomatic protocol by putting all the dirty laundry accumulated in the Tsarist archives out in the open.

The call for 'open diplomacy' was loud, but because of the lack of historical precedent also somewhat aimless.⁴¹ In this situation it was Woodrow Wilson who showed the way. Often

41 In Japan the distinction between 'open diplomacy' and the related concept of 'people's diplomacy' was seldom made, and thus were collectively rendered as *kokumin gaikō*, the direct translation of the latter concept.

criticized for his impractical idealism and dearth of social skills, there can be no doubt that a lot of credit is due to him for making the quantum jump from the prewar halfhearted attempts at a system of international arbitration to a full-blown League of Nations and, moreover, for forcing the other powers to join. The historical irony that after having implicated the others the United States itself in the end chose to opt out of the League and to limit itself to upholding some sort of distant engagement, was a severe blow to the internationalist aspirations of the age and seriously hampered the effectiveness and authority of the newborn League. However, the fact that notwithstanding the absence of the world's leading power the new international framework of the League of Nations did persist proves markedly to what extent international relations had evolved. The main treaties of the 1920s, such as the Washington Treaties (1922), the Treaties of Locarno (1925), the Pact of Paris (1928), and the Naval Treaty of London (1930), many of them instigated or endorsed by the United States, and the abolition of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance only underlined that a new framework of multilateral treaties had come into being and that this internationalist approach to foreign relations was to stay.

Ethnic Nationalism and Budding Decolonisation

Thirdly, one should not underestimate the impact of the sudden popularity of the slogan 'the ethnic national right to self-determination' (in Japanese *minzoku jiketsu shugi*), propagated by both Wilson and Lenin. Many of those peoples which during the age of empire had been slighted as ethnic nations without civilization now considered themselves to be ethnic nations with the right to self-determination. Although most Western advocates of this slogan had not intended to give ethnic national self-determination a wide geographical application, it was not easy to explain why some peoples who previously had been termed ethnic nations (in Japanese *minzoku*) could not enjoy the same ethnic national rights as others. It is a fact that the colonial empires of the victorious nations, some of which had even expanded considerably during the war, were left intact at the Peace Conference in Paris. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned changed discourse, together with the new slogan of the ethnic national right to self-determination, logically implied that a ticking time bomb had been placed under the colonial order. Even if some empires tried to act as if nothing had changed or would change, in most cases the colonial population was kind enough to tell the colonizers that it was time to wake from their *tempo doeloe* dreams and face the postwar reality. And apart from them, there of course was America, which by means of the 1916 Jones Law had bestowed self-rule upon the Philippines and had even publicly stated the conditions for complete independence, thus severely undermining the colonial order from the ruling side.

Total War Thinking and the Economic World

Last but not least, I would like to invoke Michael Barnhart and stress the postwar trend of total war thinking. Apart from the new 'internationalist' vocabulary emanating from the Paris Peace Conference, such as a league of nations, the ethnic national right to self-determination, international cooperation, anti-militarism, and anti-imperialism, there was yet another new set of terms, dealing with more 'national' concerns and connected to the recent experience of modern warfare. It was the trend of total war thinking which greatly preoccupied the postwar mind, represented by such terms as total war, economic warfare, and autarky or self-sufficiency. Any

observer of World War One could see that this was no longer a nice and heroic war. It was of a completely different quality and quantity, which involved mass slaughter, trench warfare, tanks, chemical weapons, submarines and air raids. The words ‘neutral’ and ‘civilian’ did not mean much any more. Moreover, war was protracted. Once a stalemate had been reached, the war to a large extent developed from a military competition into an economic competition. Mobilisation of the entire nation was demanded. The front was not merely in Belgium, France, Russia, Italy and Turkey, it was also in every home. No matter how much one wanted to avoid a repetition of this ‘modern’ war, one could not just rely on optimistic hopes. One had to make the necessary preparations just in case, and considering the nature of modern warfare these preparations had to be total and to a very large extent economic.⁴²

Whereas the United States did not have much of an army or a navy at the outset of the war, and accordingly had hardly been taken seriously by the military leaders of all other major powers – including the Japanese officers, who without exception passed the country by on their regular foreign tours for new strategic insights – there was no denying that the American participation was the decisive factor in breaking the stalemate on the Western front and turning the war into an unconditional victory for the Allies. This development brought home the message loudly and clearly that prominence in this world was no longer predominantly based on military power, technological power and intellectual power, let alone moral or civilisational power. The overriding criterion from now onwards was crude economic power. This new awareness was widespread and had its influences in all fields of life. In international relations it precipitated a shift in focus from territorial expansion to economic expansion (from ‘formal empire’ to ‘informal empire’) and from military warfare to economic warfare. Notwithstanding the seemingly belligerent new terminology of ‘total war’ and ‘economic warfare’ (respectively *sōryokusen* and *keizai sensō* in Japanese), one should not get the false impression that war was at the front of everyone’s mind. In the war-weary days in the wake of the Great War only a small minority of disgruntled nationalists and military opportunists were willing to immediately take up the arms again, and as a consequence the 1920s are symbolized by arms limitation treaties and military retrenchments rather than by war, although the latter was of course never completely absent. In the same vein ‘economic warfare’ should not be taken too literally, in the sense of a new war of attrition by predominantly economic means, since in most cases it comes down to the figurative meaning of plain ‘economic competition’. At this time there were only few who tossed around in their heads with the idea of the formation of a self-sufficient garrison state and the total

42 Lately there is renewed attention within Japanese scholarship for the ‘total war’ system and mindset, but most contributions place the starting point of this modern phenomenon sometime in the 1930s and endeavour to make the link to the post-World War Two period or even to this very day. See Yasushi Yamanouchi, J. Victor Koschmann & Ryūichi Narita, eds, *Total War and ‘Modernization’*, Cornell East Asia Series, 1998; Komori Yōichi et al., eds, *Iwanami kōza kindai Nihon no bunkashi 7 - Sōryokusenka no chi to seido, 1935-1955*, Iwanami Shoten, 2002; Yamanouchi Yasushi & Sakai Naoki, eds, *Sōryokusen taisei kara gurōbarizeeshon e*, Heibonsha, 2003; Kobayashi Hideo, *Teikoku Nihon to sōryokusen taisei – senzen sengo no renzoku to Ajia*, Yūshisha, 2004. This is quite in contrast to recent Western scholarship which stresses that ‘the shadows of total war’ prevailed over Europe from the immediate post-World War One period onwards and pervaded all sections of society. See for instance Roger Chickering & Stig Förster, eds, *The Shadows of Total War - Europe, East Asia, and the United States, 1919-1939*, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

mobilization of industry and society, and those few were most likely to be overzealous but narrow-minded specialists within the army. Having said that, however, the concept of total war in a new world order that was primarily determined by economic power had established itself, if not on the forefront then at least in the back of many minds, and the idea of a potential future reprise of such a war was a constant element in the intellectual makeup of the world's opinion leaders which shaped their thought to a greater or lesser degree.

1.3 The Effects of the New World Order on Japan

Picking up some of the elements mentioned above, in particular the contradictory but not less critical situation that a new ethnic nationalist and anti-colonial discourse had come into being within the reality of 'the remnants of empire', Sakai Tetsuya has discussed the international order of the interwar period in terms of the universal challenge of the 'reorganisation of empire' (*teikoku saihei*). Peter Duus for the same period perceives an inclination towards a discourse of 'imperialism without colonies' (*shokuminchi naki teikokushugi*).⁴³ It will be clear that the new world order, of which these new trends were part and parcel, could only have a strong and direct impact on Japan. Since the sacrifices made for the establishment of Japan's empire were of a comparatively recent date and efforts to expand its formal and informal empire had been carried out ruthlessly throughout the war, even to the detriment of the interests of Japan's allies, there was every reason to expect that this latecomer imperialist nation would have an extremely difficult time in digesting the end of the age of empire and in adjusting itself to the new world order. In the following chapters I will analyze in detail this process of digesting and adjusting on the basis of several case studies, so I will restrict myself here to some general observations concerning the direct implications of the new world order on Japan.

Changed Perception of the Outside World and the National Goal

First of all, it should be noted that the Japanese did not feel very much at ease in the postwar world. One might think that they should have been quite at ease now that their most feared enemy, Imperial Russia, had all of a sudden evaporated. However, by means of the Siberian Intervention (1918-22) they soon managed to provide themselves with a new hostile entity in the form of communist Russia, which was heterogeneous and thus strange and, moreover, proved to be difficult to fight. On the other hand there was the United States, the new number one, a country that was neither very easy to fathom for the Japanese, especially with a religious idealist such as Woodrow Wilson as its leader. True to their European idols, many Japanese intellectuals had taken to looking down on the United States as being at a lower stage of

43 Sakai Tetsuya, '[Shokuminchi seisakugaku] kara [Kokusai kankeiron] e'. In Asano Toyomi & Matsuda Toshihiko, eds, *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no hōteki tenkai*, Shinsansha, 2004: pp.3-28 and 'Senkanki Nihon no kokusai chitsujoron'. *Rekishigaku kenkyū*, no.794 (October 2004): p.84; Peter Duus, 'Shokuminchi naki teikokushugi – [Dai Tō-A kyōeiken] no kōsō'. *Shisō*, no.814 (April 1992): pp.105-21 and 'Sōzō no teikoku – Higashi Ajia ni okeru Nihon'. In Peter Duus & Kobayashi Hideo, eds, *Teikoku to iu gensō – [Dai Tō-A kyōeiken] no shisō to genjitsu*, Aoki Shoten, 1998: pp.26-27.

civilization than the Old World. Only an exceptionally keen observer like Hara Takashi was at a very early stage aware of its potential, an awareness which eventually led him to predict that ‘in the future, America will take the lead in the world’ and ‘American power vis-à-vis the postwar world will be astonishing’.⁴⁴ After the war, decided by a victory of the American production facilities over the German production facilities, Hara was joined in this opinion by the people. Whether they considered the United States to be a friend or a potential enemy, whether they thought in terms of military warfare, economic warfare, or peaceful economic competition, the United States was the model that the Japanese had in mind. America was what Japan sought to be, namely self-sufficient (*jikyū jisoku*). If the country wanted to survive and, moreover, wanted to be a fully-fledged player in a post-war world that was to a large extent dictated by the economic power of the United States, it had to compete with the Americans on their terms. It had to be equally fit for modern total war. It had to be economically self-sufficient as well.⁴⁵ In a new and strange world where its former European ally often proved absent and eventually undependable, and where the country also had to adjust to an unfamiliar vocabulary with which it was confronted from all sides - from the New World, from the international headquarters of communism, and even from its own colonies and informal empire - Japan felt cornered and isolated. As was often the case, its natural inclination was to turn to its East Asian backyard for a solution.

Changed Perception of International Relations and the Legitimate Means of Foreign Policy

Still, no matter how familiar the motion, this time it was orchestrated by a new set of rules, namely the abovementioned new ‘framework of diplomacy’ that prescribes ‘legitimate and plausible goals of foreign policy’. The conditions for attaining economic self-sufficiency within

44 Hara Keiichirō, comp., *Hara Takashi nikki*, vol. 4, Fukumura Shuppan, 1965: entries of 26 May and 22 October, 1917. Hara had been aware of the potential of the United States ever since his early days as a consul in Tianjin. For the Seiyūkai catching up with Hara’s awareness that the world would increasingly be determined by economic power, see Itō Yukio, ‘Dai-ichiji taisen to sengo Nihon no keisei – Rikken Seiyūkai no dōkō’, *Kyōto Daigaku Hōgaku Ronsō*, vol. 140, no.3/4 (January 1997): pp.162-64. Since Mitani Taichirō’s pioneering research on Hara Takashi’s view of the United States and the foreign policy during his prime ministership (‘[Tenkanki] (1918-1921) no gaikō shidō’. In Shinohara Hajime & Mitani Taichirō, eds, *Kindai Nihon no seiji shidō – Seijika kenkyū II*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965: pp.293-374), it has been quiet for a long time, but the last decade has seen many new contributions to this topic, such as Seki Shizuo, ‘Masatsu to kyōchō – Hara Takashi no Nichi-Bei kyōchōshugi’. In Seki, *Nihon gaikō no kijiku to tenkai*, Minerva Shobō, Kyoto, 1990: pp.209-64; Kawada Minoru, *Hara Takashi – Tenkanki no kōsō*, Miraisha, 1995; Seki Shizuo, ‘Hara Kei no Nichi-Bei teikeiron to Nisshi shinzenron’. In Seki, *Taishō gaikō*, Minerva Shobō, Kyoto, 2001: pp.147-73; and Hattori Ryūji, ‘[Kokusai hendō no daiippa] to Hara gaikō’. In Hattori, *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō 1918-1931*, Yūhikaku, 2001: pp.19-88.

45 Hara also led in convincing the people of the demands of the new, economic world, judging by his address to representatives of chambers of commerce in which he stressed that the lesson of the war just ended was that military power no longer was the main instrument to attain one’s goals and that the task to a great extent was now up to them. Hara Keiichirō, comp., *Hara Takashi nikki*, vol. 5, Fukumura Shuppan, 1965: entry of 21 November 1918.

the East Asian region were clear and all Japanese intellectuals were aware of them: no large-scale armed interventions, no formation of new colonies, and a certain degree of respect for the Chinese ethnic national right to self-determination. Although these three conditions of course were interconnected and worked together in restraining Japan's hitherto policy of imperialism on the Asian continent, I would like to concentrate here on the arrival of ethnic nationalism at the centre of the international postwar scene as the most debilitating factor to the realization of Japan's foreign policy goals.

The civilisationist discourse of the prewar imperialist international order

When in the final year of the First World War Japan was suddenly confronted with the new slogan of 'self-determination of nationalities', introduced by Lenin in November 1917 but most influentially propagated by his ideological antipode Wilson a few months later, it had a serious problem. Whereas before the war there had been no significant pressure upon the country, neither internal nor external, to recognise the distinct identity and corresponding rights of the ethnic nations within and on the border of the Japanese Empire, these same nations were all of a sudden granted an internationally acclaimed and thus very respectable vocabulary and infrastructure by which they could and certainly would voice their nationalist demands.

Since the principle of 'self-determination of nationalities' was presented by Wilson as one of the pillars on which a new and just world order to be laid down at the Paris Peace Conference would rest, it was automatically an issue also very much in focus in the Japanese media of the immediate postwar days. In the Japanese language, which in contrast to the English language makes a sharp distinction between the nation in a political sense (*kokumin*) and in an ethnic sense (*minzoku*), the right of self-determination of nationalities - often simplified as 'the right of national self-determination' - was without difficulty and ambiguity translated as '*minzoku jiketsuken*'. However, this term easily hid the fact that, although '*minzoku*' of course was not a completely new concept because the word had existed in the Japanese language since the late nineteenth century, it was nonetheless a rather recent fabrication and had mainly been used by a handful of bureaucrats, journalists and academics.⁴⁶ Most Japanese when confronted

46 As the literal translation of *kokumin*, 'country-nation', indicates, this term was predominantly related to the fact that in the modern era individuals more and more became fully-fledged members of a politically clearly defined and geographically clearly demarcated structure, namely the state. In this sense *kokumin* was a modern phenomenon and, accordingly, those people who - on account of the absence of a strong centralised state or for other reasons - were considered not sufficiently 'modern' or 'civilised', were usually not categorised as *kokumin* but as *domin* (natives) or some other derogatory denomination. Although the word *minzoku* (literally 'nation-family') was a more recent fabrication than *kokumin* it nevertheless referred to real or imagined ties which predated the framework of the modern state. It emphasised common ancestry, history, religion, language, experience, culture, spirit, and so on, and in all its inevitable vagueness was prone to trace the roots of the ethnic nation back to the beginning of time. Regardless of its arbitrary and unscientific criteria and its self-serving objectives, in the process of demarcating the own nation as a distinct ethnic nation, other nations that had not been considered fit to be honoured with the term *kokumin* were also characterised as *minzoku* and thus for the first time obtained a distinct and neutral identity. This new identity was easily allotted to 'inferior nations' since at first it did not coincide with any rights being granted, but when at the end of World War One rights were suddenly being granted on the basis of this ethnic identity it was too late to deny it. For the Japanese adoption of the

with the outside world tended to divide it up by means of either ‘*kuni*’ (country), ‘*kokka*’ (state), ‘*kokumin*’ (the political nation) or ‘*jinshu*’ (race) rather than by ‘*minzoku*’ (the ethnic nation). This practice was partly a reflection of the fact that, in the prewar imperialist world order as perceived by Japan, there had been no pressing need to consider the issue of nationalism in the sense of ethnic nationalism and, accordingly, the national identity of its Asian neighbours. The few Asian geographic units of which Japan was aware within the framework of the overall national goal of expansion onto the Asian continent, were in general treated as nothing but theatres, empty stages that had to be manned by Japan before any of its competitors did. Within this internationally supported framework of imperialist expansion, the argument of ‘civilisation’ (*bunmei*) had at least officially the task of supplying this crude national aim, which often coincided with a fair amount of bloodshed and oppression, with a laudable universal coating. Occupying and ruling African and Asian territory was presented as a ‘white man’s burden’, which the European nations grudgingly but in obedience to their duty towards God and Civilisation took upon themselves. Japan was one of the few exceptions to resist successfully the nineteenth century tide of Western imperialism and by 1911 it had even completely shaken off the yoke of the unequal ‘treaty port system’, but Japan’s success was to a large extent a success of accommodation. In confronting the West it had not come up with an indigenous discourse and, as it seriously embarked on its own imperialist adventure at the end of the nineteenth century, it was hardly surprising that it adopted the convenient Western civilisationist discourse. While the strategic argument of taking and fortifying Korea and parts of China, thus making them into the outer line of defence of Japan’s heartland, was also brought to the fore without any reservation in the first days of Japanese imperialism, the argument of civilisation came more and more to prevail outwardly: Japan as a civilised nation (*bunmeikoku*) had to contribute to the lofty goal of the progress of world civilisation by bearing its part of the ‘white man’s burden’ in the form of the enlightenment of uncivilised Korea and China.

Copying this apologetic Western debate at first glance seemed quite convenient, but there was a fundamental contradiction. When hierarchically dividing the world into groups of countries according to their level of civilisation and rendering certain privileges to the most civilised, it becomes very easy to argue that Japan, as the acclaimed sole ‘modern civilised nation’ in the East, has the duty to expand into Korea and China. But at the same time it becomes very difficult to explain why it should be the task of the ‘mediocre Japan’ to go in there and not that of the ‘West European champions of civilisation’, especially at a time when the Japanese themselves were still very much aware of a hierarchical civilisation gap between their country and the West. Japan needed another argument to supplement the universal discourse of civilisation in order to make expansion into Korea and China a particularistic Japanese privilege. This argument was of course easily found in the comparatively familiar concept of ‘race’ (*jinshu*). Civilising the barbarians and thus uplifting the general level of world civilisation were a shared ‘civilised man’s burden’

concept ‘ethnic nation’ and their creation of an identity as a homogeneous ethnic entity, see Yasuda Hiroshi, ‘Kindai Nihon ni okeru minzoku kansen no keisei’, *Shisō to Gendai*, no.31 (1992): pp.61-72; Yoon Keun-cha, *Minzoku gensō no satetsu - Nihonjin no jikozō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1994; Oguma Eiji, *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen*, Shinyōsha, 1995; Oguma Eiji, *[Nihonjin] no kyōkai*, Shinyōsha, 1998; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan - Time, Space, Nation*, M.E. Sharpe, 1998 and Kevin M. Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People*, Brill, Leiden, 2006.

but doing so on the East Asian stage was a ‘yellow man’s burden’.⁴⁷

Up to the end of the First World War Japan’s expansion onto the Asian continent was usually defended by means of a blend of the two arguments of ‘civilisation’ and ‘race’. A very intricate and well-known blend was the *Tōzai bunmei* (*chōwa* or *yūgō*) *ron* (Theory of – the harmonization or amalgamation of – Eastern and Western civilisation) as proposed by such different opinion leaders as Okakura Tenshin, Uchimura Kanzō, Ōkuma Shigenobu, Tokutomi Sohō, Ukita Kazutami, Gotō Shinpei, Tanaka Ōdō, Kawakami Hajime and Kayahara Kazan (1880-1951): the juxtaposed spiritual Eastern and materialist Western civilisations meeting each other on Japanese soil and there sublimating into one world civilisation of an unprecedented high level.⁴⁸ Although most Japanese intellectuals tended to be somewhat more down-to-earth and preferred a more balanced blend, since they could not perceive a separate Eastern civilisation of any serious value and humbly rejected the idea of Japan as the summit of world civilisation, there was hardly any blend that did not fulfil the task of providing Japan with a particular mission and special privileges on the East Asian continent. Accordingly in the greater part of contributions to the combined civilization/race discourse, Japan’s Asian neighbours were generally looked down upon and their national identity was ignored. The Japanese treated these nations either as uncivilised entities, which were considered to be lacking both elements of the nation-state, that is a unified political nation (*kokumin*) and a centralised modern state (*kokka*), and thus did not even live up to the two most basic preconditions to be counted as ‘a civilised country’ (*bunmeikoku*). Or they treated them as nothing but immature and inferior members of the yellow race, who were

47 For the two axes (*kijiku*) of civilization and race in Japanese conceptualisations of Asia, see Yamamuro Shinichi, ‘Aija ninshiki no kijiku’. In Furuya Tetsuo, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Aija ninshiki*, Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1994: pp.3-45. In his recent magnum opus Yamamuro has added the two elements of culture (*bunka*) and the ethnic nation (*minzoku*) to complete the quartet of ‘pillars of thought’ (*shisō kijiku*). Yamamuro Shinichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no Aija*, Iwanami Shoten, 2001, pp.31-142.

48 This *Tōzai bunmeiron* became popular at the time of the Russo-Japanese War and enjoyed its heyday during the First World War. Kayahara Kazan was very instrumental in spreading this theory, his journal *Dai-san Teikoku* (the third empire) a direct reference to the ideal state that had accomplished the envisioned goal of sublimating the first and second civilisations. However, nowadays it is predominantly Ōkuma Shigenobu who is associated with the term *Tōzai bunmeiron*, probably because of his posthumously published *Tōzai bunmei no chōwa* (Dai-Nihon Bunmei Kyōkai, 1923). During the 1920s and 1930s this theory of Eastern and Western civilization gradually transformed itself into the genre of ‘comparative civilisation’ (*hikaku bunmeiron*), of which the most conspicuous example arguably is Watsuji Tetsurō’s *Fūdo* (Iwanami Shoten, 1935). The idea of separate Eastern and Western civilisations and their sublimation into a civilisation of a higher level lived on after World War Two and is especially prominent within the genre of *Nihonjinron*. However, Japan’s most influential ‘new religion’, the Sōka Gakkai, also spreads the *Tōzai bunmeiron* theory through its own publishing house, the Dai-san Bunmeisha (Third Civilisation Publishing). For a comparison of the theories advocated by Ōkuma, Tokutomi and Ukita, see Kamiya Masafumi, ‘[Tōzai bunmei chōwaron] no mittsu no kata’. *Daitō Hōsei Ronshū*, no.9 (March 2001): pp.159-80. For Kayahara, see Akira Iriye, ‘Kayahara Kazan and Cosmopolitanism’. In Albert M. Craig & Donald H. Shively, eds, *Personality in Japanese History*, University of California Press, 1970: pp.373-98. For a discussion of Ōkuma’s book by a group of Waseda affiliates, see Mineshima Hideo et al., *Ōkuma Shigenobu [Tōzai bunmei no chōwa] wo yomu*, Hokuju Shuppan, 1990. And, last but not least, for the influence of the Japanese *Tozai bunmeiron* on contemporary Chinese opinion leaders such as Li Dazhao (although ‘bunmei’ was rendered as ‘bunka’), see Ishikawa Yoshihiro, ‘Tōzai bunmeiron to Nitchū no rondan’. In Furuya Tetsuo, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Aija ninshiki*, Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1994: pp.395-440.

never even asked if they shared the ideas of Asian civilisation or (East) Asian unity.⁴⁹

The ethnic nationalist discourse of the postwar world order

The above-mentioned ‘serious problem’ confronting Japan in 1918 was that, as a result of external developments in the West, the imperialist ‘civilisation’ discourse of yore was all of a sudden substituted with a new discourse which, at least outwardly, was to rule international relations and which was to a large extent based on the concept of the ethnic nation. The fact that the bitter experience of ‘the Great European War’ had led to a new internationalist trend in which such familiar vocabulary as imperialism, militarism, colonialism, and so on was stripped of its former lustre and, moreover, in many cases came to hold a negative connotation was something a Japanese could still cope with. That is, if he or she was satisfied with the 1918-scope of the Japanese formal and informal empire (which, profiting from the temporary absence of the Western powers from the East Asian scene during the First World War, had recently been considerably extended). However, the fact that the new discourse in international relations highlighted the cause of ethnic nationalism placed a ticking time bomb under the Japanese imperialist status quo. For even if Wilson had initially probably not considered the idea of applying the principle of self-determination of nationalities to ethnic nations outside Europe, the universal applicability of the principle heartened all sorts of non-Western nationalist anti-colonial or anti-imperialist movements which up to that time had been slighted or denounced. Made respectable by the new discourse, these movements gained strength and could no longer be easily ignored. If Japanese opinion leaders had not understood the implications of the messages emanating from the West at the end of the war or had thought they could just wait and see which way the wind blew they were soon proved seriously mistaken. While negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference continued during the first half of 1919, Tokyo was successively shaken by the Korean March First Movement and the Chinese May Fourth Movement, uprisings which both had a distinctly nationalist and anti-Japanese character. It was clear that it was time for both the Japanese government and opinion leaders to come up with an answer to the sudden changes occurring in Japan’s backyard as a result of the new world order and the new discourse which accompanied it.

49 There is a huge pile of studies on the condescending way prewar Japanese looked upon their ‘Asian’ - an adjective which was usually synonymous to ‘Chinese’ and seldom included the Japanese themselves - brothers. The most prominent recent examples are Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient - Rendering Pasts into History*, University of California Press, 1993; Furuya Tetsuo, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Ajia ninshiki*, Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1994; Komagome Takeshi, *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no bunka tōgō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1996; Okamoto Kōji, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Ajia-kan*, Minerva Shobō, Kyoto, 1998; Nihon Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nenpō seijigaku 1998 – Nihon gaikō ni okeru Ajiashugi*, Iwanami shoten, 1999; Furuya Tetsuo & Yamamuro Shinichi, eds, *Kindai Nihon ni okeru Higashi-Ajia mondai*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001; Yamamuro Shinichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no Ajia*, Iwanami Shoten, 2001; Sun Ge, *Ajia wo kataru koto no jirenma*, Iwanami Shoten, 2002; Li Narangoa & Robert Cribb, eds, *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia*, RoutledgeCurzon, London, 2003; Koyasu Nobukuni, *[Ajia] wa dō katararete kita ka*, Fujiwara Shoten, 2003; Sven Saaler & J. Victor Koschmann, eds, *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History*, Routledge, London, 2007; and the ongoing stream of publications on Sino-Japanese relations authored, edited or translated by Joshua A. Fogel

China, China, China

As far as Japan's formal empire was concerned, the new situation did not yet result in any fundamental problems. The ruthless suppression of the Korean uprising, in which Christian elements were also represented, gained Japan some bad press, but there were no international repercussions to be feared. Taiwan and Korea were on the safe side of the 1914 demarcation timeline, which protected the historical colonial exploits of those powers that had not been stripped of their former colonial empires due to defeat in World War One. Questioning Japanese colonial rule over these territories could only backfire on the other major powers of the postwar world and directly relate to questions of legitimacy concerning British India, French Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, but also Ireland, Algeria, Gibraltar, Puerto Rico, Guantánamo Bay and Hawaii. The territorial gains of the war period were in a different category, since they were characterised as the profit of the common war effort and accordingly had to be approved by the other powers and to be camouflaged as League of Nations mandates. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the odd quarrel with the United States over Yapp, these mandates were seldom disputed and became a full and sound part of Japan's formal empire. The only problem was China, but since it happened to be the prime focus of Japan's imperialist ambitions and prime locus of Japan's foreign policy ever since the settlement of the Korean issue in 1905, it was anything but a minor problem. It was the one foreign issue that was foremost on the prewar Japanese mind and eventually it was of course the impossibility to solve the 'China question' in a way satisfactory to the Japanese that led to the immense bloodshed of the Sino-Japanese and Asia-Pacific wars.

The main 'problem with China' was that the contradiction between its formal status of an independent state and its actual predicament of being cut up into several foreign spheres of influence centred around leased territories, was completely at loggerheads with the new ethnic-nationalist discourse and almost impossible to encapsulate nicely within the new world order. The weakness of the country due to internal strife and division ever since the 1911 revolution on the one hand ensured that things would not become explosive immediately, but on the other hand sculled all attempts at a fundamental international solution of the problem. This also explains why in Japan, for instance, one can simultaneously find groups who considered national unification the panacea to all problems in China and other groups for whom this prospect was the thing they feared most in the light of the security of Japan's informal empire in Northern China. In either case, calls from these groups only became louder and more imminent as China was awarded a central position in Japanese economic and strategic schemes that were informed by total war thinking. The notion that Japan could not do without China became widespread amongst the majority of the political, economic, military, and intellectual leaders of the age, although the concrete elaboration of the relation between the two countries tended to vary considerably.

All too shallow daydreams of strong and cordial Sino-Japanese relations, though, were soon shattered by the arrival on the China scene in May 1919 of a fresh, strong and uncompromising ethnic nationalist movement that was outspoken in its anti-Japanese sentiments. The sudden collapse a few years earlier of tsarist Russia, a feared hostile entity which nonetheless through the series of secret Russo-Japanese treaties simultaneously functioned as an

imperialist ally with partial common interests in Manchuria, had already turned a whole spectrum of points of departure concerning Japan's China policy obsolete overnight.⁵⁰ However, the entrance of an indigenous enemy on the China stage proved to be a much more fundamental problem. The combined civilization/race discourse used by Japan in order to legitimize its exploits on the Asian continent had not merely become outdated as a result of the end of the age of empire, but now also became dysfunctional because it had been primarily aimed at the Western colonial powers. In the discourse of the new age there was hardly room for arguments either of superior Japanese accomplishments in the field of Western civilization or of racial unity, but neither could these have been expected to raise much understanding, let alone enthusiasm, amongst a Chinese audience. Asianism, of course was not just out of line with Chinese nationalism but also with the outwardly internationalist spirit of the 1920s. It thus continued its history as a minority argument, lacking in popularity and being snowed under by the dominant discourse dictated by the West ever since the imperialist days. On the other hand, calls propounding Japan's ambitions that integrated the new discourse such as, for instance, the hypothetical *Nihon minzoku no tame no Monrō-shugi* (A Monroe Doctrine on behalf of the Japanese ethnic nation), no matter how popular they might be at home, were too blatant to be considered for any external use. Thus the postwar era provided the new indigenous antagonist with the decisive argument of ethnic national self-determination and left Japan pretty much empty-handed. And on top of this it of course also did not help that the United States, the new world leader, seemed to have singled out the 'sister republic' of China as the primary testing ground for the implementation of the principle of the right to self-determination of nationalities outside Europe.

Confronted with this new situation and the accompanying deficit of legitimacy, dislocated by the crumbling of the Pax Britannica, that strong foothold of foreign policy in prewar days, and urged on by a strong feeling of crisis due to the awareness of Japan's weakness within the new and predominantly economic world order of the postwar era, Japan opted for a policy of adjustment. The country bit its lips, officially denied any particularistic militarist, imperialist, colonialist or regionalist aspirations, and all through the 1920s committed itself to the universal internationalist framework of the Washington System, as embodied by the New Four Power Consortium for China, the Washington Treaties, the lifting of the gold embargo, and the London Naval Treaty. This was a clear shift away from military imperialism aimed at territorial expansion towards economic imperialism aimed at the expansion of commercial rights (*shōken*) and the extension of economic spheres of influence (*keizaiken*). The choice for this economic variety of informal empire, also termed 'the imperialism of free trade' or 'gentleman capitalism', instead of formal empire was symbolized by Japan's decision in 1922 to withdraw its army from Shandong and to restore to China the former German rights and possessions on the peninsula, including such strategic assets as the railway and the lease of Quingdao. This transition was of course largely aided by the incidental factor of the downfall in popularity of both the Imperial Army and the policy of military expansion due to the unprecedented deficit of the Siberian

50 For the 'compulsory' change of such points of departure in the case of military men such as Yamagata Aritomo, Terauchi Masatake, Tanaka Giiichi and Akashi Motojirō, see Banno Junji, 'Nihon rikugun no Ō-Bei kan to Chūgoku seisaku'. In Banno, *Kindai Nihon no gaikō to seiji*, Kenbun Shuppan, 1985: pp.77-105.

Expedition, but it also reflected a more consistent tendency in Japanese society away from the imperialism of yore dating from before the war.⁵¹

The so-called ‘Washington System’ was a multi-faceted thing, including treaties on international naval arms limitation, the partial demilitarization of the West Pacific region, and peacekeeping and conflict management in the Far East, but the Japanese support to a large extent was focused on the optimistic hope that it could provide a framework within which intra-power cooperation and compromises with Chinese nationalism could be harmonized. However, mainly because of the continuous dissension of China, the participating powers did not succeed in actively creating a new international order in East Asia and accordingly the ‘system’ mainly manifested itself in the passive form of non-interventionism.⁵² Although Japan for the most part of the 1920s stayed neatly within the limits of this non-interventionism, as represented by the China policies implemented by Foreign Ministers Uchida Yasuya and Shidehara Kijūrō, this definitely did not imply that the ambition to bend China to Japan’s will had disappeared. It merely meant that calls for an autonomous China policy released from the yoke of the Washington System, both in the sense of a more compliant pro-China policy and a more aggressive anti-China policy, were not opportune and remained largely behind closed doors. However, when in the latter half of the 1920s the new world order in the form of the Chinese right of ethnic national self-determination started eating away at Japan’s vested position of rights and interests dating from the age of empire, the debate on China’s policy burst out into the open and, moreover, included many arguments that completely ignored or sometimes even went straight against the notion of cooperation with the Western powers. This development once again underlined the landslide changes that had occurred around the world in the aftermath of World War One and strongly conditioned Japan’s foreign policy in the postwar world. Whereas the new multilateral framework provided by the West was often used, there could be no doubt whatsoever that the real adjustment to the new world order had to be done on the China stage, that it had to be conducted with the awareness of economic vulnerability and, moreover, that it for the first time in a quarter of a century mainly involved dealing with an indigenous antagonist.

51 A good example of this tendency is the special on ‘Ryōdo kakuchōshugi to shōken kakuchōshugi’ in the *Chūō Kōron* issue of March 1912, in which a convincing majority rejected any further territorial expansion on the grounds of the immense costs of direct colonial rule and the clear danger of confrontation with the Western powers. For a detailed analysis of the genealogy of the more naval-oriented argument in support of informal empire, see Sakai Kazuomi, ‘Washinton kaigi e no michi – Taiheiyō mondai to [Teikoku] Nihon’. *Hōgaku Seijigaku Ronkyū*, no.43 (winter 1999): pp.707-36.

52 Sakai Tetsuya, [Ei-Bei kyōchō] to [Nitchū teikei]. In Kindai Nihon Kenkyūkai, ed., *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyū 11 – Kyōchō seisaku no genkai*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1989: pp.62-63.

2 THE NATIONAL STAGE OF TAISHŌ DEMOCRACY AS A PERIOD OF OPENLY COMPETING ISMS

Moreover, apart from the four major universal changes discussed above of anti-imperialism, internationalism, ethnic nationalism and total war-thinking, there were also some other significant changes that – at least as far as their timing was concerned - were less externally induced and more particular to the Japanese setting. Internally, the year 1918 first of all saw an acceleration of the process towards political democracy, as exemplified by the start of a period of party government. Almost simultaneously the implementation of thought control and media censure was considerably alleviated, giving rise to a distinct period of relative freedom of opinion in which all sorts of ideas and ideologies – isms – were discussed in an unprecedented open manner. Another important phenomenon that characterises the period 1918-1932 and originates in the immediate postwar years is the so-called ‘discovery of society’ (*shakai no hakken*), leading to a pluralistic vision of the nation and a turn away from the overpowering emphasis on the state during the Meiji period. Moreover, this discovery of society was followed by the related discovery of new social groups, respectively ‘the middle class’ (*chūsan kaikyū* or *chūkan kaikyū*) and ‘the mass’ (*taishū*), which took on the role of agent, object, justification or criterion of political and social reform. Since these changes have often been treated within the context of the umbrella term ‘Taishō democracy’ and since this concept is as ever the object of fierce debate - a debate which, by the way, in Japan itself to a certain extent seems to take on the character of a feud between the history departments of Tokyo University and Kyoto University – I will first briefly discuss this debate and subsequently explain why I support the concept, before addressing the changes separately.

2.1 The Taishō Democracy Debate

Apart from the abovementioned lack of unity as to the exact dates and the determining element, the debate on Taishō democracy is even further complicated by the fact that there exist both positive and negative interpretations of this period. Ever since the end of the Second World War there has been a strong trend to closely link Taishō democracy to postwar political and social democracy along with international cooperation. Modernisation theorists and others have stressed it as a period of transition: they see this period of party cabinets as an essential prelude to postwar democracy, thus downplaying the meaning of the 1930s and the war years as a dark valley, a temporary aberration from the universal path of modernization. However, there have been at least as many voices who have spoken of Taishō democracy in terms of failure. They stress the fact that the political parties did not reach out to the masses and sometimes they even strongly cast doubt on the true democratic content of Taishō democracy. Many Marxist scholars, who until the 1970s were extremely influential in Japanese academia, have been keen to point out that Taishō democracy was nothing but a short and ultimately insignificant period of interruption in Japan’s authoritarian internal policy and aggressive foreign policy. Somewhere in between these two interpretations lies the popular Japanese image of the Taishō period and Taishō democracy, as projected by numerous movies, television series and historical *manga*. It is the image of ‘romantic Taishō’ (*Taishō roman*), the weak yet beautiful flower of freedom, romance and modernism that bravely tried to develop from under the overwhelming load of ‘glorious Meiji’ (*idai na Meiji*), but was soon dramatically crushed by ‘tumultuous Shōwa’

(*gekidō no Shōwa*).⁵³

The concept ‘*Taishō demokurashii*’ was disseminated by Shinobu Seizaburō, who nonetheless bestowed the major achievements of his own creation with the rather negative connotation of ‘a bourgeois compensation for their inherently imperialistic nature’.⁵⁴ At the end of the 1950s Nezu Masashi challenged Shinobu’s interpretation and instead gave the concept the new positive content of ‘the best endeavour at progressive reform possible under the contemporary circumstances and with the contemporary means’.⁵⁵ The clash of the two scholars sparked off a ‘Taishō democracy debate’ and resulted in a true wave of related studies during the late 1960s and early 1970s, many of which included the concept in their title. Although these works displayed a wide variety of interpretations, the majority opinion was clearly in favour of a treatment of Taishō democracy in positive terms.⁵⁶ From this boom in Taishō studies Kyoto University’s Matsuo Takayoshi emerged as the most consistent and most prominent advocate of the merits of Taishō Democracy and its important meaning for post-WWII Japan. He has dedicated almost all of his research to this period and has thus turned himself into the authority and living archive on Taishō democracy.⁵⁷ His most outspoken opponent was Itō Takashi of Tokyo University whose evaluation of Taishō Democracy was not merely negative but who completely dismissed the concept itself. He pointed out that the content of the concept was vague

53 The most prominent productions catering to and reaffirming this popular image are Suzuki Seijun’s so-called ‘Taishō trilogy’ consisting of *Zigeunerweisen* (Shinema Purasetto, 1980), *Kagerō-za* (Shinema Purasetto, 1981) and *Yumeji* (Arato Genjirō Jimusho, 1991), Fukasaku Kinji’s *Hana no Ran* (Tōei, 1988) and Harada Masato’s television film *Jiyū ren’ai* (2004). Especially *Hana no Ran* is a true who’s who of *Taishō roman*, starring such romantic heroes as Yosano Akiko, Arishima Takeo, Matsui Sumako, Shimamura Hōgetsu, Ishikawa Takuboku, Ōsugi Sakae and Itō Noe.

54 Shinobu Seizaburō, *Taishō seijishi*, 4 vols, Kawade shobō, 1951–52 (reprinted as one volume in 1954 and revised in 1968) and *Gendai Nihon seijishi: Taishō demokurashii-shi*, 3 vols, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1954–59 (reprinted as one volume in 1978).

55 Nezu Masashi, *Hihan Nihon gendaishi*, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1958: p.27.

56 Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii no kenkyū*, Aoki Shoten, 1966; Imai Seiichi, *Nihon no rekishi 23 - Taishō demokurashii*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1966; Kinbara Samon, *Taishō demokurashii no shakaiteki keisei*, Aoki Shoten, 1967; Sumiya Etsuji et al., eds, *Kōza Nihon shakai shisōshi 2 - Taishō demokurashii no shisō*, Haga Shoten, 1967; Eguchi Keiichi, ed., *Taishō demokurashii*, Gakuseisha, 1969; Inoue Kiyoshi, ed., *Taishō-ki no seiji to shakai*, Iwanami Shoten, 1969; Matsuo, *Kokumin no rekishi 21 - Minponshugi no chōryū*, Buneidō, 1970; Ōta Masao, *Shiryō Taishō demokurashii ronsōshi*, 2 vols, Shinsensha, 1971; Ikimatsu Keizō, *Gendai Nihon shisōshi 4 - Taishō-ki no shisō to bunka*, Aoki Shoten, 1971; Inoue Kiyoshi & Watanabe Tōru, eds, *Taishō-ki no kyūshinteki jiyūshugi*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1972; Kano Masanao, *Taishō demokurashii no teiryū*, Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1973; Kinbara, *Taishō-ki no seitō to kokumin*, Hanawa Shobō, 1973; Matsuo, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974; Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii-ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974; Ōta, *Taishō demokurashii kenkyū*, Shinsensha, 1975; Kano, *Nihon no rekishi 27 - Taishō demokurashii*, Shōgakkan, 1976. The English contribution to this boom was Bernard S. Silberman & H.D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 1974.

57 Apart from the abovementioned titles by Matsuo the following compilations of articles are representative of his Taishō related research: *Taishō demokurashii no gunzō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1990; *Taishō jidai no senkōshatachi*, Iwanami Shoten, 1993; *Minponshugi to teikokushugi*, Misuzu Shobō, 1998. A detailed overview of his publications until 1993 can be found in Matsuo Takayoshi Kyōju Taishoku Kinen Jigyōkai, *Matsuo Takayoshi kyōju nenpu chosaku mokuroku*, 1993.

and tended to change amongst its various proponents. However, his main argument was that the main characteristic of this historical period was not democracy, and that instead of trying to find a link with the internal support for the democratic reforms under the American occupation it was better to take notice of the many undemocratic and reformist creeds that continued without interruption into the anything but democratic 1930s.⁵⁸ Since the late 1970s the focus of research and debate on modern Japanese history has moved on to other periods or topics, but the rift is still evident in works by adherents of Matsuo which feature the concept in their title and works by disciples of Itō from which it is often impossible to learn that the concept exists.

Lately there seems to be a strong tendency to capture the character of the interwar period in the term *'teikoku'* (**empire**). Many of the proponents of this term are influenced by postmodern and cultural studies. They try to demolish the compartmental division between colonial history and national history and predominantly seem to promote the term in order to stress the reciprocal and all-pervasive relation between Japan and its colonies.⁵⁹ However at times, and most conspicuous in the case of Itō Takashi's pupil Arima Manabu, 'empire' is not used to span the sea between the homeland and the former colonies but the divide between the 1920s and 1930s and it thus is applied as a negation of Taishō democracy. In a supplement to his *[Kokusaika] no naka no teikoku Nihon* Arima admits that he very consciously evades using 'Taisho democracy'. In his opinion it is nothing but 'a desperate fabrication of an indigenous democratic creation on the basis of anachronistic post-WWII values'. Instead of democracy Arima stresses 'an arrogant Japanism' (*gōgan na Nihon chūshinshugi*) as the main defining element of the interwar period, a trait of which he even finds strong evidence in the case of the Taishō democracy figurehead Yoshino Sakuzō.⁶⁰

Although in the West there is also quite a wide variety of interpretations of the concept, emotions have not run so high and the rift is not as deep as I have experienced during my stay at Japan's two most prominent national universities. The most conspicuous non-Japanese scholar who has recently participated in the debate on Taishō democracy arguably is Andrew Gordon. At

58 See Itō Takashi, 'Nihon [Kakushin]-ha no seiritsu'. *Chūō Kōron - Rekishi to Jinbutsu*, 1972.12: pp.28-53 and the review of four *'Taishō demokurashii'* books by Itō and Arima Manabu in *Shigaku Zasshi*, vol.84, no.3 (1975): pp.60-72. Since Itō has lent his credentials to the controversial Atarashii Kyōkasho Wo Tsukuru Kai, a rightist group that seeks to revise Japan's history textbooks in a more 'patriotic' direction, his name has become a lot less prominent in academia. However, his influence is widespread amongst his many pupils and participants in his projects to collect and publish primary sources.

59 In the English language Louise Young's *Japan's Total Empire* (University of California Press, 1998) stands out as an early and influential example of this tendency. In Japan especially the efforts of a younger generation of scholars gathered in the Teikoku to Shisō Kenkyūkai should be mentioned, but the trend is much more widespread and for instance evident from the *[Teikoku] Nihon no gakuchi* series by the established publisher Iwanami Shoten. Yamamoto Taketoshi et al., eds, *Iwanami kōza [Teikoku] Nihon no gakuchi*, 8 vols, Iwanami Shoten, 2006.

60 Arima Manabu, *Nihon no kindai 4 – [Kokusaika] no naka no teikoku Nihon, 1905-1924*, Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999: supplement, p.2. Its companion volume is Arima, *Nihon no rekishi 23 – Teikoku no Shōwa*, Kōdansha, 2002. For a critical evaluation of both books, see Oikawa Eijirō's review in the Kyoto University journal *Shirin*, vol.86, no.6 (November 2003): pp.133-39. Other recent endeavours to both pun and put Taishō democracy into perspective are Hayami Akira & Kojima Miyoko, *Taishō demogurafii – Rekishi jinkōgaku de mita hazama no jidai*, Bungei Shunjū, 2004 and Banno Junji, *Meiji demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 2005.

first sight his evaluation of the term ‘Taishō democracy’ seems rather harsh as he points out that it is “chronologically inaccurate and analytically empty (...). The main reason for the use of the Taishō label has been its dubious chronological convenience (...). As a catchall for a vast array of movements, ‘Taishō democracy’ is far too inclusive”.⁶¹ However, he is not willing to discard the achievements of Taishō democracy by throwing away the democratic baby with the Taishō bathwater:

We can better distinguish these strange bedfellows [the labour and tenant unions and the social democratic and bourgeois political parties] by placing the bourgeois parties at the center of a drive in the early twentieth century for political change, the movement for imperial democracy, while recognizing their uneasy relationship with the popular energies that also fueled the movement. We may then consider the movements of workers, farmers, and intellectuals that emerged by the 1920s as often separate from, and sometimes opposed to, imperial democracy. This frees us from concern with the betrayal by the bourgeois parties of an all-encompassing ‘Taishō’ democratic movement and shifts the focus instead to the contradictory pressures impinging upon these parties.⁶²

Gordon thus proposes using ‘imperial democracy’ rather than an ideal ‘Taishō democracy’ in order to avoid having to speak of its ‘limits’, ‘shallowness’ and ‘impurity’. Although he stresses the need to highlight the contradictory pressures present during the interwar period, he shows no qualms in siding with the camp of historians who take the Taishō changes seriously. Accordingly he also describes the movement for ‘imperial democracy’ as ‘an actual movement for change that was broadly based and profound’.⁶³

I will not immerse myself too deeply in this discussion of terminology. Suffice it to say that I have my doubts whether ‘imperial democracy’ is more appropriate than ‘Taishō democracy’. It rightly stresses the structural element of imperial sovereignty, but I wonder whether this is the true defining element of the democratic movement of this period. Moreover, the adjective ‘imperial’ seems prone to hide the distinct move away from imperialism, which I stress in this work in relation to the Taishō generation of opinion leaders. Whereas I am aware of the fallacies of the concept of ‘Taishō democracy’ I think that, at least in academia, nobody uses it in the sense of a 100% pure form of democracy and that the structural limitation of ‘imperial sovereignty’ nowadays is very much part of its usage. I basically agree with Matsuo’s description of a development during the Taishō period from the Meiji frame of mind of ‘*uchi ni wa rikkenshugi, soto ni wa teikokushugi*’ (constitutionalism at home, imperialism abroad) towards a more democratic and less imperialistic Japan.⁶⁴ And I also subscribe to Mitani’s outline of

61 Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, University of California Press, 1991: pp.5, 8.

62 Ibid.: p.9.

63 Ibid.: p.7. The concept of ‘imperial democracy’ has also been introduced to Japan in the form of Gordon’s ‘Nihon kindaiishi ni okeru inperiaru demokurashii’. In Akasawa Shirō et al., eds, *Nenpō Nihon gendaishi 2 – Gendaishi to minshushugi*, Azuma Shuppan, 1996: pp.61-98.

64 Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974. This famous concept, which makes a strong contrast between internal and external policy, is an abbreviation of ‘*Uchi ni rikkenshugi wo tori*

Taishō as a distinct period in time, characterized by a democratic trend of political participation towards the state and a liberal trend of individual freedom from the state – although the former trend was considerably stronger than the latter.⁶⁵ It is in this relative sense that I support the term ‘Taishō democracy’ and will use it in this work. It is of course mere coincidence if certain trends completely fit in with the reign years of the Taisho emperor. And if one holds on to an absolute definition of democracy, Taisho democracy - and all other historical and present-day ‘democracies’ - will inevitably fail to live up to it. However, if one includes those preliminary stages that at least show a clear direction towards this absolute and probably unattainable democracy, I think for the reasons discussed below that ‘Taishō democracy’ will easily stand the test and, roughly defined in time, stands out positively in comparison to the preceding Meiji period and the ensuing early Shōwa period.

2.2 Unprecedented Political Democracy

Although not even one word of the Meiji Constitution was revised from its promulgation in 1889 until its abrogation in 1947, and accordingly it remained the prerogative of the emperor to select the next prime minister, and the cabinets in name were still the emperor’s cabinet and not the people’s cabinet, this can hardly hide the fact that the interpretation of the constitution during the 1910s and 1920s changed considerably. Whereas the most powerful *genrō* (elder statesman) Yamagata Aritomo in the first half of the 1910s could still advocate ‘transcendental cabinets’ (*chōzen naikaku*) immune to the ‘corrupt’ influence of political parties or try to mold a ‘patriotic’ party that would hold the casting vote, in the second half of the decade Seiyūkai leader Hara Takashi became his most important sparring partner and by 1918 Yamagata saw no other way but to recommend Hara as the next prime minister in order to keep the Meiji constitutional system working.⁶⁶

It of course depends on one’s definition to determine whether Hara’s cabinet was the first true party cabinet, but the fact is that the various Seiyūkai cabinets since Itō Hirobumi’s fourth and last cabinet (1900-01) had by leaps and bounds increased their party colour. Itō’s cabinet, formed immediately after the founding of the Rikken Seiyūkai, featured only two Seiyūkai

soto ni teikokushugi wo okonai (...) hōkon no taisei ni ōzubeshi’ from the 1905 founding proclamation of the Kokumin Kurabu, a union of groups opposed to the terms of the peace treaty with Russia.

65 Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii-ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974. In strong contrast to Arima Manabu, who dealt with Yoshino Sakuzō as just another example of Taishō ‘arrogant Japanism’, Mitani ranks this figurehead of Taishō democracy at the zenith of these two trends that make up ‘liberal democracy’. See the revised and expanded edition *Taishō demokurashii-ron – Yoshino Sakuzō no jidai*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1995: p.330 and ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to gendai’ and ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Maruyama Masao’. In Mitani, *Kindai Nihon no sensō to seiji*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997: pp.291-307, 379-86.

66 Yamagata is in dire need of a new biography, the standard works Oka Yoshitake, *Yamagata Aritomo*, Iwanami Shoten, 1958 and Roger F. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan, 1838-1922*, Harvard University Press, 1971 being helpful but outdated. For the communications between Yamagata and Hara, see Hara Keiichirō, comp., *Hara Takashi Nikki*, vols. 4 and 5, Fukumura Shuppan, 1965; Oka Yoshitake & Hayashi Shigeru, comps, *Taishō demokurashii-ki no seiji – Matsumoto Gōkichi seiji nishshi*, Iwanami Shoten, 1959 and Masumi Junnosuke, *Nihon seitō shiron*, vols. 3 and 4, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1967-68.

parliamentarians apart from party president Itō. His successor Saionji Kinmochi didn't fare any better when forming his first cabinet (1906-08), a thing which infuriated his lieutenant Hara Takashi. The second time around (1911-12) Hara made sure to keep things in his own hands, but this merely resulted in one extra Seiyūkai minister. The growing line was continued with the first Yamamoto Gonbei Cabinet (1913-14), which included four Seiyūkai Diet members, and by the time of the Hara Cabinet (1918-1921) and Takahashi Korekiyo Cabinet (1921-22), all ministries except for the traditionally 'transcendental' ministries of army, navy and foreign affairs were manned by Seiyūkai politicians and members of befriended House of Peers factions.⁶⁷ Moreover, whereas almost all cabinets up to 1918 (with the exception of the two Ōkuma cabinets) had been so-called *genrō* cabinets or *genrō* protégé cabinets, this was the first commoner-led cabinet and it was largely interpreted as a sign of the times.⁶⁸ As a matter of fact, with the exception of the three exceptional and short-lived cabinets of Katō Tomosaburō, Yamamoto Gonbei II and Kiyoura Keigo, (1922-24), a new era of alternating party cabinets came into being and the practice of appointing the leader of the biggest political party as the next prime minister came to be called the 'normal way of constitutional government' (*kensei no jōdō*).⁶⁹ Hara Takashi with his unique talents in negotiating and creating alliances was also instrumental in breaking up the old order and gradually spreading party and parliamentary influence over such formerly 'transcendental' institutions as the bureaucracy, the army, the navy, and the House of Peers. And at the time of his assassination he was not merely functioning as prime minister and party leader, but had also created the important precedent of taking care of the Imperial Navy while Navy Minister Katō Tomosaburō was attending the Washington Conference.⁷⁰

On the other hand, whereas Japan only after World War Two implemented true general suffrage, in the sense of giving women the right to vote too, the electorate did increase considerably during the period that is the object of this study. When the election law was established in 1889 only 1,1 percent of the total population fulfilled the qualifications for the right to vote, namely being male, aged 25 years or over, and paying 15 yen national tax. Due to the combined effect of inflation and the alleviation of the tax qualification to 10 yen in 1900 and 3 yen in 1919 the percentage gradually rose to 5,5 percent. The pre-WWII high of 20,1% was attained with the introduction in 1925 of 'general suffrage', that is the right to vote for males

67 For a list of the members, including their affiliations, of the various Japanese cabinets, see Nihon Kingendaishi Jiten Henshū Inkaï, ed., *Nihon kingendaishi jiten*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1978: pp.775-800.

68 The term 'commoner prime minister' (*heimin saishō*) was in the sense of not a *genrō*, not a member of the new aristocracy (*kazoku*), not a member of the House of Peers, nor a military officer.

69 Two good introductions to the establishment of the system of political party cabinets are Itō Yukio, *Taishō demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987 and Murai Ryōta, *Seitō naikakusei no seiritsu, 1918-27nen*, Yūhikaku, 2005. For a somewhat heretic discussion of the concept of *kensei no jōdō*, see Kojita Yasunao, *Kensei no jōdō – Tennō no kuni no minshushugi*, Aoki Shoten, 1995.

70 For Hara see Mitani Taichirō, *Nihon seitō seiji no keisei – Hara takashi no seiji shidō no tenkai*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1967; Itō Yukio, *Taishō demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987; Yamamoto Shirō, *Hyōden Hara Takashi*, 2 vols, Tōkyō Sōgensha, 1997 and Kawada Minoru, *Hara Takashi – Tenkanki no kōsō*, Miraisha, 1995. In English regrettably Tetsuo Najita, *Hara Kei in the Politics of Compromise, 1905-1915*, Harvard University Press, 1967 is still the only monograph on this exceptionally influential and adroit politician.

aged 25 and older who are able to provide for their own livelihood.⁷¹ In congruence the electorate became increasingly politically active and politically conscious. Studies by Matsuo Takayoshi, Itō Yukio, Andrew Gordon, Shigematsu Masafumi and others have established that political consciousness and party influence reached far into the provinces and deep into the lower strata of society and that these tendencies only increased during the 1920s.⁷² Starting with the campaign in 1905 against the peace terms of the Russo-Japanese War, the phenomenon of crowds taking to the streets in political protest became a factor not to be ignored. And as this new popular force proved itself able not merely to riot but even to topple cabinets, it became a factor to be feared by most political leaders. Thus, whereas the constitution to a large extent was applied from above and in name was generously bestowed upon the Japanese people by the Meiji Emperor, there can be hardly any doubt that universal male suffrage was implemented in 1925 mainly as the result, although somewhat belated, of pressure from below, in the form of an organized nationwide movement led by the Futsū Senkyo (Kisei) Dōmeikai.⁷³ In anticipation of the first general suffrage election of 1927, many so-called ‘proletariat parties’ (*musan seitō*) came into being as an alternative to the two big ‘established parties’ (*kisei seitō*) of the Seiyūkai and the Minseitō. Although the influence of the proletariat parties at first remained limited, the political spectrum had nonetheless become more varied. The electorate in general had a wider choice and the lower strata of society no longer inevitably had to cast a vote for one of the bourgeois or middle class parties but now had their own representatives.⁷⁴ And, of course, there was also the Japanese Communist Party (Nihon Kyōsantō, established in 1922) which due to its open rejection of imperial rule and the parliamentary system had to work underground, but enjoyed a considerable following during the 1920s amongst urban intellectuals and workers.⁷⁵

Of course, and as already mentioned above, there is ample criticism that this period of ‘Taishō democracy’ was not sufficiently democratic to be called a true democracy. Various scholars and

71 See Suetake Yoshiya, ed., *Nihon no jidaishi 24 - Taishō shakai to kaizō no chōryū*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004: p.160.

72 Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974; Itō Yukio, *Taishō demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987; Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, University of California Press, 1991; Shigematsu Masafumi, *Taishō demokurashii no kenkyū*, Seibundō, Osaka, 2002; Serizawa Kazuya, *[Hō] kara kaihō sareru kenryoku – Hanzai, kyōki, hinkon, soshite Taishō demokurashii*, Shinyōsha, 2001.

73 For an arguably definitive study of the general suffrage movement in Japan, see Matsuo Takayoshi, *Futsū senkyo seido seiritsushi no kenkyū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1989.

74 For a detailed overview of the established political parties and the proletariat parties before 1945, see Nihon Kingendaishi Jiten Henshū Iinkai, ed., *Nihon kingendaishi jiten*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1978: pp. 972-75. A more compact overview in English can be found in Janet E. Hunter, comp., *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*, University of California Press, 1984: pp.260-63. For the proletariat party movement, see Stephen S. Large, *Organized Workers & Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

75 Lately there seems to be hardly any interest in the Japanese communist movement before World War Two and most related studies are over twenty years old. See for instance George M. Beckmann & Genji Okubo, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922-1945*, Stanford University Press, 1969; Robert A. Scalapino, *The Japanese Communist Movement, 1920-1966*, University of California Press, 1967; John Crump, *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1983 and Germaine A. Houston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan*, Princeton University Press, 1986.

commentators have construed a whole catalogue of deficiencies, the main culprits of which seem to be the party politicians. They were opportunistic, self-centred, and limited in their conception of democracy and allegiance to its principles. They did not work for structural changes which would strengthen their position vis-à-vis the state and opponents of a liberal and democratic Japan. Moreover, infighting between the parties impeded a united front against antidemocratic elites. Instead they formed alliances and co-opted with *genrō*, bureaucrats, peers and military. They attacked each other with a more loyalist-than-thou attitude which paid respect to the institute of the emperor instead of the principle of democracy. They meekly submitted to imperial sovereignty and completely forgot about popular and parliamentary sovereignty. Thus they did not succeed in bringing about institutional or participatory democracy. They used pork barrel policies instead of a party program in order to gain votes. The politicians discredited party government by their involvement in corruption scandals. Political parties were hardly more than middle class parties that did not reach the masses and thus did not represent the people. They adopted the Peace Preservation Law and repressed the proletarian movement. Their fear of socialism, revolution and the masses was so great that they failed to mend an alliance between the middle class and the proletariat. They excluded the female half of the population from politics. They emphasized the state instead of civil society as the instrument for the implementation of change. And, last but not least, they were nationalists, imperialists and colonialists.⁷⁶

However, in the sense that Japanese politics do not stand the test when judged by the yardsticks of ‘democracy’ and ‘liberalism’, there does not seem to have been much progress during the last century. At this very moment there still is a very lively debate being conducted both inside and outside Japan, and both in academia and the public media, whether present day Japan is a true democracy or not. If we are to believe the New York Times, Japan only experienced ‘the dawn’ or ‘first stage’ of democracy at the very end of the 20th century and the attainment of true democracy still lies in the future.⁷⁷ Although the wave of so-called Japan bashing lost its momentum during the economic crisis of the last decade and many have toned down their criticism somewhat since the advent of the maverick party leader and atypical prime minister Koizumi Junichirō, up until a few years ago there was a dominant discourse that stressed such seemingly democratic deficiencies as the continuing hegemony of the Jiyū Minshutō (Liberal Democratic Party), the lame opposition, the lack of electoral choice and popular representation, the absence of political responsibility and accountability, the strong voice of bureaucracy and business interests, the custom of vote buying in return for political favours and

76 Representative critiques in the English language of the Taishō period political parties are Robert A. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan - The Failure of the First Attempt*, University of California Press, 1962; Peter Duus, *Party Rivalry and Political Change in Taishō Japan*, Harvard University Press, 1968; Shūichi Kato, ‘Taishō Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism’. In Bernard S. Silberman & H.D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 1974: pp.217-36; Stephen S. Large, *Organized Workers & Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 1981; Large, ‘The Patterns of Taishō Democracy’ and Henry D. Smith II, ‘The Nonliberal Roots of Taishō Democracy’. Both in Harry Wray & Hilary Conroy, *Japan Examined - Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, University of Hawai’i Press, 1983: pp.175-80 and 191-98.

77 ‘The Dawn of a Democratic Japan’. New York Times editorial of 18 July 1993..

the distribution of public funds, and the seemingly unending number of scandals involving politicians.⁷⁸ However, in most cases Japan's democracy is not judged on a comparative basis with the many other democracies in this world. With the criterion of an absolute form of democracy probably not one country in this world could be termed 'a true democracy'. As I already argued above, 'Taishō democracy' should also be regarded in a relative way, for instance in comparison to the preceding and ensuing periods. When compared to the authoritarian Meiji oligarchy and the government by assassination and forced unification of the 1930s it does not seem all that bleak and instead listed quite a few achievements that seemed to pave the way for more complete forms of democracy. Except for the abovementioned bringing about of a new custom of party cabinets and the introduction of male general suffrage, other major accomplishments include the establishment of a two-party system with regularly alternating cabinets, the reform of colonial rule from military rule to civil rule, and the abolishment of the prescription that the army ministers and navy ministers had to be officers on the active list.

This was not coincidentally an exceptional period in which the military preferred not to go out on the street in uniform. Notwithstanding the various fallacies of the party cabinets, on the basis of these phenomena and the direction of progress these indicate I think we can safely speak of a period of unprecedented political democracy and there is no need for any hesitation in using the term 'Taishō democracy'. Even when considered from a global perspective, Japan's political system and practice of the 1920s was of a most acceptable democratic level and it was counted as one of the few democracies of the world. To cite Richard Smethurst, "Japanese democracy in the 1920s was flawed, but it was within the parameters of what was accepted elsewhere as democratic in the interwar decades".⁷⁹

2.3 Unprecedented Freedom of Opinion

Internally, 1918 saw the end of a somewhat gloomy era symbolized by the so-called 'winter period of socialism' (*shakaishugi fuyu no jidai*), a period of severe thought control in the wake of the High Treason Incident of 1910. However, the end of World War One and the accompanying democratic trend changed all this. No matter how radical, all creeds of thought of the 1900s and 1910s, and also some from the latter half of the nineteenth century, were now suddenly and almost simultaneously introduced - or reintroduced - to the populace. Although one should not forget the crackdown on communism from the mid-1920s onwards, in general the forces of the day were in favour of freedom of opinion, making the period from 1918 to 1931 a distinct period of freedom, openness and lively debate. Andrew Gordon has proposed the term 'the creation of a

78 The main instigator of the early 1990s wave of 'Japan bashing' arguably was Karel van Wolferen, a correspondent of the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* who developed into the personification of international criticism of the Japanese 'system' by means of his worldwide bestseller *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (Knopf, New York, 1989). It is telling though that his dozen subsequent books have only been published in Japanese.

79 Richard J. Smethurst, 'Japan's First Experiment with Democracy, 1868-1940'. In G.R. Andrews & H. Chapman, eds, *Social Construction of Democracy, 1870-1990*, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1995: p.83. See also Titus.

dispute culture’ to describe this phenomenon.⁸⁰ In slight contrast to Sharon A. Minichiello’s edited volume on ‘the greater Taishō era’ (1900-1930) entitled ‘*Japan’s Competing Modernities*’, I prefer to label the more confined period centred around the 1920s as ‘the period of competing isms’. The printed media all of a sudden had to endure a wave of books and articles of which the titles flooded over with terms ending with the suffix *-shugi* (-ism). In this age of ‘intellectual sensationalism’ the various isms were analysed, compared, advocated and criticised ad nauseam. And those who were so selective that they could not find anything to their liking amongst the imported product saw no problem in creating even more *shugi* of their own, in order to be able to take part in what was a true and, as far as the pre-1952 period is concerned, unprecedentedly open ‘war of ideas’ (*shisōsen*).

The large scale censure concerning the Siberian intervention and the rice riots and the crackdown on the Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun by means of the so-called ‘white rainbow’ incident, which all occurred in the year 1918, can be regarded as the last convulsions of the old way of authoritarian repression.⁸¹ The only famous instance of thought control during the early 1920s is the Morito incident, which is mainly famous because it stands out in the general trend of relaxation.⁸² Already at the end of the nineteenth century the Diet had refused to allow prepublication censorship except in times of emergency and in 1897 the government’s right to suspend and ban papers and magazines had been replaced with the more limited right to prohibit sales and distribution of one given issue. The acceptable means to control speech had not merely become limited, but the social support for media control was also drastically dwindling. This became evident at the time of the Morito incident, when public opinion turned en masse against the repression of freedom of thought. The change in ‘atmosphere’ is also clear from the fact that there were no more crackdowns for political reasons on the main public media and the number of penalties and the heaviness of fines decreased. In general the government had to loosen its tight rein on society more and more and the public media were undeniably reinvigorated by the more open and democratic trend of the times. And even the socialists came out into the open once

80 Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, University of California Press, 1991: p.332.

81 The authorities that had been keen on taking revenge on the Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun because of attacks on the government over its handling of the Rice Riots found in August 1918 an excuse to threaten the newspaper with eternal suspension of publication. In an article on a meeting of Kansai journalists aimed at bringing down the Terauchi Cabinet, the censure officials had come upon the expression ‘a white rainbow penetrating the sun’ (*hakkō hi wo tsuranukeri*), which they interpreted as an exhortation to bring about a revolution. The Asahi managed to escape closure, but director Murayama Ryūhei and editor-in-chief Torii Sosen had to resign and the newspaper was forced to publicly perform self-criticism. Asahi Shinbun Hyakunenshi Henshū Iinkai, ed., *Asahi Shinbun Shashi – Taishō Shōwa senzenhen*, Asahi Shinbunsha, 1991: pp.93-115. For censure at the time of the Siberian Intervention, see Paul E. Dunscomb., ‘“A Great Disobedience Against the People” - Popular Press Criticisms of Japan’s Siberian Intervention, 1918-22’. *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.32, no.1 (Winter 2006): pp.53-81. A nice example of the government prohibition to report on the rice riots can be found on the second page of pictures included in the above-mentioned company history of the Asahi Shinbun.

82 Morito Tatsuo, an associate professor of economics at Tokyo University, was sentenced in 1920 to three months in jail for disturbing public order by means of an academic article on the social thought of Kropotkin. Many intellectuals appeared in court on behalf of Morito’s defence. Uesugi Shinkichi, a rightist professor of law who also had been Minobe Tatsukichi’s opponent at the time of the debate on the ‘emperor as organ of the state’ theory, had been instrumental in bringing charges against Morito.

more, for instance in the labour movement, but their names were also included in the membership lists of liberal reform societies and in the pages of various general magazines. All in all, the interwar era was a period of liberalisation, especially for the solid mainstream papers and magazines that could easily cope with a usually not terribly effective post-publication prohibition of a certain issue.⁸³

Although the purge of communists and communist writings did not disappear and even saw a distinct invigoration under the Tanaka Cabinet, the main object of censure during the 1920s concerned public mores and the imperial house. But even concerning these taboos it was a relatively enlightened and easygoing age when one considers that these were the days that ‘the emperor as organ of the state’ theory was publicly advocated by Minobe Tatsukichi and, moreover, supported by the vast majority of the ruling elite – including the emperor himself – and the intelligentsia. There can hardly be a stronger contrast with the 1930s when Minobe in the maelstrom of the so-called ‘clarification of the national polity’ movement (*kokutai meichō undō*) was forced to resign all public offices and some of his Taishō period writings were banned.⁸⁴ Other instances of censure of liberal ideas, often the result of agitation by the fanatic ultra-nationalists Minoda Muneki, Mitsui Kōshi and their Genri Nihonsha, are numerous and include the well-known cases of Takigawa Yukitoki (1933), Yanaihara Tadao (1937) and Tsuda Sōkichi (1939).⁸⁵

There was not a complete refurbishment of the system of media control in 1932 and it is only at the end of the 1930s that the blacklisting of critical writers started. However, it is hard not to notice that the debate concerning Japan’s foreign policy becomes very circumscribed in the wake of the Manchurian Incident. Various writers complained that things had suddenly become cramped, and a mere look at the newspapers and magazines can only confirm this. Criticism of the army’s armed intervention and the government’s *ex post facto* approval of the intervention and the formation of the puppet state Manchukuo did exist, but it was extremely sparse. And, moreover, those who criticized these onslaughts on the contemporary world order, mostly had to do so in a circumventory manner and under the guise of the new idiom introduced by the proponents of an ‘autonomous policy’ on the Asian continent. Through the combined forces of informal government pressure, misleading information, the victorious popular mood, editors’ directives, and self-censure implemented by the writers themselves on the basis of the changed general atmosphere, the debate concerning China - Japan’s main stage of foreign policy - was severely and irreversibly restricted. The breadth of opinion, so characteristic of the interwar period, is absent and the more the situation in China begged for debate the more the public media provided an imposed and uncritical uniformity. One important reason that the scope of my study does not reach beyond 1932 is the mere fact that the public media are no longer of much practical use in determining the true opinion of the opinion leaders. Moreover, this is also the point in time where many of them stop being opinion leaders in the field of foreign policy simply because they can no longer speak out, let alone lead, on this matter.⁸⁶

83 Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945*, University of California Press, 1988: pp.28-53.

84 Frank O. Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi - Interpreter of Constitutionalism in Japan*, University of California Press, 1965: pp.220-42.

85 Takeuchi Yō & Satō Takumi, ed., *Nihonshugiteki kyōyō no jidai*, Kashiwa Shobō, 2006.

86 For detailed analyses of censorship during the 1930s, see Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan*,

2.4 The Large-Scale Introduction of Socialist Thought and the Discovery of Society

The Reintroduction of Socialism

Although the interbellum in Japan can hardly be termed ‘socialist’ and many opinion leaders, parties and societies did their utmost to evade the label of ‘*shakaishugi*’ when explaining their political creed or determining their name, there cannot be any doubt that socialist thought exerted an extremely great influence during this era. Socialism had already been introduced to Japan during the 1890s and had been most enthusiastically embraced and propagated by Christian social reformers such as Abe Isoo (1865-1949), Kinoshita Naoe (1869-1937), Katayama Sen (1860-1933), Murai Tomoyoshi (1861-1944) and Kawakami Kiyoshi (1873-1949). However, whereas their early efforts spawned an impressive body of socialist writings it did not produce much of a following. Their attempts at organisation were repressed – the first Japanese socialist party, the Shakai Minshutō (1901), lasted only three days – and the larger part of the Japanese audience was not ready for their message. The students who flocked to their meetings were forbidden to partake in political activities and a labour movement still had to arise.⁸⁷ And when Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911), who under the influence of Peter Kropotkin had started to propagate anarchosyndicalist direct action, was arrested in 1910 and subsequently executed on the charge of conspiring to assassinate the Meiji emperor, the early socialist movement was completely crushed and the word ‘socialism’ became a taboo.⁸⁸

This ‘winter period of socialism’ lasted almost eight years. However, despite their long forced absence the great upheavals at the end of World War One made in 1919 the socialists all of a sudden feel as if ‘they for the first time were stepping into a world of their own’.⁸⁹ Externally the Russian Revolution had of course given their movement a strong impact. On the other hand the internal upheaval of the large scale Rice Riots, the sudden and strong increase of labour conflicts, strikes, and tenant farmer disputes, and the upgrading of the mutual aid society Yūaikai (Friendly Society) into the fully-fledged labour union of the Dai-Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei Yūaikai proved that there was fertile ground waiting for them. In combination with the relaxation of media control, the immediate postwar period brought forth a wave of writings introducing and explaining socialism, Marxism, communism and Bolshevism. The names of the survivors of the

pp.121-93; Richard H. Mitchell, *Censorship in Imperial Japan*, Princeton University Press, 1983: pp.254-83 and Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931-33*, Routledge, London, 2002: pp.30-43.

87 For the early socialist movement see John Crump, *The Origins of Socialist Thought*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1983; and Hyman Kublin, *Asian Revolutionary – The Life of Sen Katayama*, Princeton University Press, 1964. The second attempt at a socialist party, the Nihon Shakaitō, enjoyed a considerably longer lease of life of more than one year, but this was to a large extent due to prime minister Saionji Kinmochi’s French inclinations and strong aversion to censure and thought control.

88 For Kōtoku see F.G. Notehelfer, *Kōtoku Shūsui- Portrait of a Japanese Radical*, Cambridge University Press, 1971.

89 Sakai Toshihiko, quoted in Peter Duus & Irwin Scheiner, ‘Socialism, Liberalism, and Marxism, 1901-1931’. In Duus, ed., *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6 – The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1988: p.689.

more radical wing of early socialism such as Sakai Toshihiko (1871-1933), Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880-1958), Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923) and Arahata Kanson (1887-1981) – most of whom had been close to Kōtoku Shūsui – were not merely out in the open once more, they also enjoyed an unprecedented popularity.⁹⁰ They featured prominently in the many new journals that focused on labour and social(ist) issues and in new general interest magazines that had distinct leftist leanings. The year 1919 for instance saw the founding of Kawakami Hajime's *Shakai Mondai Kenkyū*, Hasegawa Nyozeikan and Ōyama Ikuo's *Warera* and the influential magazines *Kaizō* and *Kaihō*. In the following year the first May Day demonstration was organized in Japan and an alliance of all sorts of socialist activists, labour groups and student societies came about in the form of the Nihon Shakaishugi Dōmei (Japan Socialist League). And in 1922 a clandestine communist party, the Nihon Kyōsantō, was organized with Soviet help as a division of the Comintern.

Despite the increasing development of institutionalization, the socialist movement was seriously hampered by strong government repression and continuous factional infighting. Very much in line with this 'age of competing isms' proponents of anarcho-syndicalism, Bolshevism, guild socialism, Leninism, Marxism and national-socialism tried to dictate the party line. The movement lost its momentum and the party lost a significant number of its membership and leadership as the dominant socialist creed shifted from anarchism (under Ōsugi, 1920-22) to Bolshevism (under Yamakawa, 1922-25), and even further to Leninism (under Fukumoto Kazuo, 1925-27), after which the Comintern directly intervened in the Japan Communist Party by means of the '27 theses. This intervention, though, did everything but put an end to the discord within the party. It sparked off the so-called 'Debate on Japanese capitalism', mainly on the interpretation of the nature of the Meiji Restoration and the stage Japan had attained within Marxist ideology. As the Tanaka Giichi administration cracked down upon all communist sympathizers by means of the newly implemented Peace Preservation Law of 1925, a closing of the ranks seemed called for more than ever. Instead this debate fundamentally divided the Japanese communist camp until far after the end of the Second World War.⁹¹ Be that as it may, by this time many sympathizers of the socialist cause had already shifted their allegiance to the

90 Of these leading figures of the post-WWI socialist movement, only the enigmatic and tragic leader of the anarchosyndicalist faction Ōsugi Sakae has been honoured with a biography in English, namely Thomas A. Stanley, *Ōsugi Sakae – Anarchist in Taishō Japan*, Harvard University Press, 1982. For the others George Beckmann & Okubo Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party 1922-1945*, Stanford University Press, 1969 still is helpful.

91 This 'Debate on Japanese capitalism' (*Nihon shihonshugi ronsō*) was of such central importance since the difference in interpretation directly involved a fundamental conflict over revolutionary strategy and goals. The adherents to the so-called Rōnō-faction were opposed to the Comintern judgment that Japan was backward and semi-feudal and they instead argued that the country was ripe for a proletariat-socialist revolution. Their opponents of the Kōza-faction, in charge of the Japan Communist Party, were true to the Comintern's July 1927 theses on Japan that stressed the need for a two-stage revolution and the priority of the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. See Germaine A. Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan*, Princeton University Press, 1986 and Andrew E. Barshay, *The Social Sciences in Modern Japan – The Marxian and Modernist Traditions*, University of California Press, 2004: pp. 72-91. Hoston has observed that due to the domination of the Kōza-ha faction within this debate, Japanese Marxism deepened the consciousness of historical backwardness in all areas of the state, the society and the economy.

proletarian party movement (*musan seitō undō*). However, hopes for a strong united proletarian party that by means of legal parliamentary methods and on the basis of popular support in the first universal manhood suffrage could implement social reform were completely dashed by exactly the same kind of sectarianism.⁹²

However, what I would like to stress here is not so much the infrastructure of the socialist movement in interwar Japan as the impact of the socialist discourse. Although the various socialist and communist parties struggled to maintain their precarious existence and never succeeded in mobilizing large numbers of urban workers on the Russian model, after the end of the First World War socialism gained increasing significance as an intellectual trend during the late Taishō and early Shōwa periods. Although in 1917 hardly anybody had ever heard of Lenin, due to the continual strife within the Japanese socialist movement and the high theoretical character of the intra-party debate, a decade later the Japanese intelligentsia were arguably the most well-versed in socialist theory amongst the developed countries. Symbolically, the man who popularised socialism in Japan was not a party activist but a desk academic. Kawakami Hajime (1879-1964), a professor of economics at Kyoto Imperial University, had already acquired a large following on the basis of his 1916 bestseller *Binbō monogatari* (On Poverty), which called attention to the social problems caused by the capitalist economic system. However, he became a true apostle to young intellectuals when he publicly declared himself a Marxist in the immediate postwar days and accordingly founded Marxian economics in Japan. In his many books and his influential personal journal *Shakai Mondai Kenkyū* (1919-1930) he characterized socialism as the economics of distribution, in opposition to the economics of production that was capitalism. He also rejected social policy as endorsed by the *Shakai Seisaku Gakkai* as a mere ‘production policy’. Instead he provided his young readership with true science, namely ‘the science of distribution’ of Marxism and thus related their academic studies to Japan’s social problems in ways that previous economists had failed to do. His own dedication to solving the problem of poverty through scientific, economic research became an example for the youth of Japan to follow and to many suggested an exciting new academic career in economics.⁹³

As a result hordes of students flocked to Kawakami’s classes. Many, including the young Konoe Fumimaro, left the capital and passed by Tokyo University to enroll at Kyoto. The popularity of Kawakami and Marxism also contributed considerably to the unrivaled status of Germany as the most popular foreign research destination during the 1920s. However, it is hard to deny that Kawakami was not a very charismatic personality, let alone a leader. Accordingly, the true driving force behind the socialist boom can be better sought in the combination of the strong faith in science in these days and the irresistible attraction of the *science* of Marxism. Marxism provided an impressive, almost overwhelming, theoretical framework that seemed to give answers to almost all questions pertaining to human life. Although Marxism established itself as a synonym for ‘social science’ and the discipline of economics thrived as the *primus*

92 The proletarian parties are often termed ‘socialist parties’ in the English literature, but the parties themselves tried to stay meticulously away from ‘socialism’ (*shakaishugi*) and in their names confined themselves to stressing their social (*shakai*) and mass (*minshū* or *taishū*) character. For the proletarian party movement, see Stephen S. Large, *Organized Workers & Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

93 Gail Lee Bernstein, *Japanese Marxist – A Portrait of Kawakami Hajime, 1879-1946*, Harvard University Press, 1976: p.104.

inter pares of the social sciences, its scope was much wider. Its perceived totality, for instance in the way it tried to explain the whole of human history by means of its dialectical and materialist approach, gave it a mass-following amongst Japanese intellectuals and best-selling status. Introductory works to socialism and Marxism by Kawakami Hajime and Takabatake Motoyuki (1886-1928) sold up to 200,000 copies. There was also a huge demand for the communist classics. Takabatake's complete translation of *Das Kapital*, issued in three installments between 1920 and 1924, enjoyed a wide readership and the first printing of the Kaizōsha edition of the voluminous collected works of Marx and Engels (1928-29) sold out immediately.⁹⁴ Study groups on socialist theories mushroomed at highschools and all universities, and socialist influence was especially conspicuous at Japan's two most prominent imperial universities of Tokyo and Kyoto. A flood of translations and commentaries on the work of Nikolai Bukharin, Klaus Kautsky, Lenin, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and others kept the Japanese abreast of developments in Marxism and all socialist creeds were thoroughly discussed both within the highbrow media and in academia.⁹⁵

The years 1925-26 saw the large-scale introduction to Japan of dialectical materialism through the efforts of Fukumoto Kazuo. By this time the majority of the Japanese sympathizers of socialism had turned their backs on the humanist lectures by Kawakami and now supported radical forms of direct action. Paradoxically, Marxism gained intellectual force and influence in the latter half of the 1920s even though the government intensified its crackdown on the Communist Party and defections from the party increased. Katō Shūichi has analysed the 1920s intellectuals' mindset by saying that "In order to be consistent as a liberal, it was necessary to be a Marxist", a statement to which Andrew Barshay has added "Or at least to approximate as far as possible a class- and conflict-driven notion of social progress without the embrace of an openly revolutionary program". The latter also concludes that "Whether despite or because of the formidably unfavorable conditions, the impact of Marxism was immense, if not immeasurable, and though fiercely challenged, it conditioned the entire subsequent history of social thought in Japan".⁹⁶ Although this last sweeping statement can do with some further qualification, it probably holds for the larger part of the twentieth century.

In this work I do not deal with socialists or communists. Of my three case studies Horie comes closest, as far as his internal policy preferences were concerned, but he is best categorised as a social democrat. Yoshino had socialist sympathies and just like Horie participated actively in the proletarian party movement, but was nonetheless an outspoken anti-communist. And Sugimori considered himself so original that he would never pledge allegiance to an ideology created by

94 Sharon H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1987: p.19; Barshay, *The Social Sciences in Modern Japan*: p.54.

95 Since socialist theory was introduced to China mainly through Japanese sources, the Japanese translations and commentaries had the supplementary function of keeping the Chinese intelligentsia abreast of the international socialist debate. See Ishikawa Yoshihiro, 'Ri Taishō no Marukusu-shugi juyō'. *Shisō*, no.803 (May 1991): pp.81-102 and Ishikawa, *Chūgoku Kyōsantō seiritsushi*, Iwanami Shoten, 2001: pp.1-67 and the useful list of Japanese socialist books and articles translated into Chinese between 1919 and 1922 on pp.443-58.

96 Kato Shūichi, 'Taishō Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism'. In Bernard S. Silberman & H. D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 1974: p.224; Barshay: pp.53, 54.

another. Still, even though these three opinion leaders were most of the time not partaking directly in the debate on socialism in general and its implementation in Japan in particular, in their writings it is hard not to notice the change in vocabulary and discourse that occurred at the turn of the decade. There had been a distinct us-versus-them quality to the anti-*hanbatsu* and anti-military discourse of the early Taishō period, but after the war the notions of class and social conflict became overpowering. As the social upheaval of the postwar period, both in Japan and abroad, seemed to underscribe the socialist conflictual view of history and the present, the concept of a united Japanese nation seemed increasingly to come apart. Fundamental divisions were drawn between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between labourers and capitalists, between landlords and farmers, and the relations between these were characterised as being dominated by incessant class struggle. Simultaneously the focus of the intellectuals shifted from democracy to social equality, and instead of ‘the people’ (*kokumin*) they now discovered a new object of their reform movement in ‘the working-class proletariat’ (*rōdō kaikyū* or *musan kaikyū*).⁹⁷ Just as ‘social science’ (*shakai kagaku*) at the beginning of the 1920s became a very important and very popular part of academia, Marxism was thoroughly embedded in the intellectual life of Japan. Even if one was not a believer in the faith of ‘scientific Marxism’, one could hardly any longer survive in academia and public debate without a firm grasp of socialist vocabulary.

The Discovery of Society

Another important change to be discussed in connection with the theme of this book is the fact that, in the wake of the introduction of socialism and all sorts of other predominantly foreign isms, the Japanese started to distinguish society as an autonomous entity apart from the state. Needless to say, this development for which Sugimori Kōjirō invented the term ‘the discovery of society’ (*shakai no hakken*) was of crucial importance to their self-image and the way they looked at the outside world.⁹⁸

This discovery of society was to a large extent the byproduct of the strong tendency at the end of the 1910s to look at the state in a more critical way, and in some cases even to completely reject it. Under the influence of the socialist ideas discussed above the state came under severe attack. The centralist nation-state, with the emperor at its apex, was of course a relatively recent phenomenon for Japan. Nevertheless, it was so central to all the changes and accomplishments of the Meiji period that before long there was hardly anybody who dared to question this almost absolute institution and its overriding aims of a rich nation and a strong military (*fukoku kyōhei*). As the splendor of glorious Meiji began to fade, the Meiji emperor and the leaders of the Restoration died, and the main national aims seemed to have been to a large extent accomplished with the victory in the Russo-Japanese War, all that was left was just a bureaucratic state that lacked the former charisma and authority. To many socialist inspired intellectuals and the many Japanese who were not enjoying the newly acquired riches of their industrialising nation, the

97 Hayashi Yūichi has characterised the 1920s as ‘the age of the proletariat’ (*musan kaikyū no jidai*) in his [*Musan kaikyū no jidai – Kindai Nihon no shakai undō*, Aoki Shoten, 2000. See pp.13-21 for a discussion of the origin and use of the term.

98 Sugimori Kōjirō, ‘Shakai no hakken’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.7. Reprinted in Sugimori, *Kokka no asu to shin-seiji gensoku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1923: pp.91-112.

state increasingly seemed to be an oppressive capitalist institution.

However, Japan in the modern period was very much part of the wider world and this ‘deflation of the state’ should not be seen merely within a national confinement. The unprecedented massacre of the Great War did not only imply the bankruptcy of Western civilisation but also the undermining of the sovereignty of the European nation-states. These had proved to be militarist, imperialist, bellicose and anything but able to maintain their self-created international order based on the axiom of the balance of power. The faith in the political, diplomatic and military leadership of the old ruling elite was at an all time low, resulting in various movements to put the national state into perspective and to bring it under the control of other non-national or non-state forces.

On the one hand there were the above-mentioned postwar trends of internationalism and cosmopolitanism, which sought to rein the various national, particularist aims and interests within acceptable universal boundaries. The 1920s are characterised by the various endeavours to prevent war and to bring about a more just world order through the establishment of international institutions, the formation of multilateral treaties, and the implementation of international law and arbitration. The most conspicuous results were the League of Nations, the Washington Treaties, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. It will hardly need mentioning that in the short term these all failed miserably in bringing about their aims, but this should not distract from the new revolutionary direction these all pointed at of creating a supranational system that superceded the nation-state.

The other trend to supercede the state was not directed outwards but inwards. It was the one that was accompanied by the discovery of society. Although socialist ideology did a lot to do away with the former tendency of humble deference and admiration towards the state (*kanson minpi*) and the inclination to equate ‘the state’ (*kokka*) with ‘the nation’ or ‘the country’ (both *kuni*), there were various other competing creeds of thought. Liberal pluralist conceptions of the state, emanating from both the United States and Western Europe, were instrumental in helping Japanese intellectuals do away with their almost complete acceptance of the Hegelian doctrine of the superior prerogative of the state. The result of this anti-statist reaction was that the state ended up being just one part of a multi-faceted and superior ‘society’. In this new bottom-up view of the national order, which was completely at odds with the letter of the Meiji Constitution, society was the essence and the state nothing but its expression or instrument. This is also evident from Sugimori’s call to ‘die as a national citizen (*kokuminjin*) only to be reborn as a member of society (*shakaijin*)’.⁹⁹

Although Sugimori most likely coined the term ‘the discovery of society’ in 1921, he was not the first Japanese opinion leader to make this discovery. This honour arguably goes to the legal scholar Makino Eiichi (1878-1970), who in the July 1916 issue of *Chūō Kōron* published an article in which he criticized the theory of the sovereignty of the state and instead called for ‘the awakening of society’ (*shakai no kakusei*) and ‘the socialization of law’ (*hōritsu no shakaika*). Another early advocate of the prerogative of society was the non-Marxian sociologist Takada Yasuma (1883-1972), who in his 1919 *Shakaigaku genri* (Principles of Sociology) defined the state as ‘a part-society’ (*bubun shakai*) and two years later emphasized the pecking

99 Ibid: p.112.

order between the two entities by means of the title of his *Shakai to kokka* (Society and State).¹⁰⁰ However, the most prominent advocate of the distinction between state and society in favour of the latter was the influential publicist Hasegawa Nyozeikan (1875-1969). Starting in April 1919 with ‘Kokka ishiki no shakaika’ (The socialisation of the notion of the state) for his own journal *Warera*, the analysis of the two separate lineages of the state and society became his main task over the next few years. In doing so he was under the strong influence of Leonard T. Hobhouse’s *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (1918), a scathing attack against Hegel’s idealized exaltation of the state. It culminated in his two major works, *Gendai kokka hihan* (Critique of the Contemporary State) and *Gendai shakai hihan* (Critique of Contemporary Society), published in respectively 1921 and 1922.¹⁰¹ These were also the crucial years in which many other opinion leaders discovered a society distinct from the state. Taking up Hasegawa’s ‘socialisation of the state’ or identical slogans, they endeavoured to liberate themselves, the institutions they belonged to, and the academic disciplines they mastered, from the shackles of the state. Yoshino Sakuzō, in the footsteps of his mentor Onotsuka Kiheiji, stood up for the establishment of political science (*seijigaku*) independent from the heavily German influenced *Staatswissenschaft* (*kokkagaku*).¹⁰² And another fact of the new focus on and prominence of society of course is the establishment of the Ōhara Shakai Mondai Kenkyūjo (Ōhara Institute for Social Research) in February 1919.

Arima Manabu in his not-altogether positive assessment of the 1920s has nonetheless characterized this decade as the period in Japan’s pre-WWII history in which the state or, to be more precise, ‘state values’ (*kokkateki kachikan*) were most relativised. He discerns a generation – which he regrettably does not specify – who for the first time discovered society on the basis of their own ‘true experience’ (*riaru na jikkan*), just like the Meiji Japanese (a generation?) had previously for the first time discovered the state.¹⁰³ Arima also makes the interesting observation that society took the place of the ‘region’ (*chihō*), which until then had functioned as the collective that stood in between the state and the individual. Another observation that deserves more attention is that the discovery of society by the opinion leaders in the printed media was immediately followed by the discovery of society by the state. Arima describes a shift within the Japanese Home Ministry, where the prominence of the Social Bureau (*Shakaikyoku*) after its establishment in 1922 with great strides increased to the detriment of the Regional Bureau

100 Iida Taizō, *Hihan seishin no kōseki*, Chikuma Shobō, 1997: p.207. For Takada Yasuma, see H. D. Harootunian, ‘Disciplinizing Native Knowledge and Producing Place’. In J. Thomas Rimer, ed., *Culture and Identity – Japanese Intellectuals During the Interwar Years*, Princeton University Press, 1990: pp.99-127; Kevin M. Doak, ‘Building National Identity through Ethnicity – Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After’. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.27, no.1 (Winter 2001): pp. 10-17 and Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity – History, Culture and Community in Interwar Japan*, Princeton University Press, 2000: pp.402-13.

101 For Hasegawa and a discussion of these two works, see Mary L. Hanneman, *Hasegawa Nyozeikan and Liberalism in Modern Japan*, Global Oriental, Folkestone, 2007. Hasegawa introduced Hobhouse’s work in various articles for *Warera* in early 1920, such as ‘Heegeru-ha no jiyū ishi-setsu to kokka – Kagakuteki kokkakan ni taisuru Hobuhausu kyōju hihan wo shōkai su’ and ‘Zettai kokka-setsu ni taisuru shakaigakuteki hihan – Hobuhausu kyōju no zettai kokka-setsu no hihan’.

102 Yoshino Sakuzō, ‘Seijigaku no kakushin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1, reprinted in YSS, vol.1: pp.237-41.

103 Arima Manabu, *Nihon no kindai 4 – [Kokusaika] no naka no teikoku Nihon, 1905-1924*, Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999: p.321.

(*Chihōkyoku*), only to be eclipsed by the Police Bureau (*Keihōkyoku*) in the ever stronger ambition to bring this autonomous society under the control of the state once again.¹⁰⁴ The focus of this work does not allow me to dwell on these questions in detail, so let it suffice here to state my impression that the general atmosphere in the larger part of the interwar period is better characterized by a direction ‘away from the state’ than one ‘away from the region’ or ‘back to the state’.

This movement resulted in the advent of a new level in between the state and the individual which usurped significant parts of the political and moral autonomy of the former. Moreover, in many instances the process of ‘relativisation’ and ‘socialization’ of the state was not to stop there. Whether influenced by cosmopolitanism or anarchism, both socialist and non-socialist opinion leaders could not refrain from dwelling upon utopian visions of the eventual dissolution of the state.¹⁰⁵ Even the anything but radical Yoshino Sakuzō at the beginning of the 1920s expressed his liking for the teachings of Kropotkin and Zhungzi, and played with the idea of a harmonious stateless society based on the mere workings of mutual aid.¹⁰⁶ And Hasegawa Nyozeikan in 1922 already discerned a new internationalism that was no

104 Ibid: p.322. The Social Bureau was a super-agency, which united the labour and welfare functions of both the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. It for instance assumed primary responsibility for dealing with labour unions and industrial relations. For an analysis of the Bureau and its ‘social bureaucrats’, see Sheldon Garon, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1987.

105 Sakai Tetsuya discusses this anarchistic critique of modernity and a pluralistic view of the state as the two defining elements of ‘Taishō socialism’ (*Taishō shakaishugi*), which includes a vast amount of non-socialist opinion leaders of the 1920s. Sakai, ‘Kokusai kankei-ron to [Wasurerareta shakaishugi] – Taishō-ki Nihon ni okeru shakai gainen no sekishutsu jōkyō to sono isan. *Shisō*, no.945 (January 2003): pp.121-37.

106 Yoshino Sakuzō, ‘Kuropotokin no shisō no kenkyū’. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1920.1.16-19 and ‘Anāikizumu ni taisuru shin-kaishaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2, both reprinted in YSS, vol.1: pp.242-56 and 257-61; ‘Genron no jiyū to kokka no kanshō’. *Warera*, 1920.3, reprinted in YSS, vol.3: pp.293-304 and ‘Tōyō ni okeru anāikizumu’. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1920.3. See Iida, *Hihan seishin no kōseki*: pp.198-204.

longer confined by the state or the nation, but that had progressed to the ‘Inter-Social’ level, which nowadays is caught in the terms of ‘borderless’ and ‘trans-national’.¹⁰⁷

The discovery of society and the subsequent analysis of the differences and relation between state and society regrettably were not accompanied by an equally extensive elaboration on the relation between the individual and this newly discovered society. This situation contributed to the fact that the autonomy of the individual eventually was to a large extent usurped by the various cooperative bodies (*kyōdōtai*) of the 1930s – the most stifling of which was the ethnic national cooperative body of the *minzoku* (*Volk*). However, during the interwar period the reassurance of belonging to and representing a society that was more comprehensive, profound and authoritative than the state, gave the opinion leaders a self-confidence that allowed them to discuss both the national order and the international order with a newfound freedom towards the powers that be.

107 Hasegawa Nyozeikan, ‘1921 nen kara 22 nen e’. Warera, 1922.1, reprinted in Hasegawa Nyozeikan Shū, Vol.4, Iwanami Shoten, 1990: p.162.

CHAPTER 2

HORIE KIICHI

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC UNIFICATION BETWIXT
FREE TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY**

INTRODUCTION

Horie Kiichi is the least well known of my three case studies of representatives of the Taishō generation of opinion leaders. Although in 1927 all major newspapers lamented the death of this ‘authority on economic science’ and ‘leader of public debate’ as ‘a great loss for Japan’, in contrast to Mizuno and Yoshino nobody has honoured him with a monograph on his life or thought. Soon after his premature death the eminent publishing house Kaizōsha, publisher of the leftist periodical *Kaizō*, published Horie’s complete works (which were anything but complete), but ever since a deep silence has prevailed.¹ The inhouse publishers of Keiō University, Horie’s alma mater and employer for most of his life, provide us every once in a while with a short article on the career of the man they claim to have been ‘the most publicly active scholar in the economic academia of our country’ and ‘one of the most prominent opinion leaders of his age’.² However, in the general overviews of modern Japanese economic thought Horie is either absent or barely visible in the shadow of such contemporaries as Fukuda Tokuzō (1874-1930), Kawakami Hajime (1879-1946), Kuwata Kumazō (1868-1932) and Takano Iwasaburō (1871-1949).³ It is mainly in works on interwar political and intellectual history that he is sporadically mentioned, usually in connection with Japan’s first labour union, the Yūaikai, or Japan’s second proletarian party, the Shakai Minshūtō.⁴

Notwithstanding the present-day lack of attention for Horie, in sharp contrast to somebody like the *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*’s Ishibashi Tanzan (1884-1973), in his day Horie was probably the most conspicuous commentator on economic matters in Japan. As editorial writer on economic affairs for the influential newspaper *Jiji Shinpō* and the two big daily

1 Horie Kiichi, *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, 10 vols, Kaizōsha, 1928-29.

2 Kinbara Kennosuke, ‘Horie Kiichi sensei no omoide’. *Shosai no Mado*, 1978.5/6: p.77.

3 I have checked the following works: Sumiya Etsuji, *Nihon keizaigakushi*, Minerva Shobō, Kyoto, 1958; Chō Yukio & Sumiya Kazuhiko, eds, *Kindai Nihon keizai shisōshi I (Kindai Nihon shisōshi taikai, vol.5)*, Yūhikaku, 1969; Sugihara Shirō, *Seiō keizaigaku to kindai Nihon*, Miraisha, 1972; Sugihara, *Kindai Nihon keizai shisōshi ronshū*, Miraisha, 1980; Sugihara, *Kindai Nihon keizai shisō bunkenshō*, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1980; Yamazaki Masukichi, *Nihon keizai shisōshi: Nihonteki risō shakai e no michi*, Kōbundō Shuppansha, 1981; Nakamura Katsumi, ed., *Juyō to henyō: Nihon kindai no keizai to shisō*, Misuzu Shobō, 1989; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought*, Routledge, London, 1989; Sugihara, *Nihon no keizaigakusha-tachi*, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1990; Sugihara et al., eds, *Nihon no keizai shisō yonhyaku-nen*, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1990; Sugihara, *Nihon no keizaigakushi*, Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1992; Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, ed., *Nihon keizaigaku no kyojintachi: 20-seiki no hito, jidai, shisō*, Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1994; Iida Kanae, *Nihon keizai gakushi kenkyū - Nihon no kindaika to Seiō keizaigaku (Iida Kanae chosakushū, vol.4)*, Ochanomizu Shobō, 2000; Matsunoo Hiroshi, *Nihon no kindaika to keizaigaku*, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2002. The only general studies that show notable attention for Horie are Iida Kanae, *Kōdo shihonshugi to shakai seisaku - Nihon to Igirisu (Iida Kanae chosakushū, vol.3)*, Ochanomizu Shobō, 1998 and Chūhei Sugiyama & Hiroshi Mizuta, eds, *Enlightenment and Beyond: Political Economy Comes to Japan*, University of Tokyo Press, 1988.

4 Recently all of a sudden two very short contributions have appeared which give attention to Horie from quite different angles, namely ‘non-Marxian economics’ and ‘liquidationism’ (*seisanshugi*). See respectively Kamikubo Satoshi, ‘Saihakkutsu - Nihon no non-Marukusu keizaigaku, part III, no.5: Genso jissenha ekonomisuto Horie Kiichi’. *Keizai Seminā*, no.547 (July 2000): pp.52-53 and Noguchi Asahi, ‘Noguchi Asahi no [keizai wo kiru!], no.4: Seisanshugi = mu-sakuishugi no ronri to genjitsu’ at <http://hotwired.goo.ne.jp/altbiz/noguchi/030715/textonly.html> (July 2003).

newspapers *Tōkyō Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* and *Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun* and as driving force behind *Mita Gakkai Zasshi* and *Ekonomisuto*, Horie's voice figured prominently in the economic debate.⁵ His academic output during his lifetime comprised some fifty tomes, including standard works on public finance, banking and currency which were reprinted many times. Apart from this he was also a full-fledged member of the select group of *bunmei hihyōka*, contributing on a regularly basis to a wide range of general magazines including the authoritative *Taiyō*, *Chūō Kōron*, *Kaizō* and *Bungei Shunjū*.⁶ While his articles up to the First World War were mainly concerned with monetary and economic topics, afterwards his interest was more and more aroused by social policy, the labour movement, the proletarian party movement and, as I will deal with in this chapter, international relations. This resulted in Horie's status as one of the main representatives of 'new thought' in the postwar period.⁷

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- 5 Horie reached a public of millions, including the intelligentsia, through his work for the major newspapers and highbrow general magazines, while Ishibashi's audience was limited to less than ten thousand financial specialists and businessmen. Moreover, Ishibashi wrote most of his contributions to the *Shinpō* anonymously, so during the interwar period he was largely unknown. Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha Hyakunenshi Kankō Inkai, ed., *Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha hyakunenshi*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1996: pp.154, 178, 382.
 - 6 A complete list of Horie's books and an almost complete list of his articles in periodicals can be found in *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol. 10, Kaizōsha, 1929: pp.959-77. The scrapbooks Horie kept of his articles for the newspapers *Jiji Shinpō* and *Tōkyō Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* are preserved at Keiō University's Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies.
 - 7 Horie's name and record of service was of course included in the handy 'Overview of present-day thinkers and critics' (including private addresses and telephone numbers!) *Kaizō* printed every year. Another indication of his status is that in a 1919 *banzuke* of 'the tournament of old and new thinkers', Horie was listed in the top row of the 'new thought' side of the handbill, only preceded by *ōzeki* Kawakami Hajime, *sekiwake* Fukuda Tokuzō, *komusubi* Yoshino Sakuzō, and leaving behind him Minobe Tatsukichi, Abe Isoo, Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Yamakawa Hitoshi, Takabatake Motoyuki, Murobuse Kōshin and two dozen others. See Aka, 1919.7.1, reprinted on the endpapers (the first time inverse) of Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention - Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919*, Harvard University Press, 1999.

1 THE LIFE OF HORIE KIICHI

Horie Kiichi was born as Takiyama Kiichi in what is now Shirokane, Tōkyō on the 27th of April 1876. His father, Takiyama Masakado, was raised in a family of hereditary retainers of the Hachisuka clan of Awa-*han* (Tokushima), but had chosen for a career in the new imperial navy after the Meiji Restoration. He was the commander of the Osaka-maru, which in December 1875 transported guns and ammunitions to Kyushu in anticipation of the Satsuma Rebellion but unfortunately collided with a Mitsubishi ship in the Inland Sea off the coast of Yamaguchi prefecture and sank. As a true *samurai* he took his own life in order to assume responsibility (although in what became the first marine disaster inquiry case in modern Japanese history it was judged that the other ship was to blame). Kiichi, who was born four months after this tragic event, thus never met his father and was raised by his mother. At the age of ten he was adopted as heir into the family of his uncle, Horie Sukeyasu, a steward of the Hachisuka family who looked after their financial affairs.⁸ Raised in the capital and under the patronage of his adoptive father, who was a fervent admirer of Fukuzawa Yukichi, Horie grew up to be a commoner townsman, a true Tokyoite (*Edokko*), who never boasted of his *samurai* lineage. In September 1887 he enrolled in the junior course (*yōchisha*) of Keiō University and, apart from a few minor interruptions, he would remain connected to this institution for the rest of his life. In his first years at Keiō Horie seemed to be interested in anything but his studies, but after his advancement in 1891 to the regular course (*seika*), where most of his classmates were two or three years older, and the death of his mother in 1893, he changed his way of life abruptly. He became a true bookworm, who surprised his fellow students by reading Adam Smith's entire *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) in the original language (although he used the first Japanese translation published in 1884 by Taguchi Ukichi's Tokyo Keizai Zasshisha on the side), and gradually worked his way up to the top of his class.⁹ Probably influenced by his adoptive father, Horie chose to study economics and from the early age of seventeen worked his way through the standard works on economic science. In the process he mastered the English language, which he clearly needed when in 1894 he advanced into Keiō University's economic department (*rizaika*) which was manned by foreign staff.

After his graduation in December 1896 Horie joined the Mitsui Bank only to resign after two weeks. His next job as an editorial writer for the newspaper *Jiji Shinpō* (1882-1936) was not merely Horie's first step in a lifelong career of journalism, but also saw him drawing closer to his alma mater again, for this paper was established by the founder of Keiō University, Fukuzawa Yukichi, and was dominated by its graduates. This is where Horie came under the direct guidance of Fukuzawa, who personally checked all editorials, which were anonymous and thus commonly regarded as representing Fukuzawa's views. Judging by the comparatively high wage the youngster earned and the various words of praise from Fukuzawa, the latter was obviously

8 Horie Otoo, 'Miyake, Takiyama, Fukuzawa to chichi Horie Kiichi'. *Fukuzawa Techō*, no.13 (1997): p.18.

9 Okumura Shintarō, 'Bōyū wo itamite'. *Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun*, 1927.12.11; Nishikawa Shunsaku, 'Horie Kiichi – Kōdan ni tatsu jānarisuto'. In Nishikawa, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to sannin no kōshin-tachi*, Nihon Hyōronsha, 1985: pp.133-34. There is a hand-written curriculum vitae in Horie's personal documents which gives 1892 as the year of graduation from the *yōchisha*, but this is probably a slip of the pen.

impressed by Horie and had high expectations.¹⁰ Fukuzawa was not the only one as Horie was asked in 1889 to become secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Commerce Ōishi Masami in the ill-fated first Ōkuma Cabinet, an offer he refused.¹¹ It was also around this time that he married Horii Takiko, with whom he raised six children. Although his wife was a Methodist he himself did not join the Christian faith.

In July 1899 Horie was eventually employed as a teacher by Keiō and was immediately sent abroad for study. At Tokyo University it was already common practice in those days for promising new lecturers to be immediately sent abroad on government scholarships, but these were not available for staff of private universities. The ambitious management of Keiō, which had only in 1890 been elevated from a private college (*juku*) to a (semi-formal) private university, was the first to create a scholarship program for its graduates, and Horie was selected as a member of the first group to go abroad on the university's new mission. Fukuzawa himself told Horie the multiple responsibility he shouldered: he was not merely being sent to the West to advance his own research but also to advance the glory of both Keiō University and the *Jiji Shinpō*.¹² In August 1899 he departed for three years to continue his economic studies at various universities in the United States, England and Germany, including Harvard (September 1899-July 1900) and London University (August 1900-November 1901). In contrast to the three other case studies in this book, Horie was not that keen on participatory observation and preferred to spend the bulk of his time in libraries. Apart from the work he had brought along, consisting of his weekly report as a foreign correspondent for the *Jiji Shinpō* and the revision and enlargement of his two maiden volumes on currency and banking, he was busy most of the time either reading or buying books. At the time his interests lay with the above-mentioned two topics and transport, monopoly and political history.¹³

On his return in July 1902 Horie was promoted to the rank of professor, on the basis of his fresh Western knowledge and the two books that were in the making, and thus became the first Japanese professor of Keiō's economic department. Here he taught courses on currency, banking and public finance, but at the same time he also vigorously continued his journalistic career by writing many editorials for the *Jiji Shinpō*. In Horie's day it was very uncommon for a university professor to have a second job – especially at Tokyo University it was almost inconceivable why someone would want to be connected with anything else but the zenith of academia – and the mere fact that one had a second employer placed in doubt the absolute independent position required in scholarly circles, but it was a situation that was nonetheless very much in line with the combined academic and private enterprise career of Fukuzawa and thus pardonable at Keiō. Through his impressive academic and journalistic output Horie soon became an authority on economics, a field which during the first decade of the twentieth century was still

10 Nishikawa: pp.134-36; Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Fukuō jiden*, Iwanami Shoten, 1978: p.306; Takahashi Seiichirō, 'Keizaigaku. Waga shi, waga tomo'. *Keizai Hyōron*, 1954.1: p.111; Sendagi Takashi, *Gakkai bundan jidai no shinjin*, Tenchidō, 1908: pp.295, 298.

11 Sendagi Takashi, *Gakkai bundan jidai no shinjin*, Tenchidō, 1908: p.299.

12 Horie Kiichi diary, 1901.2.10 (upon hearing of the death of Fukuzawa). In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.10, Kaizōsha, 1929: p.737.

13 Horie's first sojourn abroad is well documented in the above-mentioned diary and in Tamaki Norio, 'Horie Kiichi no Rondon'. In Keiō Gijuku Fukuzawa Kenkyū Sentā, ed., *Kindai Nihon Kenkyū*, vol. 7, 1990: pp.45-61.

underdeveloped in his country and had comparatively few practitioners. He was moreover counted as one of the most promising new faces of the academic and journalistic circles and was even invited to give lectures at learned societies at Tokyo University, an honour seldom bestowed upon scions of private universities. However, notwithstanding his immense productivity as a scholar – he published thirteen heavy academic volumes between 1902 and 1909, including works on international trade planning, commercial treaties, government bonds and custom duty – and his appointment as head of the economic department in April 1908 – he functioned as head of the department, and later faculty for seventeen years - Horie was not considered to be worthy enough to join the eminent ranks of the Society of Doctors of Law in May 1909. The two facts that he had graduated from a private university and was employed by a newspaper probably were the main reasons that worked against him. It is not sure whether this humiliation formed the immediate cause, but the fact is that later in that year he decided to concentrate on his academic career. He tendered his resignation to the *Jiji Shinpō* and set out once again for the West to acquire the latest knowledge. In April 1910 he departed for Europe and the United States for one year to do research on social questions. During his stay in Europe Horie spent most of his time in London, although he made two trips to the continent to attend the second conference of the Free Trade Society in Antwerp in August 1910 and to make a tour of various German universities in October of the same year. While on his way to America he received the message that he had been finally awarded the degree of Doctor of Law.¹⁴

After almost fourteen years of writing articles for Keiō-related publications and economic magazines such as *Jiji Shinpō*, *Keiō Gijuku Gakuhō*, *Mita Hyōron*, *Mita Gakkai Zasshi* and *Kokumin Keizai Zasshi*,¹⁵ Horie gradually widened his scope and public. With his doctorate secured he rekindled his journalistic activities and provided both the Eastern and Western part of the country with his views on economic and social questions by means of the articles he wrote for the *Tōkyō Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* (from 1911), the *Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun* (from 1915), and the *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*. In March 1914 he contributed for the first time to the *Chūō Kōron*. Soon he was also asked to write for *Taiyō* (from 1916 onwards on a regular basis, although his first contribution seems to date from 1913) and *Kaizō* (within a year from its founding in April 1919), which meant that Horie was in the luxurious situation of having a platform to spread his views in two of the major newspapers and all of the three main all-round magazines of the late 1910s and early 1920s. From this omni-visible position he almost automatically became one of the most prominent commentators on domestic and foreign economic policy.¹⁶

Apart from this Horie more and more descended from his ivory tower and extended his activities to the streets. The tensions Japan's increasingly industrialising and urbanising society underwent in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War made Horie's attention turn from purely economic questions to social problems and in 1909 he had become a member of the *Shakai*

14 For Horie's second stay abroad see the diary and the letters he sent home which are both included in *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol. 10.

15 Horie stood at the foundation of the *Mita Gakkai Zasshi*, functioned as a chief editor and contributed to the journal from its foundation in 1907 until his death in 1927. Keiō Gijuku, ed., *Keiō Gijuku hyakunenshi*, vol.3, Keiō Gijuku, 1962: pp.621-22, 626.

16 In order to expand his reach Horie also stopped writing in the literary style (*bungotai*) and actively adopted the colloquial style (*kōgotai*) in 1920. See the foreword to his *Shakai keizai kenkyū*, Kokubundō, 1921.

Seisaku Gakkai (Social Policy Association, 1896-1924), ‘a blue-ribbon circle of industrialists, financiers, academics and public servants who proffered advice to the business community and government concerning major social problems in Japan’.¹⁷ Accordingly the main object of his second trip abroad was to study the social policy newly implemented by the British Liberal Government, to undertake field research into the labour movement and the social situation of the working class and the poor, and to buy thousands of books – of which a considerable quantity at the Socialist Bookstore.¹⁸ On his return in 1911 he immediately created a chair of recent social questions at Keiō, which he himself occupied, and in 1920 he introduced a class on the history of the British Labour movement.¹⁹ However, working from behind his desk on behalf of society was no longer sufficient for Horie. He very actively supported Japan’s first labour union, Suzuki Bunji’s Yūaikai and its later incarnations Dai-Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei-Yūaikai and Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei, from the very start in 1912 until his death, functioning as a counsellor (*hyōgiin*), writing many scholarly articles for the union organ, speaking regularly at meetings, lectures and the yearly conventions, and travelling around the country to provide the many local branches and chapters with the latest knowledge on labour issues.²⁰ He also participated in Yoshino Sakuzō and Fukuda Tokuzō’s social enlightening society Reimeikai, taught at labour schools and Terao Tōru’s school for the children of Chinese revolutionary refugees the Hōsei Gakkō, and went out to visit the living quarters of the working class and the slums of the day labourers and others who were destitute. He called out for the freedom of labour union formation, the abolition of the police law restricting labour union activity, the tightening of the factory law, the creation of a social security and old age pension system, and the implementation of a system of minimum wages. When the tensions in Japanese society turned more and more to social uproar at the end of World War One, Horie had already absorbed ample information and experience in order to

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- 17 Characterisation from Stephen S. Large, *Organized Workers & Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 1981: p. On the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai, see Sekiya Kōichi, ‘Nihon Shakai Seisaku Gakkai-shi’. *Shōgaku Ronshū*, no.26 (1957-58): pp.127-51 and no.27 (1958-59): pp. 138-70 and Sumiya Etsuji, *Nihon keizaigakushi*, Minerva Shobō, Kyoto, 1958: pp.151-324. The association was modeled on the German Verein für Sozialpolitik (established in 1872), the influential and main organization of German economists and social scientists of the Younger Historical School. Membership lists of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai were included in its annual publication, the *Shakai Seisaku Gakkai Ronsō*, of which a complete reprint has been published as *Shakai Seisaku Gakkai Shiryō Shūsei Hensan Inkaï*, comp., *Shakai Seisaku Gakkai shiryō shūsei*, 13 + 1 vols, Ochanomizu Shobō, 1977-78. Horie was invited to speak at the society’s second convention in December 1908. The society was discontinued in 1924, but Horie already resigned his membership sometime between 1919 and 1922. For analyses of the society in English, see Stephen S. Large, *The Rise of Labor in Japan: The Yūaikai, 1912-19*, Sophia University, 1972: pp.16-28 and Kenneth B. Pyle, ‘Advantages of Followership: German Economics and Japanese Bureaucrats, 1890-1925’. In *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 1, no.1 (Autumn 1974): pp.127-64.
- 18 Horie Kiichi diary, 1910.6.1 and 1910.8.8. See also the letter he sent home on 10 September 1910. In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.10, Kaizōsha, 1929: p.953.
- 19 Nishikawa: p.129; Kinbara Kennosuke, ‘Horie Kiichi sensei no omoide’. *Shosai no Mado*, 1978.5/6: p.77.
- 20 It is evident from his very energetic contribution to the Yūaikai that Horie was much more than a mere provider of academic respectability and ‘gold leaf protection against the hostile rays of suspicion from persons in business and government who looked askance at organized labor’, and this may explain why he was ranked as the top counsellor of the Yūaikai during the years 1912-18. See Stephen S. Large, *The Rise of Labor in Japan – The Yūaikai, 1912-19*, Sophia University, 1972: pp.23, 30, 36, 38, 41, 197-98 for Horie’s Yūaikai related activities and a list of Yūaikai advisors and counsellors.

analyse the new postwar domestic situation, judging by the five works he published from 1918 until 1921 on the labour question, labour unions, and the reform of the economic system. His ever-increasing support for the labour class must have undoubtedly made him something of a maverick at a private university where the sympathies of most of the staff lay with the business side. Therefore rumours in the media that Horie in 1922 was not chosen to become the next president of Keiō University because of managerial fears that financial backers might be deterred may very well be true.²¹

His prominence was also supported by the fact that in October 1916 he was asked to give the opening lecture at the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai's annual convention and that in the autumn of 1917 he was invited, this time as an authority on monetary policy, by the Chinese Minister of Finance Liang Qichao to instruct his officials for a period of three months on the workings of the monetary system.²² His formal status was confirmed when, as a result of the promulgation of the Imperial ordinance on universities in December 1918, Keiō University received official accreditation as a university and Horie became the head of the Faculty of Economics newly established in 1920. And when in April 1923 *Ekonomisuto*, the leading Japanese popular economic periodical up to this day, was launched an article by Horie was included in the first issue and in all the following numbers until Horie's death. Apart from this he also functioned as a member of the examination committee of the Ministry of Education's teacher's exam and as a honorary advisor to the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce's committee on the state of the economy (Jikyoku Keizai Chōsakai) and had been asked many times to join the business and banking world. Nonetheless Horie's enhanced status and visibility proved insufficient during the Tokyo municipal elections of June 1922, when he suffered a close defeat.

In the summer of 1922 Horie was diagnosed as suffering from arteriosclerosis and he had to face the fact that he did not have much longer to live. Not wanting to leave this world without having completed the results of his scholarly research, he spent the remaining years of his life working on his *Eikoku gendai no keizai* (The modern English economy (1924) and *Kahei, ginkō, gaikoku kawase* (Currency, Banks, Foreign Exchange) (2 volumes, 1926).²³ Horie, well known for his sympathy for the labour movement was at the beginning of 1926 asked to assume a leading function in the new to be formed Rōdō Nōmintō (Labour and Farmers Party), but partly because of his health he declined. However, in December of the same year he was, together with Yoshino Sakuzō and Abe Isō, responsible for drafting the founding proclamation of the Shakai Minshūtō (Social Democratic Party), the anti-communist faction that had split away from the Rōdō Nōmintō.²⁴ His growing involvement in politics was probably the reason why he resigned

21 'Keidai gakuchō kōnin wa Kitasato hakase ka – Horie hakase no setsu mo takai'. *Tōkyō Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 1922.6.13.

22 Oddly, although there remains a picture of the two sitting side by side, Horie's name does not appear in the extensive chronological personal history of Liang Qichao. Ding Wenjian & Zhao Fengtian, comp., *Ryō Keichō nenpu chōhen*, 5 vols, Iwanami Shoten, 2004.

23 The first, published by Iwanami Shoten, was some seven hundred pages, the two volumes of the second, published by Kaizōsha, easily added up to more than one thousand pages.

24 Yoshino Sakuzō, who had first met Horie at the Hōsei Gakkō, had also served as a counsellor of the Yūaikai, had together with Horie publicly protested against the massacre of Koreans after the Great Kantō Earthquake, and who had even actively supported Horie's election campaign, nonetheless considered him to be more an academic and commentator than someone who partook in the 'practical movement' (*jissai undō*). He accordingly mentioned that Horie's role in the establishment of the Shakai Minshūtō had been

his function as head of the economic department in 1925. Various sources mention that notwithstanding his frail health Horie was even planning to stand as a Shakai Minshūtō candidate for the first parliamentary elections under the new (male) general suffrage law in 1928, but these ambitions (which, if true, would have implied the end of his academic career) were stopped short when at the end of 1927 Horie suffered a stroke while holding a public lecture in Kyoto and died subsequently on the 9th of December.²⁵

inspired by his personal support for Suzuki Bunji rather than by true involvement in the proletarian party. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1927.12.10. By the way, I am aware of the fact that ‘*minshū*’ is most properly translated as ‘masses’, but the problem is that there is another proletarian party – the *Shakai Taishūtō* – for which it is very difficult to come up with any other translation than Social Masses’ Party, so many scholars opt for Social Democratic Party in the case of the Shakai Minshūtō.

- 25 Takahashi Seiichirō, ‘Keizaigaku. Waga shi, waga tomo’. *Keizai Hyōron*, 1954.1: p.111; Kamei Kan’ichirō, ‘Kamei Kan’ichirō rikkōho goaisatsu’, election campaign pamphlet, April 1942: p.2.

2 THE ECONOMICS OF HORIE KIICHI

In line with his academic field of specialisation, the world according to Horie Kiichi was an economic world. Moreover, this economic world was conceived of as a unity, intertwined in such a way that it was impossible for any country to ignore the dictates issued by the world market. This view of the world as one free market, where geographical, racial, or other distinctions and obstacles no longer seemed to matter, can be said to befit someone who was baptised into ‘the economic faith’ by Adam Smith. At a time when there were hardly any introductory works to the economic science in the Japanese language, Horie made his first forays into the field of economics under the direct guidance of Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. The result of this peculiar method of study was that in his mind economics was synonymous with economic liberalism. When after two years of self-study Horie enrolled in the economic department of Keiō, he had to work his way through John Stuart Mill’s *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (1848), the textbook endorsed by the head of the department Garrett Droppers, and later in life he would also cite Henry Sidgwick’s *Elements of Politics* (1891) as an important influence on his thinking. However, he left no doubt whatsoever that the predominant influence on his thought was and would always remain Smith’s well-known classic of economic liberalism and in this sense it is symbolic that his last, posthumously published article was a general introduction for the reading public of the periodical *Kaizō* to *The Wealth of Nations*.²⁶

In the 1890s Horie’s stand on economic matters was not that remarkable, since it was informed by the same universalism and liberalism of the Scottish Enlightenment and Manchesterism that seniors like Fukuzawa Yukichi and Taguchi Ukichi adhered to. However, during the first two decades of the twentieth century the influence of German scholars, especially that of representants of the Younger (or New) Historical School such as Karl Knies, Gustav Schmoller, Adolf Wagner, and Lujo Brentano became predominant in academia. As the national and international debate on economic policy was more and more swayed by various concepts of economic nationalism, protectionism and state intervention, it is hard to deny that Horie’s ‘clear and simple’ (*kantan meiryō na*) economic liberalism was becoming outdated.²⁷ His reaction was simple but rather tactless. Many colleagues and students of Horie fondly recall the time (probably

26 Horie Kiichi, ‘Yo no issō ni dai-eikyō wo ataeshi hito, jiken oyobi shisō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.2: p.100 and ‘Taishū kōza: Adamu Sumisu no [Kokufu-ron]’. *Kaizō*, 1928.1: pp.93-106. For Garrett Droppers, who together with two other American professors was employed in 1890 through the good offices of Harvard University in order to give Keiō the prestige of a true university, see Norio Tamaki, ‘The American Professor’s Regime: Political Economy at Keiō University, 1890-1912’. In Chūhei Sugiyama & Hiroshi Mizuta, eds, *Enlightenment and Beyond: Political Economy Comes to Japan*, University of Tokyo Press, 1988: pp.82-86. Since Horie only gives the Japanese translation ‘*Seijigaku yōron*’ for the work by Sidgwick, this may also be *The Principles of Political Economy* (1883), although there is no copy of this book in Horie’s collection.

27 Koizumi Shinzō, ‘Horie hakase to Keiō Gijuku no keizaigaku’. *Mita hyōron*, 1963.6: p.6. On the consecutive influence of liberalist economics and historicist economic thought in early 20th century Japan, see Iida Kanae, *Nihon keizaigakushi kenkyū - Nihon no kindai to Seiō keizaigaku* (Iida Kanae chosakushū, vol.4, especially chapters 2 and 3), Ochanomizu Shobō, 2000 and the previously mentioned works on modern Japanese economic thought by Sugihara Shirō.

in 1907 or 1908) when he had to speak at a lecture society immediately after Kawakami Hajime and without any courtesy completely rejected the latter's plea for a protectionist policy and instead loudly advocated the cause of free trade.²⁸ There can be no doubt that academic rigidity and freedom of speech are honourable causes but, on the other hand, some of Horie's typical traits, such as his 'extreme self-confidence', 'bluntness' and 'haughtiness', were not the best qualifications in order to survive in academia. As a result Horie became somewhat estranged from academic circles and fell back upon his alma mater. Together with his colleagues at Keiō he co-founded the Adam Smith Society in June 1923, of which he became the first president, but this new title probably only aggravated his reputation as an 'unconditional economic liberalist who left no room for doubts and criticism'.²⁹

Another decisive influence on Horie Kiichi's thought was his father, whom he had never met and who did not seem to stand for any specific line of thought, but who in his mind became the personification of the virtue of selfless service - in his father's case, sacrifice - to society (*shakai hōshi*).³⁰ A strong social mission can be observed in many of Horie's contemporaries and in the other figures treated in this study as well (especially Yoshino Sakuzō is a striking example of an intellectual who risked his career, fortune and health on behalf of society), so in this sense Horie can probably be characterised as a typical product of his age, but in his case it was partially linked to the unfulfilled mission of his father:

My father was definitely not an ordinary person. Although he was tied to the domain of Tokushima where the inflow of civilisation was most shallow, he soon resolved to study the West (*rangaku*) and relinquished his stipend (*karoku*) which was considered of paramount importance in feudal thought. His discernment and strong will in going his own way and transcending the current of the times are praiseworthy. (...) I who have inherited his blood must make sure not to defile it. Although his instrument was the sword and mine is the pen, I will by all means follow my father's will and exert myself for the benefit of society.³¹

His sense of duty, not just towards academic society but rather to society at large, helps to explain his strong attachment to his journalistic career, in which - rather exceptional for an academic and not seldom straying from a strict academic approach - he mainly devoted himself to providing the reading public with up-to-date economic information and the government with unsolicited but pragmatic proposals concerning economic policy. One indication that these unsolicited proposals did not fall on deaf ears is the fact that Inoue Junnosuke, governor of the Bank of Japan (1919-23, 1927-28) and Minister of Finance (1923-24, 1929-31) mentioned having read all of Horie's books on international finance and many of his articles on current economic affairs. Inoue, whose stand concerning monetary questions was indeed close to Horie's,

28 Takahashi Seiichirō, 'Keizaigaku. Waga shi, waga tomo'. *Keizai Hyōron*, 1954.1: p.111.

29 Diary entries of 5 and 12 June 1923. In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.10: pp.899-900; Koizumi Shinzō, 'Horie hakase': pp.5-6; Koizumi Shinzō, 'Waga daigaku seikatsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1939.4: p.189.

30 Horie mentioned his father and mother as the two persons who had most influenced him. Horie Kiichi, 'Yo no isshō ni dai-eikyō wo ataeshi hito, jiken oyobi shisō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.2: p.100.

31 Diary entry of 25 December 1899 (exactly 24 years after the death of his father). In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.10: pp.686-87.

claimed to have been especially impressed by Horie's detailed and well-documented arguments.³² It has also been noted that Horie in his research on the labour movement was hardly interested in the history of trade unionism and neglected the contemporaneous heated theoretical debate on trade unions. He concentrated rather on practical matters and his arguments were aimed not at academia but at the man in the street.³³ His predominant interest in the current state of the national and international economy and his emphasis on practicality and up-to-date-ness is also evident from the fact that he revised his standard works on banking, currency and public finance on an almost yearly basis.

During the 1900s Horie discovered a new object of his social mission, which was clearly distinct from the educated part of society he continued to provide with the fruits of his specialised knowledge. The 'society' or 'the people' he considered himself destined to serve were more and more described in terms of the 'socially weak' or 'the proletariat'. Reminiscing in 1926 he mentioned that one of the first works that opened his eyes to 'the problem of social inequality under capitalism, absentee landlordism and militarism' was Leon Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, which he read in 1900 on his Atlantic voyage from Boston to Liverpool.³⁴ However, it is hard to deny that Horie throughout his life constantly looked in the direction of England rather than any other part of the world for new developments (and in doing so especially looked down upon everything that was produced on Japanese soil).³⁵ And just a mere glance at Horie's extensive collection of foreign books is sufficient to make clear that in his discovery of the social plight of the proletariat he was once again mainly guided by British thinkers - in particular Fabian socialists - such as Beatrice & Sidney Webb, G.D.H. Cole, George Bernard Shaw, W.F. Willoughby, H.G. Wells, L.T. Hobhouse, J.A. Hobson, R.W. Seton-Watson, P. Snowden, Norman Angell, W. J. Ashley, C.W. Eliot, Bertrand Russell, J. Spargo, Ramsay

32 Koizumi Shinzō, 'Horie hakase': p.5; Inoue Junnosuke, 'Fukyū no seishinryoku no isan'. From a leaflet included in Horie's collected works.

33 Fujibayashi Keizō, 'Horie Kiichi sensei no rōdō kumiai-ron'. In Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Keizai Gakkai, ed., *Nihon ni okeru keizaigaku no hyakunen*, gekan, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1959: pp.376-77.

34 Horie Kiichi, 'Shōsetsu no kanshō to nenrei, kyōgū', *Bungei Shunjū*, 1926.1: pp.4-5.

35 According to Ōuchi Hyōei it was Walter Bagehot who epitomised Horie's ideal of 'British liberalism with a blob of social reformism' (*shakai kairyōshugi*). Ōuchi Hyōei, *Jitsuryoku wa oshiminaku ubau*, Bungei Shunjūsha, 1965: p.245. I became aware of Horie's complete disdain for the level of Japanese thought and scholarship when fruitlessly looking for the Japanese part of the Horie collection at Keiō's central library. It was only later that I found out that Horie's colleagues, when asked to order the huge book collection he had left behind, were equally bewildered by the fact that the only Japanese books they could trace were a few volumes of kabuki texts (the complete works of Tsuruya Nanboku IV) and had to come to the conclusion that he had even sold all the copies of their works they had given him, probably in order to replenish his budget to buy foreign books. The only other Japanese books that escaped this treatment were those by his mentor Fukuzawa Yukichi, which he kept in a separate place. Takahashi Seiichirō, 'Ko-Horie hakase wo shinobu'. In Takahashi, *Zuihitsu – Keiō Gijuku*, Mita Bungaku Raiburarii, 1970: p.403. Fujibayashi Keizō also observes that Horie seemed to have had more interest in introducing the history and current situation of trade unions in England than in doing research on the trade union movement in Japan. Fujibayashi Keizō, 'Horie Kiichi sensei no rōdōkumiai-ron'. In Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Keizai Gakkai, ed., *Nihon ni okeru keizaigaku no hyakunen*, gekan, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1959: pp.379-81. Judging by the fact that the magnum opus he considered to be the final chapter of his life work dealt with the English monetary system, this Anglophile inclination was probably also to some extent reflected in his major academic field of study.

MacDonald, B.S. Rowntree and W. Cunningham.³⁶

Whereas at the outset of his career Horie had not merely been opposed to social policy but had even taken the extreme position that there was no social problem that could not be solved by means of a *laissez-faire* attitude, during and immediately after World War One he was filled with indignation at the Japanese government's identical 'irresponsible *laissez-faire* attitude' (in strong contrast to what he had observed during his second stay in England) towards the social and economic problems of the populace.³⁷ He gradually distanced himself from his former purely economic stance and became more and more politically conscious and active. Under the influence of the Webbs' concept of 'industrial democracy' he called for the concurrent progress of political and economic democracy and found himself shifting to the left wing of the *Shakai Seisaku Gakkai*.³⁸ Later he added the element of management of production by the workers, probably under the influence of G.D.H. Cole's 'guild socialism', and thus ultimately rejected the gradualist notion of harmony between labour and capital completely.³⁹ When at the end of 1919 Horie finally admitted to himself that his thought had come to show 'socialist tendencies', he must have been aware that in the process he had also come to accept a considerable amount of state control and intervention in order to limit the detrimental side-effects of capitalism and bring about industrial democracy. Nonetheless, it took the erstwhile optimistic economic liberalist another two years to come out as a self-proclaimed advocate of 'state capitalism' (*kokka shihonshugi*).⁴⁰ In the foreword to his *Shakai Keizai Kenkyū* (Research into Society and Economy), which was published around the same time and which clearly downstages 'society' compared to 'economy', he mentions:

My ideas on economy have been shaken vehemently over the last three or four years and I myself do not deny that as a result they have changed. 'Laissez faire', 'free competition' and the like have become dreams from the past. In contrast, my current ideas have become centred on [the need to] improve the political institutions of the state and, with the state in a leading role, to reform our

36 There is a catalogue of the Horie collection at the Keiō central library, which unfortunately does not list the years of publishing of the more than thousand volumes mentioned. The collection is divided into the categories of economic theory, finance, transport, exchange, trade, social policy and miscellaneous.

37 Koizumi Shinzō, 'Waga daigaku seikatsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1939.4: p.189; Takahashi Seiichirō, 'Ko-Horie hakase wo shinobu': pp.395-96.

38 At the left wing Horie found himself in the company of Takano Iwasaburō, Fukuda Tokuzō, Morito Tatsuo and Ouchi Hyōe, although there was no change in the situation that he was the only one predominantly influenced by British political, economic and social thought.

39 Horie Kiichi, 'Shihonteki seisan soshiki zetsumetsu'. *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin*, 1920.4.15: p.689; Fujibayashi Keizō, 'Horie Kiichi sensei no rōdō kumiai-ron'. In Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Keizai Gakkai, ed., *Nihon ni okeru keizaigaku no hyakunen*, gekan, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1959: pp.375-76, 382-83; Matsuo Takayoshi positions Horie within the democratic pro-labour leftwing faction of the *Shakai Seisaku Gakkai*, represented by Takano Iwasaburō and including Horie's Keiō colleagues Fukuda Tokuzō and Kiga Kanjū. Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii no kenkyū*, Aoki Shoten, 1966: pp.152, 185.

40 Diary entry of 31 December 1919. In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.10: p.874. Horie probably first came out into the open with his support for the new ism of 'state capitalism' (*kokka shihonshugi*) in a lecture under this title, which was part of a series organised by Keiō in the summer of 1921 on 'recent economic thought'. See Horie Kiichi, 'Kokka shihonshugi'. In Keiō Gijuku Daigaku, *Keizai shichō kōenshū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1921: pp.187- 244. It is also included in *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.7: pp.943-91.

economic life in a more just direction ...⁴¹

Although Horie's ideas on internal economic policy had thus come a long way from their original point of departure, as far as international economic relations were concerned his argument was quite amazingly almost totally unaffected by his volte-face in internal matters and was as always based on the economic liberalist theory of free trade. However, just as his rigid free trade argument had not brought him popularity in academic circles in Japan, his arguments in favour of and his political activities in support of the working class did not gain Horie much sympathy at Keiō, a vestige of corporate interests, resulting in the fact that even at his alma mater he became isolated and did not find any students who would continue to bear his banner of external economic liberalism and internal social interventionism.⁴²

41 *Shakai keizai kenkyū*, Kokubundō, 1921. The foreword is from October 1920.

42 Takahashi Seiichirō, 'Ko-Horie hakase wo shinobu'. In Takahashi, *Zuihitsu – Keiō Gijuku*, Mita Bungaku Raiburarii, 1970: pp.400-02.

3 HORIE IN WAR AND PEACE⁴³

3.1 In War

View of the European War

Three years after Horie's last visit to Europe war broke out on that continent. The 'Great European War', as he called it like most of his Japanese contemporaries, was not so much treated by him as a political event but rather as an economic one. His most fundamental reaction to the war was based on economic liberalist grounds: he abhorred it since it was precisely the phenomenon of war that resulted in the greatest restriction of free trade. The process of increasing international economic interdependence and prosperity would come to a halt, and the total volume of world trade would dwindle.⁴⁴ Horie's analysis of the origins of the war was also of an economic nature; it was nothing but a clash between two irreconcilable economic systems, autarky versus free trade, represented by the two competing economic great powers of the day, Germany and England.⁴⁵ He considered war to be the unavoidable result of an autarkic economic policy. Autarkic aims in a region not suited for self-sufficiency breed territorial and colonial ambitions, inevitably leading to war with competing countries and colonised nations.⁴⁶ Although he principally blamed the German nationalist policy of economic autarky for the outbreak of the recent war and there can be no doubt that his sympathies lay with the British, whom he considered cosmopolitan and relatively free tradist, it is interesting to see that unlike many of his contemporaries he did not engage in praising or criticizing the two camps. Instead, he rather distantly analysed that the relative financial and economic power of the warring states would be of decisive influence on the outcome of the war and accordingly the chances of a German victory were very dim.⁴⁷ One gets the impression that as long as the two parties were at war and thus

43 My analysis of Horie's view of the outside world only starts out with World War One for the simple reason that most of his non-academic articles dating from before this war were written anonymously – the majority for the *Jiji Shinpō* – and cannot be easily designated to have been written by Horie without the support of further evidence. At the time I was in Japan doing research on Horie and was looking for this kind of evidence in the form of his diaries and other personal writings I was unfortunately led in the wrong direction and could not find any. It was only at a later stage that I found what I was looking for, including a scrapbook of most of Horie's many articles for the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* covering the period October 1914 – November 1927, but by then I no longer had time to go through all these. There also exist scrapbooks of Horie's articles and editorials for the *Jiji Shinpō*, covering the periods October 1899 - January 1902 (his stay in America, England and Germany) and September 1902 - February 1906 (although there are some considerable gaps for the period August 1903 – December 1905) and another scrapbook of his articles for the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* covering the period March 1911 – September 1914, but at the time I was at Keiō University's Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies to inspect the dust-ridden cardboard boxes that comprise Horie's uncatalogued inheritance these items mysteriously were not there and I only detected them last year.

44 'Ōshū-sensō to honpō keizai shakai no shōrai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.5: pp.25-31.

45 A detailed description of the two economic systems is 'Sekai keizai shisō no hendō'. In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.8: pp.689-713. For a prewar appraisal of England as a free tradist and thus strong power, see 'Eikoku no kokuun ni taisuru hikansetsu'. *Keiō Gijuku Gakuhō*, no.151 (1910): pp.18-25.

46 'Sekai keizai shisō no hendō': pp.703-07; 'Sekai sai-kensetsu to kokusai keizai'. *Taiyō*, 1919.1: pp.22-23.

47 'Ei-Doku no keizai sensō'. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 1-3 September 1914; 'Kōsenkoku no zairyoku'.

primarily ‘practitioners of uneconomic activities’ Horie did not want to openly side with either party. Notwithstanding Horie’s above-mentioned strong focus on England, in his evaluation of the war it seems that his emotional ties were not so much connected to any one country as to an economic system; he hardly ever referred to his hopes of who would win the war but rather focused on the question whether the outcome of the war would be contributory or detrimental to the expansion of the world market.

Up to the spring of 1916 Horie warned that the outbreak of the European War would have grave consequences for the Japanese economy. The recent recession, which he thought long due as a result of the immense expenses during and after the Russo-Japanese War but which had ‘been irresponsibly postponed’ by the government by means of floating foreign loans, would now only be aggravated. The warfare meant an unproductive use of a large share of the world’s capital and labour force, and because of the hostilities barriers to international trade had been raised high. This being detrimental to the world economy, Japan, a full member of the world economy, was sure to suffer its share of the unfavourable effects of these developments.⁴⁸ However, Horie soon had to retract his pessimistic predictions as the Japanese economy was reaping the profits of the war. As a result of the war there was a huge rise in the demand for Japanese goods, both from Japan’s allies and from markets that had formerly been served by European suppliers, and accordingly Japanese exports boomed. Horie could no longer turn a blind eye to the unmistakable general upsurge of the economy and grudgingly admitted that the war had turned out to be very profitable for Japan for the moment. Still, he did not refrain from warning his fellow countrymen that the boom conditions were not of a structural economic nature and the backlash would inevitably come once the war ended. Considering the structural weaknesses of the Japanese economy and the complete disarray of the world economy (or at least, its predominant European part), postwar Japan would face a crisis that would correspond in its severity to the extremeness of the abnormal economic upsurge.⁴⁹

View of the Major Powers

Neither could Horie ignore that the war had created a tendency to drive the economies of the warring states away from liberalism to protectionism. Even England had seen itself forced to curtail its policy of free trade.⁵⁰ Although he was sometimes afraid that this tendency would linger on after the war, Horie was generally optimistic and stated that protectionist measures would only be a temporary aberration. In this global economy exclusion of the other was synonymous with damaging one’s own economy. Not even economic warfare against the former enemy was to be considered. Accordingly, he strongly opposed the decrees of the Allied Economic Conference in Paris in June 1916 and repeatedly took the British and Japanese

Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun, 17-18 November 1914; ‘Ōshū sensō-go no kin’yū’. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 1 and 4 December 1914.

48 ‘Ginkō kyūjo no yōhi’. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 28 August 1914; ‘Ōshū-sensō to honpō keizai shakai no shōrai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.5: pp.18-20, 30-31.

49 ‘Keiki kaifuku to ippan keizaikai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.2: pp.51-56; ‘Ōshū-sensō no eizoku to waga kuni keizai shakai no rigai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.5: pp.57-59, 66-67.

50 ‘Eikoku no yunyū kinshirei’. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 27 February and 3 March 1917; ‘Keizaijō no handō jidai’. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 18-20 July 1917.

governments to task for their support of these. In his opinion the postwar policy of the economic oppression and isolation of Germany decided upon by the Allies was at loggerheads with both the universal principle of free trade and the Japanese spirit of ‘compassion and humanity’ (*hakuai jingi*) - as opposed to Western ‘obstinate narrow-mindedness’ (*shitsuyō henkyō*). It was thus nothing less than ‘immoral’ and he warned that if Japan followed the European lead and ratified the decrees this would constitute a stain on the country’s impeccable diplomatic record.⁵¹

Disappointed by this sort of vengefulness amongst the European countries and aware of the fact that they would be too exhausted after the war to contribute in a significant way to the recovery of the world economy, Horie put his hopes on the newly emerging economic great power, the United States. Before the war he exceptionally had already pointed out that the country, with its superior natural resources and its policy of opening its Atlantic Coast to talented immigrants from the Old World, stood most chance of becoming the leading nation of the twentieth century.⁵² As the United States within less than one year from the start of the war was rapidly transforming from a debtor nation into a creditor nation this foresight was only reinforced. Although aware that its main interest was on the American continent and surely not in Asia, he was still of the opinion that it was the sole country which, by means of investments, would be able to assume the role of driving force of the postwar world economy.⁵³ It is interesting to see that Horie welcomed the growing power of the United States on the world stage and had a rather optimistic view of Japanese-American relations, whereas these had been fairly strained for quite a while as a result of the Japanese immigrants issue and American suspicions about Japanese imperialist ambitions on the Asian continent. Moreover, it was obvious that the notorious Twenty-One Demands with which Japan confronted China in 1915 caused a further deterioration of public opinion on Japan and decisively shifted the sympathies of the American people to China, which was commonly portrayed as ‘the sister republic’. Nonetheless, Horie simply chose to ignore this development, something which was facilitated by his experiences in China in 1917, when he noticed nothing of an anti-Japanese mood and was constantly confronted with requests for Japanese help.⁵⁴ In the case of the immigration issue, which was hard to ignore because it formed such a large and eye-catching part of Japanese-American relations that was, moreover, directly linked to Japanese notions of national identity and feelings of national pride, Horie found fault with both parties. On the one hand the United States had no right to discriminate on racial grounds, but on the other hand Japan should uplift its labour force by means of education, social and labour policy, and the national shame which emigration of Japanese workers in essence was would naturally disappear.⁵⁵ Horie’s views may have been

51 ‘Kokusai keizai to dōtoku’. *Taiyō*, 1916.10: pp.57-64; ‘Kōwa mondai no keizaiteki kansatsu’. *Taiyō*, 1918.12: pp.34-35. See also ‘Rengōkoku keizaikaigi’. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 18-20 June 1916 and ‘Keizai kaigi no ketsugi’. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 24-26 June 1916. The fact that Horie stuck to his argument after the war is evident from ‘Sekai sai-kensetsu to kokusai keizai’. *Taiyō*, 1919.1: pp.27-28.

52 See Horie’s reply to the ‘Minzoku mondai ni kansuru shitsumon sankajō’ enquete in the October 1913 issue of *Shin-Nihon*, p.129.

53 ‘Beikoku ni okeru keizaijō no shin-kiun’. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 25-26 October 1915; ‘Ōshū-sengo ni okeru keizai shakai no hendō’. *Taiyō*, 1916.8: p.83; ‘Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.27.

54 ‘Shina ni okeru Nichi-Ei-Bei sangoku no kankei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: p.54.

55 This line of argument is found in all of Horie’s articles on or referring to the immigration issue and it can be traced all the way back to his ‘Beikoku no ijūmin seisaku wo ronzu’ in the May 1907 issue of the

influenced partly by Japan's economic situation which ruled out any political collision between the two countries. He was highly aware of Japan's economic dependence on the United States, which had outpaced Europe long before the start of the war and was the destination of at least one third of Japanese exports. Moreover, the United States was Japan's main export market for raw silk, occupying a share of more than 90 percent ever since the start of the war. Since raw silk was Japan's top export product and amounted from a fourth up to a third of total exports before and during the war, this situation made the whole economy of the country extremely vulnerable to possible American import restrictions and economic sanctions.⁵⁶ By the end of the war he was somewhat relieved to observe that as a result of the economic upsurge in America silk was evolving from a luxury article to an essential commodity and thus a more stable export product, but he still warned his fellow countrymen not to be at ease in a situation where Japan's export trade had become even more swayed by the ups and downs of the American economy.⁵⁷

In the light of Horie's strong awareness of Japan's economic vulnerability on the one hand, it is rather odd to see that he hardly ever referred to the country's military situation. He correctly predicted that in the postwar world Wall Street would take over the role from London's City as the centre of the world economy, which was probably the most symbolic sign of the sudden rise to the status of leading economic power by the United States.⁵⁸ However, the fact that the same country had been number two on the official list of potential enemies of the Japanese Empire since the institution of the first Imperial Defence Plan (*Teikoku kokubō hōshin*) in April 1907 and the strong likelihood that the new American prominence would lead to a corresponding increase in its presence in the Pacific after the war did not seem to bother Horie at all.⁵⁹ Neither did he seem to consider Russia, number one on the list, as a potential threat. Although he observed that the country was going through a period of economic transition, in Horie's opinion the country was still predominantly an agrarian nation that did not rank amongst the civilised nations of the world. He pointed out the underdevelopment of transport facilities and infrastructure, the lack of hygiene and the corresponding high death rate, the absence of substantial industry, the meagre diffusion of technology and knowledge, and the backwardness of farming methods. Regarding Russia's military strength he refuted the opinion that the agrarian character of the country especially met the demands of militarism and instead emphasised the

Kokumin Keizai Zasshi.

- 56 'Takahashi zōsho no zaisei iken wo shissei su'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.11: pp.67-68. There are many sources for trade statistics, but they all use different periodisations, sources and calculations. The rough percentages are an average of the percentages given in Andō Yoshio, ed., *Kindai Nihon keizaishi yōran*, second edition, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1979: pp.22-23, 118; Nihon Ginkō Tōkeikyoku, *Honpō shuyō keizai tōkei*, cited in Nakamura Takafusa, 'Sekai keizai no naka no Nichi-Bei keizai kankei'. In Hosoya Chihiro & Saitō Makoto, eds, *Washinton taisei to Nichi-Bei kankei*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978: pp.480-81; Yamazawa Ipppei & Yamamoto Yūzō, *Chōki keizai tōkei – suikei to bunseki 14: Bōeki to kokusai shushi*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1979: pp 176-99 and Murakami Katsuhiko, 'Bōeki no kakudai to shihon no yushutsunyū'. In Ishii Kanji, et al. eds, *Nihon keizaishi 2: Sangyō kakumei-ki*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2000: pp.3, 6-7, 9, 19. Nakamura observes that while Japan was extremely dependent upon the United States, for the latter Japan was nothing more than a supplier of ladies stockings.
- 57 'Kōwa rai to keizaikai no jōsei'. *Taiyō*, 1918.11: pp.36-37.
- 58 'Kin'yū chūshin idō setsu'. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 11-12 May 1917.
- 59 A good and concise introduction of the contents of the Imperial Defence Plan can be found in *Nihon gaikōshi jiten*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1992: pp.615-16.

low technological insight of the farmer soldiers and the overall poor fighting record of the Russian army.⁶⁰ This low estimation of the country and the corresponding complete absence of fear probably also explain why Horie had no holdback whatsoever in suggesting a plan for peacekeeping in the Orient together with the Russians at the end of 1916.⁶¹ After the October Revolution of 1917 Horie, whose economic liberalist principles were completely incompatible with communist theory, continued to refuse to see the new Russian government led by Lenin's radicals as a danger to Japan's future safety. He could not find any justification for a Japanese intervention in Siberia. In his opinion there was no military or economic necessity whatsoever and he moreover stressed that occupation by Japan of Russia's Maritime Province would be in line neither with a free trade policy nor with an autarkic policy. However, his simplest but strongest argument was that the Russian government and people would definitely not welcome the Japanese troops, an argument that might have kept Japan out of a lot of other trouble as well.⁶²

View of Japan and China

Horie's view of neighbour China was directly linked to his assessment of Japan's economic position, so we will examine the latter first.

During the war years Horie kept emphasizing the superficial nature of the economic high tide and warned that the Japanese should not overlook the structural deficiencies of their country. Japan was a mountainous archipelago with only fifteen percent of the national territory consisting of cultivated land and it also lacked most of the natural resources necessary for modern industry. Apart from the negative connotations autarky had because of the economically detrimental isolation-policy of the Tokugawa shogunate, it was clear that in these modern days dreams of Japanese self-sufficiency were even more vain. Horie was adamant that if his country wanted to sustain its fairly large population and to rank amongst the economic and political world powers it had to break away from its status of an agriculturally based backward nation and, there being no future as a mercantile nation because of Japan's not very strategic geographical location, the only option was to become an industrial nation.⁶³ This of course implied that Japan would become economically dependent on its suppliers of raw materials and the consumers of its industrial products but, according to Horie, in a peaceful postwar world this would not be objectionable at all:

60 'Rokoku keizai gaikan'. In Kyōiku Gakujutsu Kenkyūkai, ed., *Rokoku kenkyū*, Dōbunkan, 1916: pp.123-33.

61 'Kokusai keizai to dōtoku'. *Taiyō*, 1916.10: p.63. Up until the time of the Russian Revolution there were many, especially in army circles, who supported the idea of military cooperation with Russia, but such schemes were usually inspired by a considerably higher estimation of the Russian army and a strong feeling of threat. See Banno Junji, 'Nihon rikugun no Ō-Bei kan to Chūgoku seisaku', *Kindai Nihon no gaikō to seiji*, Kenbun Shuppan, 1985, pp.77-105 and Kitaoka Shin'ichi, *Nihon rikugun to tairiku seisaku, 1906-1918 nen*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978.

62 'Tai-Shiberia keizaisaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.5: pp.59-62.

63 The best example of Horie's advocacy of the progressive industrialisation of Japan is 'Shōgyō chūshinshugi yori kōgyō chūshinshugi ni'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.4: pp.96-97.

Judged by the experiences in the last war we can conclude that a country, no matter how much it depends on supplies from abroad, does not need to have any fears concerning the necessities of life of the people and the raw materials for the maintenance of its industries, as long as it preserves the naval power to secure the safety of its trade routes and as long as the regions that supply the aforementioned goods are within its own sphere of influence (*jikoku kenryoku han'i-nai*). These fears are even more futile now on the occasion of the Peace Conference, as there is talk of trying to prevent future wars by means of the establishment of a sort of league amongst nations (...) and chances of international peace are on the rise. It is no coincidence that at a moment like this we see the resurgence of free tradism (*jiyū bōekishugi*).⁶⁴

In the same article he argued that free trade was not the only precondition for a healthy development of the Japanese economy. Apart from the war years, Japan's foreign trade had been marked by a considerable import surplus, and the current account balance had been consistently unfavourable. This implied that Japan, just like England, needed non-trade income to sustain imports in excess of exports. This was only possible if there were no barriers against Japanese setting up their business abroad. Apart from the movement of goods the movement of men and investments had to be free as well. Another related prerequisite was that natural resources, whether in the home country or in the colonies, should be open to foreign exploitation and should be distributed equally.⁶⁵ Apart from an appeal to England to open up its colonies and abolish the monopoly on its raw materials, this is also where China comes into the picture.

Up to 1918 China had been Japan's primary destination for its direct and indirect investments, immigration and textile exports and the main supplier of raw materials like cereals, coal and iron-ore.⁶⁶ Horie considered it only natural that this important role played by China should be further enhanced. In many ways Japan and China were like complementary partners. Japan needed China's natural resources and a high-interest market to invest in and China needed Japanese capital and products. In this way China, more than Japan's colonies Taiwan and Korea, could help Japan to become a stable industrial nation based on free trade.⁶⁷ It also fulfilled some important preconditions: China was close and the trade route was safe. There was no other country at this time that could challenge Japan's naval superiority in the East China Sea. And it was obvious to most Japanese that China, at least partly, was located within Japan's sphere of influence. At the end of the war Japan ruled over the lease of the Kwantung territories and the zone bordering the South Manchurian Railway, occupied most of Shandong province, and had built up an overall presence in China unequalled by any of the other major powers.⁶⁸ Many

64 'Sekai sai-kensetsu to kokusai keizai'. *Taiyō*, 1919.1: pp.23-24.

65 Ibid.: pp.24-27.

66 Ibid.: pp.24-27.

67 See, for instance, the parts 'Sengo waga kuni no torubeki keizai seisaku' and 'Nisshi keizaijō no kyōsonshugi' of his lecture 'Sekai keizai shisō no hendō' in Horie Kiichi Zenshū, vol.10: pp.717-20. The lecture was originally included in Kokumin Kyōiku Shōreikai, ed., *Gendai kenkyū kōenshū*, Min'yūsha, 1921, but most likely dates from the year before.

68 For an overview of the absolute and relative size of Japan's informal empire in China and the place it occupied in the minds of Japanese of various trades, see Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers & Mark R. Peattie, eds, *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, Princeton University Press, 1989.

commentators of the day argued that this situation demanded a further intensification of the Sino-Japanese relations by means of an economic alliance. Although Horie had the same goal in mind he was strongly opposed to this means. He stressed the fact that an economic alliance would only make sense if it were of an exclusive nature. Yet this would not be a realistic option considering the current treaties of both countries with the other powers in the region, which for instance included the most favoured nation clause. Neither would it be very contributive to the credibility of Japan's public adherence to the principles of equal opportunities and the open door in China.⁶⁹ But Horie condemned the proposed alliance most of all because it would run counter to the principle of international free trade. How could Japan ever appeal for abolishment of the British monopoly of the natural resources in its colonies when Japan was trying to achieve the same in China?⁷⁰

Although Horie tried to steer clear of a formal 'Sino-Japanese economic alliance' (*Nisshi keizai dōmei*) and accordingly favoured the neutral term 'the amity of the Chinese and Japanese economies' (*Nisshi keizai no shinzen*), his argument was identical to that of the advocates of an alliance to the extent that he also presented the intensification of the economic relations with China as a prerequisite for future Japanese economic growth.⁷¹ The presence of a large agricultural nation bestowed with ample natural resources seemed to be the answer to most problems of a small industrial nation with hardly any natural resources at all. Yet it created other problems of which Horie was very much aware. What should be done if China started to industrialize by itself and succeeded? What should be done if China regained its tariff autonomy?⁷² Horie had to admit that there was nothing much Japan should or could do. He warned his fellow countrymen that they should not look upon China as a vassal state which they could keep down as an agricultural state just because this suited the Japanese. China was an independent state enjoying the same rights as Japan. It had the right and the potential to become a strong industrial power and would probably start to industrialize in the near future. Tariff autonomy was another national right, which was not only an economic and monetary necessity but also a matter of national prestige for any independent state. Horie even advised the Powers to restore Chinese tariff autonomy for in the end they were more likely to benefit from a monetarily strong China than a low tariff China. Japan was the one country most likely to suffer from a higher level of Chinese tariffs because of the competitive nature of its export products on the Chinese market, but it could not oppose Chinese tariff autonomy on its own and should not do so either.⁷³ In a time when the vast majority of the Japanese were enraptured by the territorial and financial gains Japan was reaping from the war and were dreaming of instating a Monroe Doctrine for (East) Asia in which Japan would function as China's leader, Horie was one of the very few Japanese willing to admit Japanese weakness compared with China, in economic terms in his case. Although Japan was dependent on China for its import and export, this was not true

69 'Nisshi keizai dōmeiron', part of *Shina keizai shōkan*, originally published in October 1918 by Shinbi Shoten. In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.8: pp.621-30. It was based on four similarly titled articles Horie wrote for the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* in December 1917 while he was in Beijing.

70 'Sekai sai-kensetsu to kokusai keizai': p.26.

71 *Shina keizai shōkan*: pp.623-24.

72 *Ibid.*: pp.629-30.

73 *Ibid.*: pp.661-63. Originally published as 'Shina keizai zakkān'. *Taiyō*, 1917.12: pp.36-37.

the other way round leaving the Chinese ample room to decide upon their Japan policy. There was constantly the possibility that anti-Japanese sentiments amongst the Chinese, springing from Japanese obstruction to the restoration of Chinese tariff autonomy, might turn out to be a long-term lethal factor for Japanese economic growth.⁷⁴

In this light it is somewhat strange to see that at this stage Horie does not make a direct connection between the anti-Japanese movement in China and the China policy of his own government. Notably, there is no mention of the Twenty-One Demands. It seems as if he considers that anti-Japanese feelings amongst Chinese foreign students mainly find their origin in the students' frustrated social ambitions on returning home or in their treatment by rack-renting landlords during their stay in Japan.⁷⁵ Horie was anything but a servile and uncritical supporter of his government. Even when limiting our attention to the field of China policy, he for instance had previously taken the Terauchi administration seriously to task for the so-called Nishihara loans. However, considering the above one cannot but conclude that as far as anti-Japanese sentiments in China were concerned he did not yet really get to the heart of the matter.

This phenomenon may be the result of Horie's view of his motherland as a spiritually superior civilisation rooted in compassion and justice, symbolized by the impeccable behaviour of the Japanese troops during the Sino-Japanese War, the Boxer Rebellion and the Russo-Japanese War. He liked to point out that Japan had thus beaten the Western nations at their own game, that is, the Western invention of international law (including war law).⁷⁶ Now in this new war, Japan should once more take the lead. Its foreign policy should again be on a higher moral ground than that implemented by such allies as Britain and France. However, using international morality (*kokusai dōtoku*) as a yardstick, he somewhat disillusioned had to admit that the Japanese siege of the isolated and helpless Qingdao stronghold and the participation in the resolutions of the Allied Economic Conference were hard to justify. Horie was especially concerned about the latter question and stressed that economic policy was a means to promote peace and not to wage war. Any economic action that was lacking in the moral sphere was not to be part of Japan's economic policy. Once the war ended, the former enemies would become potential economic partners and there would be no excuse for continued economic warfare.⁷⁷ In October 1916 he accordingly criticized the way the Ōkuma Cabinet had lightly approved of the Allied proposals and asked the people to take over:

Should [the Ōkuma] cabinet remain in power for the next three months and preside over the implementation of the resolutions of the Economic Conference, the people should resolve to prevent the government from doing so and instead see to it that our economic policy is in line with morality and that all the people in the world enjoy freedom of trade (*tsūshōjō no jiyū*) and reap the profits thereof.⁷⁸

74 Ibid.: pp.661-63. For the wide support for a Japan-led Monroe Doctrine for Asia during the latter part of the war, see Furuya Tetsuo, 'Ajiashugi to sono shūhen'. In Furuya Tetsuo, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Aja-ninshiki*, Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1994: pp.73-81.

75 Ibid.: pp.678-79.

76 'Kokusai keizai to dōtoku'. *Taiyō*, 1916.10: p.63.

77 Ibid.: pp.60-61, 63-64.

78 Ibid.: p.64.

If the government could not be relied upon anymore to give the moral example, there were still the people to represent the true Japanese spirit of compassion and justice and to guide the world to the paradise of free trade. On the eve of the Paris Peace Conference Horie repeated this call to his fellow-countrymen that above all it was most urgent that Japan take a similar, morally justified, autonomous stand.

3.2 In Peace

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was a major deception for Horie. In his opinion the conference did not merely present Japan to the eyes of the world as a passive and backward nation, only assuming an active position to defend its backwardness, nor did it result in a strong international organ for peacekeeping, an important precondition for the diffusion of free trade. On the contrary, the following year saw the establishment of another multilateral organ, the New Four Power Loan Consortium for China, which although consisting of only four consorts was the stronger because of the participation of the United States, and which restricted Japan's freedom of action in China. His good hopes for international free trade betrayed and his erstwhile pride of his country faltering, Horie tried to cope with the new intellectual, political and economic trends of the postwar world by means of a functionalist approach. Also led by his increased understanding of nationalist aspirations in China and socialist aims at home, he saw himself compelled to partially distance himself from the idea of an economic world universally reigned by free tradism. Accordingly he divided the world into the three separate layers of national economy, regional economy and international economy, and ostensibly saw no qualms in eclectically picking fundamentally different policies at the various levels.

The Limits of the League and the Crucial Sino-Japanese Economic Unit

Horie considered the defeat of the Central Powers to be proof of the superiority of free trade over autarky. He even contended that the fact that Germany had been able to put up such a good fight for more than four years was mainly due to the incompleteness of its policy of self-sufficiency. Germany had become strong through the positive effects of its international trade and not through protectionist measures. The result of the war had thus only strengthened Horie's conviction that autarky was detrimental to a country's economy and capacity to sustain a large population, eventually leading to a decline in national power. The merits of not being dependent on any other country in the case of war would in the end be outstripped by the side effects of an autarkic economic policy, namely the lack of a strong, vital and competitive economy and the plain lack of men to do the fighting.⁷⁹ Industrialisation under a policy of free trade in a world interconnected as one market was the better option to strengthen one's country, but Horie had to admit that inconsistencies remained in case of war. Even the world's largest economic power and symbol of free trade, Great Britain, had been close to collapse when

79 'Sekai keizai shisō no hendō'. In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.8: pp.710-12.

German submarine attacks seriously endangered the continuation of imports from abroad. At the Paris Peace Conference the League of Nations was created to prevent and contain future wars and Horie hoped that it could thus function to overcome the strategic inconsistencies of the free trade system.⁸⁰ But he soon had to abandon his optimism because of the weakness of the League in the face of the heightened nationalistic tendencies as a result of the reshuffling of the international balance of power during the war. The fact that many of the old and newly formed countries participating in the League proclaimed their principal support for a ‘cosmopolitanist or internationalist foreign policy’ was obviously not unbeneficial to the materialisation of free trade, but according to Horie these expressions of sympathy did not mean much when accompanied by nationalistic, protectionist economic measures.⁸¹ Moreover, the fact that American ratification of the League was still not forthcoming cast a long shadow on the future practical value of the League, and thus on the chances of free trade.

As regards Japan’s position in the postwar world order, Horie was rather pessimistic as well. He was very much aware that the stand of the Japanese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference had not done the country’s reputation much good. In his opinion the conference had merely presented Japan to the eyes of the world as a passive and backward nation, only assuming an active position to defend its backwardness. Although Wilson eventually had to give in to the Japanese demands concerning the Shandong question in order to secure the League and the peace treaty, it was clear that the sympathy of the American people was overwhelmingly with the Chinese and they were more likely to side with them than with the Japanese in the case of a future clash of interests between the two parties. This only made rumours swell of an inevitable future Japanese-American conflict, which had been present ever since the beginning of the 1910s.⁸² Horie as always emphasized that war with America was practically impossible, because of the dependence of the Japanese economy on the raw silk exports to the United States and the presence of a fairly large Japanese community on the American West Coast, but he nonetheless considered it wise to rectify Japan’s economic overdependence on the country. The possibility of a boycott of Japanese products because of anti-Japanese feelings in the United States could not be completely neglected and it would overall improve Japan’s stability and enhance its position towards the United States if Japan were able to diminish the large American share of its imports and exports.⁸³

In a world where the League of Nations could not yet guarantee the absence of war and, accordingly, the security of trade routes, Horie turned all his attention to China as Japan’s only safe haven. He pointed out that although the lines of supply in general continued to be vulnerable, Japan was in a relatively advantageous position because of the proximity of China. Whereas

80 Ibid.: p.713.

81 ‘Ōshū sensō to keizai shichō no dōyō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.168.

82 Mark R Peattie, ‘Forecasting a Pacific War, 1912-1933: The Idea of a Conditional Japanese Victory’. In James W. White and Michio Umegaki, eds, *The Ambivalence of Nationalism - Modern Japan between East and West*, University Press of America, Lanham, 1990: pp.116-18; Akira Iriye, *Japan as a Competitor, 1895-1917*. In Iriye, ed., *Mutual Images*, Harvard University Press, 1975: pp.87-91; Saeki Shōichi, ‘Images of the United States as a Hypothetical Enemy’. In Ibid.: pp.105-09; Hata Ikuhiko, *Taiheiyō kokusai kankeishi – Nichi-Bei oyobi Nichi-Ro kiki no keifu, 1900-1935*, Fukumura Shuppan, 1972.

83 ‘Sekai keizai shisō no hendō’: pp.716, 718.

European economic powers like England and Germany had to demand their raw materials from distant places, across oceans and on other continents, Japan merely had to cross ‘a stretch of water as thin as a reed’, which without too much ado could be safeguarded by the Japanese navy, and thus was clearly more blessed in order to overcome the strategic inconsistencies when applying the economic policy of international free trade.⁸⁴ He stressed that there was a natural inclination, because of geographical and economic factors, towards economic coexistence between Japan and China and that the two countries should be considered as one economic unit.⁸⁵ It is hardly necessary to mention that many contemporaries of Horie came to an identical conclusion in these postwar days, although few of them will have been inspired by the musty concept of free trade. The most common criterion on which to base calls for the strengthening of Sino-Japanese economic ties was the brand new concept imported from Europe of ‘total war’ (*sōryokusensō* or *sōryokusen*). Within the military a younger generation of total war thinkers, labelled ‘the total war officers’ by Michael Barnhart and ‘the middle rank army officers of the Army Academy graduate class 15 [=1903] and after’ by Hattori Ryūji, gradually grew in prominence and stressed the necessity of Sino-Japanese economic cooperation in order to sustain a protracted war.⁸⁶ But the new trend was equally conspicuous in non-military circles, for instance in the ruling political party Seiyūkai where influential men like Ogawa Heikichi increasingly focused on China and advocated identical plans for identical reasons.⁸⁷

Yet while amongst the majority of this vast group of total war thinkers there was a silent understanding that condoned the use of coercion and aggression if considered necessary to attain the goal of economic cooperation with China, Horie rejected such an approach as morally objectionable and destined to fail because of Chinese opposition. He was in full agreement that, for the time being, Japan had to make China its supplier of raw materials and foodstuffs, but he warned that it should not demand anything more from China.⁸⁸ In this sense Horie’s line of argument was not dissimilar from the lineage of thought of ‘*shō-Nihon shugi*’ (“small Japan-ism”), which propagated the idea of a ‘small Japan’ without colonies and spheres of influence in general and stressed economic priorities instead of strategic priorities in China in particular. Since Horie seldom referred to Japanese contemporaries – that is, apart from the politicians and military officers who formed the target of his critique – it is not so odd that he does not mention the names of Miura Tetsutarō and Ishibashi Tanzan, the successive chief editors of the economic journal *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō* who primarily advocated this idea. However, one may wonder why he did not choose to join forces with them or at least refer to the already established notion of ‘a small Japan’.⁸⁹ In strong contrast to these liberalists, the Japanese

84 Ibid.: p.716-17.

85 Ibid.: pp.719, 721.

86 Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War - The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941*, Cornell University Press, 1987: pp.23-25, 270; Hattori Ryūji, *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō 1918-1931*, Yūhikaku, 2001: pp.175, 309. The most conspicuous example of total war thinking in the military is of course provided by Ishiwara Kanji. See Mark Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan’s Confrontation with the West*, Princeton University Press, 1975.

87 For Ogawa Heikichi and other proponents of an ‘active’ China policy within the Seiyūkai, see Ogawa Heikichi Bunsho Kenkyūkai, comp., *Ogawa Heikichi kankei bunsho*, 2 vols, Misuzu Shobō, 1973 and Itō Yukio, *Taishō demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987.

88 Ibid.: pp.719-20.

89 For the *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, see Inoue Kiyoshi & Watanabe Tōru, eds, *Taishō-ki no kyūshinteki jiyūshugi*

Marxists' critique of their country's China policy was rather subdued, as their attention was mainly fixed on the social movements in Europe and Japan itself. Kawakami Hajime, the most famous interwar Marxist economist who even enjoyed a wide Chinese reading audience, seems not even once to have addressed the topic of China's modern political economy.⁹⁰ Horie, for his part, had for a long time denounced Japan's territorial ambitions in China based on his recognition of China as an autonomous state. The strong attacks on Japan's wartime behaviour towards its neighbouring country, both by the Chinese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference and by the participants in the anti-Japanese May Fourth Movement that simultaneously raged through Beijing and Shanghai, must have strengthened his conviction that Chinese nationalism and feelings of antipathy towards Japan had to be taken seriously. While Horie after his visit to Beijing in 1917 had stressed the necessity of monetary guidance of China through a Japanese superintendent (*tokuben*), he now rejected the idea of any foreign supervision of Chinese monetary policy as an infringement on Chinese autonomy.⁹¹ The only thing Japan could do to soften Chinese feelings was to follow the American example of furthering philanthropic aid to improve friendly relations between Japan and China. It was only on this basis that Japan could hope to nurture the Chinese understanding and cooperation deemed essential for the intensification of Sino-Japanese economic relations (although in the end all this rhetoric came down to nothing but the Japanese need to procure Chinese raw materials).⁹²

The New Four Power Consortium

Contrary to Horie's earlier conjecture, after the war he could not help but notice how the United States also started to focus on the Orient as a region in which to invest the huge monetary reserves it had amassed during the war and had become the third contender for the Chinese market. Compared to England and Japan the United States lacked a power basis consisting of leases of territory, railways, preferential rights and a military presence, but the country had the financial power that the other two were desperately in need of to profit from their vested position.⁹³ At the end of 1918 it had even taken the initiative in proposing a New Four Power Loan-Consortium for China, consisting of the aforementioned three major powers on the China scene and France. Its aim was to coordinate political and economic loans to the Chinese government and to do away with preferential rights that obstructed the principle of equal

– *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō wo chūshin to shite*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1972, for Miura Tetsutarō, see Matsuo Takayoshi, comp., 'Dai-Nihonshugi ka shō-Nihonshugi ka', Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1995, and for Ishibashi Tanzan see Sharon Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan – Ishibashi Tanzan and his Teachers, 1905-1960*, University of California Press, 1987, Masuda Hiroshi, *Ishibashi Tanzan kenkyū – 'Shō-Nihonshugisha' no kokusai ninshiki*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1990, Masuda, *Anadorazu, kanshō sezu, hirefusazu – Ishibashi Tanzan no tai-Chūgoku gaikō-ron*, Sōshisha, 1993 and various other publications by both Matsuo and Masuda.

90 Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974: pp.311-12; Sugihara Shirō, 'Kawakami Hajime to Chūgoku'. In Sugihara, *Nihon no keizai shisōka-tachi*, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1990: pp.223-26.

91 *Shina keizai shōkan*: pp.657-58; 'Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.31.

92 'Shina ni okeru Nichi-Ei-Bei sangoku no kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: p.54.

93 'Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.27.

opportunities, so no one country would be able, or would be inclined to try, to obtain an exclusive position for itself through financial support of a certain Chinese faction, like the Japanese government had obviously done during the years 1917-18 with the so-called Nishihara loans to the Anhui faction of warlord Duan Qirui. Although the new consortium implied that the Japanese and British positions in China would be circumscribed, the prospect of open competition with the financially far superior United States was even less promising, so after the necessary amendments both governments agreed to participate.⁹⁴ Horie was not slow to take the government to task. He pointed out that the obligation to work through a consortium was not in line with the principle of free competition and was thus disadvantageous for the Chinese government in obtaining loans under the best conditions. But most of all it would imply a restriction on Japanese initiatives, something completely uncalled for at a moment when Japan should work for economic cooperation with China to secure raw materials. He emphasized that Japan had a special geographical and intelligence advantage regarding China which should make up for the temporary lack of investment capital and the high interest rate in Japan. If the Consortium, a non-free trade institution, came into being, and Horie knew that it would, Japan should fight it with its vested superior rights in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, which were equally out of line with free trade.⁹⁵ It seems that although Horie was a fervent supporter of free trade he could not see any reason why Japan should give up its exclusive rights in its sphere of influence in Northern China as long as the other powers did not do the same in their colonies and leases in Asia. Japan should apply the policy of free trade as best as it could, but for the time being it should also hang on to Manchuria and Inner Mongolia as its only insurance for raw materials:

It is a natural fact that Japan has superior rights (*yūetsuken*) in Manchuria and Mongolia. By means of these rights exploiting the natural resources of Manchuria and Mongolia and having China supply the raw materials necessary for the survival of our industry is the key point which will dominate Sino-Japanese economic relations in the future. In other words, we will supply China with the necessary capital to develop its natural resources (...) and in return will import raw materials.

94 For a detailed analysis of the formation of the New Consortium and the reaction and ultimate decision to join in by the Hara Cabinet, see Mitani Taichirō, 'Tenkanki (1918-21 nen) no gaikō shidō'. In Shinohara Hajime & Mitani Taichirō, eds, *Kindai Nihon no seiji shidō*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965: pp.293-374; Hirano Ken'ichirō, 'Nishihara shakkan kara shin-shikoku shakkandan e'. In Hosoya Chihiro & Saitō Makoto, eds, *Washington taisei to Nichi-Bei kankei*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978: pp.306-15 and Sakai Kazuomi, 'Shin-shikoku shakkandan to kokusai kin'yūka – kokusai kyōchōshugi no ronri to genkai'. *Shirin*, vol.84, no.2 (March 2001): pp.104-33.

95 'Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: pp.29-31; 'Tai-Shi shakkan seisaku'. *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 26 and 30 May 1919. In reality Japanese intelligence advantage was rather dubious as the various diplomats and military 'advisors' on the internally divided China scene tended to see things from the perspective of the region where they had been despatched, a situation which not seldom resulted in a true cacophony of contradictory reports. The two works by Usui Katsumi on Sino-Japanese relations during the 1910s and 1920s, *Nihon to Chūgoku – Taishō jidai*, Hara Shobō, 1972 and *Nitchū gaikōshi – Hokubatsu no jidai*, Hanawa Shobō, 1971, describe this cacophony in detail. In contrast British intelligence – especially economic intelligence – may have had a few extra advantages due to the country's established exclusive position within the Chinese customs service and the network of missionaries.

This is the way to secure the supply of raw materials for our industry and simultaneously, by means of Japanese funds, to lead the Chinese economy to prosperity and the Chinese people to welfare.⁹⁶

It should be noted that Horie was convinced that Japan stood a fair chance of succeeding in competing with the other powers on the Chinese market. The American proposal only served to reinforce his conviction. Why would the United States otherwise have come up with this New Consortium which was in essence an institution to restrain Japanese initiatives in China by economic means?⁹⁷ Horie warned his countrymen that although Japan, England and America attuned their chorus as loyal proclaimers of the principle of the open door, one should not forget that in essence the three powers were nothing but economic enemies on the Chinese market.⁹⁸ What was more, although he did not yet doubt the continuation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance at this stage, he had already since 1916 been aware of the fact that in England's policy towards other countries as well, increasingly less was left of its former policy of splendid isolation and now he pointed out that the country was inclined to draw even closer to the United States.⁹⁹ His discomfort with this trend, which might lead to the not-so-splendid isolation of Japan, may account for somewhat bitter accusations aimed at the competition. Although he had a fairly high opinion of the British in general, he did not hesitate to point out that the expatriate variant was particularly jealous and cunning and thus formed a perfect team with the Chinese in many cases of unfair competition. The United States was accused of opportunism in its hopping in and out of the China Loan Consortia. And in a bad mood Horie even suggested that the American and British merchants might have instigated the Chinese in their boycott of Japanese products.¹⁰⁰

First Doubts about Japan's Status as a Civilised Country within the New World Trend

Yet we can also see that Horie in this period came to change his views drastically towards the anti-Japanese movement in China. Although he sometimes referred to the less favourable traits of the Chinese, the American and the British, he plainly stated that the occurrence of anti-Japanese movements was only natural when considering what Japan had done to China since 1895. It had taken Taiwan away from China, had through its demands for the cession of the Liaodong peninsula given impetus to the full-scale division of China by the Western powers and had in all those years hardly given any humanitarian help to its ailing neighbour. How could the Chinese know Japan other than by its expansionist face?¹⁰¹

Thus Horie distanced himself somewhat from his nationalism of former days and started to become increasingly critical of Japan's China policy. At this stage he criticized his own country for being one of the imperialist countries, not yet for being the most actively imperialist actor in

96 Ibid.: p.29.

97 Ibid.: pp.28-29.

98 'Shina ni okeru Nichi-Ei-Bei sangoku no kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: pp.53-54.

99 'Ōshū-sengo ni okeru keizai shakai no hendō'. *Taiyō*, 1916.8: pp.77-78; 'Sekai keizai shisō no hendō': 707-10.

100 *Shina keizai shōkan*: pp.664-66; 'Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.27; 'Shina ni okeru Nichi-Ei-Bei sangoku no kankei': p.54.

101 'Sekai keizai shisō no hendō': pp.720-21.

China, and neither is there any specific mention of the Twenty-One Demands. Yet, when compared with the other powers in the sphere of modern civilisation, Japan occupied an extremely low position in Horie's opinion. He was disillusioned as Japan took a far less progressive stand on labour and social questions than the other participants in the Paris Peace Conference. In the case of the New Consortium Horie condemned his country for blindly following the other powers, accuse it of adulation of foreign thought and reject international cooperativism (*kokusai kyōchōshugi*) as a hollow phrase. However, in the case of 'the great conference of world reform' (*sekai kaizō no daikaigi*) he in stark contrast insisted that Japan could not turn a blind eye to the international trend of 'a new mode of thought' (*shin-shisō*) that distinctly influenced the conference.¹⁰² The four long years of war had exerted an irrefutable impact on the people's minds and they were no longer going to put up with the social inequalities inherent in the capitalist economic system. Horie for his part saw himself obliged to distance himself from social policy as a solution to social injustice, because he found it only softened the pain and did not take the cancer away, and it is probably at this junction that he resigned his membership of the Shakai Seisaku Gakkai. In this context he even had to give Lenin and his communists credit for having a consistent ideal to reform the socially detrimental capitalistic order. Horie's solution was simply for Japan to join in the international trend of nationalisation, socialisation and democratisation in order to bring about a basic reform of the economic organisation.¹⁰³ Yet it had missed the first major opportunity for this objective and instead had even ended up getting itself a considerable amount of bad press abroad. He was afraid Japan might alienate and isolate itself further and further on the international stage through its conservative stand on social and labour policy. It is therefore hardly surprising to see that Horie openly participated in the protest movement against the selection by the government of the labour representatives to be sent to the first convention of the International Labor Organization in Washington in October 1919.¹⁰⁴

3.3 Summary: The Three-Layered Economic World

From the above it will be clear that Horie was someone who did not only make a clear division of the economic world into three separate levels but was also perfectly able to advocate different economic theories and systems on each separate level and, moreover, different economic theories and systems that are usually considered incompatible.

On the world level he perceived an abstract world market that was swayed (or rather stabilised) by inadvertent human conduct, the so-called 'invisible hand' of liberal economic theory. In line with this theory Horie proposed a policy of free trade in international economic relations, in which state intervention in general and protectionist measures in specific were considered out of the question. Somewhat contradictory to the idea of one interconnected world market, Horie was strongly aware of one more international level of economic life, namely that of the (trans-national) regional level. This regional level was different from the world level not

102 'Masa ni kitaran to suru keizai seikatsujō no kakushin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.5: pp.35-36 'Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.30.

103 'Masa ni kitaran to suru keizai seikatsujō no kakushin': pp.30-33.

104 Miyake Setsurei, *Dōjidaishi*, vol.5, Iwanami Shoten, 1958: p.153.

merely in the sense of its circumscribed size but also in the sense that it was considerably less touched by the invisible hand. Here human behaviour, whether inadvertent or not, seemed to be of almost no importance. It were the deterministic forces of economic, geographic and strategic necessity that demanded that East Asia become a complementary economic unit, primarily sustained by Japan's 'natural special economic relation with China'.¹⁰⁵ Whereas on this level the state intervention so much abhorred by liberal economists was still confined to the rather passive sphere of doing away with intra-regional obstacles and misunderstandings and was clearly not intended to bring about an exclusionist economic bloc, on the third level of the national economy Horie more and more adopted socialist influences and came to stress the role of an active state that increasingly intervened in national economic relations in order to undo the social inconsistencies resulting from free competition under the capitalist system and to bring about social, economic and political equality.¹⁰⁶

In line with the fact that Horie advocated a different economic theory on each level of the economic world, the systems he perceived on each level were different as well. On the basis of his strong admiration for Adam Smith, he predominantly raised the banner of the free trade system. He believed that under this global economic system the process of international division of labour would bring about economic interdependence and cordial relations between the countries of the world, a growing world economy benefiting all countries and, eventually, eternal world peace.¹⁰⁷ The fact that, judging by the unprecedented scale of the recent world war, the world was anything but close to this idyllic stage made Horie downplay the workings of the invisible hand behind this economic process and rather stress the reciprocity between international politics and the global economic system. He outlined a progressively increasing relation between peaceful international relations and free trade up to the ideal stage where the two were inseparably connected, but it seemed that within the present state of world disorder it was politics rather than economics that had to give the first impulse to the activation of this spiral.¹⁰⁸ This was exactly why the economist Horie took so much interest in the terms of the peace treaty and the establishment of an international peacekeeping organ and was so disillusioned by the many compromises, limitations and exceptional treatments included in both the Treaty of Versailles and the Charter of the League of Nations. These did not augur much good for the recovery of free trade and the world economy, let alone for Horie's high hopes of their progressive growth.

Horie was somewhat remarkable in the sense that there were not many others who during and immediately after the war loudly proclaimed the idealistic belief that there could be no doubt whatsoever that the free trade system was beneficial to all and that this was where the rational behaviour of man and nations would automatically lead. However, this did not mean that he was complete blind to the reality of his day. He did not easily give in as regards his conceptualisation of the global economic order, but he was willing to accept compromises on the regional and national levels that might in the long run further the realisation of his ideal of free trade. Of these two, the regional level of an East Asian economic unit was clearly the least systematic and the most shaky. Where others were able to find some footing in the form of a Sino-Japanese

105 'Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: pp.29-30.

106 'Masa ni kitaran to suru keizai seikatsujō no kakushin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.5: pp.32-35..

107 'Sekai sai-kensetsu to kokusai keizai'. *Taiyō*, 1919.1: pp.21-27.

108 *Ibid.*, pp.23-25.

economic alliance that was not dissimilar to an economic bloc, such an exclusionist structure was evidently a stadium too far for a free-tradist in heart and soul. Where could the economic justification be found for an attempt – inspired by strategic reasons - to change an economic dependence on the United States into an economic dependence on China? Horie in the end did not get any further than the argument of the complementary character of the Japanese and Chinese economies, but even this justification was often more refuted than supported in his own writings, which stressed that China was due to take the same path of industrialisation as Japan and the two countries before long would mainly know each other as economic competitors.¹⁰⁹

The years addressed in this chapter coincide with the period that Horie threw himself headlong into the labour union movement and invested much time on the labour question, on which he published major works in 1918, 1919 and 1920.¹¹⁰ Considering these preoccupations it is hardly surprising to find that the national economic order Horie propagated at the time was mainly inspired by the political objective to enhance the position of the working class as against that of the capitalist and managerial class. This ambition was of course founded on the notion of social equality rather than that of economic growth and, as mentioned before, was more prone to stress the workings of socialist state intervention than those of the invisible hand of economic liberalism. More political than economic in character and more inward-looking than outward-looking, this domestic order was seldom explicitly connected to the international or global economic order. Social and economic equality, later often expressed in the term ‘industrial democracy’ (*sangyō minshushugi*), thus seems to be a mainly internal matter, which by elevating the status of the Japanese working class may decrease the drive to emigrate and thus indirectly may contribute to solving the concrete conflict with the United States concerning the Japanese immigrants, but which hardly seems related in a more direct way – whether abstract or concrete - to the regional economic system of an East Asian unit and the global economic system of free trade. Maybe this disregard was the only way to overcome the problem of how to harmonise the fundamental contradictions between socialism and economic liberalism.

The theoretical and systematic links between the three levels of the economic world being all but absent, there was nonetheless one non-economic element which tied them all together, namely morality. Although moral conduct is seldom highlighted as part of the actions of the *homo economicus*, it formed a central element in Horie’s thought. The economic systems on the global, regional and national levels were all closely linked to such moral norms as compassion (*hakuai*), humanity (*jingi*), and justice (*seigi*), and merely seemed to take various forms because of the different character of the amoral forces on the respective levels.¹¹¹ On the global level he perceived protectionism and autarkism, which in his opinion would inevitably lead to morally reprehensible imperialism and war, as his main enemy and accordingly prescribed free tradism as the one and only remedy. On the regional level the antagonistic forces were not that dissimilar, namely exclusionism and monopolism, and, accordingly, protecting the open door and treating China as an equal were defined as ‘acting moral’. However, on the national level Horie mainly crossed swords with elitism and unrestrained capitalism, which he considered responsible for the

109 ‘Sekai keizai shisō no hendō’ in Horie Kiichi Zenshū, vol.10: pp.717-20; *Shina keizai shōkan* (October, 1918). *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.8: pp.629-30..

110 *Rōdō mondai jūron*, Hōbunkan, 1918; *Rōdō mondai no genzai oyobi shōrai*, Daitōkaku, 1919; *Rōdō kumiai-ron*, Kokubundō, 1920.

111 ‘Kokusai keizai to dōtoku’. *Taiyō*, 1916.10: pp.57-64

morally reprehensible class differences in Japanese society, and ‘moral order’ was usually defined in terms of political democracy (seijijō no demokurashii) and economic democracy (keizaijō no demokurashii).¹¹²

112 ‘Shihonteki seisan soshiki zetsumetsu’. *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin*, 1920.4.15: p.68.

4 HORIE IN NATIONAL CRISIS AND INTERNATIONAL OPTIMISM; 1920-1923

The years from 1919 to 1923 formed the period of low tide for the military and a period of high tide for the democratic and socialist movements in Japan. For instance, whereas military expenditures reached a record high share of the national budget during the first years of the Hara Cabinet, before long both army and navy were faced with an almost equivocal demand for retrenchments. These developments were partly a reflection of international trends as well as a result of the popular critique of the Siberian Intervention and the ongoing process of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation in the country itself. Horie was also clearly influenced by the intellectual trends of his day and in his articles he did much to contribute to these, although he made sure not to become directly implicated in socialism. Especially from 1921 onwards he declared himself to be a staunch opponent of capitalism, militarism and (economic) imperialism, which he now collectively presented as the fundamental causes of the world war.¹¹³ As was often the case with opinion leaders of his generation, it was the Seiyūkai Cabinet of Hara Takashi that had to bear the brunt of his anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist attacks and it was predominantly the United States, by means of its successful initiative in bringing about the Washington Treaties, that symbolized the trends of democracy, disarmament and international cooperation of ‘the new age of Taishō’.

4.1 The Postwar Crisis

March 15, 1920 saw the beginning of the postwar crisis when the Japanese stock market crashed. When in the following months the Tokyo stock exchange was closed down for more than five weeks and industry started to cut down working hours and lay off workers in large numbers, it was evident to most concerned that the wartime booming conditions would no longer persist and Japan would be back to the days of economic and monetary crisis it experienced during most of the prewar period. Horie put the blame for the economic regression on the Hara Cabinet on the grounds that, as a result of Prime Minister Hara Takashi’s will to further party interests and Minister of Finance Takahashi Korekiyo’s ignorance, it had far too long hung on to its so-called positive spending policy. It had superficially stretched the period of economic growth, keeping prices high and refusing to increase the interest rate, thus missing the chance to cool down the economy when this was necessary and still possible without too serious consequences. Now, when it was already too late, the banks saw themselves compelled to raise the interest rate suddenly and steeply, setting off a dramatic fall in stock value and an economic crisis which would be longer and deeper than if the economy had been left to its natural self-regulative process.¹¹⁴ The crisis sparked off an intensification of Horie’s anti-government

113 See for instance ‘Kokusaikan ni okeru kanjō, rigai, seigi no kankei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.96; ‘Buryokuteki kyōsō kara kokusai keizaiteki kyōsō e’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.2: pp.23, 27.

114 ‘Fukeiki shūrai ni taisuru kansatsu’. *Kaizō*, 1920.6: p.44; ‘Keizaikai no shōrai ikaga’. *Taiyō*, 1920.8; pp.37-39. Yamamoto Tatsuo, Minister of Agriculture in the Hara Cabinet but also Takahashi’s senior – and rival – as a former President of the Bank of Japan and Minister of Finance, was of the same opinion as Horie and lauded the latter’s criticism. According to a note by Horie’s son Otoo on page 210 of the copy of Okada Masukichi’s *Shōwa no machigai* (Sekkasha, 1967) kept at the Fukuzawa Memorial Center.

stand. His self-confidence must have been boosted as things turned out for the worse the way he had warned ever since the start of the war, and he now let go of any restraint in his attacks on the Hara Cabinet. This was also evident in the following issues that were not directly related to economic policy.

Suffrage

The demand for universal (male) suffrage had never been absent from the political stage since the turn of the century. A bill aimed at the implementation of universal suffrage had even been passed in the House of Representatives in March 1911, only to be rejected by the House of Peers, but as a result of the international high tide of democracy and egalitarianism after World War One it had become the major political issue.¹¹⁵ Horie had advocated expansion of the franchise in a sense that came quite close to universal suffrage ever since he started writing for general magazines.¹¹⁶ As a true economist, he at first had rather neutrally advised further democratisation as an important condition for changing the economic system into a more liberal and egalitarian direction, but his tone changed markedly from mid-1920 onwards. He now denounced the Seiyūkai party cabinet, which under the leadership of Japan's first 'commoner prime minister' ironically rejected the bill for universal suffrage year after year, for practising an economic policy only benefiting the capitalists and keeping the people suppressed by not letting them have their voice represented in parliament.¹¹⁷ Accordingly Horie more and more came to stress political democracy as a logical demand and the first precondition for the establishment of a moral economic order.

China Policy

Horie's emphasis on industrialisation as the only option for Japan to survive in the international economic competition and on Japan's need to procure raw materials and non-trade income in order to safeguard successful industrialisation continued throughout this period, just like his focus on China as the source of procurement. What had changed compared to the previous period, however, was that appeasing the Chinese had evolved into the primary precondition for the expansion of economic relations between Japan and China. It is in this context that we can also find Horie's first mention of the Twenty-One Demands and, considering the fact that he had tacitly approved of these for more than six years, his very frank and outspoken opinion comes as quite a surprise:

The Sino-Japanese Treaty from the days of the Ōkuma Cabinet can be considered

115 For an extensive analysis of the universal suffrage movement in Japan, see Matsuo Takayoshi, *Futsū senkyo seido seiritsushi no kenkyū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1989.

116 Horie's 'Seijika no shushoshintai' in the March 1913 issue of *Taiyō* (pp. 123-26) was probably his first major contribution to the debate on universal suffrage.

117 'Fukeiki no kokumin seikatsu oyobi kokumin shisō ni taisuru eikyō to kyōkun', *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.10: p.71. Horie had even become so disillusioned that he portrayed the widely detested ultra-conservative House of Peers as the only effective institution that could put a brake on the excesses of the party cabinets (read: the Hara Cabinet). 'Gikai seiji wo hinin suru shisō', *Kaizō*, 1920.9: p.95.

as the most conspicuous expression of Japan's true [expansionist] intentions. (...) It is the one thing most hated by the Chinese and I am not loath to admit that all the anti-Japanese sentiments of the last years find their origin in this treaty. (...) It is only natural for the Chinese to distrust our country, to look for protection to any other country they can put their faith in and to indulge in anti-Japanese deeds. (...) If we do not completely change the attitude of our people towards the Chinese and the Chinese foreign students, and especially the attitude of those Japanese residing in China, not merely the formation of a Sino-Japanese alliance (*Nisshi keizai dōmei*) but even mere Sino-Japanese amity (*Nisshi no shinzen*) will be hopeless.¹¹⁸

In order to prove his sincerity Horie even stated his approval of the abolition of some of the Twenty-One Demands, but he regrettably did not specify which ones.¹¹⁹

The China policy of Ōkuma's successor Terauchi Masatake was also criticized as militaristic and short-sighted. Horie pointed out that the substantial Japanese loans to China had served one specific faction in the complex Chinese power struggle and all in all had merely contributed to the continuation of the civil war. As the support had not been intended to serve any economic ends the Chinese people did not benefit from it at all. He also mentioned that these so-called Nishihara loans had been aimed at Japanese territorial gain, but when the Anhui-faction gave way to another faction the net result of the huge financial aid was nothing but the increased hatred of the Chinese people.¹²⁰

Hara's non-intervention policy towards China had not given Horie much room to either criticize or praise it until the Minister of Finance of the Hara Cabinet, Takahashi Korekiyo, came up with his 'Tō-A keizairyoku juritsu ni kansuru iken' (Opinion on the Establishment of an East Asian Economic Force) in the late spring of 1921. In this memorandum Takahashi stressed Chinese feelings, honour, pride, and profits and accordingly warned his country not to focus on short-term profits. Instead he expounded the idea of the formation of a long-term Sino-Japanese economic alliance. He called for a fundamental reform of Japan's China policy in the sense of an emphasis on economic coexistence between the two countries, aimed at the establishment of an East Asian economic force that would be able to compete with the two other economic forces in the world, England and America:

Military power is no longer the sole criterion to determine a country's power. Nowadays one should measure its economic power ... that is, the total sum of its natural, scientific and human capacity. (...) Japan at present cannot compare to the two economic forces England and America. However, if we make no mistakes and make good use of the geographical, natural and economic relations within East Asia,

118 'Nisshi keizai dōmeiron ni jikkōteki kachi ari ya', *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.7: pp.24, 27.

119 Ibid: p.24.

120 Ibid: pp.17-18, 24. The Nishihara Loans, which bypassed the Foreign Ministry and were named after Terauchi's personal emissary Nishihara Kamezō, amounted to a total of 145 million yen (20% of Japan's national budget of 1917, according to the figures of the Bank of Japan given by Takeda Haruhito, 'Keiki junkan to keizai seisaku'. In Ishii Kanji, Hara Akira & Takeda Haruhito, eds, *Nihon keizaishi 3: Ryō-taisen kanki*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2002: p.19). Apart from the Nishihara Loans the Terauchi Cabinet supplied another 95 million yen to the Anhui-faction.

our future is very hopeful. (...) It will need no mention that China holds limitless natural resources. If Japan and China joined hands in exploring the natural resources of Asia and developed their power to become one of the world's economic units, then we could compete with England and America and bring about a tripartition of the world. (...) However, it is evident that if we indeed want to tie up with China and establish this Asian economic force we will first have to reform our traditional China policy fundamentally. The most important elements of this basic reform are: 1. the swift withdrawal of our troops, which have caused misapprehension amongst both China and the Western Powers. 2. the swift removal of our various military facilities and 3. the resolute reform of all our policies and facilities that could seem to attest to territorial and aggressive ambitions towards Shandong, Manchuria and Mongolia. (...) Another most urgent precondition is to stabilize a central government in China and to restore its administrative authority over the land. (...) In order to achieve this it is inevitable that the Japanese government spare part of our economic power and openly supply its Chinese counterpart with a yearly amount of fifty or sixty million yen in order to compensate the latter's budget deficit. (...) If we do not succeed in doing so in cooperation with the Western powers through the Four Power Consortium, then inevitably we should do so on our own. This is not merely proper from the position of Japan, but even our natural mission. (...) If we fail, Japan and China will become estranged, Asia will not be able to exalt its potential economic force, and the economic forces of England and America will immediately penetrate and seize the rule over East Asia. China and Japan will then have no alternative but to succumb to their power. That is the inescapable fate that will descend upon the economically young and weak. (...) Thus I do not hesitate to assert that the future destiny of our Empire depends upon the establishment of an Asian economic force that will rank amongst the world's [three] economic units.¹²¹

With the New Four Power Loan Consortium for China ratified only shortly before, Takahashi's note in favour of a Sino-Japanese economic alliance was definitely not something very opportune to discuss in public. Accordingly it had only been circulated among a select group of elder statesmen, ministers, and members of the Provisional Committee on Foreign Policy, and had not been brought up at a cabinet meeting. Although the exact contents of Takahashi's written opinion remained secret, the general purport was leaked to the *Tōkyō Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* and appeared in its June 8 issue. After a storm of indignant reactions in the press Prime Minister Hara Takashi reprimanded Takahashi, slighted it as 'an impractical student argument' (*shōseiron*) and nothing much was heard of it anymore in the tumultuous remaining days of the Hara and Takahashi

121 Takahashi Korekiyo, 'Tō-A keizairyoku juritsu ni kansuru iken' (1921). In Ogawa Heikichi Bunsho Kenkyūkai, comp., *Ogawa Heikichi kankei bunsho*, vol.2, Misuzu Shobō, 1973: pp.144-49. A similar but earlier memorandum, entitled 'Naigai kokusaku shiken' (1920) is also included in this volume (pp.137-44).. For the background of the proposal see Mitani Taichirō, 'Nihon no kokusai kin'yūka to kokusai seiji' in Satō Seisaburō & Roger Dingman, eds, *Kindai Nihon no taigai taido*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1974: pp.137-42 and William Miles Fletcher III, *The Japanese Business Community and national Trade Policy, 1920-1942*, The University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

cabinets, which were seriously lamed by factionalism.¹²²

The idea that Japan cannot make it on its own, the awareness of Chinese nationalist sentiments, and the accordingly constant and strong emphasis on Sino–Japanese economic cooperation were shared by many contemporary commentators and Horie Kiichi was no exception. Still, Takahashi’s proposal – as was the fate of almost all his policies and actions – could not obtain the latter’s approval. During his entire writing career Horie never tried to hide the fact that he looked upon Takahashi as his main opponent in economic matters and accordingly he did not lose many opportunities to touch upon the man’s ‘sloppy thinking’ in general and ‘complete lack of knowledge of monetary and economic matters’ in specific.¹²³ Yet when considering his rejection of similar proposals towards the establishment of a Sino–Japanese economic alliance as early as in 1917 we should not see his reaction – apart from a few stray references to Takahashi’s ‘talents’ – as a personal attack. Horie rejected the proposal as rash, inopportune and insufficient on the following three grounds:

- 1 The disastrous mistake that the Nishihara loans represented should not be repeated. Although support from the Chinese people was an indispensable precondition for future close economic relations between Japan and China, financial support to the Beijing government then ruled by Wu Peifu’s Zhili-faction was not likely to benefit the Chinese people and neither would it gain Japan any good press, rather the contrary. Japan should postpone any large-scale aid to China until a strong, popularly supported central government had come into being. This, together with a drastic reform of the monetary system, was essential for Japanese investments to have serious economic effects and Japanese loans to have good prospects of being properly repaid.

122 Hara Keiichirō, comp., *Hara Takashi nikki*, vol.5, Fukumura Shuppan, 1965: entry of June 14, 1921. However, it is clear that Takahashi’s private opinion was not that rash but rather ill-timed, considering similar ideas in support of the formation of a Sino–Japanese economic alliance within the Seiyūkai ever since the war. See Itō Yukio, ‘Daiichiji sekai taisen to sengo Nihon no keisei: Rikken Seiyūkai no dōkō’, *Kyōto Daigaku Hōgaku Ronsō*, vol. 140, no.3/4 (January 1997): pp.161–64. Nishihara Kamezō and Sakatani Yoshio also subscribed from an early date to similar ideas of Sino–Japanese economic cooperation. See Morikawa Masanori, ‘Terauchi naikaku-ki ni okeru Nishihara Kamezō no tai-Chūgoku [enjo] seisaku kōsō’ and ‘1920 nendai ni okeru Nishihara Kamezō no tai-Chūgoku seisaku kōsō to seiji katsudō’. *Handai hōgaku*, vol.50, no.5 and vol.51, no.4 (January and November 2001).

123 *Shakai keizai kenkyū* (originally published in 1921). In *Horie Kiichi Zenshū*, vol.10, p.298; ‘Nisshi keizai dōmeiron ni jikkōteki kachi ari ya’: pp.23–24. Takita Chōin, the chief editor of the *Chūō Kōron*, once mentioned that Horie’s dislike of Takahashi was extreme and wondered whether he harboured any personal rancour. A journalist of the same periodical, Kisaki Suguru, also admitted that when it came to Takahashi, Horie’s critique lacked his usual irony and satire and often came down to scathing abuse. See Kisaki Suguru, *Kisaki nikki*, 1920.3.19, cited in Okada Masukichi, *Shōwa no machigai*, Sekkasha, 1967: pp.210–11. A good example is the fact that Horie in the same article (on page 24) mentioned not being loath to express his approval of Takahashi’s suggestion to partly abolish the Sino–Japanese Treaty of 1915 but could not restrain himself from adding that ‘this wise argument is without precedent and probably will be without sequel’. In Japanese there is a true heap of literature on this rather eccentric politician and monetary expert, especially since his legacy was called upon to get Japan out of the economic slump of the late 1990s, in English the biography presently in the making by Richard Smethurst is most likely to become the most authoritative source of reference.

- 2 An economic alliance would be at loggerheads with the commercial treaties the Japanese and Chinese had concluded with the other powers, which almost without exception included a most favoured nation clause. It would also mean a violation of the New Four Power Loan Consortium for China. There was no doubt that an alliance would invite reprisals from the other powers and would contribute to the international isolation of Japan. From Horie's point of view, in which world free trade was ranked as the main road to the successful industrialisation of Japan, such a development would be fatal to the Japanese economy.
- 3 The alliance would imply that Japan put all its cards on China. But was China able and willing to supply all the raw materials Japan needed? And if this was now so, would it still be the case after China had itself become an industrial nation? And what was more, could Japan on its own ever supply all the industrial products demanded by China and make all the necessary investments to develop China's natural resources? Considering the gap Horie perceived between the national economic strength of Japan and that of the Western powers and the disparity in terms of economic dependence between the two partners in the alliance, most of these questions had to be answered in the negative.¹²⁴

All in all, although Horie himself had previously pointed out the various disadvantages of the New Four Power Consortium, he considered Takahashi's proposal that Japan should proceed on its own 'an act of utter foolishness'. At present, the country had better stick to the policy of international cooperativism as far as loans to China were concerned and, rather than depending on its own slight financial resources, the best thing it could do was to guide the Anglo-American financial streams into the most desirable direction from within the Consortium.¹²⁵

America Policy

In spite of Horie's strong awareness of Japanese economic dependence on the United States, this did not keep him from attacking the country time and again for its discriminatory immigration policy. Although he admitted that there could be justifiable reasons for restricting immigration, and he approved of certain criteria for the selection of immigrants like literacy, education, health and number, he was adamant that selection on racial grounds was intolerable. It partially seemed as if the agitators on the West Coast were merely looking for another Asian scapegoat now the inflow of Chinese workers had been almost completely halted. Accordingly he advised his government not to humiliate itself by bargaining for temporary compromises, such as the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 and the concession in 1919 to no longer allow the practice of 'picture brides', for these would ultimately lead to exclusion.¹²⁶

Within his framework of free-tradism Horie demanded the free movement of goods, capital and men and, moreover, he considered emigration from low-wage poor countries to high-wage rich countries a natural economic phenomenon, but this assent in principle was accompanied by the annotation that it should not be encouraged by the former as a way of clearing a deficit in the international balance of payments, for then it would not be any different from exporting human flesh – an immoral exploit in which a civilised first-rate country

124 'Nisshi keizai dōmeiron ni jikkōteki kachi ari ya': pp.20-22, 24-27.

125 Ibid: pp.24-25.

126 'Beikoku ijūmin mondai no keizaiteki hōmen'. *Mita Gakkai Zasshi*, 1920.10: pp.55-77.

(*yūtōkoku*) like Japan was definitely not to take part.¹²⁷ As mentioned before, he demanded that the Japanese government do its utmost to uplift the working class by implementing social and labour legislation, in specific a system of minimum wages, so the workers would be sure of their livelihood and not be inclined to leave their home country. Thus the immigration troubles between the two countries would naturally cease.¹²⁸ Yet in Horie's eyes the Hara Cabinet was only pouring oil on the flames of the anti-Japanese movement in America. On the one hand it had filed a demand for the complete abolition of racial discrimination at the Peace Conference, which would have left the movement without a means to stop the Japanese from coming, but in the meantime it had successfully bargained for an exclusive treatment at the International Labour Conference, leaving the Japanese workers in dismal conditions and inclined to emigrate. In such a situation, Horie pointed out, it was only natural that American workers considered their 'exclusively backward' Japanese colleagues as a threat to their working conditions. He accused the Hara Cabinet of presenting the anti-Japanese movement with the perfect excuse to give the Japanese 'exclusive treatment' in the case of immigration as well and on this basis he put most of the blame of the resurgence of the immigration problem on the Japanese government.¹²⁹

Disarmament

Horie was not a pacifist. In prewar days he had supported the militarist and expansionist policies of his government to a considerable extent. Even at the end of 1920 he frankly admitted that the military trophies of the prewar days such as Taiwan, Korea, and the Manchurian leased territory were contributing in one way or another to Japan's economic development and he expressed the hope that the newly acquired Qindao would also become a centre of Japanese investments and economic activities. Moreover, he did not forget to mention that a Russian occupied Korea and Manchuria would have resulted in an extremely cramped situation of the economic life of the Japanese people.¹³⁰

Nonetheless, during the 1920s Horie in general took a markedly different stand towards militarism and (economic) imperialism, which was more in line with the international discourse in the wake of the carnage of the Great War. In the postwar world there was no longer a hostile foreign power that had an eye on territory in Japan's immediate vicinity and anyway there was hardly any uninhabited or unoccupied territory left. In this new situation the militarist aim of expanding the national territory had not only become ethically objectionable and practically unfeasible, but also unprofitable when judged from an economic point of view.¹³¹ As far as 'emigration' from the homeland to the periphery of formal and informal empire was concerned, he observed that there was no need for more unskilled labourers in places like Taiwan, Korea and China. Horie was now more prone to stress that the expansion of territory was not a precondition to improving the living conditions of the people in the homeland. Instead he emphasised the need

127 'Kokusaikan ni okeru kanjō, rigai, seigi no kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.95; 'Nihon no keizai seikatsu wo kaizō suru michi'. *Kaizō*, 1921.1: pp.80-81.

128 'Gasshūkoku no saitei chingin seido wo ronjite imin mondai ni oyobu'. *Mita Gakkai Zasshi*, 1920.2: pp.85-88.

129 'Gaikō no shissaku to hai-Nichi no zento'. *Kaizō*, 1920.11: pp.49-50.

130 'Nihon no keizai seikatsu wo kaizō suru michi'. *Kaizō*, 1921.1: pp.78-79.

131 'Buryokuteki kyōsō kara kokusai keizaiteki kyōsō e'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.2: pp.23-24.

for ongoing internal industrialisation.¹³² Moreover, he pointed out that the occupation of another country was almost without exception an extremely laborious and costly undertaking and the need for continuous repression of resistance from the subjugated usually made it a distinct deficit post.¹³³ This all seemed to open the way to a fundamental critique of colonialism in general and Japanese colonial practices in specific but, rather in tune with the new world order which proscribed the acquisition of new colonies but turned a blind eye to the established colonial trophies dating from the age of empire, this did not happen. Horie restricted himself to attacking militarism and imperialism.

As far as militarism was concerned, he repeated his general free-tradist attack of the immediate postwar days. Militarism limited the scope of the world market since it threatened the safety of trade routes. It also negatively influenced the volume of the world market because militarist countries tended towards isolationist policies, freezing their economies in a state where the share of agriculture is still comparatively large to attain the goal of autarky in wartime.¹³⁴ Moreover, the off-spins of militarism, e.g. war and the arms race, are equally detrimental to the world economy. War in Horie's eyes was nothing but the large-scale destruction of labour and capital with lasting negative consequences for the postwar economies of all the warring states, as could be seen in the case of Europe in those days. And the arms race led to the large-scale allocation of labour and capital to completely unproductive ends.¹³⁵ What was new was that he now specifically mentioned no longer approving of a level of armament that exceeded the amount necessary for the defence of the nation and that he considered any country with excessive armament to be 'militarist'. And it was on the basis of this new, negative definition that he without any hesitation turned the spotlight on his own country as a distinctly militarist nation.¹³⁶ This was of course anything but original at a time when Japan, through its apparent lack of internationalist passion at the Peace Conference and its lack of team spirit during the Siberian Intervention, was increasingly portrayed as the Prussia of the East by both Japan's former Western allies and its Asian neighbours. Moreover, Yoshino Sakuzō and other prominent Japanese opinion leaders of the day were neither loath to depict the country's political and military elite in a similar fashion. Nonetheless, Horie was extremely wary of Japan becoming an international outcast for somewhat different reasons. Whether the country was aspiring for it voluntarily or whether it would be forced upon Japan from the outside, isolation would have devastating effects on the Japanese economy. He advocated that Japan should exert itself in the field of disarmament and should aim to establish closer economic ties and stronger interdependency with the various countries in order to get rid of its damaging militarist and imperialist reputation.¹³⁷

It was on this point that Horie once again took his government to task. He accused it of

132 'Nihon no keizai seikatsu wo kaizō suru michi': pp.81-90.

133 'Kokumin keizai to [miritarizumu]'. *Kaizō*, 1921.3: p.71; 'Washinton kaigi ni tsuite waga kokumin ni keikoku su'. *Kaizō*, 1922.1: p.72; 'Buryokuteki kyōsō kara kokusai keizaiteki kyōsō e': p.24.

134 'Kokumin keizai to [miritarizumu]': pp.72-73.

135 Ibid.: pp.67-70.

136 Ibid.: p.67; 'Gaikō no shissaku to hai-Nichi no zento'. *Kaizō*, 1920.11: p.51; 'Kafu kaigi no dai-issei ni sesshite'. *Kaizō*, 1921.12: p.207; 'Washinton kaigi ni tsuite waga kokumin ni keikoku su'. *Kaizō*, 1922.1: p.71.

137 'Gaikō no shissaku to hai-Nichi no zento': p.51.

not showing any vigour or enthusiasm at all on the world stage when it came to the issue of disarmament. On the contrary, year after year military expenditure had risen and although it had made up the biggest expenditure entry in Japan's national budget ever since the mid-Meiji period, under the Hara Cabinet it now comprised a share of almost fifty percent.¹³⁸ Under the Meiji constitutional system with its empty imperial center it took considerable talents in the precarious act of balancing multiple power factions in order to govern. However, the majority of the opinion leaders, who tended to be overwhelmingly anti-Seiyūkai, hardly showed any interest in this kind of political reality and instead tended to lump the established political parties, the bureaucracy and the military together as part of one and the same incestuous ruling class. Horie too considered the above percentage enough proof to show that for the Seiyūkai cabinet military (or militarist) interests prevailed over care for the economy, the people, and international concerns. Accordingly his verdict was that it had actively contributed to 'the state of armed peace under the general mood of militarism' and now only had itself to blame for getting entangled in a hopeless naval arms race with the United States.¹³⁹

4.2 The Washington Conference

Whilst Horie in this period definitively exorcised all remnants of militarism and imperialism from his thought, he also had to come up with an alternative route to reach the goals of these isms, namely 'strengthening the country and enriching the people'. In his eyes a strong economy was the answer to both questions. He rejected the militarist proposition that territorial expansion was the only way to give the Japanese people *Lebensraum*. Instead, by citing the example of England, he time and again tried to demonstrate that the Japanese homeland could even handle a larger population than it did at the time.¹⁴⁰ Horie saw three main preconditions for Japan to become an equally strong economic power: industrialisation, stable supply of raw materials, and non-trade income from foreign investments. Consistent with his argument before and during the war he advocated industrialisation under international free-tradism as the way to reach that goal. But because the international situation did not yet ensure the safe conduct of free trade, Horie was still willing to consider somewhat contradictory temporary measures:

Some hold the optimistic view that we should not have to worry about [the safety of our trade routes] anymore because, through the workings of the League of Nations, in future war will no longer occur and world peace will prevail. Yet I

138 This percentage is equivalent to that of the years of perseverance (*gashin shōtan*) immediately after the Sino-Japanese War in preparation for a war against Russia and that of the mid-1930s when Japan was getting itself sucked into a total war with China. Graphs of military budget figures for the years 1868-1936 can be found in Tobe Ryōichi, *Gyakusetsu no guntai (Nihon no kindai, vol.9)*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1998: pp.105, 109, 137 and 224.

139 'Kokumin keizai to [militarizumu]': pp.66, 75; 'Washington kaigi ni tsuite waga kokumin ni keikoku su': p.72. In this latter article Horie mentioned that the share of military expenditure in Japan's national budget of 1921 had risen to 49 %. Official contemporary sources give 52,6% for the year 1920. See Andō Yoshio, *Kindai Nihon keizaishi yōran*, second edition, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1979: p.18.

140 A good example is his 'Nihon no keizai seikatsu wo kaizō suru michi' in the *Kaizō* issue of January 1921, which was almost entirely devoted to a comparison of the English and Japanese economies (pp.78-90).

cannot but have great doubts whether this League of Nations, which does not even carry out a reduction of arms nominally or formally, let alone substantially, will bear fruit in bringing about world peace. It would be a grave mistake to put our confidence in such a vague institution when formulating our national economic policy. If we want to realize an economic life based upon industry and when looking for places that will supply us with raw materials and foodstuffs, we should be aware that the safety of our trade routes might be endangered in case of war. Thus it is essential that we find these places as far as possible within our sphere of military power. (...) If we invest in China and Manchuria, set up enterprises and look to these regions for the supply of raw materials, then the development of their natural resources will lead to an increase in their consumptive power. If accordingly we choose to sell them the industrial products made on our mainland, this would mean that we will be able to obtain a region for the supply of our raw materials as well as for the sale of our products in the safest and most reliable place Japan could wish. (...) I believe that the solution to the problem of how to successfully implement industrialism in our country is to add Manchuria and certain parts of the Chinese mainland to the economic unit (*keizaiteki tan'i*) of Japan, Taiwan and Korea and to conduct our economic activities in this enlarged region.¹⁴¹

In his ardour to refute the notion that a sole country was the world's basic economic unit, Horie regrettably forgot to elaborate on the organisation, workings, rights and duties within the enlarged, supra-national unit he advocated. Yet again such an East Asian economic unit would still be prone to the same fallacies as Takahashi's economic alliance. Moreover the anti-Japanese movement in China had anything but faded and the possibility that the position Japan had built in China would be razed to the ground was fully present. Although Horie admonished the Hara Cabinet to do something substantial to soothe anti-Japanese feelings, he knew that even friendly and close economic relations between Japan and China could not give the Japanese economy complete stability. Japan's basic economic unit had to be a world unit.

It was within this frame of mind that Horie in 1921 welcomed with open arms the American proposal for a combined conference on naval arms limitation, peacekeeping in the Pacific, and Far Eastern (read: Chinese) affairs. In his comments there is nothing to be found which even hints at a feeling of anxiety over Japan's safety, at a time when others were speaking loudly of a national crisis because of the invitation to come to Washington by President Harding. Horie's treatment of the conference was as usual based on economic arguments and he could only see positive effects on both the world economy and the Japanese economy.

The Five Power Treaty on Naval Disarmament

141 'Shōgyō chūshinshugi yori kōgyōshugi chūshinshugi ni'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.4: pp.94-95, 97. Horie already proposed a similar unit in December 1917, although at that time he did not specify between certain parts of China but merely referred to 'China' at large and he did not make a distinction between the economic unit of Japan's formal economic empire on the one hand and Manchuria and China on the other but included all elements in one unit. 'Shina keizai zakkān'. *Taiyō*, 1917.12: pp.31-32.

Although Horie welcomed the Washington Conference in general, his attention was predominantly fixed on the issue of arms limitations. He could not care in the least that the United States were violating the League of Nations territory of disarmament. In his opinion it was most important that the issue of disarmament was being dealt with while the memories amongst the main powers of the first-hand experience with the horrors of modern warfare were still fresh. So if the League could not bring about arms reductions itself the non-League member America was fully entitled to try and should even be thanked for taking the initiative.¹⁴² As a Japanese citizen, he thought there was even more reason to be thankful. He pointed out that his country, which had minimally participated in the world war but had maximally gained from it, had a quite different view of the recent war compared with the main warring countries and still had a strong militaristic inclination. Thus he considered it a stroke of luck that his country, despite the lack of a substantial internal drive towards disarmament, was by means of American pressure forced to step in line with the general postwar trend of pacifist thought.¹⁴³ And especially as naval disarmament was concerned, he could not see any reason why Japan should object now the United States, the hypothetical opponent of the Japanese navy, had publicly stated its willingness to disarm and there were no obligations anymore arising from the soon to be abrogated Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Neither did Horie think that the proposed ration of warships allotted to the various countries was unjust to Japan. Whether considered from the criterion of the protection of trade routes, the length of the coastline or the distance from suppliers of raw materials and foodstuffs, Japan should even count its blessings with its ration compared to the United States and Great Britain of three to five.¹⁴⁴

But most of all Horie urged his country not to base its argument too much on premises of the recurrence of war but rather to take a more positive attitude and to do its utmost to create the preconditions for world peace. He was so adamant on this point that he even deigned to defy his mentor Adam Smith. He pointed out that the latter had been fundamentally wrong in supporting the Navigation Acts, the first of which was passed in 1651. Whereas Smith had argued that sometimes concerns of national security overruled concerns of material welfare and called for this exception on the rule of free trade, Horie pointed out that it was not this protectionist measure that had led to English prosperity and Dutch decline and that it had merely resulted in harmful counter-measures. The option of free trade, he stressed, at all times served the cause of national security best.¹⁴⁵ He painted a picture of free trade and peace progressively reinforcing each other, in the process of which the world economy and national strength and security would also be increasingly promoted. Within this scheme disarmament was characterised as the impulse that could set the spiral of peace and free trade in motion. In view of the importance of disarmament in the fields of economy and security, he called upon the Japanese delegates not to be restrained by such matters as the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the temporary rise of unemployment because of a downscaling of the military industry. These were but minor sacrifices when compared to the supreme, and economically beneficial, long-term goal of world peace. Moreover, Horie was more prone to indicate the direct advantages than the disadvantages disarmament would have on the national economy. Although he thought that a reduction of the

142 'Kafu kaigi no dai-issei ni sesshite'. *Kaizō*, 1921.12: p.206.

143 *Ibid.*: p.207.

144 *Ibid.*: pp.205-207.

145 'Adamu Sumisu no jiyū bōeki jōgairon'. *Mita Gakkai Zasshi*, 1922.4: pp.4-21.

army would be even more called for in this respect, it did not change the fact that naval disarmament would imply a cut in the major expense item of Japan's national budget and would effect a shift of labour and capital to more productive ends.¹⁴⁶

In line with Horie's focus on the disarmament issue, his highest praise for the three treaties concluded at Washington was reserved for the Five Power Treaty. The arms reductions forced upon the navies of the main seafaring nations were far more extensive than he had dared to hope. It was predominantly on this basis that he lauded the Conference as the true turning point from the age of imperialism, characterised by the arms race, to 'the new age of Taishō' (*Taishō no shin-jidai*), dominated by healthy, economic competition.¹⁴⁷ This was not the first time that Horie mentioned that a new age had come about. On previous occasions he had expressed his conviction that as a result of the war the international situation had completely changed and that world peace would be maintained for at least the next ten years or so. The fact that he limited the term of secure peace and refrained from using the term 'eternal peace' was directly related to his misgivings about the League of Nations, which without exception he characterised as weak and undependable. This lack in strength and efficiency of the League, which of course was indeed seriously handicapped by the fact that several of the 'great powers' of the postwar world were not included on its membership list, made Horie harbour strong doubts whether in ten years time it would be sufficiently strong on its own to enforce international peace.¹⁴⁸ The Washington Conference, and specifically the Five Power Treaty on naval arms limitation, thus was a turning point in the sense that it provided the optimism in the future of international relations that the League had not been able to provide. Although the Washington Treaties did not result in the construction of concrete institutions of peacekeeping and peace-enforcement, Horie nonetheless thought they would urge global economic reforms and thus would indirectly function as the crucial supplementary aid to the League. What was needed now was for the countries of the world to grasp this golden opportunity of international war-weariness and to strengthen their economic ties with the outside world further and further until they became interrelated to such an extent that it would be in their common interest to preserve peace at all costs. All they had to do was to distance themselves for a while from the old Chinese saying that 'in times of peace one should always be prepared for war' (*chi ni ite, ran wo wasurezu*), open up the economy so that goods, capital and men could freely cross borders and the economic process of the international division of labour would do the rest.¹⁴⁹ Horie was adamant that all economies were inclined to expand outwardly as long as the continuation of peace was guaranteed. He predicted that as the international trend was evolving from armament to disarmament, the world economy would also cast off its old militaristic skin of protectionism and autarkism. Inevitably, he could not help having some pessimistic reservations about the direct future of his own country as long as it was run by a Seiyūkai Cabinet - and even more so now it was under the leadership of Takahashi Korekiyo - which in his eyes was all but blind to such important 'new preconditions for success' as low consumer prices, low production costs, a

146 'Kafu kaigi no dai-issei ni sesshite': pp.208-10. See also *Sekai no keizai ha ika ni ugoku ka – zokuhen* (originally published in 1922). In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.6: pp.313-18..

147 'Buryokuteki kyōsō kara kokusai keizaiteki kyōsō e'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.2: pp.22-25.

148 'Sekai no heiwa wo sokushin suru ni hitsuyō naru keizaiteki shudan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: pp.109-10.

149 'Buryokuteki kyōsō kara kokusai keizaiteki kyōsō e'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.2: pp.27-28.

low interest rate, and the stimulation of foreign investments, education and scientific research. But nonetheless, the prospects for the world at large seemed a lot brighter in this ‘age of free trade and economic equality’ than they had ever been before.¹⁵⁰

The Nine Power Treaty on China

Horie had high expectations of the Nine Power Treaty as an efficient means to oust ‘economic imperialism’ (*keizaiteki teikokushugi*) from Chinese soil. Horie started using this term from 1921 onwards, often substituting it for plain ‘imperialism’ and not seldom accompanied by partners in crime ‘capitalism’ and ‘militarism’. Reflecting the end of the age of (formal) imperialism and the increasing influx of socialist vocabulary, the term had been widely used since the end of the First World War and featured prominently in, for instance, Konoe Fumimaro’s famous 1918 article ‘Eibei hon’i no heiwashugi wo haisu’. Due to Horie’s focus on China his use of the term predominantly had the connotation of expanding one’s position by means of the creation of exclusive monopolistic spheres of influence in this country. Economic imperialism, he maintained, had continued as before in the immediate postwar years under the guise of equal opportunities under the open door and the New Four Power Loan Consortium, but thanks to the Nine Power Treaty the whole of China would from now on be open to all countries under the banner of economic equality. From the perspective of the postwar trend that the main powers were on the lookout for new sources of raw materials and especially had turned their attention to China, he was confident that the treaty would make a contribution to world peace as well as be beneficial to the efficient exploitation of Chinese resources.¹⁵¹ Horie had no objections to Japan surrendering its so-called ‘special rights’ (*tokken*) in China, which consisted of the categories superior rights (*yūetsuken*), exclusive rights (*dokusenken*) and preferential rights (*yūsenken*) in China. However, he regretted that his country had not been able to press the other countries to give up all their rights, including leaseholds, as well. With the current treaties restoring China to the situation of 1914 only the imperialist latecomer nations on the China stage were being dealt with. Japan should have proposed that all countries give up their rights and restore China to the unimpaired situation of before the intrusion of the Western Powers. In this sense the Washington Conference had again turned out to be a lost opportunity for Japan to show its fairness and justice to the world and to regain the trust of the Chinese.¹⁵²

In the above argument, as in the negotiations at the Washington Conference itself, it is not easy to detect much attention for Chinese points of view and the country is overwhelmingly dealt with as a passive object. It is nonetheless also at this point in time that Horie openly started expressing the opinion that the anti-Japanese movement in China was a just and natural reaction to Japan’s mistaken policy over the last decades. While in April 1921 he still denounced Chinese

150 Ibid: pp.29-30.

151 ‘Shikoku kyōshō narabi ni Kyōkutō kyōyaku no seiritsu to tai-Shi keizai seisaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: pp.72-73. Although the title of this article seems to suggest that it will give equal attention to the Four Power Treaty and the Nine Power Treaty, the former is dealt with only very briefly as ‘contributive to the prevention of further economic imperialism’ while the latter is analyzed in detail as the practical elaboration of the former.

152 Ibid: pp.74-76.

illiberal economic behaviour like boycotts as ‘atrocious anti-Japanese activities’,¹⁵³ by the end of the Washington Conference he seems to have resigned himself to the inevitable phenomenon of nationalist resistance against foreign encroachment and shifted to the position that the Japanese had only themselves to blame. If Japan still wanted to stand a chance in competing with the other economic powers in the new situation of a true open-door Chinese market, a fundamental reform in Sino–Japanese relations – in the sense of real cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and understanding between the two neighbouring countries – was also essential. Japan had to change its attitude towards China drastically and should tangibly show that it was a trustworthy partner. Although Japan had squandered many previous opportunities Horie reminded that luckily, even after the Washington Conference, there were still the questions of the restoration of Chinese tariff autonomy and the abolition of extraterritorial rights to be solved and he urged his country to take the lead in supporting China in these issues. This would imply a complete turnabout in policy as Japan up till then had always taken the lead in opposing the restoration of Chinese tariff autonomy. Yet he stressed that considered on the basis of international justice – although his strong predilection for Sino-Japanese economic cooperation can neither have been far from his mind - it was Japan’s duty to help China in these matters because of which Japan itself had experienced long years of oppression and humiliation. If this resulted in an untenable situation for some of Japan’s export industries Horie advised them to move their factories to China, a step which would be completely in line with his favourite topic of international economic interdependence and co-existence. He was willing to welcome any measure, whether taken voluntarily or enforced by a treaty, which would make the Japanese economy overcome the confinement of the state and would further the realization of an ‘international interconnected economy’ (*kokusai kyōtsū keizai*) in the East Asian region. It is remarkable to see, though, that he this time even mentioned that China and thus not Japan should function at the centre of this supra-national economic unit.¹⁵⁴

Putting Japan into Perspective

As a result of its leading role in organising and successfully seeing through the Washington Conference the United States loomed large for Horie. To a somewhat lesser extent England was also the object of his praise, since it had expressed a generous and benevolent attitude to the Soviet Union at the Genoa International Economic Conference of Spring 1922. In sharp contrast he accused the other European powers of uneconomic and inhumane behaviour. He warned them that the exclusion of the Soviet Union was not merely a very ill-considered thing to do considering their own lack of natural resources and they in this way would only delay their economic recovery, but would also come down to an act of massmurder through the starvation of the Russian people.¹⁵⁵ Whereas America and England thus took on an exemplary role, Horie’s evaluation of his native country was quite harsh. In his reply to a survey by *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* conducted in April 1923 on ‘the strong and weak points of the Japanese

153 ‘Shōgyō chūshinshugi yori kōgyōshugi chūshinshugi ni’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.4: p.98.

154 ‘Shikoku kyōshō narabi ni Kyōkutō kyōyaku no seiritsu to tai-Shi keizai seisaku’: pp.78-79.

155 See ‘Sekai keizai-jō yori mita Zenoa kaigi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.4: pp.149-59; ‘Rō-nō Rokoku shōnin no kahi’. *Kaizō*, 1922.10: pp.196-97 and ‘Kanjō ni henshite richi ni hansuru rekkoku no tai-Doku-Ro taido’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.10: pp.88-89.

compared to other countries', Horie neatly listed five points for each, but there was a distinct difference in quality which made the scale tip to one side. The first category of strong points consisted of such items as a strong love for their country, a comparatively weak desire for money, and manual dexterity. To cite only the first two features ranked under the second category of weak points:

1. [The Japanese] are wanting in the group morality (*dantaiteki dōtokushin*) to give weight to the common interests of society and to respect the convenience of the general public
2. they lack the notion of loving and taking pity on the weak (...).¹⁵⁶

One may wonder with which country Horie was specifically comparing Japan, and it is of course interesting to see that nowadays the Japanese are generally considered to form a society with a very high group mentality and morality (and, for what it is worth, considered by their own government to be a people so exceptionally lacking in the love for their country that they are in need of patriotic education), but it will be clear that this critique was more than sufficient to erase any positive impression one might have gained from the earlier mentioned strong points. Regardless of their skilful hands, the Japanese were fundamentally lacking in their hearts. The country was morally lagging behind. And, as Horie was keen to point out, this was especially true of its political leadership, which lacked the passion for and thus had made hardly any progress in doing away with the internal 'baneful influences of capitalist rampancy'.

Concomitant with the development of this less rosy picture of Japan itself, Horie gained a more positive view of neighbour China. Apart from the constant current in Horie's thought that stressed China's economic importance for Japan, it was as if the more abundant criticism of his own country (including its former and present China policies) had opened the way for the recognition of the special character of the Twenty-One Demands, which of course had not without reason resulted in the institution of a day of national humiliation in China. His budding insight into the nature of anti-Japanese sentiments amongst the Chinese people helped him to gain more sympathy and understanding for the Chinese nationalist cause.¹⁵⁷ Accordingly he no longer solely treated the country as a stage for Japanese economic enterprise but more and more as an autonomous entity, which for instance is evident from the fact that the sharp distinction he used to make between China and Manchuria (for instance in his article of April 1921 cited at the beginning of section 4.2) became less clear. Moreover, he started to lean more towards true cooperation with the Chinese people, an argument which led him to reject Japanese proposals for an economic alliance with China like the one by Takahashi Korekiyo as premature, biased and one-sided.

In the postwar era in which the terms militarism and imperialism had all of a sudden acquired a negative meaning Horie was not loath to denounce his country as guilty of both. However, on the topic of colonialism, which also had received a conviction in the world's court, although under suspension of execution of sentence, he was rather silent. Just like most other opinion leaders in the leading nations of the world, Horie was more active in condemning new imperialist and colonialist enterprises than in rectifying the international situation created by

¹⁵⁶ 'Chōtan jūkō', *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*, 1923.4.5: p.154.

¹⁵⁷ 'Tai-Shi bunka jigyō no keizaiteki kansatsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.5: pp38-45 gives a good overview of the level of understanding Horie had reached in the case of China by the end of this period.

imperialism and colonialism in the past. He in fact condoned the world order of 1919 and did not demand the independence of the Western colonies in Asia but only their opening up to free trade. As far as Japan's colonies were concerned, he sometimes referred to a very gradual change towards a potential future independence of the colonized people and he did not hesitate to push for equal rights and autonomy (*jichi*) to prepare the native populations in the Japanese colonies for this goal.¹⁵⁸ However, in general it is hard to reject the impression that Horie's strong statements on imperialism in general and in the case of China in specific seemed to have hardly any implications for the colonies, and the argument of the civilising mission of the developed nations towards the less-endowed half-developed and undeveloped nations ostensibly ruled supreme as before. There are sporadic mentions in Horie's writings of this period that the annexation of underdeveloped nations by developed nations was sometimes nothing but 'imperialism under the guise of spreading civilisation', but he did not elaborate and it most certainly did not develop into an argument in opposition to colonialism as such.¹⁵⁹

For instance in the case of Korea, where he did lecture tours in 1921, 1923 and 1925, Horie was aware of strong discrimination against the Koreans and he strongly denounced all sorts of economic, social, and political abuses perpetrated by the colonial government and the Japanese community. He finely pointed out that the Japanese did not possess the competence to rule over another ethnic nation, a matter he thought obvious from the way they treated the colonised only with contempt and violence. Moreover, he was shocked by the extremely low living standards of the Koreans, exclaiming that the 'poverty of the country has even extended to the fish, which are too spineless to be served to eat'. Accordingly he could not but regard the Korean independence movement as the inevitable result of Japan's abominable colonial behaviour.¹⁶⁰

However, all this did not imply that the Japanese should pack their bags and leave with their heads bowed in shame. He justified the Japanese colonial mission on the grounds that, compared to their suffering under the misrule by the former indigenous elite, the Koreans at present were still better off. In his opinion there was nothing wrong with colonial rule as long as it was applied on behalf of the local population and the spoils of the land were equally distributed amongst the colonised instead of being robbed and transported back to the homeland. Accordingly he admonished the colonial government that now that the Koreans had finally been brought under the administration of a civilised country (*bunmeikoku*) it had the duty of providing them with a better standard of living, implementing equal treatment of Koreans and Japanese, bestowing the Koreans with the virtue of culture, and raising them to full-fledged members of the civilised nation that Japan was. Thus, somewhat contradictory to his ample critique of the government and his awareness of the fundamental flaws of the Japanese in general, and notwithstanding the 'long history and the appearance of independence' (*dokuritsu no taimen*) of the Koreans, Horie did not supply the latter with the prospect of future independence and all he had to offer instead was the promise of equality as prosperous and civilised subjects within the Japanese empire.¹⁶¹

158 Although of a somewhat later date, see for example 'Rōdō Nōminto no seiritsu wo yorokobu'. *Kaizō*, 1926.4: p.116.

159 'Kokusaikan ni okeru kanjō, rigai, seigi no kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: pp.95-96.

160 'Chōsen keizai shikan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.6: pp.70-77, 81-82.

161 *Ibid.*: pp.72, 76, 80-81, 84. For a similar argument in the case of British rule over India, see

4.3 Summary: Adjusting Capitalism

Horie has left us some very concise and convenient materials to summarize the significant changes that occurred in his thought during the period 1920-1923. Unlike a considerable number of his fellow *bunmei hihyōka* he fortunately had the habit of quite conscientiously responding to the postal surveys that popular magazines, but also more highbrow magazines like *Chūō Kōron*, would send to the most prominent opinion leaders on what was more or less a yearly basis. To stick to chronology, I would first like to quote the main part of his contribution to a very extensive survey undertaken by *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin* in early 1920 on the theme of ‘Japan one hundred years from now’:

Society in one hundred years

1. should in political terms see the complete implementation of democracy in both name and reality,
2. should in economic terms see the complete eradication of the capitalist production system, and the possession, use, disposal and succession of property should be determined on the criterion of the interests of the people (*minshū*), by which some of the property should be limited and some should be abolished,
3. or, in other words, should see the concurrent progress of both political democracy and economic democracy,
4. should in social terms see the abolition of the privileged class (the nobility and the like) (...) and see the service to society by all.¹⁶²

That this as far as Horie was concerned was not merely wishful thinking without direct implications for contemporary society is evident from strident article titles such as ‘Shihonshugiteki keizaikan wo aratamezareba sekai heiwa narabi ni jinrui-ai no jitsugen katashi’ (If we do not alter our capitalistic view of economy, world peace and love for mankind will be hard to realise).¹⁶³ In the wake of the First World War Japanese opinion leaders en masse threw the former lofty undertakings of imperialism and militarism out of the window as outdated and objectionable and Horie certainly was no exception to this. However, amongst the group of predominantly non-socialist *bunmei hihyōka* he was probably somewhat exceptional in the sense that he chose not to focus on these two excrescences but rather on what he thought to be their common cause, namely capitalism. He pointed out that in internal relations capitalism bred class conflict and in international relations, in its manifestations of imperialism and militarism, led to war and protectionism.¹⁶⁴ It hardly need be mentioned that this analysis was anything but original and is the primary element that socialism and communism are made of – although these

‘Shihonshugiteki keizaikan wo aratamezareba sekai heiwa narabi ni jinrui-ai no jitsugen katashi’: p.70.

162 ‘Shihonteki seisan soshiki zetsumetsu’. Part of the ‘Hyakunen-go no Nihon’ special issue of *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*, 1920.4.15: p.68. It was reissued under the title *Yogen suru Nihonjin* by Takeuchi Shoten in 1966.

163 . *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.8: pp.60-72.

164 ‘Sekai no heiwa wo sokushin suru ni hitsuyō naru keizaiteki shudan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: pp.115-17.

two doctrines will probably fail to mention protectionism as a major result of capitalist vice. However, although Horie as part of his profession indeed shared the materialist outlook of the world and considered economy to be the fundamental and determinate layer of both national and international society, he did arrive at somewhat different conclusions. The above ‘complete eradication of the capitalist production system’ and ‘limitation and abolition of property’ were sure to simmer down and must not be interpreted as if Horie had swapped *The Wealth of Nations* for *Das Kapital*. He was not so much endeavouring to do away with capitalism as such but rather preoccupied with containing its excesses, or what he called ‘the baneful influences of capitalist rampancy’ (*shihonshugi bakko no yohei*). It is also telling that the remedy he prescribed was not socialism but another form of capitalism, namely ‘state capitalism’ (*kokka shihonshugi*).¹⁶⁵

When we have a look at the practical contents of this new ism - which Horie adopted not long after its introduction by Russian communists - such as the participation of the workers in management, the partial management of production by consumer cooperatives, the partial socialisation of those branches of industry directly involved with the general welfare of society, maximum prices for essential consumer goods, stabilisation of the rice price, a more just revenue distribution between tenant and landlord, employment or relief of the jobless by the state, etcetera, it will be clear that it was hardly as statist as it sounded.¹⁶⁶ This is a far cry from the complete nationalisation of the whole economy and rather boils down to the acceptance of a certain amount of state control and intervention in order to limit the detrimental side effects of capitalism and accordingly bring about what he variously called ‘economic democracy’ or ‘industrial democracy’ (but what in Europe at the time was probably better known under the term ‘social democracy’). Horie clearly struggled with the phenomenon of capitalism. He was abhorred by its effects on society when not restrained by social egalitarian and national interests, yet he was affirmative as far as the principles of private property, free enterprise and free competition were concerned. He did not believe in the communist alternative as he insisted on the principle of private property as the essential impulse to stimulate production and to bring

165 For ‘the baneful influences of capitalist rampancy’, see *ibid.*: pp.115-17. For Horie’s admission that he shared certain insights with the socialists but nonetheless did not approve of socialism, see for instance ‘Kokusaikan ni okeru kanjō, rigai, seigi no kankei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.96. By the way, it seems quite likely that Horie concocted this term himself. At first sight it seems identical to the *staatsmonopolistischer Kapitalismus* that socialists and communists detected from the end of World War One onwards. However, it is hard to explain the fact that from their point of view this is but another, more modern form of monopoly capitalist and imperialist vice, while Horie propagates it as a lofty social goal. Moreover, I do not know of Japanese contemporaries using the term ‘state capitalism’. The term, often in the form of ‘*kokka dokusen shihonshugi*’, only seems to have become part of the Japanese (socialist) lexicon after the Second World War, and is most commonly found in references to Bukharin, Stalin, the Johnson-Forest Tendency, socialist economies and African and South-American developing economies. Martin Glaberman in his introduction to *Marxism for our Times; C.L.R. James on Revolutionary Organization* (University of Mississippi Press, 1999, p.xii-xiii) credits the Trinidadian novelist and negro Trotskyist C.L.R. James with having introduced the theory of state capitalism at the 1941 convention of the (American) Workers Party, but I have not been able to verify this statement.

166 For an explanation in detail of the contents of Horie’s state capitalism, see his ‘Kokka shihonshugi’. In Keiō Gijuku Daigaku, *Keizai shichō kōenshū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1921: pp.187- 244 (also in *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.7: pp.943-91) or, more concise, ‘Shihonshugiteki keizaikan wo aratamezareba sekai heiwa narabi ni jinrui-ai no jitsugen katashi’: pp.66-72.

about prosperity.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, his argument of the gradual implementation of a mixed economy characterised by the democratic control of the economy by society and the participation of the workers in the management of production, was not at such variance with Fabian socialism.¹⁶⁸ One can imagine that he probably would have liked a more appropriate phrase instead of ‘state capitalism’, which he seems to have used only for a year or two, but stuck with it for the time being in order to avoid socialist connotations.

In this connection it is also significant that Horie does not call for class struggle in order to rectify the inequalities of the capitalist order. Instead, in his writings there is an increasing inclination towards calls upon universal moral behaviour. His theories to bring about national and international welfare are as always primarily based on the notion of the rationally operating economic man, but his awareness of the fallacies of this *homo economicus* have resulted in the addition of the immaterial side of the humanely acting civilised man. Apart from the above-mentioned three economic principles, his articles are also rife with a quite different vocabulary of morality (*dōtoku*), love for mankind (*jinrui-ai*), justice (*seigi*), humanity (*jindō*), equality (*byōdō*), civilised means (*bunmei shudan*) and duty (*gimu*). Another shift in Horie’s quest to reform Japan, and by extension the world, into a more equal social, economic and political order is that the interpretation of ‘society’ in his motto ‘to serve society’ changed from an abstract, all-encompassing society to the more specific and circumscribed lower or propertyless class (*musan kaikyū*). His state capitalism was dominated by the view of the lower class as the victim of the capitalist economic order, and the solutions proposed for the most part came down to the equal participation of the working class in economic and political decisionmaking. Although at first more of a by-product of his research on the British economy, Horie’s attention and commitment to the labour union movement were of a very early date. As the nature and scope of this movement changed markedly after World War One, so did Horie’s attitude. By 1919 the working class had become an autonomous subject in his writings instead of a passive object. Although Horie was incontestably a member of the social and intellectual elite it is evident that he had started to regard the workingman as his equal. He now rejected the paternalism that dominated the school of social policy and severely criticised the establishment of the Kyōchōkai (Harmonisation Society) and the concomitant notion of labour-capital harmony that did not recognise the existence of labour unions. and instead became one of the most prominent advocates of direct labour participation in national and private companies and in the organs of the state.¹⁶⁹

167 ‘Kyokusa kyoku-u no ryō-shuchō to kōdō wo haisu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: pp.205-206.

168 For Fabianism see Margaret Cole, *The Story of Fabian Socialism*, Stanford University Press, 1961; A.M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and British Politics, 1884-1914*, University Press, Cambridge, 1962; Patricia Pugh, *Educate, Agitate, Organize – 100 Years of Fabian Socialism, 1884-1984*, Methuen, London, 1984 and Royden J. Harrison, *The Life and Times of Sidney and Beatrice Webb*, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1999.

169 Fujibayashi Keizō in his article on Horie’s discourse on the labour movement calls him ‘the strongest defender of trade unions in our country’ during the postwar period. ‘Horie Kiiichi sensei no rōdō kumiai-ron’. In Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Keizai Gakkai, ed., *Nihon ni okeru keizaigaku no hyakunen*, gekan, Nihon Hyōron Shinsha, 1959: p.376. Yamaoka Keiji, in a later article on the same theme and dealing with the same period, portrays him as the most articulate proponent of industrial democracy of the postwar era. He also assumes that one of the reasons why Horie, like many other intellectuals, was attracted to guild socialism was because it included non-menial workers in its definition of workers, but that he made sure

As mentioned above, Horie did not attack merely the internal ‘baneful influences’ of capitalism. He had become aware that the root of abuses in both national and international economic life was fundamentally of one and the same nature, and accordingly he was able to expand his compassion to oppressed people overseas as identical victims of the capitalist international order. He cross-linked the internal and external sides by stressing that while foreign expansion and war - the latter in Japan’s case fought on foreign territory and involving considerable loss of life and property for the local population - were not seldom objects of strong popular support, only a very small group of capitalists profited from these exploits, and the common people invariably ended up on the side of those who had to pay dearly for imperialism and militarism.¹⁷⁰ And in the case of yet another external symptom of capitalism, namely protectionism, he pointed out that although a certain branch of industry might benefit at the expense of foreign industry, it was the socially weaker classes that had to foot the high bill of a protectionist policy.¹⁷¹

It is within the framework of doing away with these international manifestations of capitalism that we should understand Horie’s exceptionally high praise for the Washington Conference. Although he did not specify his reaction to a survey by *Chūō Kōron* on what had delighted him the most in the year 1922, there can be no doubt that his observation that “the dawn of international peace has become visible” (*kokusai heiwa no shokō wo mitomeeta koto*) was directly related to the Washington Treaties, which had come about in the beginning of the same year.¹⁷² After his continuing disappointment with the League of Nations he all of a sudden regained his optimism in the capability of international society to accomplish ‘the hard-to-realise world peace and love for mankind’. In his opinion the treaties signified the first substantial step in the public ousting of militarism and (economic) imperialism as well as the establishment of economic equality based on the universal application of international free-tradeism. The Four Power Treaty provided a solution to the discrepancies Horie had long been aware of between free trade and national defence in the form of disarmament, as the impulse that would set the spiral of free trade and world peace in motion. And the Nine Power Treaty would chase economic imperialism out of China and instead would ensure the thorough implementation of equal opportunities under the open door policy. It was on this basis that Horie, ignoring the fact that the then emperor had been stowed away from the public view and his reign was most likely already in its final stage, somewhat belatedly proclaimed ‘the new age of Taishō’.¹⁷³ Within his

to keep his distance from syndicalism as being premature and radical. ‘Horie Kiichi no rōdō undō-ron ni tsuite – Taishō demokurashii-ki wo chūshin to shite’. *Ōsaka Kyōiku Daigaku Kiyō*, vol.24 (daini-bumon: shakai kagaku, seikatsu kagaku), no.3 (1976): pp.87-89.

170 ‘Shihonshugiteki keizaikan wo aratamezareba sekai heiwa narabi ni jinrui-ai no jitsugen katashi’: pp.60-68.

171 ‘Taieiteki keizai shisō wo haishite, sekkyokuteki keizai seisaku no kakuritsu ni oyobu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.6: pp.106-107, 113. In this article Horie also advocated that Japan should even abolish restrictions on the import of rice.

172 The Washington Conference even outranked the ‘having been left by the wayside to die’ (*notarejini*) of the cabinet of his arch-enemy Takahashi Korekiyo somewhat later in the year, which he simply listed as the event that had most made him laugh. See the ‘Kotoshijū ichiban watakushi no kokoro wo ugokashita koto’ survey in *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.12: p.104.

173 ‘Buryokuteki kyōsō kara kokusai keizaiteki kyōsō e’: pp.22, 28.

CHAPTER 2

newfound optimism, which to a considerable extent was boosted by decreased fears of a Japanese-American confrontation, the policies Horie prescribed on the international and regional levels of the economy seemed to gain proximity. However, the divergence with his economic policy on the national level, which moved up a little further from laissez- faire to state intervention, was still conspicuous.

5 HORIE IN NATIONAL HUMILIATION AND INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION; 1924-1927

The final years of the Taishō period saw Horie's ideas on national and international economy, although not always logically consistent, mature and lead him definitely away from the political mainstream. His judgement of the various non-Seiyukai cabinets from 1922 to 1927 was not altogether negative, but he still concluded that the established political parties were nothing but the representatives of the privileged class, that is the representatives of capitalism, imperialism and protectionism, and could thus not be entrusted with the country's future. Many of his contemporaries and even more members of a younger generation reached a similar conclusion during the 1920s and decided to avoid the political centre, some leaning to the socialist left, others to the nationalist or fascist right, some clinging to parliamentarism, others resorting to extra-parliamentary means. For his part, Horie had all his hopes vested in the new proletarian parties, the representatives of the working and the propertyless class, whom in their turn Horie considered to be the true representatives of the Japanese people. He expected the proletarian parties to bring about the necessary reforms that would lead to political and economic equality at home and peaceful international relations abroad. His ideas on how Japan should fundamentally reform its economic policy, thus escape from the current economic crisis, and ultimately become a first rate economic power, did not change notably. Yet he remained very pessimistic about the future of Japan's economy because he could hardly see any sign that things were moving in line with his plan for recovery.

5.1 Search for a New Ally

Horie's ideal scenario was still to attain 'economic superiority' (*keizaiteki yūsei*) through the workings of the interconnected international economy (*kokusai kyōtsū keizai*), a system based on the symbiotic relation between free trade and world peace that would eventually make the whole world into one economic unit (*sekai wo agete, hitotsu no keizai tan'i tarashimeru*).¹⁷⁴ In the case of Japan the decrees of this system amounted to working for peace in general and keeping up friendly relations with the suppliers of one's primary materials in specific. However, because in the present situation many conflicts in the world remained that might one day lead to war and the peace-keeping institution of the League of Nations was still weak as a result of lingering autarkist thought and the non-participation of several key powers, Horie in addition stressed the need to procure one's primary materials as much as possible within one's own sphere of authority. Moreover, since Japan was forced to compensate for its inherent structural import surplus, there was also the need for other countries to open their borders to Japanese capital and investments and the need for the Japanese government to switch completely from military expansionism to capital expansionism, which was less likely to give rise to inter-power struggle and native resistance.¹⁷⁵ However, things did not work out so easily. On the one hand Horie had

174 'Sakoku keizai no kiken waga kuni ni semaru'. *Kaizō*, 1925.2: p.67.

175 'Keizaiteki yūsei no jōken wo ronzu'. *Kaizō*, 1924.12: pp.47-50. It is hard to translate 'keizaiteki yūsei' any different than 'economic superiority', but let it be clear that Horie did not dream of Japan becoming

to admit that Japan itself was not yet up to fulfilling even the most basic preconditions for economic recovery. On the other hand the country was not welcomed but instead confronted with a set of anti-Japanese legislation by the central government of its most crucial trading partner and also had to deal with ongoing anti-Japanese sentiments and boycotts in the country that was supposed to play a pivotal role in the envisioned East Asian regional economic unit. As a result the international optimism of the previous period that the world was ascending a spiral towards a new age of free trade and world peace became increasingly difficult to detect in Horie's articles and was replaced by his observation that Japan, partly by its own doing, was slowly descending a spiral towards a new age of economic isolationism.¹⁷⁶

Japan, the Weak and Humiliated

The prolonged recession after the economic high tide of the war years laid bare Japan's fundamental weakness. Horie did not join those who blamed the Kanto Earthquake of September 1923 for delaying economic recovery but rather pointed at the reckless loans to China under the Terauchi cabinet and the monetary policy of the Hara and Takahashi cabinets. He accused them of being directly responsible for the country's current weak financial position. They had also contributed to the deformed nature of the Japanese economy by continuously supporting military expenditures over expenditures for the inner strengthening of the country. As a result Japan might boast of having become the third naval power in the world, yet what was the meaning of this when compared to its intellectual and industrial backwardness?¹⁷⁷ On the one hand Horie proposed retrenchments and a tight monetary policy as the way to patch up his country's financial position. Yet he was not confident that these measures would be sufficient to lead the economy out of the crisis, let alone to buttress the yen on a high and stable enough rate to return to the gold standard.¹⁷⁸ Japan was a fundamentally weak economy, plagued by unstable exports – mainly consisting of 'selling raw silk to America and cotton cloth to China' - and ever-growing imports. Horie insisted that the only definite and long-term solution to its economic problems was for Japan to reform its industry in such a way that it would produce essential goods. It simply had to build up its own chemical industry and its own iron and steel industry. Otherwise, Horie warned,

the world's leading economy and had no vision of the economic powerhouse Japan would become in the latter half of the 20th century. The term had better be interpreted with in the connotation of becoming a strong and healthy economic power that could hold its own in the East Asian region against the economic powers of the West. Another list of preconditions for becoming a 'first rate industrial nation' can be found in 'Keizai jiji mondai'. *Kaizō*, 1926.6: pp.110-11.

176 Horie's pessimistic mood is well reflected in the titles of articles such as 'Keizaiteki kiki ni hinseru Nihon' (Japan is on the brink of an economic crisis). *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.4: pp.84-99 and 'Sakoku keizai no kiken waga kuni ni semaru' (The danger of economic isolation is encroaching upon our country): pp.58-86.

177 'Zaiseiteki shin'yō no iwayuru santō-koku ni ochitaru Nihon'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.3: pp.127-32.

178 Horie is generally characterised as a proponent of a return to the gold standard. He indeed advocated this as a long-term goal, but this should not be automatically interpreted as if he would have supported the ill-timed return implemented by Minister of Finance Inoue Junnosuke in January 1930. See for instance 'Kin-yushutsu kaikin no jiki narabi ni hōhō'. *Kōmin Kōza*, 1925.1: pp.2-25. For a thorough analysis of Japan and its place in the global gold-standard system, see Mark Metzler, *Lever of Empire – The International Gold Standard and the Crisis of Liberalism in Prewar Japan*, University of California Press, 2006.

Japan might soon not be able to pay for its imports anymore and end up in a downward spiral that would be the end of economic activity and would result in isolation from the international economy.¹⁷⁹

According to Horie, the first signs of this dire prospect were already manifest in the humiliations Japan had to endure on the world stage during the last years of the Taishō period. On the capital market it was treated as an underdeveloped country as far as its creditworthiness was concerned. By the beginning of 1924 its financial credibility had plummeted and it had to endure degrading conditions and a humiliating interest rate of 6,5% on the loans it floated abroad, a rate that was also applied to ‘a third rate economic power like Spain’.¹⁸⁰ However, most conspicuous in bringing home the message that Japan was not a true member of ‘the club of civilised’ and instead was becoming more and more isolated from it, was of course the passing of an anti-Japanese immigration law, the so-called Japanese Exclusion Act, in the American Congress in May 1924. Horie wryly observed that the strong United States had taken notice of both Japan’s present weakness and the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and had accordingly seized the opportunity to enforce what it had been desiring for so long.¹⁸¹ Of course Horie denounced the Americans because their anti-Japanese measures obviously ran counter to international morality, cordiality, and justice (and probably also to the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United States and Japan). However, as before, he criticized his own government even more harshly for its policy concerning the issue of Japanese emigrants to America ever since the 1906 San Francisco Incident in which Japanese school children were forced to attend segregated schools. He accused it of a too lenient attitude towards discrimination, negligence in demanding the right of naturalization for Japanese immigrants, and the internal suppression of the labour movement resulting in a cheap but largely unskilled labour force increasingly willing to leave the country. Accordingly he showed moral indignation but no outrage towards the United States and detachedly pointed out that the American measures did not have such major implications for Japan at large. The anti-Japanese legislation merely instated a legal barrier where there already was a de facto barrier and it would for instance have no influence on Japan’s export of raw silk to the United States. And, moreover, since the bulk of the Japanese population had seldom shown much interest in such matters of non-direct concern as emigration and racial equality, it was mainly a matter concerning Japan’s national standing and honour.¹⁸²

He admitted though that the national humiliation was anything but insubstantial and therefore warned that the Japanese should be prepared for the indirect effects of the American measure on Japan’s authority towards countries like China, and even towards the colonies of Taiwan and Korea.¹⁸³ He nevertheless rejected as unrealistic every hint of retaliation against the

179 Ibid.: pp.133-34; ‘Sakoku keizai no kiken waga kuni ni semaru’: pp.72-77, 82-85; ‘Keizai jiji mondai’: pp.110-11.

180 Ibid.: pp.131-32. See also ‘Gaisai ni yotte bakuro sareta waga kuni zaisei no fushin’yō’. *Kaizō*, 1924.4: pp.134-44.

181 ‘Tai-Bei imin mondai kanken’. *Kaizō*, 1924.5: pp.24-25.

182 Ibid.: pp.19-20, 23-26, 28; ‘Beikoku no hai-Nichi rippō to waga kuni no keizaiteki fun’. Part of the special ‘*fuan kyōfu jidai*’ (Age of unrest and fear) issue of *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.6: pp.48, 66; ‘Bei-ka hibai undō no keizaiteki kachi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.7: p.60; ‘Sakoku keizai no kiken waga kuni ni semaru’: p.76.

183 ‘Tai-Bei imin mondai kanken’: p.28.

United States in order to restore Japan's national honour. When compared to the Russo-Japanese War it was obvious that at present Japan was not prepared for war, was economically extremely dependent on the other party, and lacked any international goodwill whatsoever. Even the mere idea of a boycott of American goods was completely out of the question considering the imbalance in the trade relations between the two countries. In the end such an emotional reaction would add up to nothing but 'spitting towards the sky', America remaining unscathed and Japan taking the full blow. In this case Japan had better lead 'the energies emanating from the national indignation' (*gashin shōtan*) towards the new national purpose of industrial reform than towards war or anti-foreign measures, which, moreover, were not worthy of a great and civilised nation (*dai-kokumin, bunmei kokumin*).¹⁸⁴ In line with his conviction that the whole issue of racial discrimination was not so much due to racial prejudice as it had its origins in economic factors, Horie argued that the solution to the problem could only be found in uplifting the status of the Japanese worker to international standards and strengthening the Japanese economy to the level of a first rate economic power. Thus Horie had once again arrived at his most fundamental insight concerning the controversial issue of Japanese emigrants to the United States (which was not intrinsically different from his opinion on the issue of 'emigration' of Japanese workers to overseas regions within the Japanese formal and informal empire), namely that the progress of the Japanese economy was dependent on industrial growth and capital accumulation and export, but not on emigration. Instead of focusing on growth through human labour he advised his country to take the path of growth through capital and enterprise, and to exert itself in the fields of export industry, commerce, shipping and finance.¹⁸⁵

However, there was more at stake than just Japan's outward authority. As mentioned before, Horie had acquired a quite positive view of the United States during the First World War and the immediate postwar period. He regarded it as the driving force of the world economy and greatly admired the Washington Treaties. Still, in his discussions of the country he was rather aloof and certainly did not express the sort of uncritical praise that Yoshino Sakuzō was prone to when presenting the United States as the guiding light for the rest of the world and Japan specifically. In the economic world of Horie, matters were slightly more complicated. Apart from his continuous support for free trade and economic internationalisation, he had always stressed that there was one vital condition, namely the safety of trade routes. In the case of Japan, the problem was that its main trade routes stretched all over the Pacific Ocean and could not be protected by the Japanese navy on its own. In addition, Japan was to such a large extent dependent on the United States for its exports that not only the eruption of a war involving one of Japan's major trade partners but merely a boycott of Japanese silk stockings by the American women could wield the Japanese economy a deadly blow. This awareness of Japan's economic vulnerability had indeed become somewhat less acute due to his positive evaluation of the results of the Washington Conference, but had definitely not disappeared. The conference was not just the start of a new era of disarmament and international cooperation, but at the same time was the

184 'Beikoku no hai-Nichi rippō to waga kuni no keizaiteki fuan': pp.57-58; 'Bei-ka hibai undō no keizaiteki kachi': pp.63, 65-66; 'Hai-Nichi rippō no tame ni jōsei sareta haigaiteki kibun ni hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.8: p.97.

185 'Tai-Bei imin mondai kanken': pp.26-27; 'Beikoku no hai-Nichi rippō to waga kuni no keizaiteki fuan': pp.53, 56, 59-64.

symbol of American supremacy on the East Asian scene. In this situation Horie had not considered it wise to put all one's trust in an American signature on a sheet of paper, and the passing of the Japanese Exclusion Act only strengthened this feeling. Although he did not partake in the warscare discourse of his day and did not believe in the possibility of a future military conflict with the United States, it will be clear that this pretty piece of American racial discrimination was more than sufficient to give him the impression that at least the possibility of an economic boycott had become considerably higher. The following citation from May 1924 clearly shows an increased sense of national vulnerability:

Trying to maintain our balance of trade by means of exporting our most important national product to one specific country implies that in case this country's market is closed to us, this important industry will immediately be thrown into disorder and our balance of trade will be destroyed. This state of things will inevitably lead to the situation that our diplomatic actions will be restricted by our economic relations and must be considered extremely dangerous.¹⁸⁶

Within Horie's debate on the fundamental reform of the Japanese economy, the segment of the reform of Japan's trade structure had reached a level of acuteness different from other segments. This was no longer merely about economic recovery in general or doing away with the causes of the drive towards emigration in specific, but about upholding national political autonomy. Japan had to diminish its economic dependence on the United States so it could 'afford' itself a boycott by that country and would be free in its consideration of appropriate countermeasures.

The Backward Neighbour and the Postponement of the Regional Economic Unit

Despite his country's difficult situation, Horie did not despair and came up with various solutions. In his opinion the most fundamental solution would be to industrialize Japan thoroughly in such a way that it would export only essential goods of prime quality which were not liable to become the object of a boycott anywhere in the world.¹⁸⁷ However, it is not difficult to see that this kind of peptalk hardly went beyond the realm of extreme wishful thinking and that the man himself was not going to guarantee its feasibility. Moreover, this 'solution' was a long-term policy and could not bring any immediate relief. Another solution Horie invariably propagated was the formation of an interregional economic unit close to home:

The economic demand [to secure the welfare of the nation and complete the growth of our industry through the use of their natural riches] has under the name of 'The management of Manchuria and Korea' led to the implementation of a positive policy towards these two regions. Having come this far, Japan has to stick to this policy and be determined to obtain as many and as varied as possible primary products from the two regions. The more we purchase from these regions the more we lead them to demand our industrial products and enable them to pay

186 'Tai-Bei imin mondai kanken'. *Kaizō*, 1924.5: p.27.

187 'Sakoku keizai no kiken waga kuni ni semaru'. *Kaizō*, 1925.2: pp.76-77; 82-85; 'Keizai jiji mondai'. *Kaizō*, 1926.6: p.111.

for these, thus in the end attaining an economic interconnected relation between Japan, Korea and Manchuria. Accordingly China Proper has to be led into this economic sphere as well. This is the only way for our country to build up a position of economic superiority.¹⁸⁸

Although this was not a short-term solution either, since it for instance did not address the questions who would buy Japan's silk and who would supply it with raw cotton in the meanwhile, it was a serious endeavour to shorten trade routes and to diminish Japan's dependency on the United States and the British colonies. In view of the Japanese need to procure natural resources within its sphere of influence Horie especially urged closer economic relations with China. He of course was hardly unique as the majority of the participants in the public debate called for an intensification of Sino-Japanese relations in one way or another. However, in the years 1924-25 it was not easy to detect any bright spots that could further the realisation of such aims in comparison with the previous period, be it the rather general Sino-Japanese friendship or Horie's more specific East Asian economic unit. Any observer could tell from the rapid succession of the Second Fengtian-Zhili War, Sun Yat-sen's second proclamation of the Northern Expedition, and the Guo Songling uprising that China was still too preoccupied with its own process of national unification to be able to consider plans for regional integration. Moreover, the series of nationwide strikes starting in April 1925 in a Japanese spinning mill in Tsingtao and lasting well into the next year, together with the frequent occurrence of anti-foreign boycott movements, also made clear that China was not exactly the right place to seek refuge if one was intent on securing a steady stream of primary resources or protecting one's economy from the danger of boycotts. In 1923 Horie had already come to the conclusion that 'the anti-Japanese boycott movement has attained a different, permanent character' and 'has become seriously damaging'.¹⁸⁹ Notwithstanding the fact that in the following years the general situation only went from bad to worse, Horie was not going to give in that easily. He hardly made a distinction between the various internal forces on the China stage, merely warning his government not to deal with any of the warlord factions and just let them fight it out with each other.¹⁹⁰ For lack of a concrete door on which to knock, he chose to address the Chinese people in general and use their wellknown predilection for 'concrete interest' (*jitsurigai*) as the fertile ground to sow the seeds of Sino-Japanese economic cooperation.

Horie selected tariff autonomy and joint venture as the bait with which his country should approach this Chinese predilection. He especially emphasised the former, since he was of the opinion that the attention of the Chinese nation was centred on the tariff question. Always more of an economist than a nationalist, Horie argued that in the light of China's monetary crisis the restoration of tariff autonomy was the question for which they had the most keen and manifest interest and which they considered far more urgent than the recovery of Lushun (Port Arthur) and Dalian or the abolishment of the extraterritorial rights.¹⁹¹ It was also on this point that Horie himself expressed the most scathing critique of the major powers' attitude towards China. He accused them of the total economic extortion of China through the enforcement of an extremely

188 'Keizaiteki yūsei no jōken wo ronzu'. *Kaizō*, 1924.12: pp.54-55.

189 'Tai-Shi keizai seisaku no konponteki kaizō'. *Kaizō*, 1923.8: pp.214-15.

190 'Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi' zadankai in *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.19-20.

191 'Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei'. *Kaizō*, 1925.12: p.47.

low import tariff, which robbed the country of every opportunity to develop itself into an industrialised nation and condemned it to the perpetual status of an underdeveloped, agricultural nation. Accordingly, the best way to help the country was to make an end to the economic imperialism of the powers, which had led to the cynical situation that China was the only one not to profit from the principle of equal opportunities proclaimed over its territory, and to have them implement a policy in which the principle ‘in the interest of China’ (*Shina no tame*) would occupy a central position.¹⁹² Ever since the Washington Conference Horie had pointed out that Japan, because of its identical historical experience as a victim of the treaty port system, had a special mission and duty on behalf of China in helping it to regain tariff autonomy. The most fitting opportunity to fulfil that special mission was of course presented by the Beijing Special Conference on Tariffs, which convened in October 1925 in order to adjust China’s tariff rate and increase the revenues of the Chinese government, but experienced deadlock upon deadlock in the midst of increasing political turmoil in the Northern capital and was eventually suspended in July 1926.¹⁹³ To the surprise of many, amongst which not merely the members of the various delegations attending but even most cabinet members and Foreign Ministry officials in Tokyo, Japan seemed to do just what Horie had prescribed when plenipotentiary Hioki Eki in his opening speech expressed the support of his Japanese government for the Chinese demand of restoration of tariff autonomy. Horie was very impressed, but nothing much of his initial positive evaluation remained as the Japanese delegation eventually proved the most stubborn opponent in the negotiations on the differentiation of the tariff for the various products. Just a month into the conference he already diagnosed that Japan’s apparent volte-face at the beginning of the Beijing Conference had been merely superficial. He argued that approval of a rise in the tariffs would have been a better option because the divided China was not yet able to implement tariff autonomy and would have been helped more with a measure that would have a direct positive monetary effect, such as the English-American proposal to raise the general tariff to 12,5%. Having approved of tariff autonomy Japan should leave China free to act as it pleased, yet an objective look at both economies could only lead to the conclusion that China would certainly not be inclined to commit itself to a bilateral tariff treaty favourable to Japan. Therefore, Japan’s way of acting in Beijing could only be called insincere because it would never hand China an instrument with which the latter would be able to implement its traditionally protectionist economic thought and deal a major blow to Japan’s economy. In conclusion he judged that Japan had squandered a golden opportunity to bring about Sino-Japanese economic cooperation and predicted that its pretence would only lead to a further deterioration of the relations between the two countries.¹⁹⁴

192 ‘Tai-Shi keizai seisaku no konponteki kaizō’: pp.209-10. Horie also pointed out that in sharp contrast to the low tariff rate imposed upon China, the country did not even enjoy a most favoured nation status in its export to the powers.

193 The organization of this conference had already been decided upon at the Washington Conference and was mentioned in the Treaty on Chinese Customs Duties of February 1922, but was considerably delayed by French reluctance to ratify it. By the time of the conference the Chinese government, pushed along by increasingly strong nationalist sentiments amongst the people, was no longer inclined to stick to the formal objective. Instead of settling for a mere raise of the tariff rate it demanded tariff autonomy. The other countries participating in the conference were Japan, England, the United States, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

194 ‘Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei’: pp.49-60. For an analysis of the Japanese

This only left the element of joint venture as a basis to support the intensification of Sino-Japanese economic relations. Horie had observed how anti-foreign boycotts in China seemed predominantly aimed at Japan and that in the few cases the Western powers were singled out the boycotts were of a limited scale and came to a rapid end. In his opinion this did not imply that the Chinese made any intrinsic distinction between the suffering they endured from the economic imperialism of the Western powers and that of Japan. It was rather a reflection of the fact that the Western manufactures were considered essential in comparison with the crude export products from Japan and, more important, that the British and the Americans entrepreneurs had been relatively successful in partly alleviating the oppression they inflicted upon the Chinese by creating common interests. Their Japanese counterparts should follow this example and even outdo them, by establishing joint ventures that would bring in Chinese labour, capital and management on a generous scale, would move export-oriented production facilities to China, and thus would give the Chinese both a direct and indirect interest in Japan's economic activities on the Asian continent.¹⁹⁵ This tale of economic co-existence and co-prosperity (*kyōson kyōei*) was not simply inspired by the opportunistic motive of getting rid of the nuisance of Chinese boycotts, but had a solid foundation in Horie's view of China as a valuable economic partner. No matter how fierce and violent the internal turmoil, he insisted that the country was an independent nation (*dokuritsukoku*) and Japan had to respect that fact, for instance regarding the issues of tariff autonomy and extraterritorial rights. He pointed out that his fellow-countrymen had the habit of looking down upon China from a political or military point of view, but he admonished them that when seen from an economic point of view Japan could not do without China and therefore should treat it as an equal.¹⁹⁶

Having said that much, one should also mention that Horie's argument tended to be overly determined by his economic views and that he was not completely exempt from the Orwellian postulate that 'some are more equal than others'. Regarding the former, it is evident that his focus on the issue of tariff autonomy overshadowed less purely economic Chinese nationalist demands such as the recovery of leases, rights and concessions and the abolition of extraterritoriality. He did mention these from time to time, but did not deal with them head on and sporadically even doubted their sincerity.¹⁹⁷ This stance was probably partly due to the fact that he did not detect any threat to Japan's position in China (read: Manchuria), nor from the

performance at the Beijing Conference, see Banba Nobuya's 'Pekin kanzei tokubetsu kaigi ni nozomu Nihon no seisaku kettei katei'. In Hosoya Chihiro & Watanuki Jōji, eds, *Taigai seisaku kettei katei no Nichi-Bei hikaku*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1977: pp. 375-417 and his *Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma*, Minerva Press, Kyoto, 1972: pp.246-61. In the light of Horie's accusation of his government as 'insincere', it should be mentioned though that more recent research stresses the divisions within the Foreign Ministry and makes a convincing case that the 'revolutionary' opening speech was the result of 'Asianist' diplomats on the spot like Shigemitsu Mamoru and Saburi Sadao taking things a step further than their Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijūrō was willing to, after which the latter dug his heels in. Sakai Tetsuya, '[Ei-Bei kyōchō] to [Nitchū teikei]'. In *Nenpō Kindai Nihon Kenkyū 11: Kyōchō seisaku no genkai – Nichi-Bei kankeishi 1905-1960*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1989: pp.68-70; Hattori Ryūji, *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō, 1918-1931*, Yūhikaku, 2001: pp.310-11.

195 'Tai-Shi keizai seisaku no konponteki kaizō': pp.214-18.

196 'Tai-Shi bunka jigayō no keizaiteki kansatsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.5: pp.44-45, 49.

197 Ibid.: pp.42-43; 'Kokusai taishaku riron to waga kuni keizaikai no kiki'. *Kaizō*, 1923.7: pp.47-49.

local factions or from any foreign power.¹⁹⁸ Although he definitely did not support the idea of large-scale military interventions, which would only escalate anti-Japanese sentiments and incite more boycotts, he was in favour of limited military action to protect Japanese possessions, rights and interests along the Manchurian railroad when in danger.¹⁹⁹ And he definitely did not subscribe to the idea of one-sidedly giving up its position in Manchuria on behalf of Sino-Japanese friendship. Considering his insistence on Manchuria as a vital part of the economic unit to which Japan belonged as well, this would merely imply giving its position away to other, economically and financially stronger, nations while its own inroads into alternative regions would remain cut off. This would amount to an act of ‘useless compassion’ (*Sōjō no jin*) on the mere criterion that Japan had jumped onto the China scene later than the other powers. Although he did not seem to have any fundamental misgivings about Japan eventually giving up its ‘special rights and interests’ (*tokushu keneki*) in Manchuria, he did not see any need to do so before the other powers did the same with their rights in other parts of China.²⁰⁰

This seems to be as fair an opinion as one tends to get, but it will be clear that the voice of the object of all this giving and taking was still only a secondary point of consideration. Despite his stress on the need of treating China as an equal, he himself did not leave any doubt that there was a huge divide in status between the developed (*senshinkoku*) and civilised Japan and the underdeveloped (*kōshinkoku*) and backward China.²⁰¹ Characteristically for Horie, civilisation was also first and foremost defined in economic terms and the main reason for openly denouncing the latter country as backward was its ‘protectionist and exclusionist bigoted traditional economic thought’. Therefore, Horie’s support of the restoration of Chinese tariff autonomy was conditional on the free access to its market and natural resources, otherwise it would only result into yet another attack on free trade in the increasingly protectionist world. And since he did not consider China itself capable of autonomously evolving from its conservative economic ideas, it was the senior nation Japan – probably in the similar way that Horie in 1917 had instructed officials of the Chinese Ministry of Finance – that benevolently and compassionately should lead its pupil into the realm of economic civilisation by making it join the free tradist ‘international interconnected economy’.²⁰² It was probably this kind of paternalism, maybe best expressed in his 1925 exclamation “Give China what it should be given, take from China what should be taken”, that Horie did not enjoy the widespread Chinese audience someone like Yoshino Sakuzō had.²⁰³ Just as Japan’s contradictory treatment of the tariff autonomy issue at the Beijing Conference had once again made the Chinese turn their backs on the country, Horie’s well-intended but equally inconsistent discourse on Sino-Japanese

198 ‘Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi’: p.20. As opposed to many others, especially in army circles, Horie did not think that Japan’s position in China stood anything to fear from Russia. ‘Gunbi shukushō ni taisuru keizaikan’. *Kaizō*, 1924.10: p. 112.

199 ‘Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi’: p.31. This statement was made within the context of the Second Fengtian-Zhili War at the end of 1924. A year earlier in the context of the boycott movement he had also warned of the reverse effect of military intervention, and had mentioned to condone military rescue actions only to save Japanese lives and property in case the boycotts escalated into violence. ‘Tai-Shi keizai seisaku no konponteki kaizō’. *Kaizō*, 1923.8: pp.215-17.

200 *Ibid.*: pp.20, 31-32.

201 ‘Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei’. *Kaizō*, 1925.12: p.47.

202 *Ibid.*: pp.47, 54-55, 58.

203 *Ibid.*: p.60.

cooperation probably made Chinese foreign students look for other ventures to join, in which they were allotted a less passive role. Accordingly it was clear that the realisation of the regional economic unit centred on China would be once more postponed.

European Detour

It was in the context of America's degrading measures and the failure to bring about rapprochement between Japan and China that Horie turned his attention once more to Europe and the League of Nations, which still was predominantly a European institution. He had not so much neglected the old world as he had been utterly despaired by it. He especially criticized the European countries for not moderating their policies towards Germany and Russia. Thus they were themselves guilty of postponing the recovery of the European economy and thereby of the world economy. Since Horie as a true believer in 'the international interconnected economy' was more worried about the negative effects on Japan's economy of the not forthcoming recovery of the world economy than about those of the Kantō Earthquake, he time and again advised the European countries to lower the reparation demands towards Germany and to recognize and open trade with the Soviet Union immediately, but to little avail.²⁰⁴ As far as the League was concerned, he certainly did not dispute its right to exist as he was aware that it had an important mission to fulfil on behalf of the improvement of international economic relations. There was a need for an umbrella organisation that would take care of the processes of arms reduction and 'the equal distribution of the God-given natural resources of this world among all the nations' as a necessary precondition for world peace. Regrettably though, he pointed out, the League was still dominated by protectionist economic thought and the fear of war, which continually lingered on after World War One. This situation obstructed the intensification of international relations and made the institution too weak to be worthy of Japan's trust.²⁰⁵

However, in the immediate wake of the passing of the anti-Japanese immigration law Horie changed his mind about Europe and the League in the hope that these could become a counterbalance to the United States. Not coincidentally this is also the first occasion ever since the start of the war that we can find him positively evaluating the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. He did not seem to take any notice of it while it was still in the running and neither did he show any regret when it was displaced by the Four Power Treaty at the Washington Conference, but now all of a sudden he showed his attachment by mentioning that the Alliance had protected Japan from international isolation and had helped to enhance Japan's international authority.²⁰⁶ His hopes that Europe could provide some sort of substitute were bolstered by the installation in 1924 of a Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald in England and a Radical Socialist government under Édouard Herriot in France. These 'moderate and peace-loving men' were not only more lenient towards Germany and Russia, which opened new perspectives for world peace

204 'Doitsu baishōkin mondai wo chūshin to shitaru kokusai keizai no henkyoku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.9: pp.178-80; 'Kokusai keizai to waga kuni no fukkō jigyō'. *Kaizō*, 1924.1: pp.57-58, 61-63. See also 'Ōshū keizai no antei to Ro-Doku ryōkoku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.8: pp.61-73.

205 'Hai-Nichi rippō no tame ni jōsei saretai haigaiteki kibun no hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.8: p.95; 'Gunbi shukushō ni taisuru keizaikan'. *Kaizō*, 1924.10: p.112; 'Keizaiteki yūsei no jōken wo ronzu'. *Kaizō*, 1924.8: pp.47-48.

206 'Tai-Bei imin mondai kanken'. *Kaizō*, 1924.5: p.25.

and the world economy, but were even trying to have these countries join the League of Nations. Such a reinforced League, Horie hoped, might support the weak Japan when confronted by immoral highhandedness on the part of the United States.²⁰⁷

By this time socialist theory had become a strong influence on Horie's thought, and he had made the link between the plight of the working class and the suffering of the colonized people as both being the result of the same capitalist oppression. So why did Horie have no hesitation in pinning his hopes on the two largest colonial empires in the world? He must have been aware that his was a weak bid, yet he could not find an alternative. There was no force as yet which could lead the anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist movement. China was still tormented by internal strife and did not show any signs of recovery. Many of the impoverished and oppressed, and many who sympathised with their plight, of course looked up to the Soviet Union as the haven to seek their physical and intellectual salvation. While Horie rejected communism in principle and in his various activities for the labour union and proletarian party movements made sure of staying on the anti-communist side of things, he did not merely prefer the new regime to the old regime but even held considerable sympathy for the Soviet experiment. The main reason for this was his insight in 1923 that the basis of the Soviet Union's economic policy was no longer communism, and that the country - just as he advocated his own country to do - was merely implementing state capitalism in order to contain the excesses of 'the baneful influences of capitalist rampancy' on behalf of the people and society. And whether communist or not, Horie had always professed that a country's polity was an internal matter and should not form an obstacle to the formal recognition of and the opening of diplomatic and economic relations with the Soviet Union, even if that implied stepping out of line with the other former allied powers.²⁰⁸ However, notwithstanding his moral and economic support, the fact that there was hardly any sustained attention for the Soviet Union in Horie's writings makes it abundantly clear that he considered the country neither as a model nor as a potential ally for Japan and that in the end it left him rather neutral.

Apart from the United States, a Europe almost exclusively represented by England and France, Russia and China, there was hardly any other outside world of which most Japanese were aware, let alone to which they could turn in their hour of need. For some there was of course still Asia. For instance Minobe Tatsukichi, the famous advocate of the theory that the emperor was nothing but an organ of the state (*tennō kikan-setsu*), when confronted with the Japanese Exclusion Act opted that the only solution for Japan was 'the long-range grand national policy' (*kokka hyakunen no taisaku*) of bringing about the cooperation and unification of the Asian ethnic nations.²⁰⁹ Horie, however, in sharp contrast bluntly stated that, in the wake of the anti-Japanese legislation, calls upon Japan by India and China to join an alliance of the coloured races against the white race would be nothing but 'a dubious honour' (*arigata meiwaku*). Instead he was much more concerned that Japan because of the American measure would lose its authority towards - what others would term - its Asian brothers. In analogy, when he stressed the

207 'Keizaiteki yūsei no jōken wo ronzu'. *Kaizō*, 1924.12: p.48.

208 'Rokoku shōnin mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.6: pp.96-98; 'Shihonshugiteki keizaikan wo aratamezareba sekai heiwa narabi ni jinruiai no jitsugen katashi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.8: p.71; 'Rōnō Rokoku shōnin no kahi'. *Kaizō*, 1922.10, p.196.

209 Minobe Tatsukichi, 'Tai-Bei zakkan'. *Kaizō*, 1924.5: pp.29-30.

common experience of Japan and China as victims of an externally imposed low import tariff, he did not even mention that they had been identical *Asian* victims of the *Western* treaty port system.²¹⁰ Asianism was clearly not an option for Horie and he even seemed to shy away from the geographic term Asia as an abstract regional concept that he could not cope with easily. He was probably too aware of the divide between developed civilised countries and underdeveloped uncivilised countries to embrace any ambitions for his country to participate in, let alone lead, the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movement in Asia.

As for Japan itself, Horie of course wanted his own country to become an international harbinger, in national affairs, by surpassing Fabian socialism through the complete socialization and democratization of industry, as well as in international affairs, by exceeding the framework of the Nine Power Treaty on China and adopting an autonomous policy to improve the position of the Chinese.²¹¹ Although he sometimes emphasised Japan's civilising mission towards China and Korea, this mission was for the most part defined in economic terms, such as 'economic civilisation' (*keizaiteki bunmei*) and inspired by economic motives. When judged by a more multi-faceted standard of civilisation, including human rights, morality, and social and economic equality, he had to admit that during the 1920s there was no change in the situation that Japan lagged far behind the Western nations and was not even able to attain the absolute international minimum in terms of its social, labour, China and disarmament policies.²¹² As far as national society was concerned, the country still lacked such labour and social policy milestones as a labour union law, the right to bargain collectively, the right to strike, a national pension system, a poor relief system, a minimum wages system and an unemployment insurance system, and he warned that as a result the gap between the class of haves and the class of have-nots was only increasing.²¹³ In its external relations he noted that neither the extensive size of Japan's army and navy nor the Foreign Ministry's tradition of humbly following England and America had been able to bring the nation a first rate standing as it was being humiliated by the United States and ousted by China. In order to support its international standing, Horie stated, Japan did not need a strong military so much as it needed a strong population and a strong industry in combination with a high moral standing. Instead of following passively, Japan itself should actively participate and support where this was morally demanded, take the lead when the other nations did not act, and oppose the other nations when their actions were morally objectionable. It was within this framework that Horie had praise for the independent initiative of the Japanese delegation at the Beijing Conference. However, its subsequent actions erased all hopes he

210 'Tai-Bei imin mondai kanken'. *Kaizō*, 1924.5: p.28; 'Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei': pp.57-60.

211 'Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei': p.53; 'Shin-keizai seisaku no kichō ikaga'. *Kaizō*, 1926.10: p.128.

212 'Tai-Shi bunka jigyō no keizaiteki kansatsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.5: pp.42-45; 'Bōryoku kōshi, chokusetsu kōdō, kyōhaku kyōsei nado no torishimari wa kantai ni arazaru ka'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.8: pp.109-12; 'Gunbi shukushō ni taisuru keizaikan'. *Kaizō*, 1924.10: pp.110-11. It is clear that Horie held on to the very end to Japan's economic civilizing mission, judging by his treatment of the relation between Japan and Korea in one of his last articles for *Kaizō*. 'Nihon no Man-Mō keizai seisaku'. *Kaizō*, 1927.11: pp.40-41.

213 'Burujoa no fuan to puroretaria no hisan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.7: pp.112-14; 'Shin-keizai seisaku no kichō ikaga': pp.124-25.

cherished of Japan taking leadership on the Eastern stage in the near future.²¹⁴ There was no alternative but to wait for the proletarian parties (*musansha seitō*, or more commonly *musan seitō*) to take power and to implement a true ‘foreign policy of the people’ (*kokumin gaikō*) that would not merely reform Japan’s policy into a peace policy but also force a peace policy upon the other countries as well.²¹⁵ Leaving aside the possibility of the realisation of a proletarian party cabinet, it must have been clear to Horie in these years that even this was not likely to be a panacea. When Japan’s first major proletarian party, the Rōdō Nomintō, came into being in March 1926 he had to admonish it that its party program did not pay any attention to the issue of improvement of the position of the colonised. And when he was doing the rounds of the government offices together with Yoshino Sakuzō to denounce the massacre of Korean residents in the wake of the Kantō Earthquake, he must have been painfully aware that the Japanese people still had a long way to go before they could call themselves a great and civilised nation.²¹⁶

In sharp contrast, England was still the example of political democracy, with a government led by what Horie regarded as a proletarian party, an ideal shared by most of the Japanese intelligentsia who had lost confidence in the established political parties. Moreover, although it was the largest colonial empire, in Horie’s opinion England was the only (comparatively) non-protectionist country where some vestiges of free trade remained in this otherwise overwhelmingly protectionist world. And it also remained the example of the economic goal he had in mind, since England had succeeded in establishing economic superiority within its own economic bloc from a disadvantageous geographical and geological position comparable to Japan.²¹⁷ But as the Labour cabinet only lasted for ten months and was followed by yet another Tory administration under Stanley Baldwin, Horie finally lost all hope and turned his back on the old empire, and thus on Europe, although he had no nowhere else to turn to.²¹⁸

5.2 Sparkle of Light: New Hope for a ‘Joint Venture’ with Unified China

After his brief and frustrated courtship with Europe, it was only in the spring of 1927 that Horie found an alternative in China, when he for the first time recognized a strong national force in the form of the Guomindang that seemed capable of unifying the country. This was anything but a hostile force to Horie. Instead he welcomed it as a kindred movement with an aim that was identical to the one he himself harboured in the case of Japan and the world economy, namely the expulsion of military and economic imperialism and other excrescences of unrestrained capitalism. Whereas up until this moment he had predominantly alluded to China in terms of backwardness and stagnation, he all of a sudden discerned a budding labour movement and

214 ‘Gunbi shukushō ni taisuru keizaikan’: p.114; ‘Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei’: pp.53, 57.

215 ‘Keizaiteki yūsei no jōken wo ronzu’. *Kaizō*, 1924.12: p.47; ‘Rōdō Nōmintō no seiritsu wo yorokobu’. *Kaizō*, 1926.4: p.115.

216 Horie Kiichi diary, 1923.10.9. In *Horie Kiichi zenshū*, vol.10, Kaizōsha, 1929; ‘Rōdō Nōmintō no seiritsu wo yorokobu’. *Kaizō*, 1926.4: p.116.

217 ‘Tai-Shi keizai seisaku to Nihon’. *Ekonomisuto*, 1924.12.1: p.13; ‘Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei’: p.54; ‘Nihon no keizai seikatsu wo kaizō suru michi’. *Kaizō*, 1921.1: pp.82-89.

218 ‘Sakoku keizai no kiki waga kuni ni semaru’. *Kaizō*, 1925.2: p.68.

national liberation movement and he spoke of the national, social, and – probably most important from Horie’s point of view - economic awakening of Young China.²¹⁹ And whereas a few years earlier he had disposed Sun Yat-sen’s faction as nothing more than ‘a flea’ (*nomi*) that for very questionable reasons was treated as a government worthy for Japan to negotiate with, he now had the highest praise for him and his party. In contrast to the Northern warlord Zhang Zuolin (and the Chinese Communist Party, which for the sake of convenience he chose to ignore), he proffered the Guomindang as the true representative of the Chinese people that would finally bring about the long-cherished goal of national unification. And, in addition, he lauded Sun’s legacy of ‘The Three Principles of the People’ (*sanmin zhuyi*) as the doctrine that would bestow them with ethnic, political and social equality.²²⁰

Although Horie did not live to see the unification of China, he fully expected that in the process the nationalists would also succeed in expelling all imperialist forces from Chinese territory, Manchuria included. He analysed that Young China was trying to circumscribe or oust capitalist forces and, since the major capitalist presence in the country was foreign, it was inherently anti-foreign. Moreover, the expulsion of the foreign powers was merely the logical extension of *minzu zhuyi* (ethnic nationalism), the first of Sun’s three principles that was originally aimed against the rule by the Manchu minority but had long since been amended to comprise the abolishment of the unequal treaties and all sorts of foreign prerogatives in order to recover China’s territorial sovereignty and political autonomy.²²¹ Horie showed no pity for the foreign powers as he stressed that they themselves had let slip the opportunity to appease the Chinese, due to their extremely uncompromising and stingy attitude at the tariff conference the year before. He coolly analysed that the nationalist forces were at present predominantly aimed against England, because it was the instigator of foreign capitalism in China and was still the largest capitalist force in the country, and it recently lacked the power to back up its position in China. He even predicted that it was very likely that the British influence would be completely erased.²²² It was evident that Horie did not think that his country could come away unscathed out of the strong nationalist and anti-imperialist maelstrom in China. As mentioned above, he was rather prone to think in terms of the complete expulsion of foreign capitalism and imperialism, but at this stage he did not yet spell out in detail what this prospect implied for Japan’s position, mainly concentrated in the northern part of the country. This was not because in March 1927 the Northern Expedition was still restricted to southern China or because Japan was considered able to back up its position militarily in case of danger. Especially the latter is not in line with his suggestion that Japan should even support the nationalist forces. It had more to do with Horie’s

219 ‘Shina wa hatashite sekka suru ka – Sanminshugi to Shina no kokuminsei’. *Ekonomisuto*, 1927.4.1: p.25.

220 Ibid.: p.24; ‘Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi’. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: p.19.

221 Whereas this *minzu zhuyi* can be termed ‘ethnic nationalist’ while Sun Yat-sen and his fellow revolutionaries still focused on a *Han* (the largest ethnic group in China) struggle against the ‘foreign’ *Qin* rulers, after the revolution of 1911 things become rather complicated. I do not know how the Guomindang braintank and other Chinese ideologues dealt with the discrepancies between the singular ‘ethnic nation’ most likely implied in the term *minzu zhuyi* and the large ethnic variety in China. Let it suffice here to say that almost all Japanese opinion leaders completely ignored this latter aspect and saw no problem whatsoever to speak, in a Wilsonian way, of a uniform Chinese ethnic nation (*minzoku*), inspired by a unified ethnic nationalism (*minzoku shugi*), and its claim to the ethnic national right to self-determination (*minzoku jiketsuken*).

222 ‘Shina wa hatashite sekka suru ka’: p.25.

focus on what he considered to be not in danger. It was within this context that he concentrated on the question whether China was turning ‘red’ and went to great lengths to reassure his readership that this would certainly not be the case. He underlined that the Guomindang government’s policies did not trespass one step from the Three Principles of the People as bequeathed by Sun Yat-sen and thus had nothing to do with communism at all, a line of argument that can only have been bolstered by Chiang Kai-shek’s razzia on communists that erupted not long afterwards. And even so, he considered it impossible to implement communism in China at any rate because the accompanying concept of social property was fundamentally at odds with the traditional Chinese concept of family property. Moreover, Horie continued, the present situation in China was incomparable with that in Russia on the eve of the revolution. There was no strong ineluctable structure of oppression as there had been under the tsarist regime. Most Chinese lived in relative peace and welfare without any fundamental discontent about their daily lives. They had hardly anything to do with the so-called ‘central government’, with the rare exception of the odd damage inflicted upon them by the strife of the various warlords. China was intrinsically different and would not turn Bolshevik, “not even if the Soviet Union sends over a hundred [Michael] Borodins to make their communist propaganda”. In other words, there was no fear that Japan would lose “the [potential] biggest market of its industry ... due to the infringement of the system of private property”.²²³

Faced with the successful advance northwards of the Guomindang forces, Horie in the article ‘*Nihon no Man-Mō keizai seisaku*’ (Japan’s economic policy towards Manchuria and Inner Mongolia) in the November 1927 issue of the magazine *Kaizō* once more repeated what Japan should and should not do. This article was not merely to be Horie’s unintended testament in the case of his discourse on Japan’s international relations but also gives a very clear indication what position he most likely would have taken if he had lived to witness the Manchurian Incident.

Horie was not that different from the Kwantung Army officers who concocted and staged the ‘incident’, in the sense that he was also fully convinced of the vital importance of Manchuria (and, to a lesser extent, Inner Mongolia) to Japan. Although nothing was going to stop him from daydreaming, he was perfectly aware of the fact that “at present the realization of free trade is a utopianism” and, accordingly, that his country was in dire need of adjacent, foreign regions to help the country out in securing both raw materials and a market for its industrial products. In these circumstances Horie had no hesitation whatsoever in pronouncing unilaterally that “Manchuria and Inner-Mongolia are destined to supply our country with raw materials” and “The basis of our Manchuria and Mongolia policy is that their undeveloped natural resources have to be exploited by means of Japanese capital and know-how and have to be supplied to Japan”.²²⁴ However, and this is where the comparison ends, his argument was strictly based on economic arguments and theory, a point he seldom forgot to mention. He denied any special political, demographic or strategic interests in Manchuria, saying for instance that the prospects for emigration were limited and of a secondary nature, and that Japan had nothing to fear from the Soviet Union. Moreover, and this is quite specific for Horie, within his discussions of the special economic relation between Japan and (certain parts of) China he as ever emphasised the fact that

223 Ibid.: p.26.

224 ‘Nihon no Man-Mō keizai seisaku’. *Kaizō*, 1927.11: pp.40-41.

this relation was unbalanced. Accordingly he argued that it was crucial to correct the common interpretation of the notion of ‘a special position’ (*tokushuteki chii*):

Commentators often speak of ‘the special position of our country towards Manchuria and Inner Mongolia’ and use it as the sole factor in determining our Manchuria and Inner Mongolia policy. However I only approve of speaking of a special position if Manchuria and Inner Mongolia are the subject, that is, in the limited sense that Manchuria and Inner Mongolia hold a special position in the completion of Japan’s economic life and thus that it is Manchuria and Inner Mongolia that occupy a position of special importance to Japan.²²⁵

From an economic point of view the two Chinese regions were indeed of vital importance to Japan’s subsistence, specifically as far as the goal of furthering industrialisation and attaining international economic standing was concerned. However, he explicitly warned, this was not true the other way round and therefore Japan should be aware that it was the fundamentally weaker party in Sino-Japanese economic relations.

It was partly for the same reason that Horie continued to reject the idea of an exclusive formal economic alliance between the two countries. While also pointing out that such a set-up could never be all-fulfilling for either party, his main thrust was that the whole thing was fundamentally unrealistic as it was only beneficial to Japan. The only alternative he perceived for Japan, as he had once put it, ‘to take from China what should be taken’, was for the two countries to become complementary as far as possible, strengthen economic ties and share the profits equally. The latter he considered in contrast to the practice hitherto, in which the economically most developed nation tended to usurp the larger part of the profit. Whereas he had to admit that Japan still enjoyed ‘a temporary lead’ (*ichinichi no chō*) and for the time being it was thus Japan that had to provide the capital and the management in the exploitation of China’s natural resources, this undertaking would only work under the condition that the companies involved employed the ‘amenable-by-nature’ (*honshō no onjun naru*) Chinese, enriched their lives, and shared profits and interests. In short, if Japan had the sincere ambition of preserving or even expanding its economic position in China, it first of all had to handle things not militarily but economically, then had to confront the Chinese not hostile but harmoniously, and finally treat them not unequally but as equals.²²⁶

In the light of this programme for Sino-Japanese economic cooperation it is hardly surprising that Horie strongly opposed the policy of armed intervention in China implemented by the Tanaka Cabinet, which he feared to be mainly inspired by the impossible aim of countering Chinese nationalism or, even worse, the disastrous aim of annexing Manchuria. Horie had for several years condemned all forms of militarism and economic imperialism on Chinese territory and this time he once more enumerated the foreign powers’ vices of the enforcement of extraterritoriality and foreign settlements, the restriction of tariff autonomy, violation of territorial and political sovereignty, maltreatment of workers, and usurpation of natural resources. Hardly aware of what his country still had in store for China in the next two decades and in shrill contrast to present-day apologists of Japanese crimes during World War Two, Horie already at

225 Ibid.: p.41.

226 Ibid.: pp.44-47.

this stage did not show any reserve in terming his country's actions towards China 'aggression' (*shinryaku*). He, moreover, awarded the Twenty-One Demands a very prominent place on Japan's record of related offences. He characterized it as the moment in time when his country had decisively hurt the cordial feelings of England and America and, even more critically, had invited the antipathy of the Chinese nation. In contrast to previous periods, he was now adamant that it formed the major obstacle in Japan's dealings with China and that anti-Japanese sentiments in China had gradually become stronger ever since. He was dumbfounded that after more than a decade experience of unavoidable Sino-Japanese non-cooperation those responsible for Japan's China policy could not come to the same conclusion. In utter desperation he lamented that just at the moment that the Chinese at last had become conscious of the importance of 'national interest and national rights' (*kokuri kokken*) and had risen against the trampling of Chinese sovereignty and territory by the capitalist and imperialist foreign powers, Japan had dispatched troops to Shantung and all of a sudden proclaimed a positive policy towards Manchuria and Inner Mongolia.²²⁷

Horie did not so much go into the government's argument that military intervention was essential from the viewpoint of protecting Japanese lives and property in China, although he pointed out that there were also non-military ways to accomplish this and on an earlier occasion he had mentioned that the Japanese residents in China were too self-conceited and had the mistaken conception that the Japanese government would back them up militarily whatever they did. He rather suspected the Tanaka cabinet of a partly hidden agenda concerning Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, which in his eyes came down to 'deformed economic imperialism' (*keizaiteki teikokushugi no henkei shita mono*) and was solely aimed at the creation of a monopolistic sphere of influence and possibly even a second Korea. As far as the latter option was concerned Horie warned that "Japan had better not hold any territorial ambitions towards Chinese territory as long as it does not want to fight the whole Chinese nation and turn all other countries concerned into enemies". But even the first option of a solid Japanese sphere of influence in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, centred on the support of the faction of warlord Zhang Zuolin and backed up by the necessary military interventions, would be utterly damaging even if only for the fact that the unavoidable intensification of the anti-Japanese boycott movement would completely exclude Japanese goods from markets in the remaining bulk of China. In other words, the Tanaka Cabinet seemed perfectly capable of what hordes of Soviet agitators could never get done.²²⁸

Although the direction Horie proposed was exactly the opposite from the one advocated by a younger and more radical generation, whose military representatives in the end would completely frustrate Tanaka's China policy by assassinating Zhang Zuolin, their rejection of the so-called 'Tanaka diplomacy' as anachronistic was identical:

In an age when the Chinese had not yet awoken to the urge to defend their rights and interests with their own hands, [an economic imperialist policy] might list a certain extent of progress. However, present-day China will not resign itself to

227 Ibid.: pp.38, 46.

228 Ibid.: pp.42-43, 46-47. It is only in comparison with Tanaka's 'positive policy' towards China that Horie expresses moderate praise for Hara Takashi, since the latter introduced the policy of non-intervention that the Seiyūkai more or less stuck to – and for which he on other occasions had accused Hara and Takahashi of 'lacking a basic policy' (*musaku*) - until Tanaka took over the party leadership.

being forced under foreign pressure into the position of an agricultural nation and a supplier of raw materials eternally. Even a colony will appeal and resist being in the position of an agricultural nation on behalf of the motherland for an extended period of time. Therefore, the motherland will have to make concessions to the colony for continuing to occupy this position. If things are already like this in the relation between a colony and the motherland, [it will be evident that] it is extremely hard to turn an independent state into a supplier of natural resources on behalf of another country for an extended period of time. And actually, last year's prohibition by China of the participation of foreign capital in the mining of iron ore and the enactment of a law limiting the export of the same clearly originate from the conviction that economically speaking it is wiser to become a manufacturing industrial nation than to remain a raw material supplying nation. Now that China's understanding of economics has progressed so saliently, Japan will gain nothing but the wrath of the Chinese by randomly propagating a positive policy and trying to impose our will upon Manchuria and Inner Mongolia.²²⁹

China was no longer the sleeping giant the foreign powers had profited from during the age of imperialism. The country had inherently changed in such a way that the economic imperialist policies of yore had become invalid. The Chinese could not be expected to be satisfied with a subordinate position anymore and in order to be able to play the game on equal terms they were starting to industrialise themselves. In short, China was becoming equal, not in theory as it had always been, but this time in real terms.

In the light of this new situation, most directly brought home by the Guomindang advance, Horie called upon his government to turn away from its outdated imperialist China policy. He also admonished his fellow-countrymen to abandon their condescending attitude, to recognize the new forces in China and to adopt a policy that was in line with the latter's justified demands.²³⁰ It will be clear that this kind of advice was at complete loggerheads with that given by those who could only conceive of the Northern Expedition and the potential unification of China under the Guomindang as an acute national crisis and accordingly supported Tanaka Giichi in his positive policy or were even considering more drastic countermeasures. A representative example is the call to arms by Matsuoka Yōsuke, at the time director of the South Manchurian Railway Company, by means of his article 'The True Nature of the Present Situation in China and the Responsibility of Japan' (*Shina jikyoku no jisshitsu to Nihon no sekimu*) in the May 1st 1927 issue of *Ekonomisuto*, coincidentally placed immediately after one of Horie's contributions. Completely refuting the latter's analysis in the same magazine a month earlier, Matsuoka emphasised that the Northern Expedition was nothing but a communist revolution under a nationalist disguise. This was a critical development that would not merely affect the country itself and the surrounding East Asian region but the whole world. Accordingly, it was Japan, on the basis of its prominent international position, which shouldered the responsibility towards world society of protecting the whole of the Far East from the communist threat. The country was not in a position to sit by idly, let alone to stretch out a helping hand the way Horie advocated, but had to implement 'a positive policy' and prepare itself for 'the worst to come' (both of which

229 Ibid.: p.46.

230 'Shina wa hatashite sekka suru ka': p.26.

Matsuoka refused to specify in detail).²³¹

Regrettably the *Ekonomisuto* did not allow for a direct clash in its pages between the proponent of a 'support (nationalist) China'-policy and the proponent of a 'fight (communist) China' policy, which could have provided us with more material on Horie's views of China in the last months before his death. Summarising, on the basis of the few articles that he left behind, let it suffice to say that now the English position in China was being dismantled by the Chinese themselves, there was no longer any need for Japan to hold on to its own imperialist and militarist trophies. Horie very clearly chose neither for a policy of resistance against the new nationalist forces nor for a passive policy to watch and wait for these forces to thrust their hatchet into Japan's position in Manchuria, but instead propagated a policy of active accommodation and cooperation. Thus Horie was one of the few who seemed to sanction the sacrifice of Japan's established position in the North-Eastern part of China, in the hope that his country could help China take on a leading role in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism and together they could make the world safe for democracy, state capitalism (although by 1927 he did not use this term anymore and was on the lookout for another 'ism') and, last but definitely not least, free trade. Although there is no denying that Horie until then had not taken China into full account, was often guilty of partaking in the general tendency to reckon without Japan's host, and thus was caught off guard by the swift advance of the nationalist forces, he was more than prepared to steer his fellow-countrymen away from such reckless military adventures as the Manchurian Incident and instead guide them towards a relation of economic cooperation on an equal basis. In the Guomindang government Horie had finally found a fully-fledged partner to join in the venture of Sino-Japanese co-existence and co-prosperity.

5.3 Summary: Diminishing Inequality on the Road towards Economic Civilisation

As I have emphasised throughout this chapter, the world according to Horie Kiichi was for the most part an economic world. To repeat my assessment at the outset of this chapter, 'He conceived of the world as an economic unity, intertwined in such a way that it was impossible for any country to ignore the dictates issued by the world market. Geographical, racial or ethnic distinctions were not to be considered any more within this economic system of the world as one market'. Horie established himself as a good example of a man of such a world, for in his writings, consciously or unconsciously, he hardly ever used particularistic idioms like, for instance, the sets of *Seiyō* (the West) and *Tōyō* (the East), or *hakujin* (the white race) and *ōshoku jinshu* (the yellow race). Instead he invariably adhered to the more neutral universal idioms like *gaikoku* (foreign countries) and *takoku* (other countries) when describing the outside world, and the titles of his articles and books are rife with the terms '*kokusai*' (international) and '*sekai*' (world). Horie was even quite exceptional in the sense that in the postwar age that was so much symbolised by the concept of 'the ethnic nation' he hardly used the terms '*minzoku*' or the derived ism of '*minzokushugi*'. Another particularist concept that became increasingly important during the interwar period, namely 'culture' (*bunka*), did not gain his patronage either.

It is interesting to see that instead he chose to hold on to 'civilisation' (*bunmei*), a concept

231 Matsuoka Yōsuke, 'Shina jikyoku no jissitsu to Nihon no sekimu'. *Ekonomisuto*, 1927.5.1: pp.12-13.

that was so central to the foregone age of empire and which, at least in its European or Western manifestations, had been proclaimed morally bankrupt in the wake of the European self-inflicted carnage of the Great War. The main reason for his extraordinary behaviour was that Horie tended to define 'civilisation' predominantly in economic terms and that from his point of view the war had not changed anything about the fact that 'economic civilisation' (*keizaiteki bunmei*) was based on the two pillars of industrialisation and free trade. Accordingly he imperturbably continued to prescribe the thorough implementation of these two economic policies as the most effective method to attain world peace, since they would contribute to the economic process of the international division of labour, which in its turn would inevitably result in increasingly intimate and harmonious international relations.

Economic civilisation, however, at the same time functioned as the main criterion by which Horie judged the various countries of the world. Although he acknowledged only one universal pattern of civilisation and merely one universal road that led to this economic civilisation, there nonetheless existed a fair amount of inequality within this essentially equal system. First of all, the phenomena of industrialisation and free trade of course originated from England and accordingly European or Western nations might seem to be somewhat advantaged within this scheme of economic civilisation. Be that as it may, Horie could not care in the least. He had no qualms in admitting that most basic reforms in Japanese history had been dictated by the outside world or had been applied according to foreign example. And just as he showed no hesitation in prescribing 'the gradual introduction of *Western* civilisation' in order to kick China's economy into action, he knew all too well where the roots lay for Japan's modern reforms and subsequent economic development.²³² The inequality he was aware of was thus not so much inherently connected to the history of the game as based on the actual performance of the participants. Their status depended on the level they had reached in the many-staged processes of industrialisation and free trade, and it was by means of these two yardsticks that Horie felt his country far superior to 'a third-rate European country like Spain'. Although he, unlike his mentor Fukuzawa Yukichi and the many European 'civilisation theorists' who had influenced the latter, did not neatly divide the world into the three categories of civilised, half-civilised and uncivilised nations and spell out which country belonged to which category, Horie's world order intrinsically was not that different. He mainly perceived the distinction between a select group of advanced civilised countries (*senshin bunmeikoku*) and a mass of backward uncivilised countries, of which the former shouldered the moral obligation of stimulating, assisting or, if deemed necessary, leading the economic development of the latter. In case the economically uncivilised country happened to be a colony, this modern variety of the civilising mission seemed to imply that as a due reward for the efforts by the motherland the colonised nation had to resign itself to a perpetual state of political subservience.

Whereas such a hierarchic view of the world was pretty much the norm in both the prewar age of imperialism and the postwar age of passive but lingering colonialism, Horie's criteria were not exactly normal. Industrialisation was probably high on the list of criteria of civilisation as conceived of by his contemporaries, but free trade was definitely not. Horie fervently advocated international free trade, as the result of his strong admiration for the work of Adam Smith, the

232 'Hai-Nichi rippō no tame ni jōsei sareta haigaiteki kibun ni hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.8: p.96; 'Gunbi shukushō ni taisuru keizaikan'. *Kaizō*, 1924.10: p.110; 'Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi' zadankai in *Kaizō*, 1924.11: p.19.

founder of liberal economic thought. Accordingly he championed the example of England, the cradle of liberal economic theory and the country with an economic policy that in prewar days came closest to the ideal of complete free trade. Of course it was also the world's most prosperous nation at the time and the country where Horie had spent most of his years studying abroad. And the fact that Japan, like England, is an island nation clearly not blessed with the natural resources to sustain a large population under an economic policy of self-sufficiency, must also have contributed to his advocacy of free trade. Nevertheless, even in Japan there were hardly any others who made such a clear-cut distinction between free trade and autarky as two irreconcilable economic policies, let alone completely condemned the latter and qualified all protectionist measures and autarkic policies as signs of economic, and thus civilisational, backwardness. To be sure, laissez-faire liberalism both in Japan and in the rest of the world lost almost all support during the 1910s and 1920s and near the end of his life Horie himself also had to admit that his was a protectionist world.

Although this development did not form the least inducement for Horie to relinquish his ideals of world free trade and 'the interconnected international economy' (*kokusai kyōtsu keizai*) or to adjust his set of economic criteria of civilisation, he did supplement the latter with some non-economic criteria in the wake of the ideological revolutions at the end of World War One. Within the discourse of anti-militarism, anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism he also introduced various epitomisations of the pursuit of political, social and economic equality such as a parliamentary democracy, a free press, a social security system, labour unions, and proletarian parties as new yardsticks of civilisation. As was the case for most of his generation, Horie was considerably influenced by socialist thought, but this could hardly make him reject capitalism. He drew the line at the restriction of rampant capitalism, which caused widespread inequality that was no longer tolerable. From the end of the war onwards he increasingly emphasised 'the harmonisation of economy and morality' (*keizai to dōtoku to no chōwa*) and certain 'moral conditions for the subsistence of the state' (*kokka sonritsu no dōtoku*). Within this framework he contended that the subsistence of the state no longer depended on the size of its empire or army but on the progress of its industry and the intellectual and corresponding moral capacities of its citizens.²³³ Apart from the primary necessity of being an economically 'civilised country' (*bunmeikoku*) there was also now the need for raising 'a great nation' (*dai-kokumin*), a morally 'civilized nation' (*bunmei kokumin*). And it was especially by this extra standard of a nation with a high moral standing that Horie, and with him many other intellectuals whose outlook on the world was to a great extent determined by the West European grinding of their glasses, found their fellow-countrymen fundamentally lacking.

However, in the end, the economic criteria of industrialisation and free trade carried considerably more weight than the moral criteria of civilisation, making Japan despite its many deficiencies in the field of political and social equality a safe and sound part of the elite of civilised nations. And accordingly, Japan, the only non-Western economically advanced member, was still considered to have the right and obligation to lead economically undeveloped neighbouring countries to economic civilisation. While the moral criteria often showed up in the case of Japan's self-perception in comparison to the Western democracies in order to accentuate that the country still had a long way to go on the road of civilisation and had better be humble,

233 'Kokusai taishaku riron to waga kuni keizaikai no kiki'. *Kaizō*, 1923.7: pp.52-53; 'Gunbi shukushō ni taisuru keizaikan'. *Kaizō*, 1924.10: p.114.

being the object of the application of these criteria simultaneously was an honour and privilege of the economically civilised few. The gap between Japan and the rest of the non-Western world was considered so wide that these same criteria did not even feature when the relations between Japan and its Asian neighbours were under consideration.

Although Horie's fundamental view of the world order did not thus change significantly, he made conscientious efforts to bring his economic liberalist stand in line with the trends of 'the new age of Taishō'. Ironically, it were exactly these efforts which led to discrepancies in the policies Horie proposed on the various levels of economic life and for which he was taken to task by contemporary and postwar commentators. These discrepancies are difficult to deny, but then, discrepancy between debate on the internal level and the external level was hardly exceptional and, in the political variety of the 'constitutionalism inside, imperialism outside' (*uchi ni wa rikkenshugi, soto ni wa teikokushugi*) dichotomy, has often been characterised as the point of departure of his generation.²³⁴ Although the laissez-faire liberalist argument of free trade on the world level was indeed somewhat at odds with his stress on Sino-Japanese economic cooperation on the regional level and seemed at complete loggerheads with the interventionist state capitalism on the national level, I have already discussed that Horie had the tendency to lose quite a lot of his free trade idealism the closer he got to his homeland and that the mixture is not as unsystematic and incompatible as it seems. Economic reality is seldom well served with purist theories, and in this sense one can only praise Horie for not trying to find the one and only absolute solution to Japan's problems by means of a dogmatic scheme, but instead outlining certain directions at the various economic levels which definitely do not completely exclude one another. His 'state capitalism' was a somewhat vague term which tried to avoid socialist connotations, but pretty much came down to the implementation of social democratic measures aimed at reforming an unrestrained capitalist order to a more equal social, economic and political order. Although his 'Sino-Japanese economic cooperation' indeed intruded upon the principle of free trade, Horie made it clear that it was not to become an exclusionist alliance and it very much had the character of a temporary compromise in an age in which sea routes were not yet secure and Japan was confronted with protectionism and racial discrimination in the West and in the Western colonies. And as for his ideal of world free trade, Horie would not have minded some more regulation and intervention on the international level. This is evident, for instance, from his frequent calls for an autonomous international organ with the exclusive task of opening up the colonies and securing the equal distribution of raw materials, an institution he considered essential since the invisible hand of economic liberalism was not yet strong enough to reform vested interests. However, probably because the institutional basis and support for such an initiative were completely absent or, in the case of the League of Nations, underdeveloped, this part of Horie's international argument also remained underdeveloped. In either case, Horie himself was not aware of any fundamental contradiction, as he pointed out that the forms of economic cooperation at the various levels were all based on the three keystones of 'free competition, private property, and love for mankind', the latter element probably best reflected in his strong notion of political, social and economic equality.²³⁵ And who would nowadays object to a nation that combined a political economy based upon a social democratic model at home

234 Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974.

235 'Shihonshugiteki keizaikan wo aratamezareba sekai heiwa narabi ni jinrui-ai no jitsugen katashi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.8: pp.71-72.

with participation in some form of a regional economic union, partnership in various extra-regional free trade agreements, and membership of the World Trade Organisation?

Horie was a representative exponent of the opinion leaders of his generation - left of centre, yet to the right of the socialist left - many of whom were able to overcome the 'constitutionalism inside, imperialism outside' dichotomy of the late Meiji and early Taishō periods. Horie, for his part, arrived at 'social democracy inside, anti-imperialism outside' (*uchi ni wa shakai minshushugi, soto wa hi-teikokushugi*), a much more harmonious combination. Politically one can see connections with the Kenseikai - Minseitō camp, of which several contributions by Horie to their party organs bear witness, although he ultimately supported the non-communist proletarian parties like the Rōdō Nōmintō and the Shakai Minshūtō. However, in Horie's case the demand for the democratisation of the political order should be primarily seen as the logical outcome of his aim to bring about a morally condonable (equalitarian) economic order. On the international level this economic and moral outlook, which superseded ideological, political and strategic considerations, even enabled him to condone the communist experiment of the Soviet Union and he did not seem to consider the ideological standardisation of the various national political systems as a necessary condition to attain a stable world order. The anti-imperialism of the Taishō generation did not develop into anti-colonialism and Horie was no exception to the rule. Compared to his contemporaries he was even quite generous in advocating 'economic liberty, equality and fraternity' in the case of Korea, but promises of political freedom did not come forth.²³⁶ However, his anti-imperialism did result in a firm rejection of economic imperialism, primarily focused on the case of China (which of course was the primary focus of almost all debate on international relations from the 1910s all the way through the 1930s). He did not consider China an economically civilised country, far from that, and neither did he think of it as a modern nation state. But he was adamant that China had to be treated as an equal in the sense of an independent and sovereign state, an attitude which of course could not be without serious consequences for Japan's informal empire in China. In 1917 Horie had already casually remarked that combining a policy of self-sufficiency with economic expansion in China was as easy as 'threading a camel through the eye of a needle',²³⁷ and during the 1920s, in sharp contrast to a younger generation of opinion leaders, he opted for a way out of this mission impossible in the form of Sino-Japanese economic cooperation on equal terms. This choice was inspired by many factors, such as his belief in an inevitable trend towards ever-expanding economic units - which for Japan in the first place amounted to East-Asia - in the process towards one world market, his acute awareness of Japan's inherent economic weakness and relative moral backwardness within the group of civilised nations, his recognition of China's potential economic strength, and the extension of his compassion to oppressed people overseas as identical victims of the capitalist international order. Together with the increasing impact of the Chinese nationalist movement during the mid-1920s, these factors enabled Horie not merely to give 'the retarded little brother' the benefit of the doubt but even to publicly entertain every once in a

236 'Chōsen keizai shikan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.6: pp.80-84. On the basis of this article Kan Donjin also treats Horie in a positive way in his overview of the discourse on Korea in the Japanese printed media during the colonial period. *Nihon genronkai to Chōsen, 1910-1945*, Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1984: pp.278-79.

237 'Shina keizai zakkan'. *Taiyō*, 1917.12: p.33.

while the vision of a future in which Japan would have to share the East Asian stage with an at least equally economically civilised China, a prospect for which the larger part of his fellow-countrymen even nowadays are anything but mentally and emotionally prepared. However, most of the time he offered the reassuring future picture of Japan as a true ‘industrial nation’ (*sangyōkoku*) and ‘superior economic power’ (*yūtō keizairyoku*). Thus, without any form of protectionism and without a large empire, but with neighbour China as the safe haven for Japanese investments and the place where it could accumulate the capital surplus in order to compensate for its import surplus, it would finally fulfill Fukuzawa’s dream of Japan as the England of the East.²³⁸

238 For this dream of Fukuzawa see for instance his ‘Bunzai no giron ima yori kōzubeshi’. In Keiō Gijuku, comp., *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, vol,12, Iwanami Shoten, 1960: pp.87-90.

CHAPTER 3

YOSHINO SAKUZŌ

THE QUEST FOR INTERNATIONAL MORALITY

INTRODUCTION

Since Yoshino Sakuzō has been set on a pedestal as the figurehead of the so-called ‘Taishō Democracy’ there is, in contrast to my other case studies, no lack of previous research into his person. Moreover, in line with Mitani Taichirō’s characterisation of the late 1910s and early 1920s as ‘the age of Yoshino Sakuzō’, there is hardly any work covering this period in Japan or any general history of (modern) Japan, including Japanese school textbooks, which fails to mention him.¹ As a result the majority of Japanese today will upon hearing his name immediately come up with ‘*Taishō demokurashii*’ and ‘*minponshugi*’, the two words more or less exclusively associated with Yoshino, while they will look at you in stupor when one mentions the names of either Horie Kiichi, Sugimori Kōjirō or Mizuno Hironori.

When looking at the vast amount of literature on Yoshino one must admit that the appreciation of Yoshino in the postwar period has traversed a course of constant ups and downs. In the immediate postwar days Yoshino was called upon as the most important witness by those who thought democracy was anything but incompatible with Japan and who looked back to the prewar period for proof of Japan’s democratic roots. A clear sign of the importance newly attached to Yoshino is the fact that a start was made with the publication of an eight-volume collection of his ‘democratic’ books and articles within a year of the end of the war.² The few biographies of Yoshino so far are also good examples of this trend and characterise him in their titles as ‘the apostle of Japanese democracy’ and ‘an exponent of democratic ideals in Japan’.³ However, this admiring view of Yoshino was before long attacked by Japanese Marxist scholars, who in the first decades after the war had an overpowering influence in Japanese academia, especially in the humanities. In their rather dogmatic view of man and world history they found it very hard to praise Yoshino who, despite a considerable amount of socialist influences, had been a staunch anti-communist and, instead of an outstanding democrat, they chose to characterise him as just another capitalist bourgeois imperialist.⁴ In Yoshino’s case this backlash after a short period of rather uncritical praise was not all that surprising. Apart from regular rightist attacks on

1 Mitani emphasised the pivotal role of Yoshino by adding the subtitle ‘the age of Yoshino Sakuzō’ to the revised edition of his 1974 ‘classic’ on Taishō democracy. Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii-ron – Yoshino Sakuzō no jidai*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1995.

2 Yoshino Shunzō, ed., *Yoshino Sakuzō hakase minshushugi ronshū*, 8 vols, Shinkigensha, 1946-47.

3 Oddly enough, for a long time there were only two biographies of Yoshino, one in Japanese and one in English, which are both from the 1950s and are rather dated. Tanaka Sōgorō, *Yoshino Sakuzō - Nihonteki demokurashii no shitō*, Miraisha, Tokyo 1958; Walter Scott Perry, *Yoshino Sakuzō, 1878-1933: Exponent of Democratic Ideals in Japan*, Stanford University, May 1956. The former is a eulogistic ‘critical biography’ (*hyōden*), which was made with the special cooperation of Yoshino’s family. The latter is an unpublished dissertation, which deals extensively with Yoshino’s education and his views on national politics but does not go into his views on international politics. After half a century, last year finally saw the publication of a third biography of Yoshino, in the new Japanese biographies series by Minerva Shobō. *Yoshino Sakuzō – Jinsei ni gyakkyō wa nai* was written by Tazawa Haruko, who was affiliated to the Yoshino Sakuzō Memorial museum for twelve years. She also portrays Yoshino as ‘the father of Japanese democracy’ but most of all provides a lot of details about Yoshino’s life and connections.

4 Inoue Kiyoshi, ‘Gendaishi gaisetsu’, in *Iwanami Kōza Nihon Rekishi*, vol.18, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1963, pp.35-36. Kobayashi Yukio, ‘Teikokushugi to minponshugi’, in *Iwanami Kōza Nihon Rekishi*, vol.19, Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1963, pp.97-99; Miyamoto Matahisa, ‘Teikokushugi to shite no minponshugi - Yoshino Sakuzō no tai-Chūgoku seisaku’. *Nihonshi Kenkyū*, no.91(1967): pp.33-52.

his ideas he had during his lifetime also often been the object of attacks from both the ‘democratic’ and ‘socialist’ camps. The former accused him because of his ‘watered down’ form of democracy, *minponshugi*, which tried to find a balance between democracy and the autocratic Meiji Constitution, and the latter accused him because of his ‘lukewarm’ support of the proletarian movement, which he time and again admonished to remain within the limits of gradual and peaceful reform.⁵ Still, whatever the grade of purity of the ideas Yoshino held on ‘democracy’ or ‘social justice’, most of the postwar Marxist critics did not go as far as to describe him as a “liberalist fascist” or “a capitalist dog”, as some prewar critics had done.⁶

After Shinobu Seizaburō in the second half of the 1950s had coined the term ‘Taishō democracy’ in his seminal work *Taishō demokurashii-shi*, thus suggesting that prewar democracy in Japan had not been limited to big-wigs as Yoshino but was much more widespread and covered a whole distinct period that could be termed democratic, a younger (and less or non-Marxist) generation of Japanese historians rushed into this ‘new’ area of research, which resulted in a wave of Taishō-studies from the mid-1960s up to the mid-1970s.⁷ Although the definition of ‘Taishō democracy’ tended to vary to a great extent and as a result there was not even consensus over its dating, within their research Yoshino was usually depicted either as one of the figureheads or even as *the* symbol of this Taishō democracy. However, while researchers like Matsuo Takayoshi and Mitani Taichirō had no hesitation whatsoever in once again highlighting Yoshino as an example of the possibilities prewar Japanese democracy contained and thus as a point of reference for ‘postwar democracy’⁸, before long a revisionist group emerged which rather emphasised the limitations of both Yoshino and Taishō democracy. It was Itō Takashi who, in a review together with Arima Manabu of four ‘Taishō democracy books’ (amongst which Matsuo’s and Mitani’s), set the cat among the pigeons by rejecting both the concept of ‘Taishō democracy’ and the general characterisation of the Taishō period as a time of democracy.⁹ This conclusion was in line with an earlier article in which he took the debate on

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- 5 A good example of the ‘democratic’ camp was Murobuse Kōshin, a critic who at the very early age of 23 joined the debate on democracy and adamantly rejected diluted types of democracy, including Yoshino’s *minponshugi*, in his *Demokurashii kōwa*, Nihon Hyōronsha, 1919. A representative of the ‘socialist’ camp was Yoshino’s pupil and son-in-law and later state-socialist Akamatsu Katsumaro. His description of his father-in-law as a utopian pacifist, unaware of the new materialist age calling for direct action, was anything but flattering. ‘Heiwashugisha to shite no Yoshino Sakuzō ron’. *Kokusai Chishiki*, 1925.1: pp.131-34.
- 6 Ōyama Ikuo, ‘Jiyūshugi no fuashizumuka-teki keikō’, *Kaizō*, 1927.5, pp.15-32, Hososako Kanemitsu, ‘Yoshino Horie ryō-hakase no fashizumu-ka’, *Taiyō*, 1927.4, pp.84-7.
- 7 Shinobu Seizaburō, *Taishō demokurashii-shi*, vol.1-3, Nihon Hyōronsha, Tokyo, 1954-59. The wave of Taishō-democracy studies started off with the following three works: Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii no kenkyū*, Aoki Shoten, 1966; Imai Seiichi, *Taishō demokurashii*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1966; Kinbara Samon, *Taishō demokurashii no shakaiteki keisei*, Aoki Shoten, 1967. It can be said to have ended by 1973-74 with the following four works: Kano Masanao, *Taishō demokurashii no teiryū*, Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1973; Kinbara Samon, *Taishō-ki no seitō to kokumin*, Hanawa Shobō, 1973; Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974; Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii-ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974.
- 8 Matsuo Takayoshi, ‘Taishō demokurashii to gendai’ in *Taishō demokurashii no gunzō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1990. Ibid, ‘Taishō demokurashii to sengo minshushugi’ in *Taishō-jidai no senkōsha-tachi*, Iwanami Shoten, 1993, pp.307-23. Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii-ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974, pp.42, 291-2.
- 9 Arima Manabu, Itō Takashi, ‘Shohyō’. *Shigaku Zasshi*, 84-3, pp.60-72.

Taishō democracy a step further by proposing the concept of the ‘reform generation’, a new generation which came to the fore in the latter part of the Taishō period that was not so much looking for democracy as for reform, whether to the left or to the right.¹⁰ Itō’s concept was very influential and before long this new framework was introduced in American scholarship as well, presenting to these shores for the first time a picture of Yoshino, no longer as a figurehead or a symbol of prewar Japanese democracy, but rather as an impractical idealist of a “lost generation” who had failed to provide the ‘reform generation’ with a sensible blueprint for reform.¹¹ Although I wonder how many truly original thinkers arise in each decade and have my doubts as to whether there was any representative of this ‘reform’ generation who came up with constructive alternatives to the collision-course of ‘destruction of the status quo’, I do not hesitate to admit that Yoshino certainly did not have a very creative and original mind. Yet I do think that, although not so much in his arguments as in his conclusions, he was a good representative of his generation, which I would hardly dare to call ‘lost’. What is the basis for determining that the generation that is being ignored by a new generation is ‘lost’ and not the generation that ignores the achievements of the older generation? I am supported in this view by recent publications by specialists in the field of the history of modern Japanese political thought such as Mitani Taichirō, Banno Junji, Iida Taizō and Sakamoto Takao. Although their criteria tend to vary from support of political liberalisation, plural/two-party rule or representative government by a professional elite to something as elusive as the possession of ‘a critical spirit’, they all pick out Yoshino rather than another representative of the Taishō generation or a representative of the early-Shōwa generation as the link between Fukuzawa Yukichi and Maruyama Masao.¹² These scholars thus clearly position Yoshino both as *the* representative of the Taishō-period and as a very important figure within the history of modern Japanese political thought whose opinions are still relevant today, a fact which is also evident from the recent publication of Yoshino’s selected works.¹³ This status was once again confirmed by the fact that he is the only opinion leader of the prewar period whose face adorns one of the Japanese stamps

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- 10 Itō Takashi, ‘Nihon [Kakushin]-ha no seiritu’. *Chūō Kōron - Rekishi to Jinbutsu*, 1972.12: pp.28-53. He elaborated on his concept of the ‘reform generation’ in Itō Takashi, *Taishō-ki [Kakushin]-ha no seiritu*, Hanawa Shobō, Tokyo, 1978.
- 11 Tetsuo Najita, ‘Some Reflections on Idealism in the Political Thought of Yoshino Sakuzō’, in Bernard S. Silberman and Harry D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 1974: pp.29-66; Peter Duus, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō: The Christian as Political Critic’. *Journal of Japanese Studies* 4-2: pp. 301-26; Peter Duus, ‘Liberal Intellectuals and Social Conflict in Taishō Japan’, in Tetsuo Najita, J. Victor Koschmann, eds, *Conflict in Modern Japanese History - The Neglected Tradition*, Princeton University Press, 1982: pp.412-40.
- 12 Mitani Taichirō, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to gendai’ and ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Maruyama Masao’, in Mitani Taichirō, *Kindai Nihon no sensō to seiji*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997, pp.291-307, 379-86; Banno Junji, *Kindai Nihon no kokka kōsō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1996; Banno, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Fukuzawa Yukichi’. *Yoshino Sakuzō kinenkan kaikan isshūnen kinen kōen*, Yoshino Sakuzō Kinenkan, Furukawa 1996; Iida Taizō, *Hihan seishin no kōseki*, Chikuma Shobō, 1997, pp.117-221; Sakamoto Takao, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō no [minponshugi] - sono kako to genzai’, in Kindai Nihon Kenkyūkai, ed., *Nenpō Kindai Nihon kenkyū 18 - Hikaku no naka no kindai Nihon shisō*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1996, pp.225-58.
- 13 Yoshino’s selected works have been published as *Yoshino Sakuzō Senshū*, 15 vols. & 1 supplementary volume, Iwanami Shoten, 1995-97. Below this title will be abbreviated as YSS. Another clear sign of the importance attached to Yoshino is the opening, concurrent with the publication of his selected works, of the Yoshino Sakuzō Memorial Museum in his hometown Furukawa in Miyagi Prefecture.

in the ‘20th Century Series’ issued in 1999 and 2000.

Nonetheless, the above provides a good picture of the fact that the discussion about and the assessment of Yoshino up until now has been almost completely dominated by his ideas on national politics. This regrettably ignores the very large and original contribution he made to the contemporary debate on China and Korea. In Japan only Matsuo Takayoshi has consistently emphasised Yoshino’s considerable efforts on behalf of the Chinese and the Koreans and, apart from him, there have been one Korean and one Taiwanese scholar who in their own countries have called attention to Yoshino’s exceptional position within the prewar modern Japanese debate on respectively Korean rule and Chinese nationalism.¹⁴ Lately Hirano Yukikazu has somewhat more critically positioned him within the contemporary debate on colonial reform.¹⁵ Although it is inevitable that Yoshino’s opinion of China and Korea also features prominently in my assessment of his view of the outside world, since these two countries formed the main stage of Japan’s ‘foreign affairs’, below I will not merely focus on Yoshino’s prominent ideas on China and Korea per se but rather treat them as a part of the whole of his views on human nature, religion, civilisation, the relation between the individual, society, and the state, and the relation between the nation and international society, and such global issues as ethnic nationalism, imperialism and colonialism.

14 Matsuo Takayoshi, ‘Profile of Asian Minded Man VII - Sakuzō Yoshino’. *Developing Economies* 5-2: pp.388-404; Matsuo, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Chōsen’. *Jinbun Gakuhō* 25(1968): pp.125-49; Matsuo, ed., *Yoshino Sakuzō - Chūgoku Chōsenron*, Tōyō bunko 161, Heibonsha, 1970; Kan Don-jin, *Nihon genronkai to Chōsen 1910-1945*, Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1984; Huang Zijin, *Yoshino Sakuzō dui jindai Zhongguo de renshi yu pingjia 1906-1932* (Yoshino Sakuzō’s understanding and evaluation of modern China, 1906-1932), Zhonghua Minguo Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Jindaishi Yanjiusuo, Taibei, 1995.

15 Hirano Yukikazu & Miki Shingo, Yoshino Sakuzō no [Chōsenron] wo yomu. *Bunka Kōryūshi Kenkyū*, inaugural issue (May 1997), pp.145-55; Hirano Yukikazu, ‘Teikoku kaizō no seiji shisō – sekai sensō-ki no Yoshino Sakuzō’. *Taikensan Ronsō*, no.34 (Dec. 2000), pp.1-30.

1 THE LIFE OF YOSHINO SAKUZŌ

Yoshino was born on 29 January 1878 in the merchant town of Furukawa, Shida Gun in Miyagi Prefecture, not far from the city of Sendai, the centre of Japan's northeastern region.¹⁶ His father Toshizō ran the Yoshino-ya, a tiny family business which combined small-scale wholesale trade - selling raw cotton to the surrounding neighbourhood - with domestic industry - making cotton products themselves. Yoshino was born as the third child and eldest son into this family of townsmen, which was eventually to have a total of twelve children. His father was politically active. He participated in the local *Jiyū Minken Undō* (Movement for Freedom and Civil Rights) and he served as mayor of Furukawa at the turn of the century. But as a true Meiji man he also had a strong interest in education, especially that of his own children. After finishing eight years of elementary and higher elementary school in his hometown he allowed his eldest son to go to the newly established middle school in Sendai in 1892. This was very uncommon for a son of a *townsman* but even more so for an eldest son. This unexpected development had only been possible because the family council had decided that not he but the branch of his elder sister would continue the family line and thus Yoshino, like a second son, was 'fortunately' free to commit himself to his studies. As he was also the first scion of Furukawa to go to a middle school, the whole town turned out for his festive departure to Sendai and collectively presented him with a copy of the *Genkai* dictionary. Although his mother had to start sericulture to make ends meet, the costs of her son's education were considerably alleviated by the fact that he was exemplary in his studies; as a 'student of distinction' who almost without exception graduated at the top of his year he was not merely accepted to middle school, higher school and university without entrance examinations but also, more importantly, exempted from tuition fees.

In Sendai Yoshino came into contact with the works of the Scottish enlightenment and such writers as Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill, which were influential amongst his middle school friends, but his main interests lay in literature. Having become acquainted with books at a very early age because the family business included a distribution agency for newspapers and books, Yoshino was very much a so-called '*bungaku seinen*' (literary youngster), continually sending poems and essays to magazines and compiling his own literary coterie periodicals.¹⁷ A very large part of his education consisted of being drilled to write perfect compositions, a task at which Yoshino proved himself to be exceptionally talented. This training would help him out considerably in his future very prolific writing career, although by the mid-1910s he needed a considerable amount of further training to adjust the archaic writing style he had mastered to a more colloquial style in order to reach a wider audience. Some of his writings of these early years even made it into magazines and in 1895 he made himself known amongst the *bungaku seinen* nationwide, when his contribution won a literary contest in the popular student magazine *Gakusei Hissenjō* (Student's battlefield of prose). Ōtsuki Fumihiko, the wellknown author of the

16 If not specifically mentioned the facts concerning Yoshino's early life and education are drawn from Tanaka Sōgorō, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Miraisha, 1958: pp.1-39; Walter Scott Perry, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Stanford, May 1956: pp.1-19; Yoshino Sakuzō Kinenkan, ed., *Yoshino Sakuzō – Taishō demokurashii no kishu*, Yoshino Sakuzō Kinenkan, Furukawa, 1995: pp.1-9; Matsuo Takayoshi, 'Yoshino Sakuzō nenpu' in *YSS*, bekkā, Iwanami Shoten, 1997: pp.71-106.

17 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Honya to no shitashimi', 'Tōshoka to shite no omoide' and 'Shōnen jidai no tsuioku' in *YSS*, vol.12, Iwanami Shoten, 1995: pp.40-41, 47-52, 53-55.

Genkai dictionary and principal of the Sendai middle school, was so impressed by Yoshino's qualities that he asked him to become the heir to his impeccable family line of *yōgaku* (Western learning) scholars formerly serving the Date clan, but the latter declined the offer.¹⁸ On the other hand Yoshino had a liking for arithmetic, which he nurtured "to keep his brains in training", and at the end of his time in middle school he developed a strong interest in philosophy. In line with this latest interest he had even applied to be allowed into the philosophy course of the Sendai Higher School but, due to strong pressure from a senior, he eventually entered the law course in 1897.¹⁹

During his higher school years Yoshino, as 'a model student', became head of a boarding-school house where he had great influence upon several middle school students because of his Spartan lifestyle and he created his first 'series' of disciples. He also seems to have opened his own private school, an act which earned him the name of 'imitator of Yoshida Shōin'.²⁰ Nevertheless, it was not 'the Japanese tradition' that Yoshino turned to as a handhold in his adolescent years. Sendai was one of the few centres of Christian influence in Japan, which in the form of both official and unofficial education was especially strong amongst elite students and, following the example of many of his senior students, Yoshino started to attend bible classes. Just as in the case of the many ambitious Japanese young men who joined the faith during the Meiji period only to discard it at a later stage, for him also Christianity at first was probably nothing more than a door to the English language and Western civilisation, two very important means on one's way to success in those days. However, in his case Christianity evidently succeeded in striking a deeper note. His Christian friends had looked on somewhat puzzled when Yoshino suddenly stepped forward to be baptised in the Baptist faith in July 1898, less than a year after he started attending bible classes. And, like he confessed himself, at the outset he may have been motivated by the desire to overcome his weakness of will or merely looking for a meaning to a life that consisted of a daily routine of studying, going out for walks, playing tennis, perusing old book stores and visiting the theatre. Be that as it may, this doesn't change anything to the fact that he remained a conscious and proud Christian for the remainder of his life.²¹ Soon after his conversion he wrote a scathing attack on Buddhism, as manifested by Kamo no Chōmei's *Hōjōki*, but before long he realised that intolerance towards long-standing indigenous traditions was short-sighted and better left to flamboyant men like Fukuzawa Yukichi.²²

18 Yoshino Sakuzō Kinenkan, ed., *Yoshino Sakuzō – Taishō demokurashii no kishu*: p.5; Furukawa Shishi Hensan Inkaï, *Furukawa shishi*, vol.5, Furukawa-shi, 2001: pp.832-33.

19 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Shōnen jidai no tsuioku' in *YSS*, vol.12, Iwanami Shoten, 1995: p.57.

20 Mayama Seika, 'Seinen jidai no Yoshino-kun' in Akamatsu Katsumaro, ed., *Ko-Yoshino hakase wo kataru*, pp.126-30.

21 Uchigasaki Sakusaburō, 'Yoshino Sakuzō-kun to watakushi' and Kurihara Motoi, 'Sendai jidai no Yoshino Sakuzō-kun' in Akamatsu Katsumaro, ed., *Ko-Yoshino hakase wo kataru*, pp.100-04, 108-09. For a more objective and critical interpretation of Yoshino's conversion see Peter Duus, 'Yoshino Sakuzō: The Christian as Political Critic'. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 4-2: pp.303-09. There seems to be some confusion concerning the exact date of Yoshino's conversion: Matsuo Takayoshi's chronology in the recently published collected works, which otherwise is very dependable, gives 4 July 1898 as the date of Yoshino's conversion although Yoshino himself in a letter to Suzuki Bunji of a year later gives 3 July 1899. *YSS*, bekkān, Iwanami Shoten, 1997: pp.76 and 4. Considering the fact that the day of his baptism is most likely to have been a Sunday, the latter date seems to be the correct one.

22 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Hyōronka to shite no jibun narabi Sassa Seiichi sensei no koto', *Shinjin*, 1918.1-3. In

Nevertheless, although he retracted part of his criticism it is not hard to see that the pessimistic Buddhist view of life was not in line with the optimistic ideas on gradual progress Yoshino had by then formulated. It may seem strange that the Christian belief with its ideas of original sin and human depravity fitted the bill instead, but this depended greatly on the strong influence exerted upon Yoshino by the charismatic congregationalist Ebina Danjō. The pastor of the Hongō church in Tokyo, who was often invited to preach in Sendai, did not merely proclaim a line of faith that did away with the most unscientific orthodox elements of Protestantism as propounded by the foreign missionaries but also put forward a view of man and society that was profoundly optimistic and supplied ample opportunities for social improvement.²³ The majority of the Christian population in Japan never joined in the debate on factional disputes over religious doctrine and Yoshino was no exception in ignoring Christian dogma. One can surmise that various factors such as the relative scarcity of Catholics, the recent and simultaneous introduction of the various Protestant creeds, and the common underdog position of Christians within Japanese society, collectively led to a situation in which factional distinctions were not so outspoken as in the ‘originating countries’. It is most likely this phenomenon in combination with the novelty and Western character of Christianity contributed to the fact that many educated Japanese had a very positive image of the Christian church as progressive, in sharp contrast to their Western counterparts who had generally come to look upon the church as a conservative institution and a serious obstacle. It was this image of Christianity as an egalitarian and social instrument which, apart from the above-mentioned opportunistic reasons, made many members of Japan’s young new elite join the faith. And because the church in Japan indeed lived up to this image, functioning as the cradle of social reform movements such as the labour union movement and the socialist movement, many of those who had joined for this reason remained true to their ‘faith’. Last but not least, it was also during his higher school days in Sendai that Yoshino befriended his junior Suzuki Bunji, a fellow Christian and the later leader of Japan’s first labour union, and that he married his wife Abe Tamano.²⁴ Most people tend to emphasize his conversion as the most important event at this stage in his life, but the fact that he married and took upon himself heavy financial responsibilities so early in life - only 21 years old and still a higher school student - kept haunting him for the rest of his life.

In September 1900 Yoshino moved to Tokyo, leaving behind his wife who in the same month gave birth to their daughter Nobu, the first of their seven children.²⁵ At the Imperial

YSS, vol.12: pp.9-10; Mayama Seika, ‘Seinen jidai no Yoshino-kun’, in Akamatsu Katsumaro, ed., *Ko-Yoshino hakase wo kataru*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1934: p.134.

23 Peter Duus, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō: The Christian as Political Critic’. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 4-2: pp.309-17.

24 Yoshino’s younger brother Shinji, who later served as minister in the cabinets of Konoe Fumimaro and Hatoyama Ichirō, later married Tamano’s younger sister Kimiyo. Japan’s famous playwright Inoue Hisashi, who attended the same highschool as Yoshino, has recently written a work centred on the relation between the two brothers (and the two sisters) who ended up on opposite sides of the political spectrum. Inoue Hisashi, *Ani otōto*, Shinchōsha, 2003. The play was enacted by Komatsuza in 2003 and 2006.

25 Yoshino’s numerous offspring is probably not unrelated to the fact that he was only rather late in life ‘bestowed’ with one son, after his wife had already given birth to five daughters. Four of these daughters, moreover, had male-sounding names. Yoshino’s weekly Friday evening visit hour also proved very fruitful in the sense that the majority of these daughters married to Tōdai students who frequented his

University of Tokyo he entered the Faculty of Law, the ‘Tokyo University within Tokyo University’. Although he had thought about enrolling in the department of economics, in the end he was most attracted by the legal scholar Ichiki Kitokurō and accordingly entered the department of political science.²⁶ However, just as important for Yoshino’s training were his extracurricular activities in Christian circles. He had immediately joined the Tokyo University YMCA and had settled down in an affiliated boarding house and before long he also became a leading member of the Hongō congregational church of his spiritual guide Ebina Danjō. A few months before Yoshino’s arrival Ebina had started the magazine *Shinjin* (New Man), which in line with Ebina’s open-minded attitude promised “to stand above the various factions and to treat religion, morality, education, philosophy and art”.²⁷ Yoshino began to help out with the editing, two years later started writing articles for the magazine, and another two years later became an editor himself. Apart from the articles on religious matters he specifically wrote for the Christian readership of the magazine, it was also the training ground for his first attempts at non-academic ‘*bunmei hihyō*’ (*Kulturkritik*) articles.²⁸ Moreover, Ebina also offered Yoshino a platform, in the form of the Sunday evening services at the Hongō church, to start his career of speaking in public.

Whereas Yoshino acknowledged Ebina Danjō as having been his religious mentor it was Onozuka Kiheiji whom he thanked for having helped him to form his opinions in the field of his scholarly specialism.²⁹ Onozuka had returned from Europe in 1901 to take up a professorship in political science and political history at Tokyo University, where he put democracy on the department’s curriculum for the first time. In his classes, which Yoshino enthusiastically attended, he strongly advocated the gradual adjustment of Japan to the international trend of democracy in the Hegelian way of ‘aufheben’ - combining the best of the old and the new. It was also through him that Yoshino was influenced by Richard Schmidt’s treatment of the state as nothing but a temporary historical and social phenomenon.³⁰ In the same year that Yoshino came under the influence of Onozuka’s ideas of gradual progress towards democracy he was also introduced to socialist theory through his lifelong friend Oyama Tōsuke, who later became a

house.

- 26 Ichiki Kitokurō is nowadays best known as a leading bureaucrat within the imperial household ministry and the privy council of the 1920’s and 30’s, but from 1894 until 1907 he was a professor of state law at Tokyo University, where he also inspired Minobe Tatsukichi with his embryonic idea of the emperor organ theory. Frank O. Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1965: pp. 25, 297.
- 27 Ebina Danjō (anonymous). ‘Hakkan no ji’, *Shinjin*, 1900.7, pp.1-2.
- 28 Until he left for Europe Yoshino published most of his contributions to *Shinjin* under the pen name of *Shōtensei* (he who ascends to heaven). Although the reach of *Shinjin* was limited (a circulation of 3-4000 copies in its heyday) and it was in the first place Ebina Danjō’s magazine, for Yoshino in his early years it had the function that *Chūō Kōron* would later fulfill. He kept writing on a monthly basis for the magazine and the affiliated women’s magazine *Shinjokai* (1909-1919) until the magazine ceased to exist in 1926. For these two magazines see Dōshisha daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, ed., [*Shinjin*] [*shinjokai*] *no kenkyū - nijū seiki shotō Kirisuto-kyō jaanarizumu*, Jinbunshoin, Kyōto, 1999.
- 29 Yoshino Sakuzō, ‘Yo no isshō wo shihai suru hodo no oinaru eikyō wo ataeshi hito, jiken oyobi shisō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.2: pp.107.
- 30 Tanaka Sōgorō, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Miraisha, 1958: pp.49-50; Rōyama Masamichi, *Nihon ni okeru kindai seijigaku no hattatsu*, Jitsugyō no Nihon-sha, 1949: p.85; Matsumoto Sannosuke, *Kindai Nihon no seiji to ningen*, Sōbunsha, 1966: pp.138-40.

member of the Diet for the Kenseikai, and together they attended lectures by the Christian socialists Abe Isoo, Kinoshita Naoe and Ishikawa Sanshirō.³¹ In the last year of his study he began to show his cosmopolitan and idealistic side by advocating and learning Esperanto, but that his idealism did not go as far as pacifism is clear from the articles he wrote for *Shinjin* in support of the war against Russia.³²

Yoshino graduated in July 1904 at the top of his class and was accordingly awarded the silver watch by the Meiji emperor. His ambition was to go to Europe, the cradle and centre of his trade of political history, but since there were no scholarships available he bided his time in the postgraduate course. At this stage Yoshino seemed destined to become an eminent scholar. Apart from his exemplary marks he had also given a very well received presentation on the legal philosophy of Hegel at Hozumi Nobushige's seminar. Immediately after his graduation it was published in a leading law magazine and in January 1905 it was subsequently made into Yoshino's maiden work, which was the first to introduce the principles of dialectical change to the Japanese public.³³ Nevertheless, the book was to be Yoshino's first and last true scholarly work, because at the time of its publication he had already given up his ambition of a purely academic career in favour of more practical social ambitions. During his student years he had become more and more impressed by such scholars as Ukita Kazutami, who did not confine themselves to the limits of their academic ivory tower but who instead had chosen to step down to the base level of newspapers and popular magazines in order to actively contribute to society at large.³⁴ Although Yoshino's reach at this time was still limited to the two magazines he co-edited, the Christian *Shinjin* and the academic *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, it is evident that he was more dedicated to his articles for the former magazine and that these articles more and more addressed such worldly affairs as national and international politics. The same magazine was the stage for both Yoshino's argument with the Christian socialist camp over the relation between the nation and the state and his own query into the question whether socialism and Christianity were compatible.³⁵ Another feat from this period which well reflects his increasing social consciousness was Yoshino's support in the formation of the Society for Study of the Korean Question (*Chōsen Mondai Kenkyūkai*), which nonetheless made no progress other than one talk by Shimada Saburō on the need for enlightened guidance of Korea.³⁶

Yoshino's development as a theoretician on the colonial question and the issue of the state versus society was temporarily stopped short in January 1906 by his financial strains, which compelled him to accept the offer to go to China for a period of two years in order to become the private teacher of Yuan Keding, eldest son of the then governor of Zhili province and later

31 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Minponshugi kosui jidai no kaiko'. In *YSS*, vol.12, Iwanami Shoten, 1995: pp.80-83.

32 Yoshino's two mentors Ebina and Onozuka also strongly supported the war, the latter even being one of the 'seven professors' who publicly urged the Katsura Cabinet to wage war against Russia.

33 Yoshino Sakuzō, *Heegeru no hōritsutetsugaku no kiso*, Hōri Kenkyūkai Shuppan, 1905. Reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1, Iwanami Shoten, 1995: pp.19-77.

34 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Minponshugi kosui jidai no kaiko' and 'Nitobe Inazō sensei to watakushi'. In *YSS*, vol.12: pp.81, 173-74.

35 Anonymous, 'Kokkadamashii to wa nanzo ya' (1905.2); Anonymous, 'Kinoshita Naoe kun ni kotau' (1905.3); Shōtensei, 'Heiminsha no kokkakan' (1905.4); Anonymous, 'Shakaishugi to kirisutokyō' (1905.9); Shasetsu kisha, 'Futatabi shakaishugi to kirisutokyō ni tsukite' (1905.10). The first four articles can be found in *YSS*, vol.1, Iwanami Shoten, 1995: pp.78-104.

36 Tanaka Sōgorō, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Miraisha, 1958: pp.82-85.

president of China Yuan Shikai. It turned out that Yoshino was not to see much of either Yuan Keding or, at first, his money and thus he immersed himself in the Japanese expatriate community in Tianjin, dividing his time between the church, the tennis court and the card room.³⁷ In the spring of the following year his assignment was somewhat adjusted in the sense that he had to teach international law almost every day at the military Northern Special Training Institute (Beiyang Teliansuo) and in the summer he subsequently started teaching political science and state law together with Imai Yoshiyuki at the Northern College of Law and Administration (Beiyang Fazheng Zhuanmen Xuetang), Yuan Shikai's newly established institution to train a new elite for a 'constitutional' China.³⁸ During his three year stay in China Yoshino seems to have hardly made any contacts with the Chinese and hardly set a foot outside Tianjin. He did not speak a word of Chinese to start with, but he was also rather taken aback by their different and 'uncivilised' ways. Accordingly, while there were various revolutionary incidents in South China in the years 1907-08, Yoshino at the time did not yet have any interest in a Chinese revolution:

At the time my heart was full of going to study in Western Europe, so I mainly studied English and German and hardly concerned myself with things Chinese. (...) I have only become profoundly interested in China since the Third Revolution of spring 1916.³⁹

Yoshino was back in Japan by January 1909 to assume the post of assistant professor of Political History at the Imperial University of Tokyo and to prepare himself for his next trip. As was common practice at the elite universities in those days, this new assignment meant that he would at last get the chance to go to the West and acquire the newest insights in his field of study, a prerequisite for many prospective professors. In May he was notified that he would be awarded a three-year Monbushō scholarship to study in Europe. Through the good offices of Ebina Danjō and Tokutomi Sohō he secured additional financial resources from Gotō Shinpei to support his large family at home.

On 1 June 1910, already 32 years old, Yoshino set his first steps on European soil, the cradle of his field of study and his religion. First he went to Heidelberg, where he enrolled at the university and stayed for 8 months. He was completely let down by the poor quality of the lectures, but this seems to have been a minor problem since most Japanese scholars did not come to Europe for the lectures but rather to use the libraries and do their own research, see the

37 Yoshino's boredom is well depicted in his diary of 1907, the only volume that remains of his China period. *YSS*, vol.13, Iwanami Shoten, 1996: pp.4-66.

38 Imai Yoshiyuki, 'Shina jidai no Yoshino-kun' in Akamatsu Katsumaro, ed., *Ko-Yoshino hakase wo kataru*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1934: pp.1-5. Perry's chapter on Yoshino's 'interlude in China', which is to a large extent based on this short piece by Imai, is full of mistaken assumptions and mistranslations and is best ignored.

39 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Hyōronka to shite no jibun narabi ni Sassa Seiichi sensei no koto'. *Shinjin*, 1918.1-3. In *YSS*, vol.12, p.5. See also his introduction to Miyazaki Tōten's *Sanjūsannen no yume*, which is reprinted in the same volume, p.314, 'Shina mondai ni tsuite'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.4, 1919.6, p.61 and a citation from this last article in 3.2, the first quote under the section *Sino-Japanese Friendship and the Sino-Japanese Economic Alliance*.

historical sights and immerse themselves in European culture.⁴⁰ Still Yoshino was somewhat different from his colleagues in the sense that he emphasised experiencing ‘Western civilisation in action’: “Yoshino spent the following two and a half years exploring the slums of the cities, observing diets and parliaments in session, attending rallies of the working men, listening to political speeches. He visited libraries, theatres, churches, and museums. Occasionally he paused at a university to meet a scholar who had attracted his attention.”⁴¹ In June 1911 Yoshino moved on to Vienna where he witnessed a demonstration against the rising food prices organised by the Socialist Party. Somewhat similar to Elias Canetti a few decades later, he was deeply impressed by the masses, their power and their orderliness.⁴² After three months he transferred to Berlin. During his stay there he visited the slums and showed a keen interest in the accomplishments of the Social Democrat Party. He was also impressed by the wide diffusion of political awareness amongst women.⁴³ In April 1912 Yoshino left Berlin to take the long way home via Jena, Würzburg, Strasbourg, Nancy, Paris, Geneva (especially to see the conventions of the Interparliamentary Union and the International Peace Association at work), Paris, Berlin, Schwelm, Brussels, Antwerp, London and Portland. He was in London for two and a half months, dividing his time between obtaining the latest information on the hot issues of universal suffrage, social democratic parties, labour unions, social policy and restriction of the powers of the Upper House and attending the last conversation classes he took while in Europe in German, Italian, French and English. In contrast to the countries of West and Central Europe, Yoshino did not seem to have any interest in the United States. He raced through ‘the new world’ without stopping along the way for more than one day. In his opinion there were no good books in the whole country on which to spend his money, so instead he indulged in the luxury of a slight detour to see the Niagara Falls.⁴⁴ On 3 July 1913 Yoshino was back in Tokyo, ready to take up the position of Professor in Political History at the Imperial University, the post he had been promised. In July 1914 he was indeed promoted to Professor and in September 1915 he was awarded the title of Doctor of Law.

However, there was more in store for him. Like many others who had come back with the latest information on the West, Yoshino was in the first few months after his homecoming visited by editors of magazines and newspapers with the request to write for their periodicals. The last in line was Takita Choin of *Chūō Kōron*, but he held the best cards. He was from the Tōhoku region and had also been at the Sendai Higher School and Tokyo University.⁴⁵ More important, he offered Yoshino a permanent position as leading columnist of his periodical, which had ousted

40 Yoshino Sakuzō, ‘Haideruberugu daigaku’. *Shinjin*, 1911.3. In *YSS*, vol.12: pp.273-4.

41 Walter Scott Perry, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Stanford University, May 1956: pp.58-59.

42 Yoshino Sakuzō, ‘Minponshugi kosui jidai no kaiko’. In *YSS*, vol.12: p.84; ‘Minshūteki jii undō wo ronzu’, *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.4. Reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: pp.31-32. Yoshino nikki, 1911-9-17,21, *YSS*, vol.13. For Elias Canetti, see the foreword to the Japanese edition of his ‘Masse und Macht’: *Gunshū to kenryoku*, vol.1, Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankai, 1971: pp.ii-iii.

43 Tanaka Sōgorō, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Miraisha, 1958: p.128.

44 Yoshino’s experience in Buffalo and Chicago made him grumble that “the most salient feature of American cities is the absence of bookshops and the abundance of car part retail shops”. Yoshino nikki, 1913-6-7,8, *YSS*, vol.13.

45 For a brief introduction to Takita Choin see Nihon Kindai Bungakkan, ed., *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten*, vol.2, Kōdansha, 1977: p.307.

Taiyō from the position of most prominent and influential general magazine of the day.⁴⁶ There were three factors which probably induced him to accept, although we can only speculate which one was decisive. In the first place, it gave him the ideal platform to vent his opinions, which had been strengthened during his stay in Europe, in order to contribute to the progress of his country. As already mentioned, this was a goal he had set more than a decade ago in admiration of predecessors like Takayama Chogyū, Ukita Kazutami and Nitobe Inazō. Furthermore, it gave him a considerable extra income which he needed to support his large household, numbering nine members at the time.⁴⁷ Another important factor was that Takita offered to write Yoshino's articles on the basis of their conversations, so Yoshino's prestigious 'official' obligations would not be hindered too much by his 'commercial' activities.⁴⁸ Yoshino's claim that at that time he had not been interested in writing for magazines and that Takita had willy-nilly dragged him into it do not ring very true considering his previous energetic contributions to more specialised periodicals like *Shinjin*, *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, *Shinjokai* and *Rikugō Zasshi*.⁴⁹ Nevertheless Yoshino's acceptance was both unusual and significant in the sense that it implied a big step away from academia. Yoshino was aware of this when he remarked that "Thus of my own doing I became half journalist".⁵⁰ Although he also inspired a wide group of disciples through his work at Tokyo University, the *Chūō Kōron* became his most important platform and Yoshino was and still is in the first place associated by most Japanese with his articles for this periodical. Starting with the New Year issue of 1915 he 'wrote' the opening editorial, one or more of the main articles and his 'comments upon current events' (*jihyō*, a column established for Yoshino), thus filling at least one tenth of every issue until December 1928 (except for 1924, when he had his short stint with the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, and 1925, when he was in hospital most of the time). His prominence in the pages of the widely read magazine gave Yoshino an unprecedented influence and it was an article in the January 1916 issue, '*Kensei no hongī wo toite sono yūshū no bi wo nasu no michi wo ronzu*' ('On the True Meaning of Constitutional Government and the

46 The standing of the *Chūō Kōron* was such that almost all intellectuals and students consulted it every month without fail and it was pretty much unrivaled until the arrival of the more left wing *Kaizō* in 1918. By this time the magazine had a monthly circulation of some 100,000 volumes. Sugimori Hisahide, ed., *Chūō Kōronsha no hachijū-nen*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1965: p.159. A survey from May 1916 by the Hitotsubashi Municipal Library also shows that it was the general magazine most in demand. See Nagamine Shigetoshi, *Zasshi to dokusha no kindai*, Nihon Editā Sukūru Shuppanbu, 1997: pp.150-56.

47 Judging from the figures for the years 1915-23, Yoshino's basic income as a university professor was hardly more than a third of his total monthly income. He had to earn the rest by writing articles and doing lecture tours. See Yoshino's list of earnings and expenditures in *YSS*, vol.15, Iwanami Shoten, 1996: pp.11-41 and Matsuo Takayoshi, 'Minponshugi kosui jidai no nichijō seikatsu'. In *YSS*, vol.14, Iwanami Shoten, 1996: pp.393-95. Apart from his own household, it is very well possible that Yoshino was also expected to partly support his younger brothers and sisters.

48 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Takita-kun to watakushi', *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.12. In *YSS*, vol.12: pp.153-55 Takita had clearly set his mind on Yoshino and supported him in every way until he died in 1925. The rather exceptional situation of the chief editor scribbling down the dictations of one of his 'employees' continued until 1922, when Yoshino decided to write his articles instead of dictating them in order to preserve "the flavour of my individuality". Yoshino nikki, 16 February 1922. In *YSS*, vol.14. Yoshino remained true to Takita by continuing to write the opening editorial (*kantōgen*) for *Chūō Kōron* even after he joined the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*.

49 Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Takita-kun to watakushi', *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.12 In *YSS*, vol.12: p.154.

50 *Ibid.*: p.154

Methods by which it can be perfected’), which established his name as the mouthpiece of the Taishō generation.⁵¹ From one day to the next, he became *the* authority on democracy, a position which together with his qualifications as an expert on the war going on in Europe and the revolutionary movement in China made Yoshino’s services very much in demand.⁵² His opinion on these three topics appeared in most of the major periodicals of his day and he was continually under way, doing lecture tours all over the country. However, Yoshino’s finest hour came in November 1918 when he accepted the challenge by the leaders of the anti-democratic Rōninkai to have a public ‘debate-duel’ and subsequently, in his own words, “completely skinned” his opponents and “triumphed”.⁵³ The result of the well attended and well publicised media-event was that Yoshino expanded from the mouthpiece of his own generation to the hero of a younger generation: “The excitement generated by this ‘debate for democracy’, not only among the young students and labourers who attended it but among liberal intellectuals in general, can scarcely be exaggerated, and it may be fairly interpreted as the event which launched the Taishō Democracy movement into full swing”⁵⁴ As a direct result of the debate two new societies came into being in which Yoshino’s influence was very prominent. Symbolic of Yoshino’s newly acquired ‘double status’ of serving two generations, the Reimeikai (Enlightenment Society) was a strictly balloted club of ‘professors with a mission’, consisting mainly of like-minded contemporaries, and the Shinjinkai (New Man’s Society) was a group of more radically minded students, for

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- 51 The article can be found in all of the postwar collections of Yoshino’s articles and parts of it have been translated in Ryūsaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore de Bary, Donald Keene, eds, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol.2, Columbia University Press, New York 1964: pp.218-39. Yoshino himself was very much aware of the special position of this article and upon finishing dictating it for three days to Takita he proudly noted in his diary that “it will be the longest article ever to be published in the Chūō Kōron since its foundation”. Yoshino nikki, 6 December 1915, in *YSS*, vol.14.
- 52 Yoshino was even sounded out on his ideas on democracy by those responsible for the education of the crown prince, who were anxious for their pupil to stay in touch with the times. Yoshino Sakuzō, ‘Shiga Shigetaka sensei’, *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5, in *YSS*, vol.12: pp.177-78; Yoshino nikki, 1 December 1918, in *YSS*, vol.14.
- 53 Yoshino nikki, 23 November 1918, in *YSS*, vol.14. The Rōninkai (est. 1908) was a statist association affiliated with Tōyama Mitsuru’s Genyōsha and Uchida Ryōhei’s Kokuryūkai. In 1918 they attacked the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, the most progressive and critical major newspaper of the day, which had been indicted of lèse-majesté by the Home Ministry on rather far-fetched grounds. Although one needed an extreme profound knowledge of the Chinese classics to be able to understand what the slip of the pen consisted of, Rōninkai members showed no qualms in molesting Murayama Ryūhei, the director of the *Asahi*. Yoshino’s strong criticism of their behaviour gave rise to the ‘debate-duel’, after which nothing much more was heard of the association.
- 54 Henry Dewitt Smith II, *Japan’s First Student Radicals*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1972; pp.43-44. The important contemporary *bunmei hihyōka* Hasegawa Nyozeikan, who was conspicuous for severe criticism of Yoshino on account of his ‘lack of attention for abstract political concepts’, nonetheless had to admit that it was exactly his interest in the political reality of the day and his pragmatic inclination which made reactionary politicians and the army consider Yoshino as their greatest opponent. ‘Yoshino Sakuzō hakase to kare no jidai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1933.5, reprinted in Iida Taizō, Yamarō Kenji, eds, *Hasegawa Nyozeikan hyōronshū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1989: pp.346-48. Yoshino himself was also aware that because of his authority and influence he was in danger of assaults from rightist factions and he had accordingly taken precautions at his weekly visitors evening. ‘Zadankai: Yoshino Sakuzō’. *Sekai*, 1955.4: p.110.

which Yoshino acted as an ideological mentor.⁵⁵

The immediate postwar period saw Yoshino as the pivot of many developments within Japanese society, such as the universal suffrage movement, the labour movement, the social reform movement and the international peace movement. He was a councillor of the Yūaikai, chairman of a consumers cooperative, chairman of the Hongō YMCA, director of the San'ikukai hospital (a birthclinic for indigent women), founder of a bureau for legal aid, founding member of the Bunka Seikatsu Kenkyūkai (Esplora Instituto Por Kultura Vivo), member of the Social Policy Association, an active member of the Japan League of Nations Society, the Esperanto Society and the Arms Retrenchment Association and very actively involved in associations of Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean foreign students.⁵⁶ When one, apart from his involvement in all these organisations and his considerable contribution to the *Chūō Kōron*, takes into account the additional work he did on a permanent or occasional basis for a never-ending list of magazines and newspapers such as *Shinjin*, *Shinjokai*, *Fujin Kōron*, *Fujin no Tomo*, *Bunka Seikatsu*, *Kaizō*, *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, *Tōhō Jiron*, *Kokusai Renmei*, *Kaihō*, *Warera*, *Kaitakusha*, *Myōhō*, *Meiji Bunka Kenkyū*, *Keizai Ōrai*, *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun* and *Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun*, it is not hard to imagine that Yoshino was not spending as much time on his academic research as a serious scholar was supposed to do. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of 1918 Yoshino felt compelled to deny rumours that he was writing so much for newspapers and magazines that he had been admonished by the Dean of the Law Faculty not to neglect his scholarly duties. Still, the situation indeed was such that at the height of his popularity Yoshino was contributing more than one hundred lengthy articles a year to non-academic periodicals.⁵⁷ He made an end to this contradictory situation in February 1924 by his unprecedented move away from the citadel of knowledge, the Tokyo University, to - what, in comparison, was an extremely base level - a newspaper, the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*.⁵⁸ However, due to intervention from the government which was not so keen on having somebody as influential and critical as Yoshino writing on a regular basis for a mass medium such as one of

55 For the Reimeikai see Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974: pp.30-34. The best work up to date on the Shinjinkai is the above-mentioned book by Smith. Both groups are also dealt with in Itō Takashi, *Taishō-ki [Kakushin]-ha no seiritsu*, Hanawa Shobō, 1978: pp.13-89.

56 Amongst Yoshino's many connections to all sorts of associations and societies his membership in and function as respectable face of the Cosmo Club is probably the most remarkable. This club functioned as a platform for Chinese and Korean students and Japanese socialists and communists, amongst whom such prominent men as Sakai Toshihiko, Yamakawa Hitoshi, Ōsugi Sakae and Ōyama Ikuo. This short-lived club is another sign that Yoshino was very much on speaking terms with socialist and communist opinion leaders of his day, although he took care not to display these contacts in public. For the shortlived Cosmo Club (1920-23) see Matsu Takayoshi, 'Kosumo Kurabu shōshi'. *Kyōto Tachibana Joshi Daigaku Kenkyū Kiyō*, no.23 (1999): pp.19-58.

57 'Hyōronka to shite no jibun narabi ni Sassa Seiichi sensei no koto', *Shinjin*, 1918.1-3. In YSS, vol.12, Iwanami Shoten, 1995: p.3. Yoshino's 'overproduction' is substantiated by the impressive list of publications included in the additional volume (*bekkan*) to his collected works (pp.17-200). A list of sixty-one articles missing from this hard to complete list can be found on Matsuda Yoshio's invaluable homepage, at <http://www1.cts.ne.jp/~ymatsuda/yoshino-mokuroku.htm>.

58 There is of course the somewhat similar and very well-known case of Japan's most famous modern novelist Natsume Sōseki, who turned down offers by both Kyoto University and Tokyo University and handed in his resignation to the prestigious Tokyo First Higher School in order to join the same newspaper in 1907.

Japan's biggest newspapers, his effort was nipped in the bud.⁵⁹

Yoshino's failed attempt to expand his reach by making the mass medium of the nationwide newspaper into his main platform also marks the end of his heyday. His overwhelming influence in the latter part of the 1910's had been steadily challenged from the beginning of the 1920's onwards, when the basis he was standing upon was being rifted apart as a result of the polarisation of socialists and non-socialists. Many of the younger generation who had flocked to Yoshino's home and office were now the first to start looking elsewhere for a more radical solution to the problems in Japanese society than the long-term policy of sound and gradual reform he preached. Within a few years of its establishment the Shinjinkai was dominated by communist ideas. And even the professors club of his own generation, the Reimeikai, was crippled in September 1919 by the controversy over the government nomination of the labour representative to the first convention of the International Labour Organisation and was disbanded the following year. Yoshino joined the *Asahi Shinbun* at the beginning of 1924 on the precondition that he would be free to continue writing for other periodicals as well, but in effect the number of non-Asahi articles he could write was limited. Soon after his 'resignation' from the newspaper, he was hospitalised and had to take complete rest, thus prolonging his absence from public debate. By the end of 1925 he once again joined in, but he could no longer change the situation that the *Chūō Kōron* was the only major magazine that ran his articles on a regular basis.⁶⁰

After his stint with the *Asahi Shinbun*, Yoshino was once again encapsulated within Tokyo University, albeit this time on a very exceptional basis: in spite of the fact that his official position had decreased to that of a mere lecturer he was not only granted the privilege of having his own room but he even became the 'ideological adviser' to the president of the university.⁶¹ Although his bold attempt to sever ties with academia had thus ended in failure, the emphasis remained on his journalistic work and his more fundamental research, from 1921 until his death in 1933, was to a great extent within the scope of his new 'hobby', the collection and study of sources from the early Meiji period which would ultimately lead to the seminal *Meiji Bunka Zenshū*.⁶² Thus, unlike Horie and Sugimori, the other academics treated here, Yoshino never

59 The *Tōkyō Asahi* at the time had a daily circulation of over 250,000 newspapers. However, since it was tied up with the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, which had a circulation of over half a million, together they were almost as big as the number one, the *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*. These figures are based upon the graph in Sasaki Takashi, *Media to kenryoku (Nihon no kindai)*, vol.14, Chūō Kōronsha, 1999: p.351. By the way, these figures are quite different from those in the company history of Asahi, which gives a total of 1,46 million for 1924 and accordingly presents itself as the biggest newspaper. *Asahi Shinbun Hyakunenshi Henshū Iinkai, Asahi Shinbun Shashi – Taishō, Shōwa senzenhen*, Asahi Shinbunsha, 1991: pp.240-41. The most detailed discussion of Yoshino's short involvement with the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* is Matsuo Takayoshi, 'Minponshugi kosui jidai no nichijō seikatsu', *Shakai Kagaku*, 1928.2. In *YSS*, vol.14: pp.410-14. However, instead of my emphasis on Yoshino's predilection for the public over academia, Matsuo stresses the financial consequences of his generous support of Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean foreign students as the direct incentive for his switch to the Asahi. Matsuo Takayoshi, 'Yoshino Sakuzō no Chōsenron', in *YSS*, vol.9: pp.398-99 and 'Yoshino Sakuzō to Chōsen – saikō'. *Chōsenshi Kenkyūkai Ronbunshū*, no. 35 (October 1997): pp.14-15.

60 Even the *Chūō Kōron* discontinued Yoshino's monthly 'comments on current events' column in December 1928..

61 Mitani Taichirō, 'Bannen no kutō', in *YSS*, vol.15: pp.450-53.

62 Yoshino nikki, 1 January 1922, in *YSS*, vol.14. Considering the amount of time and money Yoshino

became an authority on his original research topic of Political History and Political Science, but this was the logical result of his decision early in life to serve the Japanese public rather than academia.⁶³ He achieved fame as a journalist, writing his comments on the political trends and events of the day; with only a few exceptions, the books he published were merely compilations of his magazine and newspaper articles.

invested in perusing through second hand bookstores and visiting book auctions all over the country, it is hard not to get the idea that his project had turned into a very private obsession, but for Yoshino himself the aim was strictly public and very political. In order to bring about political reform he thought it extremely important to make the Japanese people aware of the fact that, contrary to what they were often told, things had not always been the same since the days of emperor Jinmu and to show that, even since the comparatively recent promulgation of the Meiji Constitution, times had changed considerably and demanded a new and more enlightened political framework. Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Meiji bunka no kenkyū ni kokoroseshi dōki', in *YSS*, vol.11: pp.103-04.

- 63 In 1921 Yoshino reformulated this social mission in post-WWI vocabulary when he emphasised that he considered it to be one of his duties as a public man (*kōjin*) to vent his opinions to the general public by means of the popular media. 'Yo wa kaku okonai kaku kangae kaku shinzu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.241.

2 THE GOSPEL OF YOSHINO SAKUZŌ

2.1 Human Nature

Yoshino had an extremely optimistic view of human nature, a quality he described as the direct result of his Christian conviction. This does not imply that he thought that man was perfect. He knew that even the most pious saint had his weaknesses, but this was no proof for him that man was in essence evil. On the contrary, he bluntly stated that there were no true villains. He was of the conviction that man was fundamentally a virtuous being and thus worthy to be trusted in the first place.⁶⁴ In an article on 'religion and society' he contributed to *Shinjin* in 1921 he wrote as follows:

Man is principally good. If it turns out that he does wrong once in a while, this is merely because his development has been obstructed by his environment or his education. Even such a distorted person, when put on the right track, will naturally straighten.⁶⁵

Yoshino was of the opinion that if man was but freed from his environmental and educational restrictions he would be able not only to tell right from wrong but also to make progress without limit. Because all men were in first instance equally able to develop themselves, a feeling of mutual respect would naturally arise:

If man sees someone who is superior to himself he will not envy the other. He will see the reflection of his better future self in the other. To discover one's proper and ideal self in the other is to make progress. In striving to improve oneself until the self and the model become one, virtue arises. (...) One is due to attain this ultimate ideal if one exerts oneself. Although it seems as if there are limits to reaching this goal, we have the capacity for making unlimited progress. This is the Christian view of life. It is inevitable that one will make unlimited progress if one is only placed in the proper circumstances. All men have a future in which they can progress further and therefore the feeling of mutual respect arises.⁶⁶

Yoshino's strong conviction of the principal virtue of man and the tendency amongst men to respect one another as equal beings with an infinite potential to develop made him conclude that the fundamental character of man was not to compete against and fight each other but to love and help each other.⁶⁷ Another important deduction of this religious conviction was that he did not think that man had to be changed at heart to attain social, national or international reforms.

64 'Kojinteki sōi no yokuatsu'. *Shinjin*, 1920.8, reprinted in YSS, vol.12: p203; 'Shakai to shūkyō'. *Shinjin*, 1921.7: pp.206-07.

65 'Shakai to shūkyō'. *Shinjin*, 1921.7: p.206.

66 Ibid.: p.207. Yoshino made a point of noting that, since man happened to die somewhere halfway, as yet there had not been anyone who had attained this ultimate goal.

67 'Yo wa kaku okonai kaku kangae kaku shinzu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10, reprinted in YSS, vol.12: p.243.

Since man was more than able to tell right from wrong it was sufficient that he was made aware of the fundamental nature of his present reality. Being thus informed he would automatically come to moral self-reflection (*hansei*), the one word which probably best represents Yoshino's message to his readers, and naturally make the only right decision.

2.2 Individual, Society, and the State

The Individual and Society

The Meiji frame of mind, which combined a Darwinist belief in the evolution of mankind with the personal experience of rapid social advance as a self-made man, was in Yoshino's case considerably reinforced by his religious faith in the limitless development of each individual.⁶⁸ Although he thus seemed to support the cause of the individual, it is clear from his articles in every phase of his writing career that the perfection of the individual in itself was not high on his list of priorities. The words individual (*kojin*) and individualism (*kojinshugi* or *kojin honishugi*) only figure once or twice in the titles of his thousand-or-so articles and evidently did not form an important part of his political agenda. In 1905 he even spoke out against individualism as an extreme historical aberration and whereas in *minponshugi*, the form of democracy propagated by Yoshino, 'the people' are omni-present the individual is strikingly absent.⁶⁹ His assertion that "... human life first becomes possible at the group level and therefore it is only natural that collective demands restrict the individual ..." shows that he treated man predominantly as a social entity.⁷⁰ He had no doubt at all that man was first and foremost dependent upon society for his well-being and future development. A very good example of this principal stance was his opening editorial for the *Chūō Kōron* of February 1923 in which he poetically portrayed society as 'the soil in which the seed of man has to grow'.⁷¹

As mentioned above, Yoshino professed his trust in the limitless progress of man, but in his case 'mankind' was usually represented by 'the political nation' (*kokumin*) or 'the masses' (*minshū*) and hardly ever by the individual. In the same way it is clear from his writings that

68 For the 'Meiji frame of mind', see Matsumoto Sannosuke, *Meiji seishin no kōzō*, Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1981; Matsumoto, *Meiji shisōshi*, Shinyōsha, 1996; Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, Princeton University Press, 1985 (translation of *Meiji no bunka*, Iwanami Shoten, 1970): pp.196-218 and Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought*, University of California Press, 1981.

69 '[Kokka iryoku] to [shuken] to no kannen ni tsuite'. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1905.4: p.138.

70 'Sekaiteki kyōdō mokuteki ni taisuru Nihon no taido'. *Shinjin*, 1918.5: p.6. Tetsuo Najita invokes John Stuart Mill as the 'utilitarian' antipode to the 'idealist' Yoshino. Although on the one hand I have my doubts as to whether Yoshino was so void of utilitarian elements (especially in his advocacy of general suffrage and a two-party system one can find a fair amount of utilitarian arguments), on the other hand he and Mill are very much alike as far as they both stress the relative liberty of the individual, in the sense that the individual is first and foremost a social being and thus inevitably bound by 'socially beneficial' restrictions. Tetsuo Najita, 'Some Reflections on Idealism in the Political Thought of Yoshino Sakuzō', in Bernard S. Silberman and H.D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1974: pp.47-48.

71 'Jinrui no bunka kaiten ni okeru shushi, jiban, kōnetsu no san-yōin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.2: pp.1-2.

Yoshino's major aim was not so much to help elevate the individual Japanese but Japanese society as a whole. Accordingly, one cannot but observe that Yoshino hardly paid attention to the contradictions and the problems that might arise between the desires of the individual and the demands of society.

The above does not imply that he discarded the cause of freedom of the individual. On the contrary, every now and then he emphasised the need for man to be allowed a certain extent of freedom so he could use his creativity and grow.⁷² Moreover, when considering his background it is not surprising to learn that he was adamant on such fundamental human rights as the freedom of opinion and religion. However, in the case of Yoshino these needs and rights were never autonomous and absolute, but always argued from the point of view of the whole of society. For instance, he time and again harshly criticised the *Jiyū Minken Undō* (Movement for Freedom and Civil Rights) of the 1880's as irresponsible, since he thought the advocacy of absolute universal natural rights at a stage where the majority of the Japanese were still in a state of almost complete ignorance was socially detrimental. Another telling example is the fact that whereas Yoshino like most of his late Meiji predecessors and Taishō contemporaries also projected the *jinkakusha* (man of character) as the ideal objective for the individual to pursue, his interpretation of '*jinkaku*' (character) was rather different; he stressed the cultivation of merely those qualities which would contribute to the progress of society, and which in his opinion included, most important of all, a philosophical cultivation necessary to come to share the religious view of human nature he himself upheld.⁷³ Thus, since the model individual was in his terms described almost completely in terms of its social function, it is probably no exaggeration to say that Yoshino defined 'the individual' as the inevitable agent and unit of the overriding goal of social progress.

72 A telling example is his August 1920 *Shinjin* article aimed against 'the suppression of the creative talent of the individual'. 'Kojinteki sōi no yokuatsu'. *Shinjin*, 1920.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: pp.199-203.

73 Although the term '*jinkaku*' is of Confucianist origin and stood for 'the eminent character' that the Confucian gentleman - the subject of moral conduct - should possess, under the influence of German philosophy during the late Meiji and early Taishō wave of *jinkakushugi* ('character-ism') and *kyōyōshugi* ('cultivation-ism') it came to have a different meaning. It was associated with the Kantian ethical concept of 'Bildung' and was characterised by the three absolute moral values of self-consciousness, autonomy and idealism. Two works in English that deal in detail with these two hard-to-translate isms are Kayoko Watanabe, *The Evolution of the Concept of Cultivation in Modern Japan - The Idea of Cultivation in the 1930s*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1993 and Kyoko Inoue, *Individual Dignity in Modern Japanese Thought -The Evolution of the Concept of Jinkaku in Moral and Educational Discourse*, University of Michigan Press, 2001. However, the former makes a strong distinction between 'Taishō Culturalism' (*jinkakushugi*) and '1930s cultivation (*kyōyōshugi*) and the latter mainly deals with the post-WWII period. A short description of *jinkakushugi*, including the critique by Ōyama Ikuo, Watsuji Tetsurō, Miki Kiyoshi, Hani Gorō and Shimizu Iktarō, can be found in Karube Tadashi, 'Rekishika no yume'. In *Kindai Nihon Kenkyūkai*, ed., *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyū 18 - Hikaku no naka no kindai Nihon shisō*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1996: pp.260-64.

Fundamental Equality in Society

Yoshino's view of human society, at both the national and the international level, was the logical consequence of his positive view of human nature. Since he considered all men to be fundamentally good and equal in their potential to develop, a peaceful and harmonious society based on mutual respect was definitely not a utopian dream to him. He sincerely believed in the people's potential to make continuous progress and to gradually bring about this ideal society. Although he admitted that obvious material factors still considerably restrained the people in their moral judgement, Yoshino resolutely refused to despair of the people's 'present ignorance'. He had an almost religious faith in the people:

Today's ignorance is not necessarily equal to tomorrow's ignorance. We should not despair of today's ignorance, but pin our hopes on tomorrow's wisdom.⁷⁴

It was this strong conviction in the (future) sagacity of the people which made him believe in the fundamental equality of all members of society and which formed the basis of his support for democracy. He trusted that the wisdom and the essential social character of each individual would eventually lead all of them to make a sane decision, which would benefit both the individual and society at large.

*Society and the State*⁷⁵

Yoshino's theoretical approach towards society as a unity on equal terms of individuals who were "all Buddha's in essence"⁷⁶ and his aversion to determinism on the basis of social and regional descent culminated in an exceptional view on the relation between state and society: he simply posed that in theory state and society were one and the same. In an identical fashion Yoshino was at first prone to reject the view of the Japanese state as a structure whereby a social elite dominated the state structure and oppressed the other groups in society. Even though he was not blind to the increasing social upheaval of his time and gradually came to admit that there were serious conflicts between classes in society, he always tended to keep class struggle within bounds and continued preaching the need to compromise and restore national unity. Thus he clearly downplayed socialist theory on fundamental class differences and inevitable class struggle, an attitude he preserved all through his life although he became more and more involved in the proletarian party movement. A view of society which was based on the idea of struggle between

74 'Shakai hyōron zatsudan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: pp.231. Mitani characterises as 'religious' Yoshino's exceptionally strong faith in the future capacities of the people, in spite of his feeling that they were still ignorant, since it was based on his belief that 'the voice of the people represents the voice of God.' Mitani Taichirō, 'Bannen no kutō', in *YSS*, vol.15; pp.463-64.

75 For an extensive analysis of the development of Yoshino's ideas on the relation between state and society see Iida Taizō's 'Nashionaru demokuratto to [shakai no hakken]' in his *Hihan seishin no kōseki*, Chikuma Shobō, 1997: pp.155-221.

76 'Jinrui no bunka kaiten ni okeru shushi, jiban, kōnetsu no san-yōin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.2, p.2.

distinct social groups was unacceptable to Yoshino, who kept up the ideal of social harmony.⁷⁷

However, one has to be aware that Yoshino's call for social and national unity was very different in character from similar calls by Japanese nationalists and militarists. The fact that he had been conducive in introducing some elements of Hegel's philosophy to the Japanese public did not mean that he subscribed to Hegel's statist and absolutist inclinations. His assertion that one should esteem and love the state ("to love man is to love the state") takes on another meaning when one understands what Yoshino meant by 'the state'.⁷⁸ His definition of the state as 'a body of the nation of one country' (*ikkoku minzoku no dantai*) still seems run-of-the-mill, but his insistence that 'the state' was not tantamount to 'the sovereign power' (*shuken*) or 'the locus of political power' (*seiken no shozai*) but was rather about 'a grand national spirit' (*ichi dai-minzokuteki seishin*) was unorthodox.⁷⁹ Theoreticians both to the left and right of Yoshino on the political spectrum, although for the different reasons of respectively attacking and defending the government, usually based their argument on the proposition that the state was the centre of political power. Instead of stressing the hierarchical relation between state and society as symbolised by the sovereignty of the ruler, Yoshino emphasised the non-hierarchical society-state (*shakai-kokka*) in which both elements were quintessentially one and which was characterised by the popular force of 'national spirit' (his own translation of *kokka iryoku* or *kokkadamashii*):

We speak of the so-called 'power of the state' when the state-spirit expresses itself as an external force which enforces the actions of all men. However, since the state-spirit must have a clear and concrete form in order to strictly enforce the actions of all men, it is inevitable that the state-spirit as a power is being expressed through the will of a certain individual or group of individuals. We call this individual or group of individuals through which the power of the state passes 'the sovereign'. Therefore, the sovereign in the contemporary state functions as the only organ which displays the power of the state. Thus the power of the state enforces and rules the people through the sovereign. The people obey the

77 Yoshino's stubborn rejection of the notion of class-struggle in society was the main reason why he and other 'Taishō democrats' such as Hasegawa Nyozeikan and Ōyama Ikuo parted ways in the first half of the 1920's. It is also the main cause of the postwar Marxist critique of Yoshino as naive and idealistic. In the 1920's he inevitably adopted a considerable amount of socialist vocabulary and he more and more came to divide 'the people' into the distinct classes of 'the proletariat', 'the bourgeoisie' and 'the intelligentsia', but nonetheless his stand had not fundamentally changed in that he was adamant that the loyalty of each class should first and foremost lay with the whole of society. See Yoshino's 'guideline' for Japan's proletarian parties *Musan seitō no tadoru beki michi*, Bunka Seikatsu Kenkyūkai, 1927 and the compilation of his articles on the proletarian party movement *Nihon musan seitō-ron*, Ichigensha, 1929.

78 'Heiminsha no kokkakan'. *Shinjin*, 1905.4: p.50.

79 'Kokkadamashii to wa nanzo ya'. *Shinjin*, 1905.2; 'Kinoshita Naoe-kun ni kotau'. *Shinjin*, 1905.3. Both reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1, p.80 and 81-82. In his definition of 'the state' Yoshino uses the word *minzoku*, but one has to be aware that it is not used here in the present meaning of 'the ethnic nation' but rather of 'the political nation'. I have chosen to translate it here neutrally as 'the nation' instead of the more particular 'political nation' or 'ethnic nation' because at this moment in time Yoshino, like the larger part of his contemporaries, mingled the concepts of *kokumin* and *minzoku* completely at random and only started to make a clear distinction between the two at the end of the First World War, when Wilson's advocacy of the ethnic national right to self-determination brought the ethnic nation into focus as a separate entity.

commands of the sovereign because it expresses the power of the state. The only way by which the sovereign can function eternally as sovereign is by diligently expressing the power of the state. That is why one can say the spirit of the state is not merely the criterion for the control of the subjects but also the vital power to guide the sovereign. Therefore, I cannot help but be extremely amazed how people often confuse the concepts of the state and the sovereign and stupidly think that one is adulating the sovereign when one is only glorifying the state.

In short, from the above it will be clear that what I call ‘the state’ or ‘the state-spirit’ is a truly great national spirit which transcends the will of the sovereign and the nobility. The greatness of a nation truly depends on the greatness of its state-spirit.⁸⁰

The above is a literal translation and shows how unorthodox Yoshino’s interpretation of the state was. If one does not substitute ‘society’, ‘the nation’ or ‘the grand national spirit’ where Yoshino speaks of ‘the state’, and ‘the state’ where he uses ‘the sovereign’ it is as unintelligible now as it probably was then. Nevertheless, once one sees through his unusual terminology, it will be clear from the above that Yoshino made a strict distinction between the formal legal aspects and the practical political aspects of the relation between state and society. The former aspect, which he described as the external and passive ‘top-down’ manifestation of this relation, he considered to be mainly theory; the latter, the internal, spiritual, natural, spontaneous and active ‘bottom-up’ manifestation of the relation between each individual and the political nation was reality.⁸¹

Although Yoshino evidently considered the latter manifestation most important, this did not mean that he discarded the former manifestation as unimportant. This is most obvious in the case of ‘*minponshugi*’, the one concept for which even nowadays Yoshino is most remembered. Although he did not introduce the term himself, he very consciously chose it and stubbornly continued to use it in spite of the existence of other more current translations of the word ‘democracy’ such as ‘*heiminshugi*’, ‘*minshūshugi*’, ‘*shuminshugi*’ and, most common, ‘*minshushugi*’.⁸² Yoshino was criticised, and actually is still often being criticised, for thus not placing the people at the centre of sovereignty (*minshu*) but merely allowing them the consolation prize of being the foundation of national policy (*minpon*). Although it is true that Yoshino by his evasion of the word ‘*minshushugi*’ invited the suspicion that he was not a true democrat, the whole debate was but a matter of secondary importance to Yoshino. Having already equated the state with society, he had no hesitation whatsoever in declaring that he regarded the people as the practical sovereign of the state:

Historical factors have led to the present situation that although the national spirit has long since become inherent in the majority of the people, the sovereignty

80 ‘Kokkadamashii to wa nanzo ya’. *Shinjin*, 1905.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1, pp.79-80.

81 ‘[Kokka iryoku] to [shuken] to no kannen ni tsuite’. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1905.4: pp.134-36.

82 For a short genealogy of the term ‘*minponshugi*’ by Yoshino himself, see ‘Shina mondai ni tsuite’. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.4, 1919.6: p.50. For his reasons for making a clear distinction between *minponshugi* and *minshushugi*, see ‘Kensei no hongī wo toite sono yūshū no bi wo nasu no michi wo ronzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.1, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.2, pp.25-30.

(*shuken*) is still in the hands of the ruler (*kunshu*). (...) Legally speaking sovereignty is the highest authority of the state and the sovereign (*shukensha*) is completely autonomous, but politically speaking the sovereign is in practice greatly controlled by national spirit and has to resign himself to its restrictions. (...) In modern states the national spirit is not merely the model which controls the subjects but also the vital power which guides even the sovereign. That is why in political theory we call the sovereign the highest organ of expression of the national spirit. (...) The present emperor acknowledged as much when at the time of the Restoration he stated that “all matters will be decided by public debate”.⁸³

From his very first articles in 1904 until his death in 1933 Yoshino consistently advocated the theory that the emperor was an organ of the state - the so-called *tennō kikansetsu* which brought Minobe Tatsukichi his fame and his downfall - and, in the sense that he considered the emperor and his government as mere instruments of the ‘sovereign’ people, it is beyond question that he was a true democrat. The question who was to be the nominal head of the society-state thus became a matter of secondary importance, although in Yoshino’s case significant enough to choose the term ‘*minponshugi*’ instead of ‘*minshushugi*’ to express his ideas on the ideal facade of the state structure. On the one hand he was of the opinion that a monarch as a symbol of national unity was very contributory to the cause of constitutional government and, especially in the case of Japan with its unequalled long history of a powerless but undisputed imperial line, Yoshino was reluctant to relinquish the instrument of the emperor and came to its defence.⁸⁴ He often sang the praises of constitutional monarchy as the ideal form of constitutional government, although it should not be forgotten that the emperor was nothing more than a natural being (*shizenjin*) to him and he was convinced that constitutional government was there precisely for the reason of protecting society from the human fallacies of its nominal rulers.⁸⁵ On the other hand Yoshino was a pragmatic democrat and would not have thrown himself foolhardily against the overwhelming imperial rhetoric of the state if there was no imminent need to do so. He was more than willing to support the framework of constitutional monarchy in general and the Meiji Constitution specifically, as long as the content could be interpreted in the light of the real needs and wishes of the people. Therefore his concern was not so much whether something was not in line with the letter of the Constitution (*iken*) but whether it was not in line with the spirit of democratic constitutional government (*hi-rikken*). If a situation arose in which only the former applied, he did not interpret it negatively but rather supported it as “a manifestation of the developed needs and wishes of the people” which necessitated constitutional reform. However, in such a situation Yoshino did not call out for a reform of the Constitution itself but pragmatically opted for a subtle adjustment of constitutional practice within the limits of the

83 ‘[Kokka iryoku] to [shuken] to no kannen ni tsuite’. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1905.4: pp.137-38.

84 ‘Ika ni shite kokutai no banzen wo kisubeki’. *Shinjin*, 1918.7: pp.3, 8-11. He was even so bold as to state that “Nowadays nobody will deny that imperial government is superior to republican government” and to characterize republics as pitiful since they lacked a person or a family sufficiently respected and authoritative to become the emperor or monarch. ‘Shina teisei mondai ni taisuru waga kuni no taido’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.11, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.8, p.191.

85 ‘[Kokka iryoku] to [shuken] to no kannen ni tsuite’. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1905.4: pp.134-36.

Constitution.⁸⁶ And equally pragmatic, when in 1919 he concluded that the democratic forces were no longer anti-monarchic and the necessity to make a clear distinction between the various Japanese terms for ‘democracy’ had thus become obsolete, he discarded his ‘*minponshugi*’ without much ado in favour of the more common ‘*minshushugi*’, which on the primary point of content had always been closest to Yoshino’s convictions.⁸⁷

Temporary Inequality and the Leading Role of the Intelligentsia in Society

So much for abstract theory. If Yoshino had dogmatically clung to his religious belief in the virtue and wisdom of the people and to the implications of this belief for the rule of society, the gap with the reality of his day would have been too wide to earn him a large audience and he would not be remembered as the apostle of the ‘Taishō Democracy’. Although we should not forget that the above-mentioned ideals were at the heart of most of his writings, Yoshino was both idealist *and* pragmatist. His view of mankind might sometimes have led him to interpret the motives of some political actors in an overtly optimistic way which will have baffled most of his contemporaries, but he was not so blind as to put irrational demands on Japanese society.⁸⁸

Whereas he was definitely not willing to give in on the point of the fundamental virtue of the people, Yoshino had to admit there were some serious restraints to its wisdom. In 1905 he rather harshly remarked that “with a few exceptions the lower echelons of society are unsound (*fukenzen*)” and argued there was no need to extend the extremely limited franchise.⁸⁹ Although a decade later he took the opposite view and had become a strong supporter of the general suffrage movement, he was sometimes reluctant to speak out against the practice up to 1924 of the formation of transcendental cabinets. The main reasons for his hesitation were that he considered the political parties, the theoretical representatives of the people, still lacking in capability and the Japanese population still lacking in wisdom. The people had not yet attained the status of *jinkakusha* (men of character), the materially and immaterially independent individuals who were supposed to function as the safeguard and basis of political democracy. In an article from 1914 we can see how he still speaks of the lower classes as “lacking any brain

86 ‘Sohō-sensei cho [Jimu ikkagen] wo yomu(4)’. *Shinjin*, 1914.10, reprinted in YSS, vol.3, pp.100-01.

87 ‘Shina mondai ni tsuite’. Reimei Kōenshū, vol.4, 1919.6: p.55. Mitani Taichirō emphasises the historical background to Yoshino’s advocacy of *minponshugi* in the sense that it was a reaction to the argument of *zenseishugi* by the Terauchi Cabinet, which tried to stress the content of ‘good government’ over the form of transcendental rule. Nevertheless, I cannot help feeling that the debate on party cabinets versus transcendental cabinets was predominantly pursued on the assumption that in this case form determined content and thus in the end was a dispute on the future content of government policy and not merely an abstract debate on the ideal state structure. Moreover, it does not explain why Yoshino chose *minponshugi* instead of *minshushugi*. Mitani Taichirō, *Kindai Nihon no sensō to seiji*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997: pp.296-301.

88 As I will discuss later, Yoshino’s inclination to accredit certain political actors with an extremely laudable character was especially conspicuous in the case of Anglo-Saxon politicians such as Woodrow Wilson and David Lloyd-George. See for instance ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5: pp.55-56. As far as most of the political actors on the Japanese scene were concerned, he instead tended to stress that the world did not run merely on ideals and he mimicked Spinoza in saying that it was wise to “take care that our leaders are placed in such a position that they instinctively act in line with the interests of the majority”. ‘Minponshugi, shakaishugi, kagekishugi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: pp.32-33.

89 ‘Honpō rikken seiji no genjō’. *Shinjin*, 1905.2, reprinted in YSS, vol.1: p.16.

content”.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, whereas many of his contemporaries often used the argument of the continuing ‘unwholesomeness of the people’ as a justification for outright political autocracy Yoshino did not agree and sought another solution. In principle he was of the conviction that, even if the people in general lacked the wisdom to make a sound political decision, they at least had the moral virtue to select the right man to represent their interests and accordingly he was willing to subscribe to the democratic principle of rule by the majority.⁹¹ Although this fulfilled the important aim of precluding the possibility of the people being oppressed by an authoritarian ruling class, he was nonetheless not completely at ease to leave the theoretically virtuous majority to use its rights as it pleased:

Modern politics, in its formal political structure, gives utmost priority to the will of the majority. However, this of course does not imply that in the field of its practical ideal of the composition of society it will tolerate the dictatorship of the majority. If majority politics literally lead to mob rule the sound development of the state will not come about. The majority must formally be both the basis of all administrative actions (*seiken katsudō*) and the complete ruler of the political arena. Yet internally they need a spiritual leader. They must look up to the instructions of the knowledge and capacities of the wise minority.⁹²

As long as the fundamental precondition for pure democratic rule, a morally enlightened and wise populace, was not fulfilled, Yoshino was willing to accept a somewhat contradictory hybrid form of democracy and autocracy simply because he could not see a better alternative. What he proposed as the best solution for the time being was a form of indirect rule by the people, namely democratic representative government (*daigi seiji*) based on the will of the majority under the leadership or guidance of an enlightened minority (*minshū seiji wo kiso to suru kizoku seiji*).⁹³

Countries where there is an intimate relation of mutual dependence between the majority and the minority will develop in the most wholesome manner. Minority politics is accompanied by abuses and moreover, considering the general trend, can no longer be reinstalled. Nonetheless, majority politics cannot develop in a sound way without the guidance of the wise minority. The complete development of constitutional government will only come about if the two cooperate. When we look at this relation from a political point of view, it is the will of the majority that is ruling the state but, when looked at from a spiritual point of view, a minority of

90 ‘Minshūteki jii undō wo ronzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.4, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: p.31.

91 *Ibid.*: pp.25-26; ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5: p.54.

92 ‘Kensei no hongī wo toite sono yūshū no bi wo nasu no michi wo ronzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.1, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.2: pp.51-52. Mitani Taichirō argues that Yoshino and Maruyama Masao are very similar in the sense that they both advocated the need to supplement political democracy with spiritual or cultural aristocracy. In order to prevent democracy from slipping into the dictatorship of the majority they dedicated themselves to raising and organising politically active minorities within mass-democracy. Mitani Taichirō, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Maruyama Masao’ in his *Kindai Nihon no sensō to seiji*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997: pp.379-86.

93 ‘Minshūteki jii undō wo ronzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.4, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: pp.33-34.

wise men is leading the country. Therefore, one can say that it is both democracy (*minponshugi*) and aristocracy (*kizokushugi*) at the same time. One can say that it is commoner politics (*heimin seiji*) on the one hand and hero politics (*ei'yū seiji*) on the other. In other words, the flower of constitutional government will bloom proudly and graciously if political democracy is in full harmony with spiritual heroism.⁹⁴

So who were these wise men that in Yoshino's view would automatically be followed and elected by the people? It is clear that he did not have the incumbent ruling elite in mind. The anti-social 'evil triumvirate' of bureaucrats, militarists and capitalists never ceased to be the main target of Yoshino's pen. Somewhat like Sugimori Kōjirō he advocated rule by a *morally* superior elite. He criticised the present situation in his country where the main criterion of social standing still seemed to be one's social or economic class. In his opinion social standing should be based on moral standing (*dōgiteki hinkaku*), not on class, and he predicted that once class privileges had been removed, the moral standing of those who had distinguished themselves in the free competition between individual capacities (*nōryoku*) would naturally become the basis of social and political authority. In a true democracy superiority would be based on someone's moral ability (*jitsuryoku*) and the process of 'subjugating' others in order to reach a superior position would no longer employ the means of coercion and oppression but the instrument of 'warm friendship'.⁹⁵

No matter how idealistic the content of Yoshino's 'new moral elite' was, it will be clear that the recognition of an elite in itself tends to be at loggerheads with the egalitarian character of democracy. There can be no doubt that Yoshino was one of the staunchest supporters of democracy of his day, but this did not mean that he totally supported the adage 'all men are equal'. He only acknowledged an abstract form of equality, in the sense that he embraced the belief that every sane mind had the *potential* to develop itself limitlessly if only given a normal opportunity. However, at a certain moment in time there would be inequality between men, because some were not given and others did not even take this 'normal opportunity', and those who were using their opportunity were inevitably at different stages in their development. Thus men were at least temporarily unequal and accordingly, Yoshino's main point of focus, there was inequality between men in the extent of their moral standing, and therefore in their social and political fitness.

Although Sugimori and Yoshino both advocated a certain form of meritocracy in favour of moral *jitsuryokusha* (men of ability), their interpretation was completely different. Whereas Sugimori's *jinkakusha* or *jitsuryokusha* was mainly described in terms of an autonomous individual with his special rights and privileges, Yoshino's was more like a *bodhissatva*; an intermediary between the political and intellectual elite and the common people who was almost completely occupied with his special duties and responsibilities towards society. In his opinion the major qualification for a member of the moral elite was that he 'cared'; he had to have an almost religious compassion (*dōjō*) and self-sacrificing mentality (*kenshinteki gisei seishin*)

94 'Kensei no hongī wo toite sono yūshū no bi wo nasu no michi wo ronzu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.1, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.2, p.52.

95 'Shina mondai ni tsuite'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.4, 1919.6: p.56.

towards the common people.⁹⁶ His constant emphasis on the duties of the elite, his rejection of any privileges except for the respect they would enjoy, and his insistence that these men of ability had to be resolved to serve the country *through* the people made Yoshino's recognition of a distinct moral elite in society, in sharp contrast to Sugimori's, not so difficult to harmonise with his support for democracy.⁹⁷

Loathing the egoistic upper-class ruling elite and still despairing of the lower classes, it is not so strange that Yoshino vested his hopes in the rising middle class, of which he was coincidentally a prominent member himself, as the future moral leaders and political actors on behalf of the nation:

When questioned on which class within the nation we should concentrate, it goes without saying that this must be the middle class. The upper and lower classes do not show any sign of just and fair ideas. Formally *heiminshugi* and *minshūshugi* and the like are presented as if the common people (*heimin*) form the political nucleus and the masses (*minshū*) rule, but in fact it is the opinion of the sound middle class which, on the one hand, leads the small minority of political authorities (*tōkyokusha*) and, on the other hand, spiritually guides the lower classes (*kamin*). (...) The middle class is the sound backbone of the state.⁹⁸

Another important factor in Yoshino's choice of the middle class is that he considered it moderate when compared to the revolutionary lower class. He abhorred revolution; on the eve of the First World War he pitted himself against such 'revolutionary movements' as German socialism and, even worse, French syndicalism.⁹⁹ In general he regarded drastic reforms of the social system as detrimental to society and instead he supported gradual reform through the enlightenment and guidance of the people. It was the mission of the wholesome middle class on behalf of the whole of society to steer the populace away from revolutionary instruments and show them the right path to social reform. On the basis of their superior moral standing and wisdom, the middle class had to make the common people realise what its true demands were and, accordingly, what its means of fulfilling these demands should be.

Until Japan was shaken by significant social unrest in the form of the strikes and the Rice Riots of 1918, Yoshino accordingly advised 'the British school of social policy' as the best option for harmonious social reform, since he thought it was successful in making the division of wealth gradually more equal and checking socialist upheavals at the same time.¹⁰⁰ His endorsement of the British model becomes even easier to understand when we see how he interpreted the British political system as the perfect example of middle-class rule:

96 'Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei'. *Shinjin*, 1914.5: pp.52-53.

97 'Kensei no hongi wo toite sono yūshū no bi wo nasu no michi wo ronzu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.1, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.2, p.52.

98 'Kokusai kyōsō jōri ni okeru saigo no shōri'. *Shinjin*, 1914.12: p.29.

99 *Ibid.*: p.29; 'Sohō-sensei cho [Jimu ikkagen] wo yomu (4)'. *Shinjin*, 1914.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: pp.90-92.

100 *Ibid.*: pp.91-92.

The British House of Commons is always backed by the power of the common people, but rather than them being influenced by the common people it is they who lead the people. It is a characteristic of British politics that it takes the common people as its foundation, yet standing above the people there is always an able superior class which forms the centre of political power. (...) I have no reservation in presenting the recent political developments in England as a model for sound political progress.¹⁰¹

2.3 History, Progress and Civilisation

The manner and pace of progress as preferred by Yoshino (non-revolutionary and gradual) has already been discussed, but we still have to pay closer attention to the content and direction of progress. Progress according to Yoshino was equivalent to modernity (*kinsei* or *kindai*) which, not at all strange for a political scientist, he defined in an exclusively political way. Although he once characterised modernity by the rise of the independent thinking and deciding individual, it is more significant that he deemed the modern era to have commenced with the French Revolution.¹⁰² Commentators on Yoshino have more often than not paid attention to the fact that the element of economy was almost completely absent from his view of the world. He tried to downplay the importance of socio-economic class in favour of the nation as a whole and accordingly trivialised the notion of class struggle, which was so prominent in the economic determinist views of history, present and future such as propagated by socialists and communists.¹⁰³ There was clearly no place for historical materialism in Yoshino's ideas, but this did not mean that he automatically adopted the Western liberal outlook which instead highlights the autonomous individual. As a man lamenting the lack of religion in society, his emphasis was not so much on the historical process of the intellectual liberation of the individual from the constraints of religion. He concentrated almost completely on the political freedom of the people from the constraints of the absolutist state. For Yoshino progress was all about the establishment of the political principle of democracy.¹⁰⁴

101 Ibid.: p.93. Another example in which England is depicted as the perfect example of 'aristocracy based on democracy' is 'Minshūteki jii undō wo ronzu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.4, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: p.33.

102 His exact words were that "The so-called modern history is nothing but the record of the development of the awakening of the individual spirit". 'Kokkadamashii to wa nanzo ya'. *Shinjin*, 1905.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1: p.79. For the French Revolution as the starting point of the modern age, see '[Kokka iryoku] to [shuken] to no kannen ni tsuite'. *Kokka Gakkai zasshi*, 1905.4: p.138 and 'Seiji hattatsushi-jō yori mitaru Shina to Nihon to Ō-Bei'. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1923.1.1: p.5.

103 Hasegawa Nyozeikan, 'Yoshino Sakuzō-hakase to kare no jidai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1933.5, reprinted in Iida Taizō, Yamaryō Kenji, eds, *Hasegawa Nyozeikan hyōronshū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1989: pp.346-48. Tanaka Sōgorō, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Miraisha, Tokyo 1958: p.180; Walter Scott Perry, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Stanford University, May 1956: p.84.

104 Ibid.: p.138; 'Minshūteki jii undō wo ronzu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.4, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: p.29. Yoshino's characterisation of progress as a modern process explains why he was hardly interested in either pre-modern Europe or pre-modern Japan. In the case of Japan, in the end all his attention was diverted towards research in the political and 'civilisational' history of the Meiji period, when Japan for the first time seriously started to adopt modern Western elements including democracy.

As already stated, Yoshino considered social merit superior to individual merit and therefore it is not so strange that democracy, which he defined in an early article as the claim of the popular ‘national spirit’ against the autocratic tendencies of the sovereign, was higher on his list of criteria than individual rights or an individualistic autonomous spirit. The short overview of modern progress he gave in the same article also highlights this tendency. In his opinion modern progress had started out in Europe with the advent of the movement for the establishment of democracy in reaction to pre-modern absolutism. In its revolutionary enthusiasm to make the sovereign bow to the national spirit, it had occasionally tended to go to such extremes as formal popular sovereignty and individualism but, as a result of the failure of various revolutionary movements, the knowledgeable had come to reject the extremes of ‘democracy as a principle of sovereignty’ (*shukenron to shite no minshushugi*) and to support ‘the sound form’ of constitutional government, in the sense of ‘democracy as the practical means by which to operate political power’ (*seiken unyōron to shite no minshushugi*).¹⁰⁵

Yoshino’s definition of civilisation was also mainly linked to this specific form of political progress. He treated democracy as the most conspicuous and important international trend of his day and he used to determine the stage of civilisation of a country by the degree it had brought about constitutional government.¹⁰⁶ In this sense his view of civilisation was monistic and universal: Yoshino did not make a sharp distinction between, for instance, Eastern and Western civilisation. In essence there was but one civilisation which was ‘world civilisation’ and its most important criterion was democratic content. More specifically, he considered representative government (*daigi seiji*) through political parties and resulting in ‘a system of responsible cabinets’ (*sekinin naikakusei*) as the ideal manifestation of democratic constitutional government – and, even more specifically, the British two-party system as one of the preconditions to attain this ideal form - and he only awarded the honorary title of ‘a modern civilised country’ to those countries he considered ‘society states’, i.e., states that were based on the will of the people.¹⁰⁷

In the sense that he had decreed democracy in the form of popular representative government to be the most determining factor of civilisation, his universal ‘world civilisation’ was in content rather close to ‘Western civilisation’. It goes without saying that this was an equation which would not always be very advantageous to his own country, but Yoshino did not seem to have any problem with it. Since the evolutionary process towards democracy had started in Europe and this part of the world, partly because of its headstart, clearly had attained the then highest stage of constitutional government, he had no hesitation in designating Europe as the most civilised part of the world.¹⁰⁸ Although he regarded Japan as the first instance of modern progress in the Orient, he pointed out that the country was still in the transitory stage “from the

105 ‘[Kokka iryoku] to [shuken] to no kannen ni tsuite’. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1905.4: p.138.

106 ‘Rokoku ni okeru shuminteki seiryoku no kinjō’. *Shinjin*, 1905.5, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5: p.12.

107 ‘Honpō rikken seiji no genjō’. *Shinjin*, 1905.1, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1: pp.9-10; ‘Kokkadamashii to wa nanzo ya’. *Shinjin*, 1905.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1: pp.78-79; ‘Minshūteki jii undō wo ronzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.4, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: pp.33-34, 39. For Yoshino’s advocacy of a two-party system as the best functioning form of political democracy, see ‘Ni-tō tairitsu wa waga kokujō ni tekisu’. *Shin Nihon*, 1914.5: pp.94-97 and ‘Nakahashi-shi no ni daiseitō-ron’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.5: pp.120-22.

108 ‘Rokoku kizoku no unmei’. *Shinjin*, 1905.5, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5: p.14.

age of blind obedience to the age of enlightenment". This stage, Yoshino observed, had not lasted that long in the case of the European pioneer countries, but in Japan it was rather extended due to the deficiencies in education.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, he already considered his country more civilised than a European entity such as the Russian empire, which is evident from the fact that one of the reasons he supported the Russo-Japanese War was that he thought the Japanese had the task, on behalf of world civilisation, to enlighten the Russians with (European) political modernism (*seijiteki kinseishugi*).¹¹⁰

2.4 Christian Morality¹¹¹

As already suggested, many of the ideas Yoshino embraced, such as his above-mentioned ideas on human nature, society and democracy, were strongly inspired by his religious convictions. Yoshino was baptised into the Protestant faith in Sendai at the age of 20, an act which to some seemed rather hasty but which he himself claimed was based on a strong determination. He said he had been keenly aware of the oppression of Christianity in Japan, which moreover was especially severe in the increasingly nationalistic tide of the 1880s and 1890s.¹¹² When he arrived in Tokyo in 1900 he joined the Congregationalist Church in Hongō to which he remained connected for the rest of his life. He probably chose this church both because of his admiration for the *jinkaku* of its leader Ebina Danjō and because he was sympathetic to the comparatively enlightened doctrine of this specific Protestant sect; Yoshino often remarked that he abhorred the intolerant sectarian fanaticism of professional religionists and he was a freethinker.¹¹³ When he for instance visited Germany in 1912, he was rather amazed to discover that many believers of the faith still fervently defended certain parts of Christian dogma, such as the creation of the world in seven days, the immaculate conception, the resurrection and the second advent of Christ, which he thought completely unscientific.¹¹⁴ Moreover, even in his many articles for church affiliated magazines such as *Shinjin*, *Shinjokai* and *Rikugō Zasshi*, he hardly ever cited from the Bible and in his diary one never comes upon an allusion to life after death, let alone a direct invocation to God. Thus it seems justified to conclude that Yoshino was

109 'Katō-kun no [aikokushin-ron]'. *Shinjin*, 1905.3: p.55.

110 'Rokoku no haiboku wa sekai heiwa no motoi nari'. *Shinjin*, 1904.3: p.26. It is interesting to see that Yoshino in this sense was very much in touch with his foreign colleagues, since somebody like Bertrand Russell at the time of World War One completely ignored the common Allied effort against the enemy and, on the basis of the identical argument of the progress of world civilisation, expressed the hope that Germany would beat Russia (although as far as the war on the Western front was concerned he was initially somewhat more in line with government policy and was convinced that his own country would be victorious after a short war). Ray Monk, *Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude*, Vintage, London, 1997: pp.372-74.

111 The best and most extensive treatment in English of Yoshino's religious ideas and their influence on his political thought is Peter Duus, 'Yoshino Sakuzō: The Christian as Political Critic'. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 4-2: pp.301-26.

112 'Kenja Naatan'. *Bunka Seikatsu*, 1921.9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.216.

113 *Ibid.*: p.216. A very good and recent article on Yoshino's religious ideas, which deals specifically with Ebina's influence on him, is Ōta Masao, 'Yoshino Sakuzō to Kirisuto-kyō', in *Dōshisha Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo*, ed., [*Shinjin*] [*shinjokai*] no kenkyū, Jinbun Shoin, Kyōto, 1999: pp.281-308.

114 'Berurin yori Pari he'. *Shinjin*, 1912.8: p.84.

not devoted to the Christian religion because of a belief in an abstract god or in order to find personal consolation. That he was at first uncomfortable with his somewhat shaky underpinning of his belief can be traced from a letter addressed to Ebina Danjō of September 1904 in which he confesses to having serious doubts whether he has the right qualifications to become an editor of Ebina's magazine *Shinjin* because of his lack of 'Religious Passion' as compared to his 'intellectual Passion'.¹¹⁵

Nonetheless, Yoshino has more than once professed that Christianity was the most important influence on him and his ideas:

The fact that I often discuss questions concerning politics is not completely unrelated to my basic training in political science, but mainly derives from my personal views which are the result of my Christian education. (...) My views of man and society, which have been fostered by Christianity, make that I cannot be satisfied with the present political world and political debate, and therefore my spontaneous discontent comes to the surface in the form of political discussions. The result is that they lack both a broad sociological basis and a deep philosophical foundation. (...) I am aware of the fact that this is a serious weakness in my scholarly research. (...) I have sincere respect for the wisdom of Kita Reikichi, who discerned that my arguments spring from Christian humanitarianism.¹¹⁶

It is not that I cannot argue my views (on human nature) theoretically, but to me it is no longer an argument. It is rather an unshakable conviction ... based on religious belief.¹¹⁷

The reason Yoshino was so attracted to the Christian faith that he was even able to feel at home in church while lacking a belief in the existence of the Christian God is twofold. In the first place, as already mentioned, he was aware that the Christian church was a principal agent of social reform in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, and accordingly most of his church-connected activities were related to this aspect. However, and this leads us to the second and basic reason of his church affiliation, to Yoshino it was no historical or regional coincidence that in Japan the church had stood at the cradle of both the socialist and labour union movement. He considered an active role of Christianity in social and political reform both essential as well as inevitable.¹¹⁸ This was the simple deduction from his conviction that the most fundamental element of Christianity was not its doctrine but its mentality and the social and political application of this mentality:

Christianity of course has its theology and philosophy, but that is not the essence

115 *YSS bekkān*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997: p.9.

116 'Hyōronka to shite no jibun narabi ni Sassa Seiichi-sensei no koto'. *Shinjin*, 1918.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.6. Kita Reikichi (1885-1961), the younger brother of Kita Ikki, was a nationalistic philosopher who at the time of this article taught at Waseda University.

117 'Yo wa kaku okonai kaku kangae kaku shinzu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.243.

118 'Shakai to shūkyō'. *Shinjin*, 1921.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.209.

of Christianity as a religion. The holy trinity and the original sin are not what religion is about. True religion is the power to attain a godlike life. It is sufficient if we feel that way. (...) The Christian society is characterised by the will to live a human life oneself and the will to let others lead a human life as well.¹¹⁹

Thus an active and very positive interpretation of the credo ‘live and let live’ was what Yoshino considered to be the most important element of Christianity. This form of cooperation was founded on what he called ‘the Christian view of human nature’, a view he defined as the conviction that each man is virtuous and able to develop limitlessly. According to Yoshino this was the reason why everybody was equal before God and why in human society mutual respect would occur naturally. And it was on the basis of this mutual respect as equal *jinkakusha* that man was not merely able to delegate and compromise passively but was also inclined actively to love and help one another.¹²⁰ As a matter of fact Yoshino himself was a genuine example of a man actively implementing the Christian mentality he advocated. It may even be hard to find someone who was both implementing pragmatic compromise with and extending selfless help to individuals and society on the scale he did, but even in his case there was one precondition:

I can get to terms with others on minor points as long as they share the same view of human nature. I definitely cannot if they regard the fundamental nature of man is to divide and fight one another.¹²¹

The ‘Christian view of mankind’ was so central to Yoshino that he refused to compromise with and help those who did not share it. He was very sympathetic to the socialist cause and in 1920 had even publicly stated that ‘in a certain sense I am a socialist’. However he hastened himself to clarify that he was merely a socialist in the sense of ‘a supporter of social reform’ and that he could definitely not make common cause with those with ‘a fundamentally different’ or ‘materialistic view of life’.¹²² And, in fact, later on he shunned the socialist and communist movements and actively tried to oust these elements from the proletarian party movement, because he could not condone their notion of human society as a battlefield of distinct social classes and the methods of social reform this notion prescribed.

It is hardly necessary to mention that what Yoshino without much ado calls ‘the Christian view of human nature’ is a far cry from official Christian dogma, whether Catholic or Protestant. It has been pointed out that “Conspicuously absent from his writings is any notion of fundamental human depravity or original sin. Like Ebina, he believed men were united not by their worthlessness in the eyes of God, but by their acceptance of His ‘children’.”¹²³ This

119 Ibid.: p.207.

120 Ibid.: p.209; ‘Yo wa kaku okonai kaku kangae kaku shinzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10, reprinted in YSS, vol.12: p.243.

121 Ibid.: p.243.

122 ‘Nihon shakaishugisha dōmei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.9, reprinted in YSS, vol.10: pp.58-59.

123 Peter Duus, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō: The Christian as Political Critic’. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 4-2: p.314. On a slightly different note, it is a wellknown fact amongst Yoshino scholars that he committed the Christian sin of adultery by having an affair with Mozume Yoshiko, who after Yoshino’s death became

phenomenon has led some scholars to emphasise the essentially ‘Japanese’ nature of Yoshino’s interpretation of the Christian faith, in the sense that his stress on the inherent goodness of mankind, the merit of education and self-cultivation, and the central role of a moral elite seem to have a lot more in common with the writings of Confucius and Mencius than with the Bible. When looking at the fact that many of his Christian compatriots, amongst whom his spiritual guide Ebina Danjō, shared this ‘exceptional’ attitude towards the Christian religion, it is indeed very tempting to start speaking of another instance of the ‘typically Japanese’ quality to absorb foreign things but at the same time to reform them into something new which is more indigenous than foreign.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, as far as Yoshino is concerned, in spite of his solid training in the Chinese classics one has a very unrewarding task in trying to find positive allusions to Confucianism in his writings and therefore I rather share Peter Duus’ conclusion that he was merely functioning within the tradition of Japanese Protestant liberalism in the 1890s: “...while it is plausible that in one way or another lingering Confucian patterns of thought may have leached the Calvinist despair out of Protestantism in Japan, the source of Yoshino’s optimistic Christianity is more likely the Enlightenment tradition that was absorbed into nineteenth century Western Protestantism.”¹²⁵

Besides the ‘Christian’ optimistic view of human nature and the egalitarian and harmonious view of human society, compassion was another element of ‘the Christian mentality’ which strongly attracted Yoshino. Since it was clear that the society he lived in was far from harmonious and egalitarian, he considered a humanitarian compassion for the less endowed an essential quality for the political and social elite in order to bring about an ideal society. Those in power should never be complacent in their temporal superiority; they had to be humble and self-sacrificing in a continuous awareness that they had to serve the people even to the extent they themselves would become dispensable.¹²⁶ The fact that Yoshino allotted more and more time to his journalistic activities at the cost of his academic career should in my opinion not be explained merely by financial considerations, but should be seen mainly in the light of this

known as the first female Japanese writer of crime fiction under the name of Ōkura Teruko. Ironically, Yoshino had arranged the marriage in 1910 between Mozume and Ida Shūzō, a diplomat and intimate friend of Yoshino from his China days. The couple spent most of their time abroad and divorced in 1924. Yoshino’s affair with Mozume is not publicly known, partly because on the demand of his family the allusions to this extramarital relation were meticulously omitted from his diaries at the time of publication. Nevertheless, the fact that he openly wrote about his ‘sinful’ behaviour in the diaries – of which he knew that because of his standing these would become public after his death – and even stated that “this is true love”, is a very good example of his relaxed way of dealing with Christian dogma. More information on Mozume Yoshiko – including the recollections of her brother who mentions the liaison – can be found in Yamashita Takeshi, ‘Joryū tantei sakka dai-ichigō Ōkura Teruko’, in Yamashita, [*Shinseinen*] *wo meguru sakkatachi*, Chikuma Shobō, 1996: pp.153-95. In 1959 Mozume (Ōkura) wrote two small articles on Yoshino, hiding their relationship, which are included in *Yoshino Sakuzō Kinenkan Kenkyū Kiyō*, no.3 (2006): pp.45-51.

124 For Ebina’s religious ideas, see Sekioka Kazushige, ‘Ebina Danjō no shingaku shisō’, in *Dōshisha Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo*, ed., [*Shinjin*] [*shinjokai*] *no kenkyū*, Jinbun Shoin, Kyōto, 1999: pp.237-58.

125 Peter Duus, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō: The Christian as Political Critic’. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 4-2: p.323.

126 ‘Kasō kaikyū no sekinin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.8: p.105.

religious sense of compassion for the common man.¹²⁷ As a public man (*kōjin*) he considered it more than anything else his duty to give his opinion in newspapers and magazines in order to enlighten and help the people on their way.¹²⁸

Whereas ‘the Christian’ basic belief in man’s virtue and moral wisdom and its limitless belief in each man’s potential to make progress formed the basis of an egalitarian and harmonious society, the element of compassion was a very important precondition to the progress of human society. Yoshino once very typically alluded to this compassionate Christian love for mankind (*jinruiaiteki onjō*) as the light of the sun; the seed of man that was planted in the soil of society had to be bestowed with the light of love to come to fruition.¹²⁹ Since Yoshino used to measure progress in the first place in political terms, the above would imply that ‘the Christian mentality’ provided for both the coming into being and the advance of modern democracy. In effect, he did subscribe to such an unorthodox interpretation of political progress. In sharp contrast to someone like Sugimori who shared the common Western view that it was the individual’s liberation from the constraints of religion which first made possible social, political and cultural progress, Yoshino was of the opinion that it was instead the growth of a religious spirit which had made man aware of the value of the individual and eventually had given rise to democracy. And although he admitted that the division of church and state was the general trend of the day, he warned that this should not obstruct the view of the people to the fact that apart from the Christian limitless belief in the development of human nature there was no basis for political liberalism and that the progress of democracy was constantly guided by a religious spirit.¹³⁰ Thus Yoshino was truly convinced of the holy “mission of religion towards politics”¹³¹ and in his mind constitutional government (i.e. political progress) was inextricably linked with Christianity. What he called ‘the Christian mentality’ was the fuel society had to run on in order to make headway and he did not hesitate to make the medical diagnosis that the cause of the disease Japan’s society was suffering from was its “too anti-Christian social system”:

If we applied the humanitarian spirit of Christianity not only to our whole spiritual life but also to our society-state (*shakai kokka*) system, what a convenient and nice life we could lead. The diffusion of the Christian spirit is needed in all facets of our present society.¹³²

Just as in the case of national society, the Christian mentality was at the heart of Yoshino’s views on international society. During his stay in Germany he had seen the play

127 In contrast to the usual explanation that Yoshino’s switch to the *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun* was due to the financial obligations he had taken upon himself, such as the financial support of Korean and Chinese students (e.g. Kaji Ryūichi in ‘Zadankai: Yoshino Sakuzō’. *Sekai* 112 (1955); p.108), I tend to interpret Yoshino’s total transfer to journalism in 1924 as the mere crystallisation of a long-term development, which was mainly inspired by his overriding aim in life to guide the people.

128 ‘Yo wa kaku okonai kaku kangae kaku shinzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.241.

129 ‘Jinrui no bunka kaiten ni okeru shushi, jiban, kōnetsu no san-yōin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.2: pp.1-2.

130 ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5: pp.47-49; *Jiyūshugi no konkyo*. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: pp.231-32.

131 This is the translation of the title of his May 1914 *Shinjin* article ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’.

132 ‘Kojinteki sōi no yokuatsu’. *Shinjin*, 1920.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.203. A similar conclusion can be found in ‘Shakai to shūkyō’. *Shinjin*, 1921.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.210.

Nathan the Wise by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, an event he later declared to have been the most inspiring in his life.¹³³ This play is in essence an indictment against racial and religious discrimination and tries to stimulate a sense of international friendship. It very clearly succeeded in doing so in the case of Yoshino; he reminisced that it made him realise that “national and religious distinctions are merely manifestations of the fact that man is in origin one” and therefore “human sentiment should transcend national and religious barriers”. Considering the fact that by the time he went to Europe he had already developed a strong sense that civilisation was a monistic and universal phenomenon, one wonders if this play indeed led Yoshino to a ‘new awareness’. Another point of interest is that although he was not blind to the fact that the play itself was not altogether favourable to the Christian clergy, he nevertheless formulated his ‘new awareness’ mostly by means of Christian vocabulary such as ‘God’s love for mankind is universal’ and ‘the universal brotherhood of man’.¹³⁴

Be that as it may, it will be evident that in spite of his individual ‘satori’ the rest of the world did not share his experience and, at the time, even the first steps towards the ideal of a brotherhood of world citizens still had to be taken. Yet again Yoshino did not despair and vested his hopes in the Christian value of compassion to stimulate internationalism and, in the process, lift the general level of what he thought of as a world civilisation. Almost identical to his line of argument on the role of the middle class *jinkakusha* in national society, he maintained that the political and social elite of the world society, assembled in a few modern civilised states, had the public duty towards the whole of mankind to help unselfishly the yet underdeveloped countries. Accordingly the diplomacy of the modern state had to be founded on ‘noble ideals based on a religious spirit’, which was to be both ‘grand and global’.¹³⁵ According to Yoshino, this compassionate spirit was best represented by the ideals of international justice (*kokusaiteki seigi*) and humanitarianism (*jindō*) and its champion Woodrow Wilson. Already well before the outbreak of the war Yoshino expressed his ‘highest respect’ for this distinctly religious man, since he regarded him as the most eminent example of the moral political leader who was even prepared to sacrifice the interests of the state on behalf of his international ideals.¹³⁶

Yoshino seemed to downplay religious differences when he professed that “all religions are equal reflections of the light of God”.¹³⁷ He more often than not used the general term ‘religion’ instead of the more specific term ‘Christianity’. He was also most impressed by Lessing’s *Nathan the Wise*, which was very tolerant towards the Islam, and showed interest in freemasonry and the Korean Ch’ōndogyo. However, it is clear that to him there was but one religion which was completely in line with both human nature and the demands of modern society. He never even hinted that there might be another religion or mode of thought that combined a positive and cosmopolitan egalitarian outlook with a self-sacrificing humanitarian morality and thus could function as an alternative to Christianity. Religions strongly rooted in the Japanese tradition such as Shintō and Buddhism were instantly rejected by Yoshino as inferior to his own faith, since he regarded these incapable of a substantial (moral) contribution to politics,

133 ‘Kenja Naatan’. *Bunka Seikatsu*, 1921.9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.215.

134 *Ibid.*: pp.215-19.

135 ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5: p.59.

136 *Ibid.*: pp.57-58.

137 ‘Gakujutsujō yori mitaru Nichi-Bei mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.1, p.154.

and his feelings on that other world religion are clear from a 1916 article in which he mercilessly denounced the Islam as ‘the world’s most bigoted religion’.¹³⁸ Thus when Yoshino stated in 1921 that

My philosophical training has raised me to the level that I can look down on the overall state of things. However, this was not sufficient to discern the right course in life. It was my religious conviction which made me see in what direction the light of the ideal (*risō no hikari*) was shining and which showed me the way to proceed.¹³⁹

he was not merely talking about his own religious experience which happened to be Christian, but he was clearly putting forward himself and his Christian religion as the guiding light to be followed in order to bring about social and political reform and civilisational progress.

2.5 Summary: Eclecticism, Pragmatism, Idealism

As I have discovered from my research on prewar Japanese opinion leaders, apart from the obvious exception of a few prominent socialists and communists, it is usually quite difficult to lay one’s finger on the major influences affecting a particular person. More often than not, this question is almost impossible to answer since the prewar Japanese intellectuals were masters of eclecticism. They had no problem whatsoever in mixing elements from different Western (and sometimes Eastern or native) philosophical and ideological traditions which from a Western point of view are completely incompatible.¹⁴⁰ Yoshino is yet another case which proves this Japanese ‘intellectual freedom’. Raised in the 1880s and 1890s he was trained in the customary Confucian classics and naturally influenced by the contradictory Meiji legacy of nationalism, social Darwinism, enlightenment theory and ideas of individualist meritocracy. From his high school days onwards these influences were given a rather particular direction by the liberal Protestantism he started to adhere to, but his university education at the beginning of the century, during which he was exposed to such diverse vectors as socialism, anarchism, and both Kant and Hegel, once again complicated matters and meant that Yoshino was not free from feelings of intellectual insecurity. Although it is difficult to prove because of an almost complete lack of sources on Yoshino for this period, I find it hard to fight the impression that the adolescent, who in his student days was still searching for an abstract theory that would give him intellectual

138 ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5, p.59; ‘Taisengo no sekaiteki kyōsō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.3-4.

139 ‘Yo wa kaku okonai kaku kangae kaku shinzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.243.

140 Other scholars have also noticed this phenomenon and argued that it is the result of the nearly simultaneous introduction of several modes of thought into prewar Japan. See for instance Walter Scott Perry, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Stanford University, May 1956, p.85. And even in the case of communists ample contradictions arise, as Gail Lee Bernstein in her study on Kawakami Hajime time and again has to note that Kawakami’s communist sympathies are constantly obfuscated by his samurai spirit, Confucianist ethics and nationalism. Bernstein, *Japanese Marxist: A Portrait of Kawakami Hajime, 1879-1946*, Harvard University Press, 1976.

stability, gradually gave up doing so after his graduation in 1904. By the time he went to Europe in 1910 he seemed rather complacent and perfectly at ease to combine his idealism, which to a great extent was reinforced by his adoption of 'Christianity', and his pragmatism as a man of the modern world. That the two were sometimes completely at odds was something Yoshino did not need to be told. He was aware of the fact but simply decided to make the best of it, sometimes emphasising the first, at other times the latter, choosing what was to his liking without too much ado. This rather carefree intellectual attitude is very evident from the time of Yoshino's trip to Europe onwards. For instance, unlike many other Japanese intellectuals in 'the land of supreme learning, culture and civilisation' he did not choose to become the disciple of one particular English or German university professor in the pursuit of the answer to all his questions. As many of his 'fellow travellers' did at a later stage, Yoshino had already given up hope of abstract intellectual rigidity. He travelled about seemingly aimless, mainly concentrating on means (foreign language training) and sources (books, interviews, observations) that could help him in forming his own opinions.

In my discussion above of Yoshino's ideas on man, the state, and national and international society, I have stressed his combination of idealism and pragmatism (and will again stress this combination in the following analysis of his views of the outside world), but this does not mean that both elements were equally strong. Maybe it is best to summarise here that, although in his criticism of events which merely called for a direct reaction he often tended to be more pragmatic and willing to water down the wine, in his criticism of events which in his opinion had to be addressed within the framework of a more structural and long-term development - and these made up the majority in Yoshino's case - he very clearly showed his more idealistic side. In the end, it was this idealist but fundamental conviction in the virtue of mankind and in the formal equality of individuals and nations, together with his strong belief in gradual but continuous progress, which proved dominant and made a younger generation turn away from Yoshino. They were looking for simple and direct answers to their hopes for a swift reform of the national and international status quo, but the solutions Yoshino offered seemed to project nothing but a long, hard road of mutual compromise and cooperation and thus were hardly attractive to them at the time. However, with hindsight, we may say that it was nevertheless this naive idealism which makes him stand out in a very positive way. The basis of the policies Yoshino prescribed may be too idealistic for the cynical creatures we are, but it was exactly this idealistic basis which compelled him to stubbornly hold on to his policy of compromise and cooperation, a policy which we have found to be the only pragmatic option in social life and a policy which has become the basis of our national and international order.

3 YOSHINO AND THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR: THREE PHASES

3.1 Phase 1, August 1914 - June 1915: Optimistic Belief in the Continuation of the World Trend

International Morality and the Holy War

When Yoshino was confronted with the outbreak of the Great War in Europe in August 1914, he had no problem in handling it although the war in itself seemed in contradiction with his belief in a cooperative and pacifist world. Until the summer of 1915 he was convinced that the war was but a minor incident and would be over before long and, moreover, that it would only help to reinforce the universal trends he had observed in the prewar world. The most conspicuous trends Yoshino had discerned were the national policies of political liberalism (democracy) and economic liberalism (free trade), the international policies of cooperativism and pacifism and the spirit of cosmopolitanism and international morality. The hitherto unknown scale of the fighting did not seem to damage Yoshino's convictions at all. In December 1914 he assessed that even now "it is evident that the international trend is moving in the direction of the ideal situation in which international relations are ruled by morality just as is the case in interpersonal relations",¹⁴¹ and all through the war he proclaimed that, 'because of their Christian civilisation, the experience of the war and the need for international economic relations', all Europeans would become fervent pacifists after the war.¹⁴²

The main reason why Yoshino kept his faith in 'the two thousand-year old invisible but unshakable world evolution towards pacifism'¹⁴³ was that in his view the war was of a simple character and the parties were clearly divided; it was a holy war of the just England against the evil Germany. As I discussed earlier, Yoshino considered England a model country in many aspects. For example, he had professed his admiration for its ruling elite, which through 'its religious compassion and political wisdom' had succeeded in the establishment of 'a just and effective socio-political system'. This opinion was only reinforced by 'impressive acts of national unity during wartime' by such various groups as the British aristocracy, socialists and suffragettes, which, he emphasised, were very different from the German variety of national unity in that they were free and spontaneous.¹⁴⁴ Apart from its model political democracy Yoshino was much impressed by England's international track record, as exemplified by its achievements in the field of other 'universal trends' such as economic liberalism, international cooperation and international justice. The British people, he summarised, were to be envied for their exemplary role on the world stage, which contributed to both their particular national interest and international peace at large.¹⁴⁵

141 'Kokusai kyōsō jōri ni okeru saigo no shōri'. *Shinjin*, 1914.12: p.22.

142 'Sengo ni okeru Ōshū no shinkeisei'. *Shinjin*, 1915.4: pp.45-47; 'Sengo Ōshū no sūsei to Nihon no taido'. *Shinjin*, 1915.6: p.33; 'Ōshū senkyoku no genjō oyobi sengo no keisei wo ronjite Nihon shōrai no kakugo ni oyobu'. *Shinjin*, 1917.3: pp.44-45.

143 'Sengo Ōshū no sūsei to Nihon no taido'. *Shinjin*, 1915.6: pp.29-30.

144 'Kyokoku itchi no bidan'. *Shinjokai*, 1915.1: pp.26-27.

145 'Sengo Ōshū no sūsei to Nihon no taido'. *Shinjin*, 1915.6: pp.32-33. Yoshino makes no mention of the Boer War, by which England at the turn of the century called a considerable amount of bad press upon

In sharp contrast, Yoshino could hardly trace any good qualities in the German state and nation. This attitude was neither a product of the war; although he had spent most of his time in Germany while studying abroad - more than one and a half years compared to a mere few weeks in England - his stay there merely seemed to have made him very critical. His first impression was that Germany's main problem was its extremely authoritarian political system and religion, which had resulted in the absence of a sound and liberal middle class guiding elite such as present in the 'excellent' (*erai*) England. However, at first he believed this unsound socio-political system would be corrected to some extent by a revolution of the German common people, which he thought inevitable within the foreseeable future.¹⁴⁶ Later he seemed to have become pessimistic about the German nation as a whole when he stated that they could best be characterised by the word '*zweckmassig*' (efficient). This is not a negative term in itself, but gradually came to be interpreted by Yoshino as 'ruthless' and 'immoral', in the sense that 'the end (*der Zweck*) justifies the means', and he depicted Bismarck as the best representative of this German national character. Contrary to many Meiji Japanese who worshipped Bismarck as a true hero who had brought about the ultimate modern goal of state and nation building, Yoshino despised him for the means he had used in the process. Bismarck, he contended, was an untrustworthy power-politician who completely defied international justice and morality and thus formed the origin of the distrust in Germany by many other countries.¹⁴⁷ Accordingly Yoshino professed not to be at all amazed by German war atrocities and breaches of international law; what else could one expect of a 'politically backward' and 'uncivilised' nation?¹⁴⁸

Yoshino tended to view the European war more or less as a bilateral Anglo-German affair and the great differences in morality and civilisation he perceived between 'the two countries at war' were sufficient for him to speak with full conviction of 'the eventual defeat of Germany' at all stages of the war. In this first phase of the war, however, he was most adamant. Against the general opinion of many other commentators of the day, Yoshino maintained that this would not be a protracted war and Germany would be completely defeated.¹⁴⁹ The German tendency to trust solely in military power and to ignore international morality when convenient was outdated and would inevitably lead to the decline of the country. Nowadays, he emphasised, one did not predominantly need national strength, accumulated by such means as militarism and economic self-sufficiency, but the sympathy of the world in order to survive.¹⁵⁰ Still, the aspect that made him stand out most amongst his contemporaries was his view of the war as a holy quest by a virtuous and heroic nation against an evil empire. He rejected the common view, of both those who looked upon life as a struggle for survival and those who were convinced of the aggressive nature of capitalism, that the war was the inevitable result of the economic competition between imperialist rivals. England was not fighting Germany because it was a competitor. This, he said,

itself around the world, but most Japanese seemed to have forgotten about this and other less exemplary British 'achievements' on the world stage by the time of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Russo-Japanese War.

146 'Berurin yori Pari he'. *Shinjin*, 1912.8, p.85; 'Kokusai kyōsō jōri ni okeru saigo no shōri'. *Shinjin*, 1914.12: p.29.

147 'Doitsu no kokuminsei'. *Shinjokai*, 1914.11: pp.57-59. In contrast, in the same article for this women's magazine Yoshino presented Gladstone and Wilson as his heroes. *Ibid.*: p.60.

148 *Ibid.*: p.62; 'Sengo ni okeru Ōshū no shinkeisei'. *Shinjin*, 1915.4, p.45.

149 'Sengo ni okeru Ōshū no shinkeisei'. *Shinjin*, 1915.4: p.41.

150 'Kokusai kyōsō jōri ni okeru saigo no shōri'. *Shinjin*, 1914.12: pp.22, 24-26.

was proven by the fact that the British did not and would not consider fighting its strongest economic competitor, the United States; England was fighting the German nation because of the latter's 'lack of morality and justice'.¹⁵¹ This idealistic view of the war probably made Yoshino one of the few Japanese who, right from the start, very clearly chose sides in the European war and who wholeheartedly supported the war effort against Germany.

Legitimate Imperialism

The fact that Yoshino condemned Germany for its 'immoral and militarist' expansionism did not imply that he rejected imperialism as such. Like most of his contemporaries he was very much aware of the need of the Japanese nation to expand across its borders in order to retain a position on the world's stage, and he both acknowledged colonialism and forms of informal imperialism as means of realising this national aim.

Moreover, it is evident from Yoshino's regular allusions to the 'superb colonial qualities of the British nation' that he regarded an empire an essential part and a glorious symbol of a mature 'modern civilised state'.¹⁵²

Although he was not blind to the fact that imperialism was prone to collide every now and then with the universal trends he had discerned, he justified his stance by reasons of force majeure. Since 'the forces of internationalism and humanitarianism' were still too weak to have a significant effect on the level of morality in international relations, it was no option for Japan to stand aside in the imperialist competition. For the time being it had to join the competition, even more so now "the Orient had become the centre of West European expansionist ambitions".¹⁵³ The way Yoshino tried to harmonise the inevitable, and also desirable, national goal of imperialism with his ideals of international morality and universal brotherhood was not uncommon: he provided a legitimate form of imperialism which was more or less in line with the universal trends he acknowledged.

In an article written at the start of the Russo-Japanese War we are offered a first glimpse of what was legitimate imperialism according to Yoshino. He made the point that there were no grounds for disapproving of the Russian strategic and economic drive towards Manchuria, but that he could not approve of their methods: their 'economic exclusionism' would not only wield a blow to the many Japanese companies in the region but, moreover, the spread of Russia's 'uncivilised political practices' would imply an 'absolutist current against the international trend towards democracy'.¹⁵⁴ A year later, when Japan's troops were steadily advancing into Manchuria, Yoshino gave a definition of what Japanese imperialism should be like. Japan's expansion had to be 'peaceful expansionism', a combination of universal justice (*tenka kōdō*) and national strengthening (*kokuryoku kenjitsu*). This definition is as vague as most definitions by contemporary commentators in favour of imperialism tend to get, since it does not make clear where he drew the line between 'peaceful' and 'aggressive imperialism'. Nevertheless, his early

151 Ibid.: pp.26-27.

152 'Man-Sen shokuminteki keiei no hihan'. *Shinjin*, 1916.6: pp.59-60; 'Kokuminteki hansei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.8: p.1; 'Taisengo no sekaiteki kyōsō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3: pp.6-8.

153 'Sohō-sensei cho [Jimu ikkagen] wo yomu'. *Shinjin*, 1914.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: pp.86-87; '[Futsu-ryō Indo ni taisuru Nihon no yashin] ni tsuite'. *Shinjin*, 1905.2: p.54.

154 'Sei-Ro no mokuteki' and 'Ro-koku no haiboku wa sekai heiwa no motoi nari'. *Shinjin*, 1904.3: pp.25-26.

writings are of help in outlining Yoshino's basic stand, which we could tentatively describe as a combination of military, economic and moral imperialism. On the one hand this imperialism would not unnecessarily threaten the interests of other countries, but on the other hand it was clearly aimed at making Japan into a strong great power (*kyōdaikoku*) that would no longer have to consider the interests of others to the same extent as up till then.¹⁵⁵ Up to the end of the First World War imperialism did not have any negative connotations to most people in 'the civilised world'; it was an honourable cause and it was merely the adjective 'aggressive' or 'military' which had become suspect. In Yoshino's case it was not any different. He did not doubt the goal but there was a problem with the means which had to be solved: one could not be as 'zweckmassig' as the Germans had been. Of course Yoshino also subscribed to military imperialism inspired by strategic motives, i.e., the principle of offensive defence, but only to a limited extent. In the case of Japan he almost automatically treated Korea as a special region within Japan's line of interest (*riekisen*) but, unlike military men such as Yamagata Aritomo, he was not willing to go any further. Amongst other reasons he pointed out that the additional effect to the prosperity of the country (*kokuun*) of stretching the line of formal empire steadily decreased and the costs would soon become disproportional.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, in the parts of the Asian continent beyond the Korean peninsula (read: China) Yoshino tended to advocate peaceful 'economic' means to extend the empire. However, in the decade between the Russo-Japanese War and 'the European war' he increasingly stressed that military and economic imperialism alone could not accomplish the task:

History proves that the victorious nations of this world which have left their enduring marks on posterity were not merely superior in the field of material power but in all cases also superior in the field of spiritual power. If the Japanese nation is merely willing to establish our military authority over Korea and Manchuria and aside from this does not hold any design to implant superior civilisational ideals on the continent, we will definitely not have the qualifications to become the eternal victor in the management of the continent. (...) Military power is not the goal but an instrument.¹⁵⁷

This call for a strong element of morality and civilisation in Japan's expansionist policy was the result of Yoshino's genuine feeling that the world was rapidly turning into a better place and international relations would fundamentally change. Once the war started and the attention of the Western superpowers was being diverted to the West European front, it was obvious that 'Japan had no opponents in the Orient' and thus could 'easily establish its hegemony over the Orient by military means'. Nevertheless, he warned his compatriots not to jump at the opportunity: "For Japan it would be most desirable to place the whole of China under its influence, yet this is not realistic. Japan lacks the political and moral authority". Moreover, after the short war he assumed the European war would be, England and Russia would be back in East Asia and pass judgement on Japan's actions during their temporary absence. Yoshino thought that Japan would be in a disadvantageous position from the outset, since it would never be

155 '[Futsu-ryō Indo ni taisuru Nihon no yashin] ni tsuite'. *Shinjin*, 1905.2: pp.53-54.

156 'Sohō-sensei cho [Jimu ikkagen] wo yomu'. *Shinjin*, 1914.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: pp.95-96.

157 *Ibid.*: pp.89-90.

accepted as a member of the white, civilised and Christian ‘European society’.¹⁵⁸ Considering this mental gap between Japan and Europe and the fact that it would be impossible for Japan militarily to resist the united European forces, it was no solution for Japan to base its empire on sheer national strength, i.e., military and economic power. On the contrary:

We should limit our arms to such an extent that we will not arouse European suspicion of our being a war-loving nation and forming a threat to the peace in the Orient. (...) We must not lose their sympathy. (...) Since we cannot develop the military power to oppose the rest of the world on our own, there is no other way but to make up our lack of military power with international sympathy. (...) We can only receive their respect and sympathy when we support the European ideal of creating paradise on earth.¹⁵⁹

Yoshino was aware that Japan first had to obtain European recognition of its expansionist aims in order for its imperialist policy to be successful. He was of the opinion that in the framework of ‘the new universal trends’ it was essential that his country possessed moral authority and the only way to achieve it was to contribute to ‘the Western ideal of world cultural progress’.

Europe and Japanese Inferiority

Yoshino could have been self-contented with doing his people a favour by showing them which way to proceed; however, he seems to have been rather bewildered by the logical conclusions of his new awareness. Whereas he considered the Japanese nation at least partially equipped for the imperialist competition of yore, he was at a complete loss about what it could contribute to the new ‘world civilisation’. It was “neither *Yamatodamashii* nor *bushidō*, and definitely not *Shintoism*” for which the world was waiting. He was adamant it had to be something “loftier with a wider, global scope”, but he was not able to give his fellow countrymen any concrete advice.¹⁶⁰ The problem was that, in spite of his usual optimism in mankind in general, Yoshino was evidently pessimistic about the qualities of the Japanese. He saw it as his main task to exhort his people to do good and, even though it sometimes may have been merely in order to make sure that his fellow-countrymen did not become complacent as a result of Japan’s relatively successful modernisation, the fact is that there is no stage in his writing career in which we could ‘accuse’ him of exalting the virtues of his own country. This tendency was also evident in his critique of the international achievements of the Japanese and only increased the more Yoshino became aware of a new universal trend.

In Yoshino’s opinion Japan joined ‘world politics’ with its victory over Russia, yet at this time his conception of world politics was still very limited. He plainly stated that “We don’t have direct political interests in Europe and the United States, so we will not interfere in their private business” and one can imagine that he hoped the same to be true for the Western powers in their

158 ‘Kokusai kyōsō jōri ni okeru saigo no shōri’. *Shinjin*, 1914.12: pp.27-28; ‘Shina no seijiteki shōrai’. *Shinjin*, 1914.11: pp.51-52; ‘Sengo Ōshū no sūsei to Nihon no taido’. *Shinjin*, 1915.6: pp.33-34.

159 ‘Sengo Ōshū no sūsei to Nihon no taido’. *Shinjin*, 1915.6: p.34.

160 *Ibid.*: p.36.

dealings with East Asia as well.¹⁶¹ Thus when Japan after the Russo-Japanese War was once again confronted with European clamour over the rise of a ‘yellow peril’ in the East, Yoshino did not see any reason why Japan should engage in self-reflection:

(European suspicions of Japan) find their origin in the expression of Japan’s true power during the Russo-Japanese War. (...) It is not strange ... that they do not like to see a strong Japan in the Orient, the region of future West European expansion ... but it cannot be helped. All we can do is to prove to them by our actions that Japan’s national policy is aimed at peaceful expansion and will not intrude upon their concessions. (...) On the other hand, we should strive to become a strong great power soon so we can make them shut their mouths. (...) We should not take outside criticism into consideration.¹⁶²

A decade later Yoshino’s conception of world politics had fundamentally changed and his position towards the outside world had turned a full 180 degrees and was never to swing back. Japan had indeed become one of the countries of the world but, with the world increasingly becoming one, he no longer agreed that Japan had to aim to become a ‘strong great power’. Now he urged it to become a first-rate country.¹⁶³ Japan was not so much considered to be lacking in power but lacking in civilisation and morality. Yoshino’s view of his fellow countrymen had thus become rather harsh and he tended to use every piece of outside criticism as a pretext to urge them to self-reflection. As far as national policy was concerned, Yoshino was prepared to spare the people and named the “irreligious and corrupt” political elite and their “strong-handed rule completely void of any sort of social policy” as the main culprit. He maintained that there was no country where there was so little compassion and understanding for the weak and where law and politics were so much conceived to protect the superior class as in Japan.¹⁶⁴ However, in the field of the international policy of Japan, he showed less remorse for the common man when he characterised them as small-minded nationalists and egoists: “Our education has made them into good Japanese citizens but they lack the credentials as world citizens” and during the war he labelled them as “even worse than the Germans”.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the Japanese emigrants to the United States would not have been overjoyed to hear Yoshino say that, at their present level of civilisation and international morality, it was only natural they would be ostracised wherever they went.¹⁶⁶

In accordance with his harsh diagnosis, the cure Yoshino prescribed for Japan was not light either; the Japanese had to change fundamentally their whole way of thinking, including their view of the outside world. He was aware that this would be a long-term process but, he encouraged his fellow countrymen, all would not be in vain:

161 (Shōtensei) ‘Nichi-Ro sensō to sekai seiji’. *Shinjin*, 1904.8: p.32.

162 (Shōtensei) ‘[Futsu-ryō Indo ni taisuru Nihon no yashin] ni tsuite. *Shinjin*, 1905.2: p.54.

163 ‘Sohō-sensei cho [Jimu ikkagen] wo yomu’. *Shinjin*, 1914.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: p.82.

164 *Ibid.*: pp.84-85; ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5: pp.49-51.

165 ‘Hai-Nichi mondai to Kirisuto kyōto’. *Shinjin*, 1913.12: pp.32-33; ‘Kyokoku itchi no bidan’. *Shinjokai*, 1915.1: pp.26-27.

166 ‘Kokumin no taigai shisō wo aratameyo’. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1915.4: pp.50-51.

... if Japan would only taste the essence of Christian civilisation and would understand and embrace a grand and global spirit (*idai naru sekaiteki seishin*) identical to the one upheld by the Westerners, we could have far more cordial relations with the West.¹⁶⁷

Asia and Japanese Superiority

Although by 1911 Japan had attained the status of formal equality with the West by means of the abolition of the so-called ‘unequal treaties’, under which Japan for half a century had to tolerate an imposed low customs tariff and the legal extra-territoriality of foreign residents, there were probably few Japanese who considered their own nation fully equal to the West. The above citation is evidence that Yoshino was also all too willing to accept an almost spontaneous feeling of Japanese inferiority vis-à-vis the ‘Christian civilised nations of the West’. However, when speaking in such general terms, one tends to overlook the fact that in reality this category was perceived by most Japanese, who would probably omit the adjective ‘Christian’, as consisting of no more than the four ‘strong great powers’ of the day: Great Britain, Germany, France and the United States. Yoshino, for his part, on the eve of World War One gave the following hierarchy to the ‘visible’ nations of the world in terms of civilisation: 1. Great Britain 2. the United States 3. France 4. Germany 5. Japan 6. Russia 7. China.¹⁶⁸ In short, even if like Yoshino one considered ‘Europe’¹⁶⁹ as the most civilised part of the world and Japan as the worst pupil of the civilised class, this still meant that Japan ranked as the number five of the world. This general view of the international order had significant implications for the way Japan conceived the only part of the world with which it was confronted in everyday international life: the adjacent arena of East Asia. Within this regional framework Yoshino provided a completely different evaluation of his country:

If there is one nation that has the qualifications and the mission to represent the Oriental nations and compete with the Occidental civilisation in contributing to the progress of the world it is Japan. (...) At least in terms of military power Japan is in the position of a supreme ruler. In matters relating to the destiny of East Asia we cannot ignore the opinion of the Western countries, but they cannot act against our will either. Japan has the strongest right to have a say (*hatsugenken*) in matters concerning the destiny of East Asia. However, we are not content with the status of being merely the military champion in the Orient. We should also become the spiritual leader and representative of the Oriental nations. (...) We have to bring

167 ‘Sohō-sensei cho [Jimu ikkagen] wo yomu’: p.87.

168 ‘Minshūteki jii undō wo ronzu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.4, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: pp.33-34. However, in terms of military strength he ranked the undemocratic and thus uncivilised Russia as number five. See for instance his ‘Rokoku kizoku no unmei’. *Shinjin*, 1905.5, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5: p.14 and ‘Kokusai kyōsō jōri ni okeru saigō no shōri’. *Shinjin*, 1914.12: p.23.

169 In pre-WW1 Japan one often tended to forget to make some geographical elaboration for the sake of the United States, which was more or less treated as a part of Europe. Moreover, this ‘Europe’ did not include large parts of the European continent itself. This is also evident from the fact that Yoshino during his three year sojourn in Europe did not stay outside of ‘the big three’ except for Austria, a country most Japanese hardly distinguished from Germany.

about a spiritual revival of the Oriental nations.¹⁷⁰

In spite of his doubts whether Japan had anything to offer world civilisation and how it could legitimise its existence vis-à-vis the higher civilisations of the West, Yoshino did not seem to harbour any doubt that Japan could contribute in every possible way to - and thus was entitled to lead - the development of East Asia. It might not be a fully fledged Christian and democratic civilisation, but at least it was part of that civilisation.

In order to understand better Yoshino's ideas on Japan's superiority in East Asia, we should examine his view of China because, Korea already being part of the Japanese empire, this was what the terms 'East Asia' (*Tō-A*), 'the East' (*Tōhō*) and 'the Orient' (*Tōyō*) implied. During his years in China, Yoshino was first the private teacher of Yuan Shikai's son and later the most prominent teacher at the Northern College of Law and Administration, the school established in 1907 by Yuan in order to modernise China, and he was thus able to mingle with a comparatively Western-oriented part of the Chinese elite. Nonetheless, judging by one of his first reports home dating from 1906, compared to "us, developed Japanese", Yoshino did not have a good word to say about either the Chinese people in general or the reformers in particular:

The Chinese base their judgements and actions on a prescribed set of traditional formalities and there is hardly anyone who behaves according to his own free and independent insights. (...) Even Yuan Shikai, who is most progressive minded, is still under the influence of old customs. (...) I must say that this formalism is the biggest obstacle to the progress of the Chinese empire and the Chinese people. (...) They have no idea of independence and freedom, ... lack ideals and thus the drive to progress. (...) Their recent so-called 'progress' is nothing but the copying of only the outline of Western and Japanese institutions and has no content at all.¹⁷¹

One decade and two Chinese revolutions later one could still hear the echo of Yoshino's China experience. The following example of his complete rejection of the Chinese and their then leader Yuan Shikai is very instructive:

[Yuan's] knowledge of the world, the most important prerequisite for a diplomat, is extremely meagre. Except for Korea, he has not set one foot across the border. (...) Moreover, he does not know foreign languages and what they call Chinese learning is definitely not very profound. (...) He was trained in the so-called 'Chinese bureaucracy' and thus had to cut himself a way through cunningness, falsehood and all sorts of vices. (...) He is not to be trusted ... and he lacks an autonomous policy. He is merely implementing the golden rule since the days of Li Hongzhang of 'using the [Western] barbarians to restrain the [Eastern] barbarians'. (...) Doesn't he see that in the end they will suffer themselves the most for bringing external forces between China and Japan?¹⁷²

170 'Sengo Ōshū no sūsei to Nihon no taido'. *Shinjin*, 1915.6: pp.35-36.

171 'Shinajin no keishikishugi'. *Shinjin*, 1906.7/9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.8: pp.176-77, 180-82.

172 'Tai-Shi gaikō no gensei hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.6: pp.78-80.

To criticise the Chinese for not having been to the West and not being able to speak English or German is typical of Yoshino, but the other accusations are an exact copy of the contemporary Japanese stereotype view of the Chinese. His diagnosis of ‘the problem with China’ was also:

One never hears of the rise of patriots (*yūkoku aimin no shishi*) in China. (...) An overwhelming majority of the people is mainly driven by private interests and hardly cares [about their incredibly irrational backward political system]. Even most of the revolutionary parties are not sincere groups who are critical of the present system. They are merely jealous of the arbitrary means government officials use to enrich themselves. (...) Therefore, at the moment there is no basis for a revolution in China. (...) The bureaucrats are too strongly committed to the present system because of their private interests ... that from their side no substantial reform is to be expected. (...) The driving force for any reform has to originate in the common people (*heimin*). Unfortunately, the people still spend their hours in idle slumber and have so long been restrained by the ties of formalism that they lack the independence and creativity to discover by themselves the aims for which they should reach. (...) If we truly want to help China, the best thing we can do is to teach the Chinese the most ordinary scientific and moral common sense. (...) It will be most effective if we mingle amongst the Chinese people and sprinkle them with the light of truth that is taught by modern civilisation.¹⁷³

Even in 1915 Yoshino did not show any hesitation in calling China feudal, ruled by nepotism and void of any hope for ‘constitutional politics’.¹⁷⁴ To what extent the fact that Yoshino had only been in China to earn money while he had actually wanted to go to Europe for study and the fact that he himself did not speak ‘his languages’, i.e. Chinese, contributed to him not forming a somewhat more benevolent view of the country remains open to speculation. In any case, with such a condescending attitude it is hardly surprising that he was not able to make any Chinese friends during his three-year stay and that he in essence remained completely uninterested in the country and its fate, no matter how many revolutions occurred.

However, in the age of lingering imperialism China, ‘the last scene of competition between the colonialist powers’, could not just be cast aside as hopeless. While all powers openly paid tribute to the principles of equal opportunities and the open door, Yoshino was not the first to notice that these were but hollow phrases and in practice everybody was creating his own isolationist sphere of influence, a development he considered desirable neither for China - and more important - nor for Japan.¹⁷⁵ Thus, even if one did not have any sympathy for the country and its people, its territory had to be safeguarded against the West. Yoshino did not hesitate to state that the most desirable solution, in his view, would be for Japan to place the whole of China under its influence. Like most Japanese in pre-Second World War days he subscribed to the aim

173 ‘Shinajin no keishikishugi’. *Shinjin*, 1906.9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.8: pp.182-86.

174 ‘Shina no teisei wa jitsugen no mikomi ari ya’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.10: pp.67-68.

175 ‘Shina no seijiteki shōrai’. *Shinjin*, 1914.11: pp.49-51.

of ridding Asia of Western domination, yet to his regret he had to admit that this was not a realistic aim and accordingly he was a rather silent supporter of the ‘Asia for the Asians’ cause. As discussed earlier, he thought Japan was evidently inferior to the Western powers and lacked both the political and the moral authority to bring such a policy about successfully. The next best solution Yoshino could think up was for China to become so strong that it could get rid of the foreign spheres of influence itself and, of course, he was gracious enough to promise the Chinese the necessary Japanese help to accomplish this task.¹⁷⁶ Although he was not blind to the considerable amount of anti-Japanese sentiment in China, which would seem a major obstacle to such a cooperative Sino-Japanese scheme, Yoshino was rather optimistic. The source of anti-Japanese sentiment in China, he determined, was “the discrepancy between Japan’s status and its behaviour”, so if the Japanese residents in China would only stop their disproportional arrogance and the Chinese would only give up their toadyism towards the West, Sino-Japanese cooperation would come about naturally.¹⁷⁷ In this set-up it was Japan, the success story of instant nation-building under the menacing gaze of Western imperialist powers, that had to shoulder the heavy task of imbuing the Chinese, who after all were unpatriotic Mammonists, with the nationalist feelings which were considered primarily essential to strengthen the country:

By means of respect and sympathy we have to develop Chinese national awareness (*minzokusei*) and endeavour to stand together to uphold the security of the Orient. Although Japanese politicians tend to strive merely for personal glory and the Japanese people tend to become fanatically patriotic, we should not take our egoistic national interests as the sole criterion in our China and Korea policies. We have to implement a long term policy for the eternal prosperity of the Orient (*Tōyō eien no taikai*).¹⁷⁸

To complete this grand scheme of national security by means of a strong China, it was even provided with a Christian topping of international equality and universal - or at least Oriental - brotherhood. Nevertheless, it is not hard to see that the main pillar of Yoshino’s argument, a strong China, was extremely difficult to harmonise with his above-mentioned total condemnation of the Chinese nation. Another weak point is that he never said what this plan would imply for Japan’s position in Manchuria in the not very unlikely case Japanese fostered Chinese nationalism would also turn its attention to the North and would develop into a movement to retrieve concessions there. Instead, all Yoshino came up with was a very weak general argument, which will not have convinced many of his fellow countrymen, that Japan needed a strong and potentially dangerous neighbour in order to become a real strong nation itself.¹⁷⁹

Yoshino also had a different scenario up his sleeve, namely ‘the big stick’, which would

176 Ibid.: pp.51-53.

177 Ibid.: p.53.

178 ‘Kokusai kyōsō jōri ni okeru saigō no shōri’. *Shinjin*, 1914.12: p.28. I have chosen to render ‘*minzoku*’ as ‘national’ instead of ‘ethnic national’. Although he, and most of his contemporaries, even after 1918 used *minzoku* in the case of China in its entirety, thus ignoring the fact that the country was a multi-ethnic entity, here he is also more concerned with China as a unified political nation (and as a member of the yellow race).

179 Ibid.: p.27; ‘Shina no seijiteki shōrai’. *Shinjin*, 1914.11: pp.51-52.

be enacted in case the Chinese did not spontaneously come knocking on Japan's door; there was the fait accompli that Japan as a result of 'the European war' had come to exercise considerable control over the whole North of China. The Japanese themselves had completely eradicated German influence and the other European powers who had a stake in China were at that moment too weakened to divert attention to East Asia. Moreover, Yoshino thought that even after the war these countries would respect Japan's increased influence in China, in reward for Japan's aid in the war, and thus the Chinese would become so dependent that they would no longer be able to turn Japan down. In this way, with a certain measure of coercive guidance, Sino-Japanese cooperation would also come about.¹⁸⁰

However, it is hard to fight the impression that the latter scenario sounded rather like 'the ideal solution' he had considered unrealistic at an earlier stage of placing the whole of China under Japanese influence. The above at least is not very consistent with the idea that Japan would have to stand trial before 'a court of international morality' after the war, and to think that England would lend spiritual support to this scheme of forcing China to accept Japanese guidance seems to be the height of wishful thinking.¹⁸¹ Moreover, the existence of a country called the United States, which also had interests in China and which was as yet not directly involved in the war, was completely ignored.

The Litmus Test: the Twenty-One Demands

It will be clear that during the first stage of the war Yoshino was, to put it mildly, in two minds about the China policy Japan should pursue: a strong Japan versus the Western powers with China as the mere object of the competition or a future strong China as one of the subjects in the struggle against the West. These two options seem to be at complete loggerheads; from the viewpoint of China itself the former would imply more rights and concessions in foreign hands and the latter less. It was time for Yoshino's 'desk theories' to be tested in practice to find out which side he was really on. The first opportunity that arose was, of course, the clash between Chinese and Japanese interests over the so-called Twenty-One Demands.

When in May 1915 Japan sent an ultimatum to the Chinese government in order to have it accept twenty-one demands which, especially in case of the so-called Group Five Demands, would imply a considerable extension of Japan's informal empire in China and a proportional infringement upon China's authority,¹⁸² Yoshino left no doubt which scenario he thought should be enacted. He fully agreed with both the content of the whole set of demands and the secret diplomacy of the Ōkuma Cabinet. Moreover, he thought the ultimate method of coercion by

180 'Shina no seijiteki shōrai'. *Shinjin*, 1914.11: p.54.

181 *Ibid.*: p.54.

182 The Japanese text of the Twenty-One Demands can be found in foreign minister Katō Takaaki's instructions to the Japanese ambassador in Beijing, Gaimushō, ed., *Nihon gaikō nenpyō narabi ni shuyō bunsho, jō*, Hara Shobō, 1965: pp.381-84. There is a translation in English in David J. Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History*, vol.II, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1997: pp. 383-86. Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-1915*, Macmillan, 1969: pp.258-62. For a compact analysis of the demands in English, see Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention - Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919*, Harvard University Press, 1999: pp.85-92.

means of military threat was perfectly justified. He pointed out that “Japan has shown itself to be more than prepared to settle Sino-Japanese questions in a friendly and peaceful way, although it is in a position to coerce China by means of force” and that even “the Chinese leaders fully understood Japan’s true intentions and had been willing to comply, but they could not do so because of popular pressure”.¹⁸³ Thus, the final notification was no more than a friendly helping hand stretched out to the Chinese government on behalf of ‘the peace in the Orient’, the grand cause the Chinese people were not able to see because they were ‘over-sensitive’ and did not understand ‘Western logic’.¹⁸⁴

Yoshino turned out to be an even stronger supporter of a hard line in foreign policy than the Ōkuma Cabinet in the sense that he was willing to disregard completely international concern over the Japanese demands. When due to international pressure Japan let go of the Group Five Demands, which Yoshino considered most desirable, he launched the attack. The cabinet, he cried out, had been so foolish as to underestimate the Chinese when it supposed that they would not expose the secret part of the demands to the Western powers and, more important, it had damaged the empire’s authority by softening the Japanese demands in the final notification. Once having made clear its demands to China the Japanese government should not have succumbed to foreign pressure, even if this led to tension with England and America. He was convinced that in the event problems arose with the Western powers these could be easily resolved afterwards and, even if this turned out to be more problematic, losing face vis-à-vis China was a far more distasteful prospect.¹⁸⁵ In order to save face, and of course also to extend practical interests on the continent, Yoshino demanded that Japan show China that it would not give in to foreign pressure. It should not restore Qingdao before the country recognised all Japanese demands:

Aren’t we doing more than is strictly necessary? (...) If we lightly return Qingdao, what will we then use as bait to make the Chinese comply with our Group Five Demands?¹⁸⁶

It shall be clear that when one professes not to be willing to do anything more than ‘strictly necessary’ there is no basis for such a difficult enterprise as Sino-Japanese cooperation, and calls to this end in order to secure Asia from the West merely sound hollow. Moreover, Yoshino was so preoccupied in having all those involved recognise Japanese superiority in East Asia that he tended to forget the Japanese inferiority to the West he himself so often emphasised. Thus, at this stage, it is hard to find in the policy he proposed towards China a trace of the noble ideals of international justice and humanitarianism. Whereas at an abstract level of international relations, or within the ‘league of civilised nations’, he used to pay tribute to the universal trend of cooperative internationalism, in the region of Japan’s core activities which involved ‘uncivilised nations’ as well Yoshino did not seem any different from the average Japanese imperialist ‘realpolitiker’ of his day and had no sympathy at all for the Oriental neighbour China.¹⁸⁷

183 ‘Tai-Shi gaikō no gensei hihan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.6, pp.76, 66.

184 Ibid.: pp.61, 64, 66, 68.

185 Ibid.: pp.65, 74, 75.

186 Ibid.: p.78.

187 It is for instance very interesting to see that Yoshino at the time of the negotiations concerning the

3.2 Phase 2, July 1915 - December 1917: The War as a Stagnation of the World Trend and the Need for an Asian Monroe Doctrine

Miscalculations and Adjustments

The second phase started in the early summer of 1915 when Yoshino began to take a radically different view of the war and, partly as a result of his new insights, gradually adjusted his directions as to what Japan's China policy should be like. The incentive for his changed assessment of the war was simply that it had taken a turn very different to what Yoshino had previously imagined. In the summer of 1915 Germany was anything but on the losing end and, especially on the eastern front, the Allied Forces were not faring well. He now put forward that the war would last a long time and, although he still maintained that the Allied Powers would win the war in the end, he did not sound so convinced anymore. In the spring of 1916 he admitted that "the defeat of German militarism will not be as complete as initially expected. (...) The end of the war will probably see a 60-70% Allied victory".¹⁸⁸ Exactly a year later he went even further back on his prophecy by saying that "it is probably a fair conclusion to say that the Allied Forces can only win by 60%".¹⁸⁹ It will be clear that if he conceded only a little more he would inevitably turn out to be predicting a German victory.

Moreover, whereas at first he had given the Germans not a ghost of a chance because of their authoritarianism and uncivilisedness, Yoshino now saw himself compelled to come up with a reason for Germany's unexpected staying power. And so he did. Although he never openly admitted that his former assessments had proven completely wrong, one could now suddenly find him speaking of militarism being "merely a superficial feature of German society". In essence, he explained, Germany was just another Western civilised country with a harmoniously united nation, consisting of an able and popular imperial line, a highly educated religious and secular elite, and a strong and well-educated people imbued with religious feeling. And another virtue of the German people Yoshino had earlier overlooked but now specifically mentioned was their "respect and support for their scientists and scholars".¹⁹⁰ However, most remarkable is the fact that he was not even morally indignant about the German submarine attacks, which he simply disposed of as being both rational and inevitable.¹⁹¹

Whether it was the logical result of his reassessment of the German moral standing or his perception that to argue that the Germans were not that evil was not sufficient to explain why 'the good' were not simply gaining an overwhelming victory, the fact is that Yoshino

Twenty-One Demands strongly condemned China for 'appealing to the world' (*yo ni uttaeru*), a strategy which was to become his own. *Ibid.*: pp.78-80.

188 'Taisen-go no sekaiteki kyōsō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.10, 12.

189 'Ōshū senkyoku no genjō oyobi sengo no keisei wo ronjite Nihon shōrai no kakugo ni oyobu'. *Shinjin*, 1917.3, p.42.

190 'Doitsu kyōsei no genin wo toite waga kuni no shikisha ni uttau'. *Shinjin*, 1915.12, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5, pp.132-39.

191 'Ōshū senkyoku no genjō oyobi sengo no keisei wo ronjite Nihon shōrai no kakugo ni oyobu'. *Shinjin*, 1917.3, pp.36-37.

simultaneously reassessed the English moral standing and even completely redefined the fundamental nature of the European war. He changed his mind about it being a holy war between good and evil; he drew nearer to the interpretation of the Social Darwinist and Marxist camps that it was merely an inevitable collision between economic or imperialist rivals.¹⁹² All of a sudden he professed that he had become aware that there was also a dark side to European civilisation. He now confronted his readership with the ‘new’ conclusion that in their international relations the European countries were not ultimately motivated by the noble ideals of international justice and humanitarianism (his *idai naru sekaiteki seishin*) but by questions that were more directly related to the survival of the state. It was evident, he said, that they were mainly trying to expand their economic power and colonial rule and were thus involved in a constant struggle amongst themselves for a bigger share of the world market. As a result war was endemic and this time it had been the collision between the German drive to destroy the status quo (*genjō daha*), in the form of the German ambition to kick Russia out of the Balkans and to overturn the British and French colonial dominance, and the refusal of Britain and France to give in (*genjō iji*), which had sparked off this latest episode.¹⁹³

In contrast to most Japanese for whom the war in Europe was a very distant matter which did not concern them, Yoshino continuously thought it to be of direct influence to Japan. The title of his March 1917 contribution to *Shinjin*, ‘The Present State of the European War, the Post-War Situation and Japan’s Future Preparedness’ is a good example. However, whereas at first he had advised his fellow-countrymen to start adjusting to the universal trend which would rule the postwar international order, he now warned them for the effects of the postponement of the whole matter. The incomplete Allied victory Yoshino predicted at this stage implied that Germany would lose all its colonial possessions, but the country itself, including a politically active emperor and Prussian dominance, would remain more or less intact. Accordingly, “rivalry between the two West European powers and the two Central European powers” would continue as before and a war of revenge was more than likely. However, England and France had become good students of the German school of militarism and would not again fail to make the necessary preparations. Therefore, Yoshino concluded, armament would be the postwar trend and the struggle for the few remaining non-colonised territories, read “China”, would be as fierce as ever.¹⁹⁴

It was also in this phase that Yoshino for the first time made mention of the United States as a potential threat to Japan’s position in Asia:

The United States will eventually break with the legacy of [President George] Washington and, as a result of its financial power, its national pride, and its new strong army, will become the country most to be feared.¹⁹⁵

192 Ibid.: p.40.

193 ‘Taisen-go no sekaiteki kyōsō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.1-2, 5, 10; ‘Ōshū senkyoku no genjō oyobi sengo no keisei wo ronjite Nihon shōrai no kakugo ni oyobu’. *Shinjin*, 1917.3, p.40.

194 ‘Taisen-go no sekaiteki kyōsō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.10-13; ‘Ōshū senkyoku no genjō oyobi sengo no keisei wo ronjite Nihon shōrai no kakugo ni oyobu’. *Shinjin*, 1917.3, pp.40-42.

195 ‘Sekai seiron no tenkaki’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.7, p.14.

However, when compared to his other articles dealing with the Asia policy of the United States, this still seems to be an incidental and merely rhetorical outburst. He left open the possibility of American economic expansion into Asia after the war, but he rejected the notion that the United States was particularly hostile to Japan and flatly denied that it had any strategic interests in the Western part of the Pacific. For instance, he pointed out that the United States had not opposed and still did not oppose the Japanese occupation of Micronesia, explained that the expansion of American naval forces was mainly aimed against Europe, and emphasised that its fundamental attitude towards Asia was best represented by the Democratic Party's policy to grant independence to the Philippines.¹⁹⁶

When Yoshino at this stage of the war was talking about “our present international crisis which makes us extremely anxious about our future”¹⁹⁷, this was not so much based on a direct and tangible threat by any of Japan's ‘potential enemies such as the United States, England, Russia and France’.¹⁹⁸ He was not blind to the fact that in the Japanese media there was much talk of international competition being fierce and European and American power heading eastwards to oppress Japan, but he did not take it very seriously and bluntly stated that in general the Japanese people did not feel such pressures at all.¹⁹⁹ In his opinion such fears were based rather on an increased general awareness of the weakness of Japan itself. Although Yoshino's assessments of the war and the international situation at large were not always in line with the general opinion, there was one realisation he shared with most commentators, namely the awareness that national strength, and accordingly the outcome of wars, was more and more determined by economic power. Although he admitted that the German military discipline and its outstanding officer corps were not completely unrelated to its recent victories, he had become aware that “Germany is temporarily winning because of better production facilities” and “War on this scale is not decided anymore by the quality of training and bravery of the soldiers”.²⁰⁰ However, if national strength and national security were mainly about economy, Japan, Yoshino realised, was in for deep trouble within this framework of ‘total war’. In this new situation, what was a country to do which “completely lacks the German staying power” and which, with its “relatively large population and small territory”, could not even start dreaming of economic autarky?²⁰¹

A Monroe Doctrine for Asia

Yoshino had adjusted his view of the postwar situation as a result of his realisation that a world order based on justice and compassion would be postponed. In its stead, the traditional world order of imperialism based on military and, increasingly, on economic strength would more or less continue for a considerable time to come. Therefore, it was no longer realistic to

196 ‘Beikoku no tai-Tōyō seisaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.12, p.90; ‘Kitaru beki kōwa to Kōshūwan oyobi Nanyō shotō no shobun’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.3, pp.110-11; ‘Ōtani Kōzui-shi no [Teikoku no kiki] wo yomu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.4, pp.88-89; ‘Taisen-go no sekaiteki kyōsō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, p.13.

197 ‘Sekai seiron no tenkaki’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.7, p.2.

198 ‘Ōtani Kōzui-shi no [Teikoku no kiki] wo yomu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.4, p.89.

199 ‘Nisshi shinzenron’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.9, p.19.

200 ‘Roshia no haisen’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.10, pp.70-72.

201 ‘Seishinteki jikyūjisokushugi wo haisu’. *Shinjin*, 1917.7, pp.18-19, 21-23.

think that the reaction of the Western powers to Japan's endeavours in East Asia would be as mild as he had presumed in the early stages of the war. Japan needed a more solid base to stand on in Asia than vain dreams of a tolerant West and hollow calls for Sino-Japanese cooperation; it could no longer hope to go for it alone. According to Yoshino, Japan should strive to do as much as it could by itself, but should not go to irrational and detrimental extremes such as economic self-sufficiency.²⁰² The alternative of a Japan-led "Monroe Doctrine for Asia" (*Ajia Monrōshugi*) he himself proposed in these new circumstances as the 'rational and harmless' version of Japanese autonomy was nonetheless invariably aimed at restraining the growth of Western influence in the region and was, as always, primarily based on the idea of Sino-Japanese friendship and cooperation.

While the war in Europe was going on and Japan's allies to some extent depended on Japan for aid and supplies Yoshino was convinced the country had nothing to fear. At the time of Yuan Shikai's attempts to reinstall imperial rule in China, he approvingly noticed how the Western powers were eagerly trying to seek out Japan's stand on the matter. This, he emphasised, was a clear indication that Japan had attained an equal footing with its economic rivals in China.²⁰³ Still Yoshino was not content. At the beginning of 1916 he pointed out that the war situation presented a golden opportunity to make the stubborn English at last recognise Japanese superiority in the Far East. Japan should no longer compromise but instead force England to express its understanding of Japan's justified needs for economic expansion into China and to take part in a agreement in which both countries would demarcate their respective spheres of interest. In Yoshino's scheme the result of such an agreement would be twofold: it was to prevent or decrease future confrontation between the two major powers in China and it was to take away the open attitude of contempt for Japan by the British residing in China, "one of the causes of anti-Japanese feelings amongst the Chinese".²⁰⁴ This design was in his opinion considerably precipitated by the premature (although predicted by Yoshino) death of Yuan, whom he considered as anti-Japanese and pro-Western and the one person Yoshino was actually referring to when he very generally spoke of 'anti-Japanese feelings amongst the Chinese'. As a result of Yuan's demise the Western powers would have to depend more and more on Japan's strength in order to preserve order in China. And in fact, he stressed, this was exactly what happened when England not long afterwards recalled its minister in Beijing, John Newell Jordan, the man he regarded as the main instigator of anti-Japanese feelings amongst the Chinese leadership. Yoshino interpreted this as a clear sign that Japan's strongest economic competitor in China had reversed its policy. From now on it would recognise Japanese superiority in the region and "completely attune itself to Japan".²⁰⁵

According to Yoshino, Japan's pre-eminent position in China was further enhanced by the American-Japanese 'exchange of notes declaring the policy of the two Governments with

202 Ibid.: pp.18-19.

203 'Tai-Shi keikoku no hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.12, p.80.

204 'Tai-Shi gaikō konponsaku no kettei ni kansuru Nihon seikyaku no konmei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.87-89.

205 'Shina no jikyoku to Nihon no taido'. *Shinjin*, 1916.7, pp.4-5. Yoshino's information does not seem to fit the facts here, since Jordan functioned as the English minister to China until 1920, although it may be that he was temporarily absent for a while in 1916.

regard to China' on 2 November 1917, better known as the Ishii-Lansing agreement.²⁰⁶ He rated it highly as the tangible evidence that the United States, although last in line, had at last shown understanding and given its assent to the Japanese ideal of expansion into Asia:

Japan's special interests in the main part of China have been recognised (...) albeit in the very light meaning of a political right of priority. (...) It more or less comes down to the fact that the United States will not carry out any political activities in China without the consent of Japan. (...) The United States has also finally recognised an exception to the general principle of the guarantee of Chinese sovereignty and territory in the form of Japanese political privileges in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia (*Manmō*).²⁰⁷

Although Japan's mission thus seemed fully completed, Yoshino was not so blind as to assume that 'the civilised British' were pleased to accept the superiority of an in essence inferior nation and that 'the moral United States' was at ease having a fundamental principle it sincerely believed in trampled upon. He knew that these were just the temporary effects of the abnormal situation of the power vacuum in the East. If Japan wanted to retain its position as a superior, the country had to make serious preparations for the postwar era when everything would be more or less back to normal and the competition between the economic and colonialist rivals would start afresh. This, however, did not mean that he proposed his country join and try to win the arms race which he had predicted would ensue in the postwar world. He did not think his country was strong enough to be able to completely ward off the postwar rush by the Western powers towards the markets and resources of the Far East. Therefore, slightly more humbly, he proposed that Japan had "the divine mission to moderate the rivalry amongst the Western powers and to secure the safety of the Oriental nations". Japan had to control the harmonisation of the economic interests of the various foreign powers in China, not like the local mafia boss who relied on sheer force and threats, but like a policeman who relied on authority backed up by only a moderate amount of force. In this sense, Yoshino clarified, "Japan's attitude has to resemble closely the American policy of Monroe-ism".²⁰⁸

Things could not be easier. Appealing to the two well-known components 'civilisation' and 'race', which for more than half a century had made up the main official or unofficial excuse for Japan's imperialist adventures - most conspicuous in the slogan 'same script, same race' (*dōbun dōshu*)²⁰⁹ - , Yoshino argued that just because Japan was the most developed regional power it also had the authority to claim special rights and interests in its own backyard. In case

206 Lansing's note to Ishii and the joint protocol can be found in Gaimushō, ed., *Nihon gaikō nenpyō narabi ni shuyō bunsho*, vol.1, Hara Shobō, 1965, pp.439-40.

207 'Nichi-Bei kyōdō sengen no kaisetsu oyobi hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.12, pp.47, 51. See also 'Iwayuru kyōdō sengen to Nichi-Bei mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.1, pp.107-08. Although the literal translation of the abbreviation '*Manmō*' is 'Manchuria (*Manshū*) and Mongolia (*Mōko*)', I prefer to use 'Manchuria and Inner Mongolia' since the practical interests usually did not reach as far as the nominally autonomous and factually under Russian influence Outer Mongolia (although there of course was a temporary absence of strong Russian influence from the end of 1917 until mid-1921).

208 'Taisengo no sekaiteki kyōsō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.15-16.

209 Another translation and interpretation of *dōbun dōshu* is 'same culture, same race', but I have chosen to stick to the 'same script' interpretation given in the *Kōjien*.

England and America were no longer willing to recognise Japan's special position in China, it was they who were morally wrong since they would be denying Japan its national and natural destiny to expand onto the continent.²¹⁰ Just as Great Britain was entitled to the region facing the Indian Ocean, the United States to Central and South America, and Russia to the Middle East, Japan was entitled to the Far East.²¹¹ Yoshino considered Japan's case even stronger than that of some of the other powers, since the country was overpopulated and not self-sufficient in most areas, so it could not do without "the natural resources and markets in the safest and easiest region", namely "China, India and the South Sea Islands".²¹² There were, of course, no Japanese who seriously contemplated stretching Japan's backyard all the way to India and, as mentioned, Yoshino himself had already allotted India to Great Britain. But where China was concerned, he was adamant that Japan could not and should not compromise: "Our expansion in China is a matter of life and death for the future of our country. We cannot restrain ourselves". Mixing the universal argument of 'civilisation' with a decisive quantity of the particularist element 'region', which in this case was close to 'race', he argued that in this East Asian version of the Monroe Doctrine it was Japan that manned the position of regional leader (*meishu*). And accordingly, since the Western powers were not entitled to a position in the Far East equal to Japan, they were the ones who had to restrain themselves.²¹³

Sino-Japanese Friendship and the Sino-Japanese Economic Alliance

So much for authority and legitimacy, which are the things racial and ethnic arguments are mainly about. It was time for Yoshino to get down to the issue of power. Although his propagation of a Monroe doctrine for the Far East altogether does not sound very different from what he had proposed during the first year of the European war, there was a considerable difference, apart from his changed assessment of the war itself. He no longer completely slighted the Chinese. On the contrary, he stressed more and more the need for Sino-Japanese co-operation and it is clear that China was allotted an important and more active role within his new plan for an Asian region of Monroe-ism. As already mentioned, this change in the content of his call for regionalism was not inspired by an increased awareness of Japanese vulnerability vis-à-vis the Western powers, which could have made him look for new allies. In fact, most Japanese never felt themselves so safe as during the war years 1915-1917, which were characterised by booming economic conditions and a markedly increased influence over East Asia. Normally one would thus expect to find a strong sense of self-confidence and an increased tendency to proceed alone. Nevertheless, this was not the case with Yoshino. The shift in his argument was not so much based on the idea of a fundamental change in the relations between Japan and the West as a result of the war. In his eyes it was rather China which was changing and, although he had incorporated the country within his regionalist schemes from an earlier date, he now for the first time

210 'Nichi-Ro kyōyaku no seiritsu'. *Shinjin*, 1916.8, pp.4-5; 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, p.43.

211 'Shin Nichi-Ro kyōyaku no shinka'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.8, p.76.

212 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, pp.43-44.

213 'Tai-Shi gaikō konponsaku no kettei ni kansuru Nihon seikyaku no konmei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, p.89; 'Shin Nichi-ro kyōyaku no shinka'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.8, p.76.

considered it trustworthy enough to seriously act as an ally to Japan.

This change in his opinion on China was not even so much influenced by actual political developments in the country itself as it was the effect of a few incidental developments in Yoshino's direct surroundings. Reminiscing in 1919 he noted:

I spent three years in China ... but I did not make any true friends. I did not meet anybody worthy of my trust. (...) Therefore I had strong doubts about China's future and was not interested in the country. (...) It was only in 1914 when I found out that Wang Zhengting, the Chinese representative to the international YMCA of whom I had heard very impressive rumours while in Europe, had joined the revolutionary party that I became interested in the developments in China.²¹⁴

Although undoubtedly aided by his evident antipathy toward Yuan Shikai as a result of his personal experiences in Manchuria and Tianjin, it was the example of an esteemed Christian 'aniki-bun' (older brother) which made Yoshino hold sympathies for China and the Chinese revolutionary movement. However, in the end the most important cause for his shift in opinion seems to have been his experiences as a teacher at the Hōsei Gakkō (School for Law and Politics). This private school in Tokyo, where Yoshino together with his peer Onozuka Kiheiji taught from its opening in 1914 until its closure in 1920, was established by Terao Tōru especially for the children of the revolutionary Chinese who had fled their country in the wake of the failed Second Revolution.²¹⁵ Moreover, at the beginning of 1916, immediately after the more successful Third Revolution, Yoshino was requested by Terao and Tōyama Mitsuru to write a history of the Chinese revolutionary movement.²¹⁶ In this enterprise he was aided by Dai Jitao (1891-1944, in Japan better known under his pen-name Dai Tianchou), Sun Yat-sen's 'political secretary' and

214 'Shina mondai ni tsuite'. Reimei Kōenshū, vol.4, 1919.6, p.61. Yoshino was not very univocal as to when and how his interest for China had arisen. In another instance he gave the Third Revolution of 1916 as the incentive. See the quote in part 1 of this chapter.

215 Terao Tōru (1858-1925) was one of the six professors who in 1900 called upon the Yamagata Cabinet to contain the Russian expansion in East Asia by means of an Anglo-Japanese alliance. However, he took an exceptional stand by proposing a "Monroe Doctrine for the Far East" as the ultimate goal and defining an Anglo-Japanese alliance as merely a rational temporary means as long as this Monroe Doctrine by the yellow race was not yet ready to be implemented. Tomizu Hirono, *Kaikoroku* (1905), reprinted edition, Ryūkei Shosha, 1986: p.32. In 1911 the China-minded Terao threw himself headlong into the revolution and gave up his position at Tokyo University in order to become a constitutional adviser to the revolutionary forces of Sun Yat-sen. Marius B. Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen*, Harvard University Press, 1954: pp.144-45.

216 Tōyama Mitsuru (1855-1944) is most commonly characterised as the charismatic doyen of the amalgam of prewar right wing forces. From Fukuoka he presided over the Genyōsha (established 1881) and worked hard, mostly behind the scenes and not seldom in unscrupulous ways, to direct his country on a nationalist, expansionist and Asianist course. In connection with the latter he functioned as the most important basis of support and protection in Japan for Korean and Chinese revolutionaries and Indian independence activists, and he is wellknown for his exceptionally intimate ties with Kim Ok-kyun, Sun Yat-sen and Ras Behari Bose. He features in the abovementioned work by Jansen, but there is a dire need for a monograph on this very influential, but often invisible man on the pre-WWII Japanese political and intellectual scene (whose picture still seems to decorate the walls of right wing and yakuza offices).

interpreter, and Yin Rugeng (1889-1947).²¹⁷ Regrettably Yoshino's diary of 1916 has not survived, but somewhat later in life he acknowledged that through his acquaintance with the Chinese revolutionary refugees he "became gradually aware of a new spirit of national reform amongst the Chinese".²¹⁸ Thus in the process of teaching them and writing their (revolutionary) history, Yoshino made his first Chinese friends, learned to respect them and ended up supporting the cause of 'young revolutionary China'.²¹⁹ And more important, through this medium he was for the first time able to have both sympathy and hope for the country as a whole and, as a result, his plans for a Monroe Doctrine for Asia became based on a form of Sino-Japanese co-operation which had considerably more substance than before.

While up to the first half of 1916 Yoshino still tended to insist on the leading role of 'the enlightened Japan' within the East Asian region and accordingly argued that there was no other way for China to uphold its independence but to depend on Japan, in the summer of the same year his emphasis markedly changed. The results of his growing involvement in the Chinese revolutionary movement are most evident in the sense that he began to try to look at things from the viewpoint of the Chinese too. And although there was no imminent practical need to do so, he suddenly started stressing the fact that the Chinese were an independent people and China was a sovereign state.²²⁰ Moreover, the idea that Japan had better stay aloof and trust China to complete the job of inner reform and strengthening the country on its own was becoming pre-eminent in Yoshino's attitude towards his country's China policy. This of course did not mean that Japan would sit still and stoically endure the damage it might suffer during the process of China's unification and reformation. Although he begged China's pardon for doing so, he thought it perfectly justified for Japan to interfere in internal Chinese affairs whenever necessary in order to guarantee the safety of Japanese citizens, especially in the practical situation where the central Chinese government had no control over the military forces in the provinces. Yet the principal limit was clear. Japan was no longer entitled to use the excuse of 'enlightening China'

217 '[Sanjūsannen no yume] - sono saikoku ni tsuite'. *Teikoku Daigaku Shinbun*, 1926.5.31, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12, p.314. Yin Rugeng and Ma Baiyuan, the secretary of the Chinese YMCA in Tokyo, were Yoshino's closest Chinese friends. Yin studied at the Fifth Higher School in Kumamoto and Waseda University and later married a Japanese. He had an extensive revolutionary career, during which he served Huang Xing, Sun Yat-sen, Guo Songling and Chiang Kai-shek. In the latter half of the 1930s he switched to serving the Japanese army in North China and in 1943 ended up in one of Wang Jingwei's cabinets, for which he was executed in 1947. For Dai Jitao and his long relation with Japan, see Lu Yan, *Re-Understanding Japan – Chinese Perspectives, 1895-1945*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

218 'Shina mondai ni tsuite'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.4, 1919.6, p.62.

219 From a list that Matsuo Takayoshi has made on the basis of Yoshino's diaries, it is evident that Yoshino made his first Chinese acquaintances – with Dai Jitao and Sun Yat-sen - in 1915 and especially during the late 1910s maintained relations with Chinese on a scale unrivaled by any other contemporary opinion leader. Matsuo, 'Yoshino Sakuzō to Ishibashi Tanzan no Chūgokuron – danshō'. *Chikaki ni arite*, no.32 (November 1997);, p.93-95.

220 For 'Japan's leading role' see 'Taisengo no sekaiteki kyōsō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, p.16; 'Tai-Shi gaikō konponsaku no kettei ni kansuru Nihon seikyaku no konmei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.78-79 and 'Nichi-Ro kyōyaku no seiritsu'. *Shinjin*, 1916.8, pp.4-5; for 'the Chinese viewpoint' see 'Teikaton jiken wo ronjite waga tai-Manmō-saku ni oyobu'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.10, p.11; for 'China as a sovereign state' see 'Shina no jikyoku to Nihon no taido'. *Shinjin*, 1916.7, p.1; 'Teikaton jiken wo ronjite waga tai-Manmō-saku ni oyobu'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.10, p.25.

in order to interfere in Chinese internal affairs by materially supporting either of the opposing sides in the struggle for the unification and hegemony over China. And military opportunism such as the establishment of an independent Manchuria under the disguise of the restoration of the Qing dynasty was entirely out of the question.²²¹ Yoshino's stand is best characterised by the following remark from the early spring of 1917:

It is an unshakable fact that China does not uphold the outlook of an independent state at the moment, but the main question (in determining our China policy) is whether we see a ray of hope in its future or not.²²²

He accepted the general view that China in the present situation of internal turmoil, a weak central government, and foreign concessions and spheres of influence dividing its territory did not fit the modern definition of a civilised and sovereign state. Nevertheless, Yoshino was very exceptional in the sense that he did not use China's present weakness as an excuse in order to encroach further upon the country and that he was willing to give it the benefit of the doubt. Because he was convinced that 'Young China' had the potential to lead the country to the level of a true sovereign state, he thought that in principle China should be treated as an equal and thus already had the right to be treated as an independent state.

Just like Kita Ikki, whose *Shina kakumei gaishi* had highly impressed Yoshino, he was not all that enthusiastic about Sun Yat-sen and was eager to point out that because of his impractical attitude Sun's influence on the Chinese revolutionary movement was dwindling.²²³ Instead he fully supported the younger elements within the movement whom he frequently hailed as 'the future leaders of China'. He believed that this young party during the last ten years had succeeded in gaining the support of the Chinese people and on this essential basis would proceed to strengthen and unify China. Thus he demanded that the Japanese government aim its long-term policy at the revolutionary forces.²²⁴

Since Yoshino at an earlier stage had predicted that the victory of the revolutionary forces would inevitably result in a strong movement to recover the rights and concessions of the foreign powers in China,²²⁵ one would assume that now he was professing the imminent victory of the Chinese revolution he would also come up with suggestions for a long-term policy to bring this movement into accord with Japan's 'special interests in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia'. He was indeed very much aware of the clash that would arise and accordingly rejected rhetoric that heralded Sino-Japanese cooperation but ignored the conflicting political interests of the two countries:

221 'Teikaton jiken wo ronjite waga tai-Manmō-saku ni oyobu'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.10, pp.10, 16-18.

222 'Ōtani Kōzui-shi no [Teikoku no kiki] wo yomu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.4, p.90.

223 Hazama Naoki, 'Yoshino Sakuzō to Chūgoku' in *YSS*, vol.7, Iwanami Shoten, 1995; pp.411-12. Yoshino had met Sun on one occasion (Yoshino diary, 1915.6.5, *YSS*, vol.14) and in his home he had a piece of calligraphy by Sun. 'Zadankai: Yoshino Sakuzō'. *Sekai*, no.112, p.114.

224 'Tai-Shi gaikō konponsaku no kettei ni kansuru Nihon seikyaku no konmei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, pp.83-87; 'Nisshi shinzenron'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.9, p.21; 'Tai-Shi seisaku ni taisuru gimon'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1917.3, pp.15-17.

225 'Shina no seijiteki shōrai'. *Shinjin*, 1914.11, p.58.

It is hypocrisy to say that one can harmonise the political relations between Japan and China. (...) In the strictly political relation where there is a clash of interests hollow phrases such as ‘same script, same race’, ‘lips and teeth’ and ‘Pan-Asianism’ will not bring about true friendship.²²⁶

However, one can hardly say that Yoshino came up with a reasonable alternative himself. On the one hand he seemed to cling to an optimistic wait-and-see policy when he said that he hoped that Young China “would not take up the rash methods of the Young Turks but follow the successful gradual road set out by the young Meiji politicians” and that in the end the revolutionary faction would prove to be more pro-Japanese than the bureaucratic faction of Yuan Shikai and Duan Qirui.²²⁷ On the other hand, Yoshino was clearly pussyfooting around the touchy political questions when he proposed that for the time being it was best to establish cordial Sino-Japanese relations in ‘other, transcendental fields’ like religion, morality, science, literature and art.²²⁸

While Yoshino, the idealist, of course stressed co-operation in these fields as supremely important within the framework of Japan’s divine mission in the Asian region, it did not take him that long to come down to more practical business. When in the course of 1917 he became more and more aware of the fact that national power in the modern world was mainly determined by economic strength and Japan could no longer remain an agricultural state but had to become an industrial power, not much was heard any more of such ‘spiritual communication’ with China.²²⁹ From that moment onwards we find him elaborating predominantly on Sino-Japanese cooperation in the field of economy:

The Japanese used to be extremely careless, demanding their natural resources from all over the world, but this war has finally opened our eyes and has made us look to China even more. China abounds with all sorts of natural resources, which are merely waiting for someone to come over and develop. Almost all of the things Japan lacks can be produced in China, so Japan can become an independent economic unit when it can make use of China’s natural resources. Moreover, we

226 ‘Nichi-Ro kyōyaku no seiritsu’. *Shinjin*, 1916.8, pp.5-6. ‘Lips and teeth’ is a reference to the Chinese proverb “the cheekbone and the teethridge depend on each other; when the lips wither the teeth will become cold”, which was an allusion to a relation of strong interdependency. Ever since the time before the early Han dynasty it was almost without fail used as an exhortation to two parties not to fuss and fight but to cooperate with one another in the face of the threat by a strong third party. In Meiji Japan it was the standard phrase by which a Sino-Japanese alliance against the West was advocated. Fukuzawa Yukichi was one of the first to strongly rebuke the idea of Sino-Japanese interdependence in his ‘Hosha shinshi no kogen tanomu ni tarazu’. *Jiji Shinpō*, 4 September 1884, which was the precursor of his famous ‘Datsu-Aron’ of March 1885. Yoshino had also rather exceptionally uttered this proverb when he emphasised the need for true Sino-Japanese friendship and cooperation in his ‘Taisengo no sekaiteki kyōsō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, p.16, only to reject it again a few months later.

227 ‘Shina no seijiteki shōrai’. *Shinjin*, 1914.11, p.58; ‘Tai-Shi seisaku ni taisuru gimon’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1917.3, p.16.

228 ‘Nichi-Ro kyōyaku no seiritsu’. *Shinjin*, 1916.8, pp.5-6; ‘Nisshi shinzenron’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.9, pp.23-24.

229 ‘Taisengo no sekaiteki kyōsō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.3, p.16; ‘Nisshi shinzenron’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.9, p.24.

also need China as a customer for our commercial and industrial goods. Therefore, no matter from which angle one looks at it, Japan's economic survival and development can only be attained by means of an alliance with China.²³⁰

Although one can hardly say that Yoshino was very consistent by arguing in September 1916 that Japan and China had become one economic unit, in December 1917 that Japan and China should become an economic unit and only a month later that Japan had to become an independent economic unit on its own, in all cases it is clear that the most important lesson he had drawn from the war was the completely contradictory idea that Japan had to attain economic autarky by means of a Sino-Japanese economic alliance (*Nisshi keizai dōmei*).²³¹ While this same awareness induced many others to cling even more to the position Japan had accumulated in Manchuria, Yoshino took a somewhat different stand:

Our most important aim is to foster strong economic ties between Japan and China (...) and accordingly we must take the whole of China as the object of our China management (...) and not limit ourselves to merely one part such as Manchuria and Inner Mongolia or Shandong.²³²

The curse of our traditional policy towards China which was solely based on strategic motives (...) was that it was inviting the division of China into economic exclusive spheres of influence. This would have formed a fatal threat to our national life. It should be our national policy to insist on China's territorial integrity in an absolute sense. (...) As a result of the war we are becoming keenly aware of the fact that our economic interests in China are more important than our strategic interests.²³³

Judging by these statements Yoshino seemed to be willing to consider giving up parts of Japan's position in Manchuria, that is those parts which were based on strategic motives, in order to gain an overall stronger economic position in China. This was a far cry from his earlier stand which was marked by calls upon the Chinese to show some understanding for the inevitable 'political expansion' of Japan into China and for the fact that one could not expect to live peacefully in Manchuria, the buffer zone between an expanding Japan and a weakening China. At the time he mainly characterised the 'political expansion' of Japan in China as an essential element in order to guarantee Japan's principal objective, that is 'the economic and social expansion' in China, and optimistically remarked that Japan's political expansion might become unnecessary if only China became stronger.²³⁴ Now he distanced himself from this line of argument by

230 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, p.53.

231 'Nisshi shinzenron'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.9, pp.23-24; 'Nichi-Bei kyōdō sengen to waga tai-Shi seisaku'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1917.12, pp.40-41; 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, p.53.

232 'Nichi-Bei kyōdō sengen to waga tai-Shi seisaku'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1917.12, p.41.

233 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, p.56.

234 'Nisshi shinzenron'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1916.9, pp.14-18, 23; 'Nichi-Ro kyōyaku no seiritsu'. *Shinjin*, 1916.8, pp.5-6.

characterising it as the main factor for anti-Japanese feelings amongst the Chinese. Yoshino had been aware of this side effect before, but had merely treated it as a bothersome yet bearable burden. However, with his new emphasis on the overriding need for an economic alliance this stand was no longer tenable:

The Japanese are definitely not the only people proceeding on this same road [towards an economic alliance with China]. The Americans and the English are out there as well. Therefore it is not sufficient just to make an effort; we must be aware of the presence of strong competitors and make a more than normal effort. The precondition is to soothe Chinese feelings and foster emotional ties.²³⁵

To win the free economic competition in China - which Yoshino thought that Japan, in spite of its capital and industrial limitations, was capable of achieving because of its geographical advantage and the relatively large number of people occupying key positions in China who had studied in Japan - and to be able to “bathe in the bliss of China’s inexhaustible natural resources”, Japan first had to win in the free competition for China’s sympathies.²³⁶ In theory he was thus able to translate the Japanese need for a Sino-Japanese economic alliance into terms of Sino-Japanese friendship. The above-mentioned “more than normal effort” implied that he was aware that Japan first had to singe its wings - at least a considerable share of the political and strategic part - in order to reduce anti-Japanese feelings to a level at which successful economic cooperation would be feasible. However, it still remained to be seen if his rhetoric had any practical value; in other words, to what extent he was willing to give in to China’s political demands.

At first Yoshino merely emphasised that Japan should change the attitude with which it confronted the Chinese and remained rather silent on the issue of the content of the Japanese reaction to the Chinese demands. For example, in the case of the settlement in 1917 of the Zhengjiadun Incident²³⁷ he said:

I agree with most of the aspirations of the so-called advocates of expansion in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, but I disagree on the point that I do not think we should always demand the expansion of our interests as a Japanese right. (...) Our demands are legitimate and should not be withdrawn. (...) But especially in the case of the intricate negotiations over the Zhengjiadun incident ... we must absolutely not take an aggressive attitude. Our policy should be consistently based on friendly relations and we should make an appeal to their amity in order to make them compromise.²³⁸

235 ‘Nichi-Bei kyōdō sengen to waga tai-Shi seisaku’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1917.12, p.42.

236 ‘Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, pp.58-60; ‘Tai-Shi gaikō seisaku ni tsuite’. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1918.6.17, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.8, p.339.

237 This incident in which the Japanese consular police clashed with the local Chinese regiment on 13 August 1916 in Zhengjiadun, a town in the Southeastern part of Jilin province, left sixteen Japanese and four Chinese soldiers dead.

238 ‘Waga tai-Manmō seisaku to Teikaton jiken no kaiketsu’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1917.3, pp.27-28.

At the same time, although rather casually, Yoshino for the first time intimated that he also had his doubts about the sagacity of the notorious Twenty-One Demands. In this case he did not object to the content of the demands, but it was the way Japan had handled the treaty which made him feel uneasy; it was “too aggressive” and “has only left us Chinese hate and foreign suspicion”.²³⁹

Yoshino’s attitude towards China was thus clearly changing, although one wonders if the Chinese would have taken any notice if it had remained confined to such a subtle shift in methodology. However, somewhat later he also began to concede on substance. The first instance was in June 1917 over the question whether China should be allowed to increase its customs tariff rate. As usual Yoshino first discussed the formal legal aspects of the issue, on the basis of which he came to the conclusion that there was no treaty-based obligation compelling Japan to agree to a raise in the Chinese import tax. However, having said that, he nonetheless advised his country not to take a formal but a pragmatic stand. When considered from ‘the fundamental spirit of the previous treaty’, ‘the obligations dictated by friendship’, and ‘a general moral point of view’ Japan should, even on its own initiative, agree to a raise of the 5% rate in real terms. He was convinced that such a benevolent attitude would contribute considerably to the cause of Sino-Japanese friendship as a preliminary stage for economic cooperation.²⁴⁰ By December of the same year Yoshino’s mild exhortations developed into an open criticism of Japan’s continental policy. In line with his scheme for an alliance based on economic motives, he now plainly demanded that Japan should give up ‘the irrational part of its expansion policy’, by which he meant ‘the establishment on military and strategic motives of exclusive monopolistic spheres of influence in China proper following the Manchurian-Inner Mongolian model’. And only a month later he publicly vented his ‘doubts whether it had been wise in the first place to demand a sphere of influence in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia’ itself. Judging by these utterances which, incidentally, did not even so much as refer to Japan’s formal colonies such as Korea and Taiwan, theoretically the road towards the eventual relinquishment of Japan’s political interests in Manchuria seemed open in case Japan’s economic interests demanded such a line of action in the future.²⁴¹

3.3 Phase 3, January 1918 - June 1919: The War as a Turning Point in World History and a Revolutionary Acceleration of the World Trend

239 Ibid.: p.27.

240 ‘Nisshi shinzen to Shina kanzei mondai’. *Shinjin*, 1917.6, p.71.

241 ‘Nichi-Bei kyōdō sengen to waga tai-Shi seisaku’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1917.12, pp.38-39; ‘Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, p.57. Yoshino’s argument is of course reminiscent of pleas for ‘a small Japan’ (*shō-Nihonshugi*) and ‘the abandonment of Manchuria’ (*Manshū hōkiron*), published in the economic periodical *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō* by Miura Tetsutarō and Ishibashi Tanzan ever since 1912. See Matsuo Takayoshi, ed., *Dai-Nihonshugi ka shō-Nihonshugi ka - Miura Tetsutarō ronsetsushū*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1995, *Ishibashi Tanzan Zenshū*, vols.1-2, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1971 and Masuda Hiroshi, ‘Ishibashi Tanzan no Manshū hōkiron - Shō-Nihonshugi ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu’, in Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Kokusai seiji 71: Nihon gaikō no shisō*, Yūhikaku, 1982: pp.72-92.

The New Age of Internationalism

1917 was a crucial year for Yoshino in another way as well. In that year two major events in world history brought about a turning point in Yoshino's thinking, although it took him until the beginning of 1918 to fully digest their implications. Whereas his propagation of internationalism before the war had not been very convincing and as the war lingered on he seemed to have lost all hopes of its implementation during his lifetime, as a result of the Russian Revolution and the American participation in the war he suddenly turned over-optimistic. He claimed that a new world, as exemplified by the internationalism and pacifism in Lenin's peace proclamation of 8 November 1917 and Wilson's Fourteen Points exactly two months later, was already taking shape much earlier than he had dared to dream.²⁴² When at the Paris Peace Conference, which Yoshino termed "the great conference of world reform", the League of Nations came into being Yoshino was overjoyed and convinced that the world had made a decisive step on the road to 'international cooperativism' (*kokusai kyōchōshugi*)²⁴³, from which there was no return. The age of imperialism was over and the dawn of the age of international democracy was glowing.²⁴⁴

The change

The unexpected Russian revolutions of March and November 1917 and the American declaration of war on Germany of April 1917 made Yoshino once more change his mind on the true character of the war that was going on, with the exception that this time he never again altered it. He still adhered to the view that the war had been inspired by disputable nationalistic motivations on the side of the imperialist European powers, but he rejected the idea that these motivations still held sway. The reason for his conclusion was that it could not explain the unselfish participation of the United States. His solution to the problem was to argue that whereas the war had started out as an amalgam of bilateral conflicts, as exemplified by the need to establish a non-single-peace pact in September 1914, the events of 1917 had made the Europeans self-reflect and open their eyes. This had turned the war into a true common effort after all; a universal war on behalf of international justice.²⁴⁵ Within this framework it was Germany that once again solely had to shoulder the moral responsibility for the war; it had ignored the argument of righteousness because of its militarism and its feeling of cultural superiority, and accordingly the country in due course would have to bow to the moral power of

242 'Shuppei-ron to gendai seinen no sekaiteki keikō'. *Shinjin*, 1918.4, pp.12-13.

243 Notwithstanding the fact that one will not find 'international cooperativism' in the English lexicon, I will use the term since this literal translation of '*kokusai kyōchōshugi*' makes clear that this was not a mere case of international cooperation but a true principle of international cooperation. As far as I have been able to ascertain, Yoshino first used the term in his 'Rōdō fuan no sekaiteki ryūkō ni mezameyo'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.83.

244 For 'the great conference of world reform' see 'Santō mondai'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.5, 1919.7, p.29; for the shift from imperialism to international democracy see Yoshino's identically titled 'Teikokushugi yori kokusai minshushugi he'. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1919.6-7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6, pp.35-70.

245 'Heiwa no kiun wo sokushin shitsutsu aru san-daigensoku'. *Shinjin*, 1918.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5, pp.285-86; 'Guree-kyō no kokusai dōmeiron wo yomu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.7, pp.56-58; 'Santō mondai'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.5, 1919.7, pp.13-15.

the Allied Forces.²⁴⁶ Moreover, when at the end of 1918 Germany all of a sudden surrendered unconditionally and the baffling and macabre scale of human disaster of this Great War gradually started to sink in, Yoshino could not but insist on a higher goal for the war to make up for the unprecedented high number of casualties. Whether this was due to his Christian faith or not, he could not reconcile himself to the idea that all this suffering was due to something as base as a mere power struggle that, even worse, would probably continue as before and thus make all the suffering meaningless. There had to be a deeper meaning and he found one. The war, he said, had accelerated the internationalist world trend and thus made an immense contribution to the progress of world civilisation. In all its vehemence and horror it had in a very short time succeeded in making all participants aware of the universal principles upon which international relations had to be based in order to secure eternal peace and prosperity. The Russians had been the first to awake, the Americans followed, later the British and the French, and finally the Germans.²⁴⁷ Clinging to this deeper interpretation of the war, Yoshino was adamant that it had not been the economic factor but the moral factor which had driven Germany to its rapid surrender. The scarcity of goods might have contributed to some extent, but the fundamental reason was the spiritual awakening of the German people to the argument of justice. In his opinion Wilson's Fourteen Points had made them aware for the first time of the possibility of a just peace treaty and thus formed the direct incentive to lay down their arms.²⁴⁸

Before going any further into Yoshino's analysis of the new world trends of pacifism and internationalism that he considered to have become the overriding forces in postwar international relations, I will first analyze his views of 'the two apostles of the new gospel', the two ideological antipodes Russia and the United States which he nonetheless portrayed as standing peacefully side by side.

The October Revolution and the pure but non-ideal Russia

As already briefly mentioned, Yoshino never had a high opinion of tsarist Russia. He considered it to be the uncivilised and autocratic exception to the rule of a democratic Europe. Contrary to the comparatively developed Japan it did not yet have a constitutional government and its population was for the most part made up of backward farmers. It was only in 1905 that he witnessed the first faint glimpses of civilisation in Russia, when as a result of the great defeat in the Russo-Japanese War 'some parts of the population became aware of the autocratic evil of its government and the need for progressive reforms'.²⁴⁹ While Yoshino thus seemed to support the Revolution of 1905 and the establishment of the Duma, he still did not give Russia much credit so long as the tsars were ruling the country. He may not have objected to a general agreement under which Japan and Russia would commit themselves to the peaceful development of the Orient, but he was not very enthusiastic about the series of treaties Japan concluded with Russia in 1907, 1910 and 1912. In sharp contrast to government leaders who considered Russia

246 'Senshō no dōtokuteki igi'. *Shinjin*, 1918.12, pp.3-5.

247 'Heiwa no kiun wo sokushin shitsutsu aru san-daigensoku'. *Shinjin*, 1918.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5, pp.286-87.

248 'Senshō no dōtokuteki igi'. *Shinjin*, 1918.12, pp.5-7.

249 'Rokoku ni okeru shuminteki seiryoku no kinjō'. *Shinjin*, 1905.5, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5, pp.11-13.

as an ally in their design to keep American economic expansion into East Asia at bay, Yoshino clearly did not trust the autocratic regime and warned against disproportional commitment to the country. He emphasised that there was no common enemy which could justify the establishment of a Russo-Japanese alliance and indeed noted that Russia itself was an enemy of Japan, although a 'distant' one, that when given the opportunity would recommence its expansion in the Orient.²⁵⁰

Considering this background, one need not be astonished that Yoshino, usually not a strong supporter of reform by force and the severance of imperial lines, was very pleasantly surprised by the February Revolution of 1917. He immediately gave his approval to this violation of the rule of gradual evolution with the excuse that the excessively autocratic imperial regime had caused equally excessive means to topple it. Nevertheless, although the means had been somewhat radical, he stressed that the character of the revolution was predominantly moderate and liberal. In his opinion the main force of the revolution were 'the liberals', who he defined as 'standing between the regime and the people' and who thus were synonymous to the intelligentsia, the backbone of the nation with its selfless mission on behalf of all the people. Since Yoshino clearly considered himself part of this sound part of the nation he did not only support but even identified himself with the new 'liberal' Russian regime. Moreover, he thought that the revolution was also inspired by a general aversion to 'the pro-German attitude of the tsarist regime' and thus harboured good hopes that the events would result in an increased Russian contribution to the war effort.²⁵¹

It will be clear that the October Revolution was an extremely bitter pill for Yoshino to swallow, although he professed to be merely 'not pleased':

There are two reasons why I am not pleased with the success of the radicals in Russia. Their thought is dangerous and they will not restore the power necessary to contain the Germans. (...) In the end the anti-radicals will be victorious and this will also be our only hope in containing Germany.²⁵²

Notwithstanding this last hopeful remark, it was hard to deny that not long after the October Revolution even Kerensky's 'sound socialist' forces were completely routed by Lenin's radicals and Russia's further participation in the 'capitalist and imperialist' European war was in the end officially recalled by means of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 1918. Thus all Yoshino's hopes, for both Russia and the war victory, seemed to have been completely dashed.²⁵³

250 'Kyōshō wa ka, dōmei wa fuyō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.10, pp.74-76; 'Shina no seijiteki shōrai'. *Shinjin*, 1914.11, p.52.

251 'Roshia no seihen'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.4, pp.121-24. It is obvious that his identification with the 'liberal' forces went so far that he made them into the medium of his own hopes for Russia's continued contribution to the Allied war effort. Moreover, Yoshino's analysis of who was the driving force during the tumultuous period after the February Revolution was not very consistent; it shifted from 'the liberals' to the 'parliamentary socialists' to Kerensky's Socialist Party.

252 'Tai-Ro seisaku no sasshin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.6, p.100.

253 For a general account of Japanese reactions to the Russian Revolution see Hosoya Chihiro, *Roshia kakumei to Nihon*, Hara Shobō, 1972 and Kikuchi Masanori, *Roshia kakumei to Nihonjin*, Chikuma Shobō, 1973. Masuda Hiroshi compares the reactions of Yoshino and Ishibashi Tanzan in his 'Ishibashi Tanzan no Roshia kakumei-kan - Yoshino Sakuzō to no hikaku kōsatsu'. *Jiyū Shisō*, no.14, February

In spite of these developments he was not so small-minded as not to give credit to his ideological enemy on the points of the internationalist and pacifist ideals Russia's radical government under Lenin had expressed in its peace proclamation of 8 November 1917, and which were reiterated in Russia's official proposal to the Allied Powers to make peace with Germany and Austria of 21 November 1917. Yoshino noted that whereas the United States and England did not go much further than mentioning the principle of ethnic national self-determination and even then only in the case of enemy territory, Russia was "most pure" in its attitude towards the related principles of no annexation, no indemnity, and ethnic national self-determination (*hi-heigōshugi*, *mubaishōshugi* and *minzoku jiketsushugi*). According to Yoshino, the new Russian government was so strict in the implementation of these "three abstract principles which will take away the incentives or causes of war" that it was even willing to sacrifice certain national interests in its stead.²⁵⁴

However, no matter how superbly pure and cosmopolitan Yoshino thought Lenin's principles to be, it is clear he did not consider proposing Russian radicalism as the foremost example of the new world trend. 'Radicalism', in sharp contrast to 'communism' and 'socialism', had an extremely negative meaning in Yoshino's vocabulary. It implied that it ignored such overriding concepts as order and evolution.²⁵⁵ In the case of the Bolsheviks he loathed the fact that they completely rejected parliamentary methods. Why take one's refuge in revolutionary socialism while parliamentary socialism was making its first headway and what was the sense in treating the parliamentary socialists, who at least shared a goal with the Bolsheviks, as one's main enemy?²⁵⁶ Moreover, he was also appalled by the means of the total eradication of the capitalist class by which the Bolshevik aim to establish absolute rule of the proletariat was to be implemented:

Their view of politics is fundamentally mistaken in the sense that they hold no trust whatsoever in the present political system. (...) They look upon politics as a game amongst the capitalist ruling class. (...) However, modern politics is very different [from the politics of the first half of the nineteenth century]. So-called modern politics, which revolves around its nucleus of thorough democracy, is no longer monopolised by a certain class. The radicals nevertheless stick to their prejudice (...) In the end it all comes down to the question whether one can think of the capitalists as one's human brothers. (...) The radical means of eradicating the other is unacceptable to a spiritualist (*seishinshugisha*) like me, who is convinced that somewhere we and the capitalists are related and that we will be able to make them understand. [I cannot subscribe to] the radicals' materialistic

1980: pp.15-36. It will hardly come as a surprise that Masuda concludes that Ishibashi was more realistic than Yoshino in his evaluation of the revolutionary force and accordingly his predictions were more correct.

254 'Heiwa no kiun wo sokushin shitsutsu aru san-daigensoku'. *Shinjin*, 1918.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5, pp.287-89.

255 'Minponshugi, shakaishugi, kagekishugi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6, pp.26-34; 'Rōdō fuan no sekaiteki ryūkō ni mesameyo'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7, p.81.

256 'Minponshugi, shakaishugi, kagekishugi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6, p.30.

view of man as completely determined by his material condition.²⁵⁷

Yoshino was convinced that the diffusion of radicalism was “not a part of the social evolutionary process but merely a reactionary temporary result of the exceptional circumstances of the war” and the sound judgement of the Russian people would naturally lead to the fall of the Bolsheviks. The people would prove that Tolstoy and not Lenin was their true representative.²⁵⁸ Therefore, and also when considering the ongoing war in Europe, he thought it preferable to get rid of the radical government as soon as possible. There was, however, a considerable problem:

Although the radicals will inevitably fall, it will definitely not do to make undue haste and try to destroy them artificially. In particular, in one’s eagerness for success one should not make use of external forces, since this will only make the radicals more popular and might have the effect of saving them from their natural destruction. At the moment the radicals have the support of the majority of the Russian people, (...) so we must be very prudent.²⁵⁹

This statement very well shows Yoshino’s strength as a socially conscious cosmopolitan, in the sense that it more or less came to him as a natural reaction to make the point of view of the Russian people into his own point of departure. Since he was of the opinion that, for the moment, the Bolsheviks could claim to be representing the Russian people more than the disorderly amalgam of anti-revolutionary forces, he was opposed to helping ‘the evolutionary social process’ in Russia by means of foreign intervention as he considered it both impractical and unjustified. Similarly, while he wearily looked on how in the wake of the October Revolution Japan’s economic position in Siberia was being razed to the ground, he could not think of any rational basis for his country to intervene and in the end he even became one of the most persistent opponents of Japan’s protracted intervention in Siberia from August 1918 up to October 1922.²⁶⁰ Ironically, this was one of the many cases in Yoshino’s life that his principles led him to support the position of his professed enemies.

To summarise, although Yoshino rejoiced over the fact that as a result of the Russian Revolution the world had got rid of an extremely autocratic and backward regime and Japan had lost its greatest enemy in the Asian region, i.e. tsarist Russia, in the process he was lumbered with a new enemy, this time more an ideological than a military rival, who partly adhered to the same internationalist ideals as he himself did and thus was considerably trickier to fight than the former enemy had been.

257 Ibid.: pp.31, 34.

258 Ibid.: p.34.

259 ‘Tai-Ro seisaku no sasshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.6, p.100.

260 Shuppei-ron to gendai seinen no sekaiteki keikō’. *Shinjin*, 1918.4, pp.9-11; ‘Tai-Ro seisaku no sasshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.6, p.102.

261 For a general account of Japanese reactions to the Russian Revolution see Hosoya Chihiro, *Roshia kakumei to Nihon*, Hara Shobō, 1972 and Kikuchi Masanori, *Roshia kakumei to Nihonjin*, Chikuma Shobō, 1973. Masuda Hiroshi compares the reactions of Yoshino and Ishibashi Tanzan in his ‘Ishibashi Tanzan no Roshia kakumei-kan - Yoshino Sakuzō to no hikaku kōsatsu’. *Jiyū Shisō*, no.14, February 1980.

Woodrow Wilson's America as the model of international morality

In contrast to his complete disdain for tsarist Russia and his ambiguous attitude towards communist Russia, Yoshino had never harboured any strong feelings against the United States of America, in his eyes a civilised modern nation. Before the war he had once been to, or rather had rushed through, the United States and had on a few occasions lamented the profundity of its civilisation when compared to the Old World, but these casual remarks also lacked profundity. His direct but hasty encounter with the country had left him quite indifferent. And although he admitted that it might even be somewhat less pure than the new revolutionary Russia as far as the implementation of internationalist principles was concerned, when it came to making up his mind which of the two harbingers of the universal anti-imperialist trend should be Japan's guide in the 'new age of Taishō' it did not take him long; he was more than willing to look up to 'the democratic United States' as the true apostle of the new gospel.

It will hardly be necessary to mention that a choice in favour of Russia would have gained Yoshino even less approval, but this does not imply that the advocacy of the United States as the model internationalist country was well received. Many Japanese from all strata of society had a very different view of this country, which loomed quite large in the popular mind since for a long time it had been the primary destination of Japan's migrant workers. On the basis of half a century of emigrant experiences, the United States was more often singled out as an extremely hypocritical nation, on the one hand professing to apply noble universal ideals and on the other hand discriminating against Japanese immigrants. Nonetheless, Yoshino always emphasised the former quality as the most fundamental character of the Americans and downplayed the latter phenomenon. On any marked point on the increasing spiral of the anti-Japanese movement in America, and thus on the increasing spiral of tension between the two countries, such as the incident in 1906 when Japanese pupils were excluded from white schools in San Francisco, the prohibition of moving from Hawaii to the mainland in 1907, the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, the Californian anti-Japanese law on landownership of 1913, the second Californian anti-Japanese land law and the prohibition of picture brides in 1920, and finally the Japanese Exclusion Act of 1924, he flatly refused to accept the notion that the United States was a racist country.²⁶²

In Yoshino's opinion the so-called 'anti-Japanese problem' in the United States had in essence nothing to do with racial prejudices against the Japanese immigrants; his usual line of argument was that the whole thing had originated in a labour problem, had developed subsequently into an economic and social problem and, because of opportunistic actions by local politicians and somewhat helped by American suspicions of Japan's expansion into the Asian continent, had only recently turned into a racial and political question.²⁶³ Moreover, Yoshino did not think that the cause of the problem, and thus its solution, should be sought in the other party.

262 Yoshino's first contribution to the *Chūō Kōron* was actually a long 'scientific analysis of the Japan-American question'. 'Gakujutsujō yori mitaru Nichi-Bei mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1914.1, pp.137-62. Apart from this he wrote dozens of articles on the 'continuing story' of the friction between the two countries as a result of the immigrant problem.

263 'Hai-Nichi mondai to Kirisuto-kyōto'. *Shinjin*, 1913.12, pp.28-32; 'Jinshu mondai to Nichi-Bei kankei'. *Kaikoku Kōron*, 1919.5, pp.12-13.

He maintained that there was nothing wrong with the American people, whom he praised for their just views of the outside world (*taigai shisō*) and their high grade social mindedness (*shakai shinri*), so Japan was only aggravating matters by raising criticism based on such out-of-place arguments as ‘justice’ (*seigi*) and ‘humanity’ (*jindō*). From his point of view the Japanese immigrants were to blame. They were uncivilised, bigoted, and isolated themselves completely from American society. But, most of all, they had sparked off the whole problem themselves by accepting to work under inhuman conditions and thus undermined the position the American labourers with great pains had just managed to secure. It was the Japanese who had to change their behaviour and their way of thinking.²⁶⁴ Having said that, Yoshino made sure to point out that he did not mean to imply that the Japanese should give up their identity. There were many cases of other groups of immigrants who had succeeded in assimilating into American society while preserving their own culture as well. All it took, he mentioned, was for the Japanese immigrants to show that they shared “*the American spirit of creating an ideal country and contributing to the progress of world civilisation*”.²⁶⁵ He did not consider it fair to apply discriminatory measures against immigrants already accepted into America, such as the Alien Land Law of California of May 1913, but he thought the country was completely within its rights to reject undesirable immigrants as long as there were no international regulations forbidding it to do so and the Japanese had not changed their ways.²⁶⁶

It will be clear that no bad word about the United States was to be expected from Yoshino and neither did he want to hear one from anybody else. To simplify his attitude towards Japan’s Pacific neighbour, it could be said that in his opinion a nation that had elected somebody as noble as the outstanding religious leader Woodrow Wilson could not be wrong. His view of this country in the years 1913-1920 was very directly related to its president, the man whom he seemed to admire more than any other of his fellow human beings and who he without any hesitation projected as the ideal political leader. Wilson was the exceptional ‘man of character’ (*jinkaku*) whose moral standing was so high that he was able to smoothly reconcile both the interests of the state and the ideals of justice and humanity by means of his ‘religious nationalism’. At one and the same time, he was the servant of both his own nation and the whole of mankind.²⁶⁷ Besides, Yoshino was invariably immensely impressed by Wilson’s political manner of ‘appealing to the people first of all’ (*mazu kokumin ni uttaeru*), which he considered the basis of true democracy.²⁶⁸ Although in Japan there was considerable criticism, especially after the Paris Peace Conference, of the ‘unpragmatic’ Wilson, Yoshino usually turned a deaf ear. His adoration of the man was so uncritical that, whereas he had first praised Wilson for “his lofty ambition to bring the European War to an end in a peaceful way”, as soon as the United States

264 ‘Kokumin no taigai shisō wo aratameyo’. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1915.4, pp.46-51.

265 ‘Hai-Nichi mondai to Kirisuto-kyōto’. *Shinjin*, 1913.12, pp.31-32.

266 ‘Jinshu mondai to Nichi-Bei kankei’. *Kaikoku Kōron*, 1919.5, p.13.

267 ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5, pp.55, 57-58.

268 ‘Beikoku jōin ni okeru jōyaku hijun mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.8, p.109. In sharp contrast to Yoshino’s analysis, later commentators have in a less flattering way characterised the abstract masses as Wilson’s only resort since his megalomaniac character made him unfit to compromise with his direct political proponents and opponents in cabinet and parliament. See for instance Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt, *Woodrow Wilson: Een Leven voor de Wereldvrede*, Meulenhoff, Amsterdam, 1990.

declared war to Germany he suddenly proclaimed to be “deeply impressed by the endurance and exertion by which the president has made public opinion favourable to participation in the war”.²⁶⁹

As an exponent of their noble-minded leader Yoshino characterised the American people on the one hand as “true citizens (*kōmin*) ... filled with the spirit of democracy” in national affairs and America on the other hand as “a pacifist country” in international affairs.²⁷⁰ In his opinion in joining the war the country had no ambitions of territorial and economic expansion; it had stood up unselfishly against Germany merely on behalf of “the abstract principle of international justice” and “the pure ideal of eternal peace”. This did not mean that the Americans completely lost sight of their own national interest but that they were able to promote this while in the meantime contributing to world civilisation.²⁷¹ Moreover, what is very important to note in this ode to the ‘*Beikokudamashii*’ (American spirit) is that Yoshino thought it to be in essence a religious spirit and thus uniquely qualified to solve the dilemma of nationalism and internationalism which tormented the modern world.²⁷² We can find a very striking example of this rather exceptional assessment of the American people in his reaction to the March First Movement in Korea. While most Japanese officials and commentators pointed to the American missionaries in Korea as instigators of the uprising, Yoshino took up their defence and was even so bold as to propose that the good services of these religious men of high moral standing be put to use to bring about accord between the Japanese and the Koreans.²⁷³ Similarly, he did not even seem to consider restraining himself when he offended his own people by publicly stating that he was “envious” of the United States and, to a slightly lesser extent, Great Britain and emphasised that it would take very great determination from the Japanese people in order to be able to occupy an equal position to these two countries in the postwar world.²⁷⁴

One of the side effects of Yoshino’s extremely positive view of the United States as a pacifist country which harboured almost no expansionist ambitions was that he had tended to ignore it as a rival in the power play for China and had scarcely taken American reactions to Japan’s endeavours on the Asian continent into consideration. The United States too, was at its best, a very distant and very hypothetical enemy.²⁷⁵ However, as it during the war quickly turned into an economic superpower and a strong military power, this optimistic assessment of international relations in East Asia could no longer continue. By the beginning of 1918 Yoshino concluded:

There can be no doubt that the imminent need to restore friendly Japanese-American relations is being pressed upon us by the requirements for our

269 ‘Ōshū senkyoku no genjō oyobi sengo no keisei wo ronjite Nihon shōrai no kakugo ni oyobu’. *Shinjin*, 1917.3, p.34; ‘Beikoku sansen no bunmeiteki igi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.5, p.93.

270 ‘Shinkoku naru shiren wo hetaru Ō-Beijin ni kangamiyo’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.3, p.76; ‘Ōshū senkyoku no genjō oyobi sengo no keisei wo ronjite Nihon shōrai no kakugo ni oyobu’. *Shinjin*, 1917.3, p.34.

271 ‘Heiwa no kiun wo sokushin shitsutsu aru san-daigensoku’. *Shinjin*, 1918.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5, p.287; ‘Kokusai renmei wa kanō nari’. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1919.1, pp.134-35.

272 ‘Seiji ni taisuru shūkyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1914.5, pp.54-55.

273 ‘Chōsen bōdō zengosaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.4, p.122.

274 ‘Shinkoku naru shiren wo hetaru Ō-Beijin ni kangamiyo’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.3, pp.76-77.

275 ‘Shina no seijiteki shōrai’. *Shinjin*, 1914.11, p.54.

management of the Orient. This is because the present war has made the United States into a great power in the Orient.²⁷⁶

One can say that [in prewar days] there was no need to take American objections very seriously into account as long as we had obtained the approval of England and Russia. (...) Now we can no longer ignore the opinion of the United States, because their awe-inspiring military power will give it a strong say in the Orient and because Japan cannot do without American capital in its exploitation of China's natural resources.²⁷⁷

Instead of the war-exhausted England and the revolution- and chaos-ridden Russia, the countries that from then onwards really mattered in Japan's foreign policy were the United States and China, the direct object of Japan's foreign policy which was nonetheless often overlooked since it was predominantly considered as merely the stage of Japan's foreign policy.²⁷⁸

Nevertheless, on the whole Yoshino seemed to be most interested in the new American prominence in a geographically less circumscribed sphere, namely its increased right to have a say in the overall postwar settlement. When the United States joined the war in April 1917 he told his readers to take special note of the fact that Wilson had promised to respect the rights of small countries, to establish a powerful international organisation to settle future conflicts, to eradicate militarism, and to establish the principle of freedom of the seas. Therefore, he predicted, its participation in the war would mean "an important contribution to the progress of postwar civilisation".²⁷⁹ And when the war was over he concluded that it had been the American decision to join the war, and thus not the Russian Revolution, which marked the beginning of a new era; it had been "the first instance of the successful enforcement of international law, ... motivated by a pure spirit of international justice" and thus gave rise to optimism over the role of a league of nations in postwar international relations.²⁸⁰ With Russia not merely being disqualified by Yoshino himself but also practically barred from the stage of the peace negotiations by the war victors, all his hopes were vested in the United States, the genuine apostle of the new world trend, to act as a restraining force on the less fair European powers and to bring about the ideal of pacifist internationalism.²⁸¹

Pacifist internationalism

As mentioned before, Yoshino's view of historical progress was inseparably linked to the diffusion of democracy and accordingly he tended to take the French Revolution as the true starting point of the history of mankind. Moreover, judging by the articles he wrote from the end of the First World War until his death in 1933 it is clear that he was of the opinion that within

276 'Iwayuru kyōdō sengen to Nichi-Bei mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.1, p.107.

277 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1, p.49.

278 'Tai-Shi gaikō seisaku ni tsuite'. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1918.6.16, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.8, p.337.

279 'Beikoku sansen no bunmeiteki igi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.5, p.95.

280 'Kokusai renmei wa kanō nari'. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1919.1, pp.134-35.

281 'Hi-shihonshugi ni tsuite'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.2, p.103.

this relatively short history of man the years 1917-1918 formed the most significant turning point. In April 1918 he for the first time made mention of his awareness that man had made a decisive step forward and was now entering a new world (*shinsekai*).²⁸² After one hundred years of pain and misery mankind had finally shed the evil curse of 19th century civilisation, in which the elements autocracy and militarist imperialism stood out, and was presently engaged in grand designs for reform in order to finally bring about the realisation of the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity from the days of the French Revolution. Yoshino made clear that in his eyes this effort should not remain confined within the national borders. His aim was ‘world reform’ (*sekai kaizō*); the application of the three principles of freedom, equality and fraternity to the relation between nations, resulting in the ideal of international democracy (*kokusai minshushugi*).²⁸³ Whereas he admitted that men (read: the Europeans) of the 18th and early 19th century had not been completely blind to the ideal of international democracy, he slighted their exhortations as mere desk theories, sandcastles which were founded on nothing but ‘utopistic idealism’. These had been few, impractical, superficial, and completely out of touch with the 19th century main force of ‘scientific realism’, to which they all too soon had to admit their defeat. However, with the carnage of ‘the Great European War’ and the defeat of its strongest representative, Germany, this cold and cynical positivism had come to a deadlock as well and the rule of ‘scientific idealism’ had finally been established.²⁸⁴

Yoshino’s strong conviction that the tide had changed is notable from his evaluation of Tokutomi Sohō, the very influential editor of the *Kokumin Shinbun* to whom Yoshino had been indebted at the outset of his writing career. Whereas he had usually criticised Tokutomi’s ideas on international relations quite mildly, in a review in 1917 of Tokutomi’s bestseller *Taishō no seinen to teikoku no zento* (The Taishō youth and the future of our Empire) his criticism suddenly turned very harsh. He had never denounced Tokutomi - and still refused to do so - for the latter’s well known conversion at the time of the (first) Sino-Japanese War from ‘commonerism’ (*heiminshugi*) to ‘nationalism’ (*kokka heiminshugi*) and ‘imperialism’ (*bōchōshugi*), since Yoshino considered the democratic movements of the early Meiji period such as the Popular Rights Movement superficial and a form of elite indulgence completely uncalled-for at the height of the imperialist age. However, this time he severely attacked his senior for being blind to the new age of international cooperation and characterised his ideas as those of a conservative man of a bygone age.²⁸⁵

When we take a closer look at the new trend recognised by Yoshino, two features stand out the most: internationalism and pacifism. The reason why Yoshino stressed the American participation in the war and the Russian revolution of 1917 as the signs of a turning point in history was predominantly because these changed the war, from in outlook a collective event but in essence a bilateral event, into a multilateral phenomenon. His line of argument was extremely simple: the Russians were socialists and thus by definition gave priority to abstract principles

282 ‘Shuppeiron to gendai seinen no sekaiteki keikō’. *Shinjin*, 1918.4, pp.12-13.

283 ‘Sekai kaizō no risō - minzokuteki jiyū byōdō no risō no jikkō kanō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.3, pp.90-91.

284 ‘Taigai seiron no shoha’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.12, pp.95-98.

285 ‘Sohō sensei cho [Jimu ikkagen] wo yomu’. *Shinjin*, 1914.7: pp.83-87; ‘Sohō sensei no [Taishō no seinen to teikoku no zento] wo yomu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.1: pp.159-64. See also ‘Gunbi seigenron no ichi hihan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.3: p.100.

over national interest. And as for the Americans, they had no direct national interests which clashed with Germany and Austria and could only be motivated by abstract principles. In his eyes the precedent thus created by the two ideological antipodes would be decisive for the postwar order. The new world that was being built at that moment would for the first time in history be based upon true universal qualities. Accordingly he was convinced that the fact that the conditions for peace negotiations had “changed from questions of particular national interest to universal principles” was the first result of the American and Russian challenge.²⁸⁶ The pacifist element is omnipresent in Yoshino’s articles from this time onwards, in which he completely rejects militarism and capitalist aggressive expansionism and constantly proclaims that the days of imperialism are over and the dawn of a new age of peaceful international democracy has arrived.²⁸⁷

The practical contents of this peaceful international democracy were vague, but the preliminary outline Yoshino presented made clear that his internationalism did not imply a very rigid break with the past but rather a shift of emphasis. He admitted that each state, just like each individual, had a particular (*tokushuteki*) side and thus a particular mission. However, what is important is that Yoshino thought that this particular mission was no longer soul-saving. In his opinion it was far more important to ensure that the particular side of the state was in harmony with the universal (*fuhen-teki*) side of the state:

There are two sides to the spiritual basis of the state: the universal side and the particular side. One can consider the universal element to be either the side we share with all other countries or the side where we mutually influence each other. The particular side is a unique characteristic which has come about through the combined forces of geography, environment and race which together form a nation’s history. In an identical way the individual also has two sides. Each individual has both his own peculiar basis which allows him to build up a certain special position and a universal basis which makes him into a member of the human race. Man’s value is measured by the extent he cultivates and harmonises both sides. It will not do to concentrate only on one side and neglect the other. (...) The same applies to the state. Do we not often see that a state which has sufficiently developed its particular side is lacking on its universal side as a country of this world? We cannot call such a country a respectable state.²⁸⁸

Taking aim, as usual, at his motherland, Yoshino was so kind to point out that it had been overdeveloping its particular side and had even held the universal side in contempt. Although the above quotation suggests that both elements of the state had to be developed more or less equally to bring the state to its completion, in his reaction to Japan’s ‘particular historical situation’ his emphasis was on the universal side rather than the particular side. There certainly was no lack of

286 ‘Heiwa no kiun wo sokushin shitsutsu aru san-daigensoku’. *Shinjin*, 1918.2, pp.286-87; ‘Sekaiteki kyōdō mokuteki ni taisuru Nihon no taido’. *Shinjin*, 1918.5, pp2-8.

287 ‘Shuppeiron to gendai seinen no sekaiteki keikō’. *Shinjin*, 1918.4, pp.12-13; ‘Hi-shihonshugi ni tsuite’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.2, pp.101-04; ‘Teikokushugi yori kokusai minshushugi he’. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1919.6-7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6, pp.35-70.

288 ‘Seishinteki jikyūjisokushugi wo haisu’. *Shinjin*, 1917.7, p.20.

Japanese who thought their consecutive cabinets had mainly been very apt at following ‘the universal’ (read: Western) example and had ignored defining and implementing a particular and autonomous Japanese mission in the modern world, but Yoshino did not usually follow this line of argument at length. Instead he tended to stress the fact that “an autonomous stand ... does not mean that one should stick to a particular question ... which is completely out of touch with the world trend”.²⁸⁹

He did not, therefore, flatly reject particularism and he even ranked it as an essential element of the state, but there was no doubt that within the harmony he endorsed between particularism and universalism the latter component was overriding. Indeed, it was true that “the state at present is clearly the strongest variety amongst all forms of human collectivity”, but there was “no reason at all to claim that the demands of the nation and the state are the only collective demands that matter”. One had to be aware that the national collective of the state was nothing but a historical phenomenon, which as part of the progress of civilisation had developed over the last few centuries and right then was at its zenith but because of its growing incompatibility with the historical trend would gradually become less prominent. Just as the national collective had taken over the pre-eminent position of the regional collective, before long it would be outranked itself by the international collective.²⁹⁰ As a matter of fact, Yoshino argued in 1919, international justice and international cooperativism were already gaining ground and the world was rapidly becoming one organised organic body.²⁹¹

In his proclamation of the advent of a more and more internationalist and thus more and more peaceful world Yoshino, of course, was not walking on untrodden ground. For instance, many of his contemporaries supported the view that in the modern world there were strong economic forces at work which pressed for an increasing degree of internationalisation that would gradually remove the roots of war. Yoshino also admitted still adhering to the theory of Norman Angell, as expressed in his 1909 bestseller *The Great Illusion*, that war between nations was no longer possible because the world had become one economic unit. Economic relations had developed to a level where they could no longer be confined to the national borders, Yoshino argued, so any idea of economic autarky was irrational.²⁹² However, Yoshino would not be Yoshino if he did not stress a far more lofty field of human life, namely spiritual life. Throughout the remainder of his writing career his energies were devoted to warning his readers not so much of the danger of economic autarky as of the danger of ‘spiritual autarky’ (*seishinteki jikyūjisokushugi*). The awareness that all of mankind was one (*dōrui ishiki*) travelled along with the progress of the world’s ever expanding material infrastructure, most notably the international transport facilities. As distances in time sharply decreased and the world became smaller and smaller, the modern state was no longer the ethnic national state (*minzokuteki kokka*) of yore. Eating away at the borders of the latter was ‘a world opinion’, which each country from now on had to obey on pain of international isolation followed by the gradual degradation in the line of

289 Ibid.: pp.20-23; ‘Taigai seiron no shoha’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.12, pp.97-98. This criticism of ‘autonomous policies out of touch with the outside world’ can also be interpreted as yet another attack on Tokutomi Sohō, who invented the term ‘an autonomous foreign policy’ (*jishu gaikō*).

290 ‘Sekaiteki kyōdō mokuteki ni taisuru Nihon no taido’. *Shinjin*, 1918.5, pp.6-7.

291 ‘Kokusai renmei wa kanō nari’. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1919.1, p.135.

292 Ibid.: p.133; ‘Kōkyū heiwa no genjitsu to Kirisutokyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1918.10, p.14.

civilised nations. Yoshino urged his fellow-countrymen to steer away from their erstwhile narrow-minded attitudes and policies and thus not to bring the wrath of international society upon themselves.²⁹³

Although Yoshino mentioned that with the establishment of a ‘world opinion’ all countries had become its mere representatives and there were no longer any individual countries which determined the world trend²⁹⁴, it is hard not to notice that he usually singled out the United States as the personification of the new world trend and thus as the best representative of world opinion. Still, this was almost inevitable in Yoshino’s case. The world trend of pacifist internationalism was in his opinion in essence founded on “the awareness that we are all human beings and children of God” and the full implementation of this awareness would in its ultimate stage lead to the realisation of God’s will on earth.²⁹⁵ However, it goes without saying that Yoshino’s god was not an abstract and universal entity but the God of Christianity. Notwithstanding the fact that he was preaching to those already converted, in this case the select Christian readership of the magazine *Shinjin*, there was no trace of modesty in his words when he said that “the true feeling that all men are brothers is most developed within Christianity and, moreover, can in practice be developed only by means of Christianity”. He might have thought of the First World War as a sign of the decay of the European powers, but he definitely did not share Oswald Spengler’s view that it implied the end of Western civilisation, let alone the defeat of Christianity. On the contrary, it was “a victory of Christianity over small-minded violent nationalistic imperialism” and as a result the postwar world trend was in his eyes more than ever an exponent of the Christian spirit, so it was only natural that he selected the United States, ‘the true Christian nation’, as its pre-eminent representative.²⁹⁶

At the beginning of this chapter I discussed Yoshino’s view of national society, in which all members were allotted equal rights because of their equal potential to develop but were not considered equal as all members of society could not be at the same stage of development at the same point in time and not all of them were actually making full use of their potential. His view of international society was basically the same. In the equally interdependent international society of the postwar period he deemed all countries, whether great or small, to be fundamentally equal, but this did not mean that at that moment in time all shared the same measure of fitness for the new internationalist world order. Accordingly Yoshino gave his consent to a peace conference where matters would not be decided in a fully democratic way; although national strength was not to be the main criterion any longer, a country’s right to have a say in “the overriding subject of world reform” would vary according to its “degree of spiritual refinement” (*seishinteki hinkaku*).²⁹⁷ Needless to say, this was a quantity which was not easily measured, and Yoshino’s further division of this quantity into two elements did not help either. The above-mentioned ‘universal side’ and ‘particular side’ of a nation, which had to be developed to an equal extent in

293 ‘Seishinteki jikyūjisokushugi wo haisu’. *Shinjin*, 1917.7, pp.17-23; ‘Kōkyū heiwa no genjitsu to Kirisutokyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1918.10, pp.12-15.

294 ‘Sekai no daishuchō to sono junōsaku oyobi taiōsaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.1, p.143.

295 ‘Shuppeiron to gendai seinen no sekaiteki keikō’. *Shinjin*, 1918.4, p.13; ‘Kōkyū heiwa no genjitsu to Kirisutokyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1918.10, p.14.

296 ‘Kōkyū heiwa no genjitsu to Kirisutokyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1918.10, pp.15-16.

297 ‘Nanzo susunde sekai kaizō no mondai ni sanyo sezarū’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.12, pp.373-74.

order to be considered ‘capable’ in the new world order, were defined as ‘furthering the world trend’ and ‘realising the national mission’ respectively’ and thus did not offer anything more than a new set of abstract and subjective terms.²⁹⁸ It was quite impossible to find any definitive consensus on what the world trend and the national mission comprised. So how could a country’s international moral standing be determined in an objective manner?

Hardly bothered by such problems Yoshino applied his own standards and, when judged by those standards, the United States seemed to be doing very well in both categories while his own country was awarded considerably poorer marks. As far as the universal component was concerned, he strongly criticised the fact that Japan was still ruled by ‘unscientific realism’ instead of ‘scientific idealism’, which meant that it was doing even worse than the 18th century ‘utopistic idealists’ and the German ‘scientific realists’.²⁹⁹ With a holier-than-thou attitude he blamed the country for not showing any understanding of the universal, and essentially Christian, postwar spiritual trend towards eternal world peace:

For us, believers in the Christian faith, (...) it comes almost naturally to put the principle of universal brotherhood into practice. However, for those who are wanting in this religion, and especially for those who have been brought up under our intolerant nationalistic education, no matter how hard they try they will often not be able to free themselves from the power of their long education and to devote themselves thoroughly to the principle of universal brotherhood. This implies a particularly strenuous mission for the Japanese Christians in the postwar management of our country.³⁰⁰

Neither did Japan seem to have achieved any noteworthy results in the field of its particular mission. While many countries must have been extremely envious of the progress Japan made during the war years - turning from a debtor nation into a creditor nation almost overnight, extending its informal empire in China by means of the Twenty-One Demands and the occupation of Shandong, and acquiring new navy strongholds in the Pacific which stretched as far south as the Equator - these were not the things that counted according to Yoshino’s standards. Analogous to ‘the universal side’ of the state, the particular ‘national mission’ was also linked to ‘the contribution to the progress of mankind in its totality’, the only difference to the universal side of ‘furthering the world trend’ being that it was a distinct contribution which could only be made by one sole nation because of its unique characteristics.³⁰¹

In the case of his motherland, Yoshino could only think of two typically Japanese features which were able to function as a contribution to the rest of the world. Not surprisingly, he first mentioned Japan’s status as the only civilised country in Asia. This gave Japan the moral responsibility to act as leader in the development of the Oriental countries, a development

298 ‘Sekai no daishuchō to sono junōsaku oyobi taiōsaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.1, pp.143-44. ‘

299 ‘Taigai seiron no shoha’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.12, pp.95-98.

300 ‘Kōkyū heiwa no jitsugen to Kirisuto-kyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1918.12, p.16.

301 ‘Sekai no daishuchō to sono junōsaku oyobi taiōsaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.1, pp.143-44. It was also only this universally defined ‘national mission’ which gave a nation the right to make special demands to other nations in order to secure its survival and development.

incidentally which included helping these countries to get rid of Western imperialism.³⁰² The second and last special quality Yoshino could trace was Japan's "unique national polity" (*tokushu no kokutai*) characterised by an "uninterrupted line of benevolent emperors", which had endowed the country with "the one and only true monarchy" and which he considered the best prerequisite for the thorough implementation of democracy (*minponshugi*).³⁰³

Nonetheless, Japan's performance in the field of the development of Asia was immediately disqualified because of the use of illicit means. In its ardour to accomplish its national mission Japan had forgotten that one first of all had to follow the universal trend. The country was mistaken if it sought to fight old forms of Western expansionism by means of new forms of Japanese expansionism. Although Yoshino did indeed admit that under the first true party cabinet of Hara Takashi "the new international trends of anti-militarism and democracy are reflected in our domestic policy", he still took his compatriots to task over their foreign policy, in which "the people's only criterion seems to be territorial expansion".³⁰⁴ In this sense one can very well call Yoshino a true 'Taishō democrat', as defined by Matsuo Takayoshi, since he clearly rejected the opportunistic partition that was present in the Meiji period leading-concept of "internally constitutionalism, externally imperialism" (*uchi ni wa rikkenshugi, soto ni wa teikokushugi*).³⁰⁵ Although a similar critique as regards the content of Japan's imperial line was impossible in those days and neither to be expected since Yoshino had deemed it worth mentioning specifically in the first place, Japan's superior version of monarchy was not yet allowed to help improve the country's score. As long as Japan had not become fully democratic itself this special feature was not to be exported, Yoshino said, and he thus saved himself the bothersome task of explaining in what way Japan's imperial line would bestow benevolence upon the rest of the world.³⁰⁶

In short, before it could start advocating its particular mission Japan first had to subscribe unconditionally to the universal 'common grand ideal of mankind' (*jinrui kyōtsū no dairisō*). This implied that it had to exert itself to bring about social and international justice by means of the thorough implementation of democracy (*minponshugi*) in its internal policy and international equality (*kokusaiteki byōdōshugi*) in its external policy.³⁰⁷ However, when taking Yoshino's general assessment of his own people into account it is evident he thought it would still take an enormous effort and a considerable amount of time for Japan to become a 'Christian nation' and to occupy a position in the postwar world equal to the United States and Europe.

Ethnic Nationalism

The principle of ethnic national self-determination

302 'Shina no hai-Nichi-teki sōjō to konponteki kaiketsusaku'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.7, p.61.

303 'Sekai no daishuchō to sono junōsaku oyobi taiōsaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.1, p.146.

304 'Shina, Chōsen no hai-Nichi to waga kokumin no hansei'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1919.8, reprinted in YSS, p.110.

305 For Matsuo's characterisation of 'Taishō Democracy' in contrast to the Meiji-period frame of mind, see the first part on 'the early stage of Taishō Democracy' in his *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974: pp.1-92.

306 'Sekai no daishuchō to sono junōsaku oyobi taiōsaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.1, p.146.

307 Ibid.: pp.143-44.

The new pacifist internationalist trend was accompanied by a new vocabulary which not merely stressed such pacifist and internationalist goals as anti-imperialism, international co-operation, disarmament, and so on, but somewhat confusingly also highlighted the cause of nationalism. Up till 1918 Yoshino had not been very aware of nationalism in the sense of ethnic nationalism (*minzokushugi*).³⁰⁸ The closest he had reached was patriotism, of which he distinguished two forms; the first being *aikoku* (love the country) or *yūkoku aimin* (care for the country and love the people) which he considered sound and even essential for the progress of a nation and the second *kokusuishugi* (chauvinism), which he considered intolerant, extreme and detrimental to both national and international society. Yoshino promoted the former and ignored the latter and thus had seen no dilemma whatsoever in prescribing patriotism or national salvation (*kyūkoku*) for China and enhancing Japan's national interests in China at the same time.³⁰⁹ Moreover, in a world which he tended to divide conveniently into four or five cooperating zones of Monroe-ism, there had been no question of a dilemma between internationalism and national interests. There seemed to be a peaceful balance amongst and within the various zones.³¹⁰

However, when at the end of 1917 another type of nationalism, ethnic national self-determination (*minzoku jiketsushugi*), came to the fore through the uncoordinated efforts of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Woodrow Wilson, Yoshino could no longer deny that if this form of nationalism was propagated by China and Korea it eventually could not but collide with Japan's national interests, which he equated with another, minimal sort of nationalism, namely the national right to live (*kokuminteki seizonken*). For the first time Yoshino admitted that there was a dilemma between 'internationalism', in the form of the universal *right* to self-determination of nationalities, and 'nationalism', in the form of Japan's particularistic *need* for national subsistence through continental expansion. Although the goal of the Japanese nation was still the

308 It was only at the beginning of 1918 that Yoshino for the first time used '*minzokushugi*' in the title of one of his many articles. 'Kōwa jōken no ichi-kihon to shite tonaheraruru minzokushugi.' *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.3: pp.92-6. There is a rare article by Yoshino from October 1913 which from a political point of view analyses "the present competition between ethnic nations", but it was a subject on which he was requested to write by the magazine *Shin-Nihon* rather than a subject he had chosen himself. Moreover, in the article he refuses to treat nationalism as an 'ism', a laudable goal to which one can rightfully aspire, and instead he rather distantly categorises the different forms of expression of what he prefers to call "the drive towards ethnic national unity" and analyses what chances these various forms have in accomplishing their goal. Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Seijijō yori mitaru konnichi no minzoku kyōsō'. *Shin-Nihon*, 1913.10: pp.44-56. Although we disagree exactly on the point of how profound Yoshino's awareness of *minzokushugi* was before 1918, I am indebted to Kevin M. Doak for his insistence on distinguishing between nationalism and ethnic nationalism. See his 'Ethnic Nationalism and Romanticism in Early Twentieth-Century Japan', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 22:1, 1996; 'What is a Nation and Who belongs? National Narrative and the Ethnic Imagination in Twentieth-Century Japan', *The American Historical Review*, 102:2, 1997; 'Culture, Ethnicity, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Japan', in Sharon A. Minichiello, ed., *Japan's Competing Modernities*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1998: pp.181-205; 'Narrating China, Ordering East Asia: The Discourse on Nation and Ethnicity in Imperial Japan', in Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu, eds, *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, The University of Michigan Press, 2001: pp.85-113.

309 'Katō-kun no [Aikokushin]-ron'. *Shinjin*, 1905.3: p.55; 'Nihon bunmei no kenkyū'. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1905.7: pp.130-31; 'Shinajin no keishikishugi'. *Shinjin*, 1906.9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.8: pp.182-83.

310 'Shin Nichi-Ro kyōyaku no shinka'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.8: p.76.

same, the international framework had changed. As a result the legitimate means to achieve the goal had become more restricted and were increasingly dependent on the benevolent co-operation of other nations. Like many contemporaries Yoshino chose not to resist but to adjust to the new ‘international current’:

Once this principle [of ethnic nationalism] is accepted at the peace conference, even if its application is limited to a certain circumscribed area, its moral authority will know no limits and therefore it goes without saying that the postwar question of the disposal of the ethnic nations will eventually be dealt with by means of the so-called principle of the self-determination of nationalities. And even if this question is not directly raised at the peace conference we should not feel at ease and continue to oppress [other] ethnic nations, for this will imply that we are going against the world trend. (...) We should immediately reform our policy of colonial rule and be prepared for the postwar trend.³¹¹

Ethnic national self-determination and colonialism: circumscribed autonomy

In the case of Korean and Taiwanese ethnic nationalism with which, as Yoshino had predicted, Japan indeed was soon confronted (respectively in March 1919 and in January 1921), harmonisation of ethnic national rights of others and Japan’s own national needs was not such a difficult task.³¹² Although it was no longer politically correct to invade foreign territory and establish new colonies, this new rule did not seem to be of any consequence to the colonies which already existed. Accordingly there was hardly any outside pressure on Japan nor outside support to those colonised by Japan, except from the new but feeble Russian communist government, to bring about a substantial reform of the colonial status quo in East Asia.

Notwithstanding this lack of substantial outside pressure, Yoshino had of his own accord already at an early stage become aware of the need to adjust Japan’s colonial policy, especially in the case of Japan’s main colony, Korea. Like the vast majority of his European and Japanese

311 ‘Kōwa jōken no ichi-kihon to shite tonaheruru minzokushugi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.3: pp. 95-96.

312 In January 1921 Taiwanese students in Tokyo organised in the Shinminkai presented the Diet with a petition for the establishment of a parliament in Taiwan. In the next year the main stage shifted to Taiwan itself and the driving force of the movement changed to the Taiwan Bunka Kyōkai (Taiwan Culture Society), also under the leadership of Lin Xiantang. The movement was later represented by the Taiwan Minshūtō (Taiwan Masses Party) and the Taiwan Chihō Jichi Renmei (Taiwan Regional Autonomy League) until it was completely suppressed in 1934. Due to the stringent colonial rule on Taiwan it was impossible for the Taiwanese ethnic national movement to publicly rally for self-determination or independence and had to restrict itself to the demand for a Taiwanese parliament. Although the Taiwanese movement has received not even a fraction of the attention the Chinese May Fourth Movement and the Korean March First Movement have, it succeeded in on a yearly basis presenting a petition, which nonetheless was completely ignored by the colonial authorities. See Wakabayashi Masahiro, ‘Taishō demokurashii to Taiwan gikai setchi seigan undō’. In Haruyama Meitetsu & Wakabayashi Masahiro, eds, *Nihon shokuminchishugi no seijiteki tenkai – Sono tōchi taisei to Taiwan no minzoku undō*, Ajia Seikei Gakkai, 1980: pp.76-230 and Wakabayashi, *Taiwan kō-Nichi undōshi kenkyū*, expanded edition, Kenbun Shuppan, 2001.

contemporaries Yoshino considered colonialism a noble undertaking and accordingly he thought the rule of Korea to be a matter which did not merely concern the development of national prosperity but also “our honour as an Oriental developed country”. This led him to support Japan’s colonial policy of assimilation in theory, in the sense that it would contribute to the cultural enlightenment of the Koreans, yet he became more and more aware that in practice this laudable policy did not work in the case of “ethnic nations that have a somewhat developed distinct civilisation of their own”, a category to which he considered Korea also belonged.³¹³ At a time when even Great Britain, a country to which Yoshino attributed “superior colonial qualities”, had evidently failed in its assimilation experiment in Ireland and was reforming its colonial policy, it was clear to him that Japan could not stay behind in “our own Ireland”.³¹⁴ His views were further confirmed when in the early spring of 1916 he visited the annexed colony for the first time, as part of a larger inspection tour of both Korea and Manchuria at the instigation of the Japanese government. His visit to Korea was not limited to the customary meetings with the colonial bureaucrats of the government-general but also included talks with anti-Japanese activists and leaders of the Ch’ōndogyo, the highly syncretic and egalitarian popular religion. His overzealous discharge of his duty led him, probably much to the distress of his sponsor, to the following conclusion:

The colonial capacities of us Japanese are extremely immature. (...) The few Japanese colonists that have succeeded in Manchuria and Korea depend on either excessive government protection or unlawful trade. (...) It seems as if the Japanese villages in Manchuria and Korea have been moved here in their entirety from Japan; neither on the level of business relations nor on the level of social relations do they have any connection with the natives (*domin*). (...) The Japanese authorities have spent a large amount of money for the sake of the welfare of the natives and have constructed several splendid facilities, but most of these concentrate merely on superficial formality and lack all passion. (...) They oppress and scorn the natives and as long as they outwardly act as if they render benevolence but in reality force the natives to submit blindly and totally to their power, the natives will invariably, if not outwardly at least secretly, hold feelings of resentment. (...) There is almost no spiritual communication between the Japanese government facilities and the natives. (...) Moreover, ethnic nations simply do not like to be ruled by foreigners. (...) In sharp contrast, the American missionaries in Korea and Manchuria have, completely independent from their state authorities, self-sacrificingly worked in the interests of the natives and have become the object of their adoration, as stateless gods. (...) The Japanese only act egoistically and thus have by their own doing prepared the ground for the anti-Japanese movement. Instead we should foster pure spiritual harmony and

313 ‘Sohō sensei cho [Jimu Ikkagen] wo yomu’. *Shinjin*, 1914.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.3: p.107.

314 ‘Airando mondai’, *Shinjokai*, 1914.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5: p.42. Judging by two articles he wrote for the *Taiwan Seinen* in early 1922, he also included Taiwan into ‘our own Ireland’. ‘Airando mondai ni tsuite’ and ‘Airando mondai ni taisuru kōsatsu’. *Taiwan Seinen*, respectively 15 February and 1 May 1922.

cooperation.³¹⁵

Considering the forecast since late 1917 of the oncoming storm of ethnic national self-determination this need became even more urgent. For example, in January 1919 Yoshino, yet again tackling a problem to which hardly anybody else paid serious attention, referred to the logical inconsistency that would arise between the status of the new mandatory territory of Micronesia and the status of Japan's established colonies. He foresaw a situation whereby Japan under a mandate from the League of Nations would formally be obliged to educate completely uncivilised natives, who did not yet have any hope of ever being able to decide their own political future, and to guide them to a level where they could implement national self-determination, while the comparatively civilised Korean nation had never been promised anything more than the present dubious honour of complete assimilation into the Japanese empire. Yoshino urged his government to apply swift reforms that would give the Koreans hope for the future before the postwar trend of nationalism posed considerable problems.³¹⁶

But his warning came too late. Only a few months later the colony was set ablaze by a large-scale popular insurrection, aimed at calling the attention of the world powers, then in conclave at the Paris Peace Conference, to the right of the Korean people to national independence. Although Yoshino, a proponent of gradual peaceful reform, as a matter of course denounced the Korean violence employed, his reaction to the March First Movement was in general sympathetic. Still, even Yoshino did not meet the Korean demands head on. He started out by stating that the Korean question was a "humanitarian problem" which had to be seen through "a mirror of sharp moral judgement".³¹⁷ Based on this moral view of the self and the other, which was symbolised by the term *isshi dōjin* (impartial benevolence) from the 1919 imperial rescript on the organisational reform of the government over Korea, he advocated drastic reforms of the policy of colonial rule, such as equal treatment in the fields of education, employment and income, freedom of press and speech and, to facilitate matters, civilian rule instead of military rule.³¹⁸ Accordingly, he prophesied, a "new era" of civilian and civilised colonial rule would be ushered in and at last the long-term colonial objective of "close

315 'Man-Sen shokuminteki keiei no hihan'. *Shinjin*, 1916.6: pp.57-61. For a more extended report on his tour of Manchuria and Korea, see 'Man-Kan wo shisatsu shite'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1916.6: pp.17-64.

316 'Kōwa kaigi ni teigen subeki waga kuni no Nanyō shotō shobun-an'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.1: pp.145-46; 'Chōsen no tomo yori no tegami', *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.1: p.155; 'Chōsen tōchisaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: pp.50-51.

317 'Chōsen tōchi no kaikaku ni kansuru saishō gendo no yōkyū'. In *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.6, 1919.8: p.5; 'Taigaiteki ryōshin no hakki'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.4: p.103.

318 'Kōkokuteki Chōsen no sonzai wo wasururu nakare'. *Umi ka Oka ka*, 1919.7: p.10; 'Chōsen tōchi no kaikaku ni kansuru saishō gendo no yōkyū'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.6, 1919.8: p.41; 'Shokuminchi ni okeru kyōiku seido'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.96; 'Chōsen tōchi no kokuminteki shihai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.88. This imperial rescript and the 1910 rescript on the annexation of Korea can both be found in Mizuno Naoki, ed., *Chōsen Sōtoku yukoku kunji shūsei*, vol.2, Ryokuin Shobō: pp.5-6. Mark Peattie in his very helpful overview of Japan's colonial history points out that the Confucian concept of 'impartial benevolence' formed a key part in Japan's colonial ideology, but that it nevertheless was extremely ambiguous and was accordingly used by both the camp that stressed the 'equal duties' of the colonised and the camp that stressed the 'equal rights' of the colonised. Mark Peattie, *Shokuminchi: Teikoku 50-nen no kōbō*, Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 1996: pp.134-45.

collaboration between home land and Korea (*naisen tomohataraki*)” would come within reach.³¹⁹

Yoshino was aware that “the inevitable result of a policy of impartial benevolence will be that we will have to accept some sort of autonomy (*jichi*)”.³²⁰ He thought that the Koreans, in cooperation with the Japanese residents, at least should have the right to supervise the rule by the Japanese authorities, but he did not seem to want to commit himself too strongly. Before the uprising he had approvingly cited Yamamoto Miono’s recommendation that

Our future goal should be to develop Korea to the level of a completely autonomous colony (*kanzen naru jichi-shokuminchi*) within fifty or hundred years. In the mean time we should give them autonomy and let them partake in Korean politics to the extent that they have culturally progressed.³²¹

Now he merely stated that “measure, extent and period of implementation are open to debate” and “Korean demands such as autonomy, independence, an independent Korean parliament or Korean representatives in the Imperial Parliament are all long-term topics which have to be considered by a special research or investigation committee on the policy for ruling over Korea”.³²²

In line with his earlier critique of the Japanese colonists and the colonial government, Yoshino was thus more than willing to interpret the March First Movement as proof of Japan’s complete failure as a colonising power and to propose reforms deemed necessary to improve the situation, but he ignored the central Korean demand for political sovereignty. A new era of civilian colonial rule was still colonial rule. The Korean problem was not so much a political question he handled in terms of Korean rights or even a practical problem centred on Korea’s capacity to be autonomous. Most of all it was a moral question that called for Japanese self-reflection and which was to be the touchstone to test whether the Japanese nation was sufficiently capable, that is, civilised, to apply colonial rule and expand into the Asian continent.³²³ Within the framework of such a discourse the complete national self-determination or independence of Korea and Taiwan could only be “too radical” a proposition and promises of autonomy, in contrast to promises of full equality with the Japanese settlers, had to remain vague.³²⁴

However, there was an even more important reason for this than the need for a testing

319 ‘Shinsōtoku oyobi shinseimusōkan wo mukau’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.9: p.214; ‘Chōsen ni okeru genron jiyū’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.94.

320 ‘Chōsen bōdō zengosaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.4: p.121.

321 ‘Chōsen tōchisaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: p.50. Yamamoto Miono (1874-1941) was a professor at Kyoto University where he served as the dean of the Faculty of Economics until 1934. His main publications concerned the agricultural and colonial policies, and the emigration and labour questions.

322 ‘Chōsen bōdō zengosaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.4: pp.121-22; ‘Chōsen tōchi no kaikaku ni kansuru saishō gendo no yōkyū’. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.6, 1919.8: p.8.

323 ‘Chōsen tōchi no kaikaku ni kansuru saishō gendo no yōkyū’. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.6, 1919.8: p.42; ‘Chōsen tōchi ni okeru [kōjō] to [seigi]’ and ‘Chōsenjin no jichi nōryoku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.9: pp.222-23.

324 ‘Kokusai mondai ni kansuru shitsugi ni kotau’. *Shinjin*, 1920.6, p.9.

ground for Japanese colonial ability. In sharp contrast to Taiwan, Manchuria and other parts of China, where Yoshino by this time almost completely rejected aggressive expansion and only recognised economic and cultural means to further Japan's natural destiny to expand onto the continent, Korea had a special military status which allowed for somewhat cruder means. This special treatment of Korea is evident from the fact that in a *Tōhō Jiron* article in 1918 he continued to justify the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars by means of a very simplified view of Korea and a misrepresentation of Chinese and Russian influence in the Korean peninsula during the period 1876-1904, that were unworthy of an eminent scholar such as Yoshino. Moreover, he allowed a glance at his 'true colours' when he came to the topic of the eventual annexation of Korea in 1910:

Our national defence is incomplete when all our defensive facilities are stationed within our national borders. (...) Although Belgium is a small country it is fortunately endowed with the capacity to be independent and it can accordingly preserve its neutrality interposed between England and Germany, but if it had been a country such as Korea, England would have competed with Germany and would have exerted itself to stretch its line of national defence to the Eastern part of Belgium. The position of Japan's national defence in the Orient is exactly the same as that of England in Europe.³²⁵

It is very revealing to see that he uses the concept of 'a line of national defence' (*kokubōsen*), which is situated outside the national border (*kokkyō*), since one cannot but associate it with the paired concepts of 'the line of interest' (*riekisen*) and 'the line of sovereignty' (*shukensen*) as introduced in a famous letter dating back to 1890 by Yamagata Aritomo, the arch-conservative *genrō* and autocratic founding father of the modern Japanese army who in all other aspects is best qualified as the complete antipode of everything for which Yoshino stood.³²⁶ Although Yamagata's view of the East Asian scene had further evolved since the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War, in the sense that Japan's line of interest, which just like the line of sovereignty had to be defended at all costs, now stretched all over Manchuria and even to other considerable parts of mainland China, Yoshino did nevertheless acknowledge an identical line of national defence which comprised all of Korea. As later examples dating from after the outburst of the March First Movement also suggest, his support for Korean autonomy was indisputably subordinate to this strategic concept:

Although we regret that our ruling policy was extremely biased towards Japan, this does not imply that we can let a policy of 'Korea for the Koreans' take its own course. Even fervent supporters of the Korean independence party will probably recognise that we demand that our interests be given serious

325 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1: pp.42-43, 46-47.

326 Yamagata Aritomo, 'Gaikō seiryakuron'. Reprinted in *Nihon kindai shisō taikēi 12: taigaikan*, Iwanami Shoten, 1988: pp.81-86. One can also find it in the collection of Yamagata's written opinions, Ōyama Azusa, comp., *Yamagata Aritomo Ikensho*, Hara Shobō, 1966: pp.196-201, but one has to be aware that in this version they have somehow managed to mix up the order of the pages of the original letter.

consideration.³²⁷

Even if the Koreans should be allowed to partake on an equal footing in the implementation of the rule of Korea (the *chi* of the *tōchi*), the general framework of the rule (the *tō* of the *tōchi*) had to remain firmly in Japanese hands, and inevitably had to be ‘colonial rule’.³²⁸

Thus there were overriding strategic reasons for Yoshino to hold on to Korea and since there was no international pressure to relinquish existing colonies, he did not need to take Korean independence into serious consideration. From our present day point of view it is of course very easy to criticise Yoshino for his hypocrisy, on the one hand heralding the cause of ethnic national self-determination while on the other hand rejecting Korean independence. Although in his day it would probably have been impossible anyway to publicly raise the call for Korean independence due to censure, on the other hand there was no need to propagate the illusion that, once given autonomy, the Koreans would spontaneously come to share the *Yamatodamashii* (Japanese spirit) and would even voluntarily choose to remain part of the Japanese empire.³²⁹ Besides, it is evident that in the case of the colonies, Yoshino tried to marginalize the issue of political emancipation, a topic he stressed so much in the case of the motherland Japan, in favour of cultural and social emancipation.³³⁰ Still, aside from this sort of patronization, we should not forget that he was a lonesome forerunner as far as his view of the Korean ethnic nation was concerned. While most of his contemporaries looked the other way, Yoshino could not refrain time and again from drawing their attention to abuses against Koreans at home and, even more exceptionally, in the colony itself.³³¹ Moreover, he was able to look upon the Korean insurrection as a legitimate and respectable nationalist movement and publicly vented his strong

327 ‘Chōsen bōdō zengosaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.4: p.122

328 In an article from early 1921 Yoshino also criticized that the Japanese colonial authorities in Korea had mixed up the point of departure and the goal of their policy, but he very clearly stated that this goal had to be colonial rule under which the Koreans both in body and in mind had completely become Japanese. ‘Seijika no atama’. In Morimoto Junkichi, ed., *Watakushidomo no shuchō*, Bunka Seikatsu Kenkyūkai, 1921: pp. 212-13.

329 ‘Chōsen no bōdō ni tsuite’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.11: pp.84-85; ‘Chōsen mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.1: p.191.

330 A telling example in this context is that Yoshino in 1923 rejoiced over ‘the fact’ that “the internal demands of the young Koreans are penetrating a level far deeper than political freedom” and that “the Korean Labour Federation is in very close cooperation with Japanese labourers (...) they are joining hands on the high ground of the liberation of the proletariat (...) and thus the Korean popular movement is going beyond *the narrow-minded bounds of political independence*”. ‘Chōsenjin no shakai undō ni tsuite’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.5: pp.193, 198. For Yoshino’s stand towards his Taiwanese compatriots, whom he demanded to become “an independent cultural ethnic nation” but whom he simultaneously rejected to give political independence, see ‘Shukuji’. *Taiwan Seinen*, 1920.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: p.293.

331 Yoshino’s exceptional attention for Korea is evident from Kan Donjin’s inventory of the interwar debate in the printed media on Korea, in which Yoshino’s name pops up time and again while most other prominent opinion leaders are either absent or only feature once or twice. Kan Donjin, *Nihon genronkai to Chōsen, 1910-1945*, Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1984. Twenty-six of Yoshino’s articles are included in *YSS*, vol.9. However, it is hard to escape the feeling that his attention plummets after 1921 and it is also a fact that Yoshino did not once visit the country after the war.

doubts about the assimilation policy.³³² In my opinion he was the only Japanese who was able to come up with something as ‘outrageous’ as the proposal that:

The Japanese in Korea, at least the Japanese teachers, should master the Korean language and should wear the Korean costume. (...) True assimilation cannot completely be a one-way process.³³³

But there are many more scattered data which attest to the fact that Yoshino was an exceptional figure in the Japanese debate on colonial policy. Within the Unitarian Church, which formed the nucleus of the Japanese Christian mission to Korea, he was one of the few who opposed against his church thus acting as a paw of the colonial government.³³⁴ One of his articles on Korea was serialised with clear approval by the *Tongnip Sinmun* (Independence News), the unofficial organ of the Korean provisional government in Shanghai.³³⁵ He warned his fellow countrymen against belittling Korean independence activists by calling them ‘malcontents’ (*futei*) and he publicly spoke in very admirable terms of Yŏ Unhyŏng, one of the key persons of the Korean provisional government.³³⁶ His sympathy for the Korean independence movement is also evident from the fact that a fair amount of his Korean acquaintances and the majority of the Korean foreign students he financially supported were independence activists.³³⁷ In spite of the limitations Yoshino evidently had, he at least recognised the distinct identity of the Korean ethnic nation and tried very hard to see things from the Korean point of view and, as a result, he was willing to meet Korean (or identical) rights and demands to a much greater extent than the vast majority of inhabitants of the colonising countries of his day.

Ethnic national self-determination and imperialism: economic imperialism

However, in the case of China things were different from Korea. Since China was not a colony, its nationalist movement could not be so lightly dismissed in the first place. And neither

332 ‘Kōkokuteki Chōsen no sonzai wo wasururu nakare’. *Umi ka Oka ka*, 1919.7: pp.10-11; ‘Chōsen mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.1: p.191; ‘Tōgaku oyobi Tendōkyō’. *Bunka Seikatsu*, 1921.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: p.183; ‘Taigai mondai ni taisuru watakushidomo no taido’. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1921.7: p.35; ‘Suigen gyakusatsu jiken’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: pp.88-89; ‘Chōsen tōchi no kaikaku ni kansuru saishō gendo no yōkyū’. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.6, 1919.8, pp.41-42; ‘Chōsen no nōmin’. *Bunka no Kiso*, 1925.9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: p.208.

333 ‘Senpuku Sengo no shōrei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.96

334 Matsuo Takayoshi, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to zai-Nichi Chōsenjin gakusei’ (original 1973), reprinted in Matsuo, *Minponshugi to teikokushugi*, Misuzu Shobō, 1998: p.186.

335 The article in question was the abovementioned ‘Chōsen tōchi no kaikaku ni kansuru saishō gendo no yōkyū’. It was serialised between August and September 1919, almost simultaneous with its publication in Japan in the *Reimei Kōenshū* (vol.6, 1919.8: pp.1-42).

336 ‘Iwayuru Ro Unkyō jiken ni tsuite’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: pp.177-79.

337 A list of Koreans Yoshino met, on the basis of his diaries, can be found in Matsuo Takayoshi, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Chōsen – saikō’. *Chōsenshi Kenkyūkai Ronbunshū*, no. 35 (October 1997): p.8. Other articles by Matsuo providing information on Yoshino’s Korean network and his support of Korean students are ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Chōsen’ (original 1968) and ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to zai-Nichi Chōsenjin gakusei’ (original 1973), both reprinted in Matsuo, *Minponshugi to teikokushugi*, Misuzu Shobō, 1998: pp.128-62 and 163-203, and ‘Yoshino Sakuzō no Chōsenron’, in *YSS*, vol.9, pp.379-404.

did Yoshino subscribe to the strategic need for doing so, as in the case of Korea. Moreover, as discussed before, it was evident to him that as a result of the war the position of the United States in the world had become pre-eminent and that also in the Asian theatre it could no longer be ignored, as he had been inclined to do. Japan was now on the defence and was forced to do more than merely mimic the American vocabulary of the open door, equal opportunities and sovereignty of Chinese territory. Under such circumstances Yoshino's erstwhile calls for a superior position of Japan in East Asia legitimised by means of a Monroe doctrine for Asia were not timely any more, and accordingly the word "Monroe-ism" was no longer heard of. Hence he brought his rhetoric concerning Japan's continental policy more in line with the new internationalist trend:

Once one admits that the Oriental civilisation has the mission to make a unique contribution to the world, one should also recognise that the ethnic nation of Japan has the duty to culturally develop the Orient. If we hand over the task of the cultural development of the Orient to the United States, this will not merely be a complete loss of face for Japan but will also mean the end of the Oriental civilisation. On behalf of the honour of the Oriental nations and the global mission of the Oriental civilisation we have to be aware that it is the great noble duty bestowed upon us to make absolutely sure that this task remains secure within the hands of the Japanese ethnic nation.³³⁸

Yoshino presented a view of postwar East Asia in which the two new great powers in the region, Japan and the United States, would no longer be engaged in something as base as military competition, so the Oriental nations need not fear an armed collision between the two powers on their doorstep. Instead they could happily look forward to 'their destiny' to be greatly developed as a result of the competition between Japan and America in the field of culture.³³⁹ It goes without saying that this cultural competition as described by Yoshino is rather odd. What is the use of competition if Japan is so much preordained to guarantee that world civilisation will not forego its indispensable share of Asian civilisation? It seems as if God will not condone Japan losing out. Be that as it may, by posing that Asia had a special cultural mission to fulfil on behalf of the whole of mankind and by positioning the Japanese as the one ethnic nation that had to tug the Asian boat and whose influence in the region thus had to remain preponderant, also on behalf of the whole of mankind, he carefully shifted his line of argument away from the particular economic and political preferential rights of Monroe-ism to the realm of a lofty universal cultural goal in which Japan happened to have a particular duty. To what extent such rhetoric was inspired as before by non-cultural goals such as the expulsion of Western imperialism and the establishment of Japanese economic superiority remains open to debate, but it is obvious that it was at least well in line with these aims.

Although the above argument is clearly based on something we might term 'cultural Asianism', Yoshino invariably took heed to keep away from 'political Asianism' or 'great Asianism' (*dai-Ajiashugi*). In the same article as the citation above he pointed out that these latter isms were nothing but Japanese excuses to unnaturally unite the yellow race against a

338 'Waga kuni no Tōhō keiei ni kansuru san-daimondai'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.1: p.68.

339 Ibid.: pp.67-68.

superficial common enemy, the white race. He thought that there was no theoretical evidence for the assertion that the white race would unite and come to oppress the yellow race and termed such ideas racist, exclusionist, and barbaric. In contrast, making no distinction on the basis of the colour of one's skin was a real sign of progress and civilisation. He warned that if Japan decided to propagate this barbaric 'great Asianism' fellow Asian nations such as the Chinese and Indians, whom he considered to be more cosmopolitan and more experienced by their contacts with the West and thus better capable of making a sensible comparison, would rather turn to England or America. If Japan wanted to avoid isolation both from the West and the East, its Asianism should be founded on principles that were so broad that they could also be applied to bring about an alliance with the Europeans and Americans. Thus, just as the West is not portrayed as an opponent, the East is not presented as a solid unity; they are separate 'Oriental ethnic nations' (*Tōyō minzoku*) which happen to share a common civilisation but they are not given a common racial (*jinsu*) identity. Moreover, the civilisation they share is not presented as superior but rather neutrally as being able to contribute to world civilisation, so in Yoshino's case it might be better to use 'asianism' instead of 'Asianism'.³⁴⁰ However, what is important to notice is the different interpretation Yoshino gave to the implementation of his cultural argument in the case of Korea and in the case of China. Whereas he used Japan's cultural superiority as a justification for the continuation of its rule over Korea, he did not do so in the case of the Japanese branches of informal empire in China such as Manchuria and Shandong. In the former case he hardly ever mentioned the previously discussed strategic argument and it was thus the cultural argument which had to serve as the sole conclusive argument against Korean self-determination. If Japan only proved to be a high standing culture the Koreans would naturally want to remain under Japanese rule and even want to become Japanese themselves. In the case of China he was much more humble; the cultural argument merely functioned as yet another pillar to buttress the grand design of Sino-Japanese economic cooperation. It was within this economic framework that Yoshino had first become aware of the need to support Chinese nationalist demands for self-determination. Ever after he continued to emphasise this need, and sometimes he even used cultural arguments that functioned in exactly the opposite direction to those he used in the case of Korea.

As previously mentioned, in the course of the war Yoshino had gradually given in to Chinese demands concerning political and territorial sovereignty in principle and now, with the increasing influence of the United States in mind, he started to take the first tottering steps on the road of conceding in content as well. This proved to be a long and difficult road for the former imperialist, but, ironically, he was helped on his way by the nationalist and anti-Japanese May Fourth Movement which raged through China in 1919, starting in Beijing and eventually spreading over the whole country, in the wake of the decision by the four major powers at the Paris Peace Conference not to return the former German rights over Shandong to China but to confer them to Japan.³⁴¹ Yoshino had never made a secret of the fact that he thought the Chinese central government, at the time dominated by the Anhui faction of warlord Duan Qirui, not to be

340 Ibid.: pp.67-68.

341 I will deal with Yoshino's stand on the Shandong question in the next section on the Peace Conference and will here only treat his reaction to the May Fourth Movement, a procedure I think is hardly problematic since Yoshino rather amazingly was able to keep the two strictly apart.

representative of the Chinese people and thus an obstacle in the way of a true Sino-Japanese economic alliance. For this reason he had time and again criticised the huge financial support it was given by means of the so-called Nishihara loans in the days of the transcendental ‘militarist’ cabinet of army general Terauchi Masatake.³⁴² A logical extension of this attitude would have been to support Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary Southern faction in its aim to bring down the warlord government, which Yoshino indeed did, but not wholeheartedly since he was not the type to rally actively for the cause of armed revolution. However, with the May Fourth Movement a reasonable alternative to the revolutionaries had come into being. While the movement itself could hardly be called pacifist, Yoshino paid most attention to the fact that it had sprung from a sound source, namely the students and “liberal” professors such as Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi and Li Dazhao of Beijing University.³⁴³ The latter was a former pupil of Yoshino’s at the Northern College of Law and Administration in Tianjin and in the months before the May Fourth Movement the two had exchanged letters and magazines, with the result that Yoshino and his Reimeikai were very prominently introduced as the harbingers of new thought in several newspapers and magazines connected with Li.³⁴⁴ However, regardless of Yoshino’s personal contacts, it need not amaze us that he had no problem in identifying with the scholarly elite of the Chinese version of Tokyo University: “The new movement certifies what I have been advocating all these years”. True, their methods were “still rather uncivilised”, but it was “a spontaneous popular movement” with “the right spirit” and, very important, it proved that “new liberal thought is no longer limited to the Southern faction”.³⁴⁵

342 ‘Gennaikaku no iwayuru tai-Shi seisaku no sasshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.2: pp.80-81; ‘Dan Ki-sui shikkyaku no hihō to waga tai-Shi seisaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.12: pp.97-98; ‘Shina seikyoku saikin no henchō to Nihon no taido’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.5: p.39; ‘Gunji kyōyaku wa Nisshi ryōkoku ni nanimono wo atafuru ka’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1918.6: pp.48-53.

343 Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) was at the time dean of the Faculty of Letters and editor of the influential magazine *New Youth (Xin Qingnian)*. Later he would become a founder and the first secretary general of the Chinese Communist Party (from 1921 until 1927). Hu Shi (1891-1962) had studied in America under John Dewey and taught philosophy. Li Dazhao (1889-1927) was at the time in charge of the university library and only became a professor in 1920. He later became the main representative of the Chinese Communist Party in Peking and was instrumental in the establishment of the First Common Front of Guomindang and Communist Forces. He was executed by Zhang Zuolin in 1927 after the latter’s troops had raided the Soviet embassy where Li was in hiding. Many other representatives of the so-called New Culture Movement were hired within the framework of the university reform program of Cai Yuanpei, who became *Beida*’s new chancellor in January 1917. For Chen, Hu, Li and the political and intellectual atmosphere at Beijing University during the late 1910s, see Timothy B. Weston, *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals and Chinese Political Culture, 1898-1929*, University of California Press, 2004.

344 Matsuo Takayoshi, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Ri Taishō’ (original 1988), reprinted in Matsuo, *Minponshugi to teikokushugi*, Misuzu Shobō, 1998: pp.97-100.

345 ‘Pekin daigaku gakusei sojō jiken ni tsuite’. *Shinjin*, 1919.6: pp.3-7; ‘Shina ni okeru hai-Nichi jiken’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7, p.84. Recent comparative research on Yoshino Sakuzō and Chen Duxiu seems to point out that Yoshino’s identification with his Chinese colleagues was not purely a case of wishful thinking. Sasaki Tsutomu characterises Yoshino and Chen as the ‘mister democracy’ of their respective countries and finds that they both advocated ‘proletarian democracy’, a complementary combination of political democracy and economic socialism. See Sasaki, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Chin Doku-shū’. *Misuzu*, no,493 (april 2002): pp.13-25..

Moreover, Yoshino thought that the popular protests of May 1919 marked a watershed in the anti-Japanese movement as well. In his opinion for the first time these clearly had not been orchestrated by the Chinese government or representatives of Japan's Western economic rivals in China and as a direct result they did not have such a strong anti-Japanese character. The May Fourth Movement, he stated, was quintessentially an extension of the 'movement against the bureaucratic and military clique' and predominantly aimed at reform in China itself.³⁴⁶ In the process, the Chinese people were merely making clear that they no longer permitted foreign governments to deal with the like of Duan Qirui and this time it was Japan that happened to be picked out because it had been overtly implicated in the warlord regime. In line with this argument, in his dozen or so articles concerning the movement Yoshino did not say a word about its direct incentive - the unsatisfactory settlement of the Shandong question - and, undisturbed, accordingly stressed that it was not aimed against the "peaceful Japan" of the people but against the "aggressive Japan" of the military clique (*gunbatsu*).³⁴⁷ In addition, he invariably concluded that the new force Japan was confronted with in China was not a heterogeneous opponent but in essence a brother in arms (*kyōmeisha*) in the reform movement of the true Japan: they were "identical liberation movements" that shared the aim of ousting undemocratic bureaucratic and militarist influence from their national policies.³⁴⁸

This is the main reason why Yoshino was one of the very few Japanese who immediately supported the May Fourth Movement in China and, notwithstanding its clear anti-Japanese character, even characterised it as "a sign foretelling the establishment of friendly relations between the political nations of Japan and China".³⁴⁹ If only the Japanese reform movement could be victorious and, consequently, militarist influence completely eradicated from Japan's China policy, it would only be a matter of time before China, based on "the calm judgement of its intelligentsia", stopped its anti-Japanese agitation. Thus the victory of both movements would bring about "true cordial Sino-Japanese relations" on the basis of which "the sound Sino-Japanese elements will jointly discuss the future of East Asia".³⁵⁰ It of course helped that Yoshino's message was distributed with approval by several Chinese newspapers,³⁵¹ but he also sought to personally contribute to this noble goal by fostering understanding between leaders of the liberation movements of the two countries. He actively supported the many Chinese (and Korean) foreign students in Tokyo and he helped to establish various societies to stimulate a dialogue between them and Japanese students.³⁵² He contacted Li Dazhao, his former pupil at

346 Ibid.: p.3; 'Shina, Chōsen no hai-Nichi to waga kokumin no hansei'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1919.8, reprinted in YSS, vol.9: p.109.

347 Ibid.: pp.7-8; 'Pekin gakusei no kōdō wo manba suru nakare'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.1.

348 Ibid.: pp.6-8.

349 This is the title of 'Nisshi kokuminteki shinzen kakuritsu no shokō'. *Kaihō*, 1919.8, reprinted in YSS, vol.9: pp.257-67.

350 'Pekin gakusei no kōdō wo manba suru nakare'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.1; 'Pekin daigaku gakusei sojō jiken ni tsuite'. *Shinjin*, 1919.6: p.8; 'Shina ni okeru hai-Nichi jiken'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.86; 'Nisshi daigaku no renkei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.87.

351 For instance, a complete translation of his 'Pekin daigaku gakusei sojō jiken ni tsuite' from the June 1919 issue of *Shinjin* was published in the 19 June issue of the *Xinbao* newspaper. See Matsuo Takayoshi, 'Yoshino Sakuzō to Ri Taishō': p.101.

352 The two main fora for this dialogue were provided by the Tokyo YMCA, which also had a Chinese and a Korean section, and Tokyo University, but Yoshino also helped many Chinese and Korean students on an

the Northern College of Law and Administration in Tianjin and now a professor at Beijing University, with the idea of establishing an exchange program for both students and staff, but apart from one visit by a Chinese student delegation in May 1920 this did not bear much fruit due to government hindrance and Chinese aversion to becoming implicated in ‘Japanese imperialism’,³⁵³

Somewhat more pragmatically, Yoshino also pointed out that joining this new popular force was the only option left for Japan to expand into China and he even had high hopes:

I am convinced it will not be difficult to bring about our objective of peaceful expansion on the basis of Sino-Japanese friendship, co-existence and co-prosperity, as long as our fundamental China policy is exactly in line with their national demands. (...) I do not think China and Japan have a long profound history of mutual enmity [that might obstruct this objective].³⁵⁴

Either idealistically on behalf of the Oriental civilisation or pragmatically on behalf of Japan’s economic expansion, Yoshino braced his earlier awareness that Japan’s future China policy had to be based on ‘coexistentialism’ (*kyōsonshugi*). And with the rise of popular forces guided by ‘sound elements’ on both sides of the East China Sea he seemed to be more optimistic than ever that things would work out well. However, in contrast to the form of coexistence Yoshino sought to achieve with the colony of Korea, which was merely based on such lofty ideals as mutual respect and impartiality, there could be no mistake that coexistence with China definitely implied an extra and less abstract element in the form of ethnic national self-determination. Yoshino’s rather ambiguous ‘Sino-Japanese friendship’ (*Nisshi shinzen*) had progressed to the somewhat more explicit ‘coexistence between sovereign partners’ (*jishu kyōson*).³⁵⁵

The Paris Peace Conference and the New World Order

Yoshino’s expectations of the Paris Peace Conference as the culmination of the above-mentioned universal new trends of internationalism and pacifism were extremely high. He argued that due to the complete change in the character of the war during the last year of the

individual basis. He supported them financially, either by himself or by finding patrons. In fact, many Chinese and Korean students leaving for Japan were advised by their seniors that the first thing they should do when arriving in Tokyo was to turn to Yoshino. See, for instance, Matsuo Takayoshi, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to zai-Nichi Chōsenjin gakusei’. In Matsuo, *Minponshugi to teikokushugi*, Misuzu Shobō, 1998: pp.192, 200. And when they ended up in trouble with the police because of political activities Yoshino made sure to get them the best legal aid they could ask for. See for instance Ono Shinji, *Go-shi Undō zai-Nihon*, KyūkoShoin, 2003, which documents Yoshino’s strong involvement in the release of Chinese students who had been involved in May Fourth related rallies in Tokyo.

353 Yoshino presented his plans in ‘Nisshi kokuminteki shinzen kakuritsu no shokō’. *Kaihō*, 1919.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: pp.257-67. For the implementation of his plans see Fujii Shōzō, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to kindai Chūgoku’ in *Yoshino Sakuzō Senshū Geppō*, no.11: pp.1-4 and Ishikawa Yoshihiro, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to 1920-nen no Pekin daigaku gakusei hō-Nichi-dan’ in *Yoshino Sakuzō Senshū Geppō*, no.14: pp.5-8.

354 ‘Shina mondai ni tsuite’. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.4, 1919.6: pp.64-65.

355 ‘Pekin daigaku gakusei sojō jiken ni tsuite’. *Shinjin*, 1919.6: p.7; ‘Nisshi kokuminteki shinzen kakuritsu no shokō’. *Kaihō*, 1919.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: pp.266-67.

fighting, adjustment of national interests - formerly the topic that peace negotiations were all about - would this time merely be a minor subject. The Paris Peace Conference would not be a political or an economic conference but an ideological conference, dominated by the great spirit of world reform. It was for this reason that Yoshino, in line with ‘the true character of the conference’, urged his country to send ‘men of ideas’ (*shisōka*) like Ebina Danjō and Nitobe Inazō (who both happened to be Christian) instead of the usual politicians and economists as its representatives.³⁵⁶ Moreover, he predicted that in order to attain the most important goal of preserving eternal peace in the world the representatives of each country would in principle have an equal voice. He was aware that during the practical work of the negotiations the strength of the various voices might vary to some extent, but was only willing to acknowledge such deviations from the rule if these were based on the outstanding ‘spiritual refinement’ of a nation and not on the old criterion of sheer strength. In a similar vein the success of the conference on the whole and the success of the various national delegations were neither to be judged by the traditional criterion of ‘national gains’ but had to be measured by the new standard of ‘contribution to the ideal of world reform’.³⁵⁷

Needless to say, the actual character of the Paris Peace Conference was not a breakaway from traditional diplomacy and hardly resembled the picture Yoshino had so optimistically sketched. In the first place, apart from his hero Woodrow Wilson there was probably not one other person to be traced that he would have qualified as ‘a man of ideas’. And the most important decisions were invariably made on the basis of national interests by a council consisting of the four or five major powers, from which the other countries were barred. Thus one would expect Yoshino’s reaction to be one of complete deception. Before going into his overall judgement of the Paris Peace Conference, I will first examine his reaction to those separate issues that were of utmost importance from the Japanese point of view.

The peace treaty

Yoshino was disappointed the most by the peace treaty with Germany. At the end of the war he had emphasised that the Germans had yielded neither to military superior strength nor to economic distress but to the call of justice in the form of Wilson’s fourteen peace principles. Moreover, he had personally reassured the German people that they could rely on not being confronted with further demands that would surpass the limits of this justice.³⁵⁸ There will be hardly any need to mention that not many, neither inside nor outside Japan, subscribed to Yoshino’s analysis and reassurance and, accordingly, the demands levied against Germany at the conference were a lot more extensive than he had conjured. Yoshino was enraged with the “nationalistic politicians of England, France and Italy” for their “overly harsh demands on Germany”:

Their stand is egoistic and together with Wilson we strongly deplore that they have completely disjointed the original peace proposal. (...) They invariably treat

356 ‘Nanzo susunde sekai kaizō no mondai ni sanyo sezarū’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.12: p.373; ‘Kōwa kaigi ni taisuru kokumin no taido’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.3: pp.74-75.

357 Ibid.: pp.373-74; ‘Nan no ten ni kōwa tokushi no seihai wo ronzubeki’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.9: p.1.

358 ‘Senshō no dōtokuteki igi’. *Shinjin*, 1918.12: pp.6-7.

Germany as an enemy and try to make it suffer to such an extent that it will not be able to rise again. This attitude towards peace does not differ in any aspect from the age of militaristic competition and is completely incompatible with the spirit of the new age in which we are trying by hook or by crook to create a league of nations.³⁵⁹

He also pointed out the more pragmatic argument that, although the conservatives would never again rule Germany, 'the present moderately socialist cabinet' would remain unstable because of a lack of popular support if the peace conditions were not mitigated. However, his main objection was on principle; the demands on Germany were at complete loggerheads with the spirit of international cooperativism.³⁶⁰

Another Litmus test: the Shandong Question

The settlement of the former German rights on the Chinese peninsula of Shandong was definitely of secondary importance to the Western participants in the peace conference, but for the Japanese government it had top priority. It was the one and only issue the Japanese delegation constantly and actively lobbied for and in the end they even threatened to walk out of the conference if the issue was not resolved to their satisfaction.³⁶¹ Not surprisingly, it was of equal importance to China as well. The divided country made a combined effort to present its case to the war victors and even was even quite successful. Its comparatively young and Western educated delegates made a very favourable impression and succeeded in arraying the public opinion of most of the major Western powers behind its cause.³⁶² China needed this sort of indirect support because its bargaining position was considerably weaker than that of the Japanese. Although the Chinese demand for direct restitution of the German rights seemed to be most in line with the principle of ethnic national self-determination, the fact that it was a weak and internally divided country that had only joined the war at a late stage did not further its case. Its most vulnerable spot, though, was that it had bowed to Japan's Twenty-One Demands of May 1915 and signed several Sino-Japanese treaties, which included Chinese acquiescence to the conveyance of the German rights to Japan. The latter had consequently not lost any time and had traded further military and financial aid to its European allies in return for their support of its demands over Shandong at future peace negotiations.³⁶³

359 'Tai-Doku kōwa jōken no kakoku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.98.

360 'Doitsu no shōrai to kōwa no zento'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: pp.78-80; 'Rōdō fuan no sekaiteki ryūkō ni mesameyo'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.83.

361 See for instance Minister of Foreign Affairs Uchida Yasuya's instructions to the Japanese delegation in Paris. Gaimushō, ed., *Nihon gaikō monjo -Taishō hachi-nen daisansatsu jōkan*, Gaimushō, 1971: p.299.

362 Most effective in this aspect was Gu Weijun (Wellington Koo), who got his Ph. D. from Columbia University and spoke impeccable English. Thirty years old at the time of the Paris Peace Conference, he had already served for three years as the Chinese minister to the United States. From then on he served as the acceptable face of China (and after 1949 of Taiwan) to the West, for instance as representative at the League of Nations, plenipotentiary to the Washington Conference and the Chinese consultant travelling with the Lytton Commission.

363 The texts of the treaties with China and the secret agreements with the European allies can be found in Gaimushō, ed., *Nihon gaikō nenpyō narabi ni shuyō bunsho*, vol.1, Hara Shobō, 1965.

Although Yoshino had gradually shifted his position on the Twenty-One Demands and in March 1917 had voiced his first cautious critique, at the time he had not become so dogmatic as to reject the benefits that Japan was reaping from the related treaties. Accordingly he supported the government policy to secure the support of the allies for Japan's demands at the peace conference without taking any notice of Chinese protests.³⁶⁴ As I have already discussed, in the next two years Yoshino's attitude towards China softened even further and his emphasis on the future importance of China for Japan's economy became stronger and stronger. Whereas this on the one hand resulted in his design for a Sino-Japanese economic alliance based on mutual friendship and 'coexistence between sovereign partners', on the other hand it hardly seemed to produce any effect on his appraisal of the tainted Sino-Japanese treaties. When the Chinese delegates at the peace conference presented their main argument that these treaties had been forced upon them and thus were null and void he was not at all impressed. His first reaction was to express his dissatisfaction with the fact that "the Chinese all of a sudden (*yabu kara bō ni*) brought up their protest over the Shandong question at the Peace Conference", a misrepresentation of facts which is not to Yoshino's credit. Moreover, he labelled their endeavour a "mission impossible": he could not think of "anything so foolish as putting one's matrimonial quarrels to the judgement of complete outsiders". He advised them to "directly address themselves to Japan", which can hardly be called a realistic proposal when one considers the customary haughty attitude of the Japanese government to Chinese claims.³⁶⁵

Yoshino thus clearly had not changed his stand as far as the form of the Chinese protests was concerned, but more interesting to notice is that his critique of the content of their demands did not show much understanding of the Chinese case either. At first glance he seemed to flatly deny that the treaties had a coercive character; he formally took the stand that there had been and still was mutual agreement on the settlement of the Shandong question between the authorities concerned.³⁶⁶ And even if he was willing to give in on a minor point, such as the possibility that the treaties had been concluded with a central government that lacked the support of the Chinese people, this did not automatically mean that such a treaty was completely invalid. To say so was "against logic", "completely irrational" and "not in line with international law".³⁶⁷ At a public rally of the Reimeikai in Osaka Yoshino addressed the Shandong question and contended that:

I don't think one can argue that treaties that have been concluded in the former age of particularism (*kobetsushugi*) have absolute binding power. Of course this does not mean that all these treaties are invalid. They are only invalid to the extent that they conflict with cooperativism (*kyōdōshugi*) and comprehensivism (*hōkatsushugi*) (...) Now that Italy has taken Fiume the South Slavs have completely lost their exit to the outside world. If Italy recognises the position of

364 'Kitarubeki kōwa to Kōshūwan oyobi Nanyō shotō no shobun'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1917.3: pp.110-11.

365 'Shina mondai ni tsuite'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.4, 1919.6: p.54; 'Santō mondai'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.5, 1919.7: p.9.

366 'Santō mondai kaiketsu no sekaiteki haikai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: pp.88-90; 'Santō mondai'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.5, 1919.7: pp.7-9.

367 'Santō mondai no kyakkanteki kōsatsu'. *Kaikoku Kōron*, 1919.6.: p.12; 'Santō mondai'. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.5, 1919.7: p.7.

the South Slavs it is only natural that it concedes Fiume to them. Italy can do perfectly well without Fiume, but the South Slavs cannot. No matter what was said in a former treaty, if one considers the matter from the viewpoint of present day comprehensivism Italy must concede. However, the position of Japan towards Shandong and the position of Italy towards Fiume are of an entirely different character. Shandong belongs to our so-called established rights... (...) Japan's Shandong is in the first place different in nature from other occupied areas in the sense that the interests at stake are simple; other occupied areas are congested with all sorts of interests but in Shandong only Japanese interests exist and there are extremely few other interests. Besides, the Shandong question cannot be looked upon in the same way as other occupied areas since it is a *fait accompli* that has already been solved without any objection between the [two] countries concerned.³⁶⁸

If there was any “fuss” about the Shandong question the Japanese delegates had better “link it to Egypt”. Yoshino described Egypt as “a war trophy” with an uncontested special status and thus, for convenience sake, acted as if he had forgotten that Egypt had been an English protectorate since 1882 and thus was more similar to Taiwan, Korea or the leasehold in South Manchuria than the recently acquired Shandong.³⁶⁹ In short, Yoshino considered Japan's claims to Shandong to be truly justified and accordingly did not show any hesitation in expressing his great joy when the demands were fully recognised at the Paris Peace Conference.³⁷⁰

The irony of history is that Yoshino delivered this speech on the 4th of May 1919, the very day on which the students of the Chinese ‘liberal’ movement took to the streets of Beijing. Although he professed to support this May Fourth Movement as a fraternal movement that shared the aims of the Japanese reformers, he deliberately did not emphasise that the direct incentive to the movement had been the decision at the Paris Peace Conference to confer the German rights in Shandong to Japan. Even when the diffusion of the movement over the whole of China eventually led to the country's refusal to sign the peace treaty, he more or less chose to ignore the fact that the movement was to a considerable extent aimed against Japanese influence in China in general and the Japanese occupation of a fair part of Shandong in particular, a situation which the Japanese nation as a whole - both the ‘aggressive Japan’ of the military clique and the ‘peaceful Japan’ of the people - supported.

Why could the true opinion of the Chinese people that for the first time was able to manifest itself not be respected in this new age of cooperativism? Yoshino's stand that China's demands in the first place were not acceptable on formal grounds of laws and customs in international diplomacy is somewhat quaint for a man who usually tended to stress content over form and spirit over matter. Moreover, his discussion of the content of the Shandong question in relation to Fiume and Egypt was not very convincing either. It at least did not make clear why Japan was justified in putting aside the Chinese point of view. The passing remark that “on the grounds of future economic expansion into China, Japan cannot bear that its interests in

368 ‘Santō mondai’. *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.5, 1919.7: pp.25-28.

369 *Ibid.*: pp.27-29.

370 *Ibid.*: pp.1-3.

Shandong will be completely ignored” seems to hint at an entirely different set of motives behind his stand.³⁷¹ Anyhow, Yoshino’s argument that there was a clear distinction between sovereignty, which had to be restored to the Chinese, and rights, which would pass into Japanese hands, was rather technical and arbitrary and was definitely not the fair and clear-cut solution that would meet the approval of either Chinese or Western public opinion. Therefore, his attitude towards the Shandong question was very difficult to reconcile with his often repeated conviction that “the only way for Japan to expand economically in China is to capture the hearts of the Chinese people”. One rather gets the feeling that on behalf of this same economic expansion he was not yet willing to give in to the Chinese on issues of major interest.³⁷²

Summarising, it may be said that the weakest point of Yoshino’s argument is that he first comes up with a passionate tale of a new world order that from now on will be ruled by universal principles, but when it comes to the crunch he has no scruples whatsoever in dwelling extensively upon the special position of Shandong and even is so bold as to present completely particularistic economic arguments. In spite of the new awareness he professed to have gained, he was not yet able to act completely in line with ‘the universal trends of internationalism and pacifism’ and to do away with the benefits the Twenty-One Demands had bestowed upon Japan. Just like the European powers in the case of Germany, his own stand in the case of Shandong seems hardly to be in harmony with the three main peace principles of ‘no annexation, no war reparations, and ethnic national self-determination’ and it clearly did not breathe ‘the spirit of international cooperativism’.

The League of Nations

Yoshino’s evaluation of the peace treaty, partly positive but for the most part negative, was not decisive for his general judgement of the peace conference. Rather than to the peace treaty itself his attention was predominantly directed to the topic of the establishment of a league of nations. A formal settlement of the conditions for peace was inevitable but if this did not go hand in hand with a fundamental reform of ‘the general attitude towards international relations’ it would be merely a matter of time before war broke out again as a result of clashes of irreconcilable national interests. If the European War had proven one thing, he argued, then it was that there could be no everlasting peace on the basis of the balance of power system of yore, a non-institutionalised and immaterial mechanism which was expected to harmonise conflicting national interests in a ‘spontaneous’ way.³⁷³ During the war Yoshino had confirmed his opinion that the world definitely needed a strong international organisation to enforce peace and by the end of the war he was convinced that all citizens of the countries that had experienced the horror of modern warfare now shared this aim. As a result of the war a former utopia had become reality: “eternal peace is now the unshakable demand of all civilised peoples” and they had become aware that “to this end all countries of the world have to be united under one legal

371 ‘Santō mondai no kyakkanteki kōsatsu’. *Kaikoku Kōron*, 1919.6: p.14.

372 Ibid.: p.15; ‘Tai-Shi seisaku no teimei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.10: p.144.

373 ‘Heiwa no kiun wo sokushin shitsutsu aru san-daigensoku’. *Shinjin*, 1918.2, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.5: pp.286, 291.

system” under the control of “a great league of nations” that would function as “a peace enforcing alliance”.³⁷⁴

Yet Yoshino knew that such a new multilateral and supra-national system of peacekeeping, in the same way as the national system of the state, could not be perpetually enforced merely by military force. The real power of international sanctions was determined by the extent of international interdependency, which Yoshino thought consisted of “the two fundamental preconditions of material economic relations and immaterial mutual feelings of sympathy”. Notwithstanding the fact that the First World War had quite emphatically debunked the identical argument by Norman Angell, as far as the first factor of economic interdependency was concerned Yoshino had from an early stage been quite optimistic. He was convinced that in economic terms the present state was no longer the nation state of yore and economic relations had already surpassed the scope of the state and would increasingly continue to do so. There remained the second factor of mutual sympathy or, in Yoshino’s vocabulary, “the awareness that we all are members of mankind and children of God”. On this topic he had to rely on less tangible and measurable quantities such as ‘the virtue of man’, ‘the social instinct of the human animal’ and ‘the international morality of the people’, but he was convinced that in the end, as a result of the lessons of the war and the ever ongoing progress of human civilisation, “the force of international opinion will ensure that international justice is obeyed”.³⁷⁵ Since Yoshino thus stressed the importance of a strong psychological foundation in the case of new multilateral forms of upholding international relations, he was aware from the very beginning that the coming into operation of an institution like the League of Nations would be a long-term process. Mankind could not be expected to change its way of thinking overnight. This is why a year before the convention of the Paris Peace Conference he wrote:

It is unrealistic to think a strong international organisation to enforce peace will come about immediately. (...) We will have to support the first few imperfect attempts as well.³⁷⁶

We should interpret Yoshino’s reaction to the peace conference in the same vein. Although the overall result of the peace conference did not live up to the extremely high expectations he had time and again expressed, he was able to make a distinction between long-term and short-term goals. For the moment Yoshino was already more than content that the League of Nations had come into being. He had pragmatically resigned himself to the fact that an international alliance would inevitably be imperfect in the beginning and that it was vain to hope for immediate success but, as he mentioned at the end of the war, its mere materialisation would be proof of “the fact that the people have become aware of the need for international trust and cooperation instead of national military strength” and thus would imply “a formerly unimaginable progress of mankind”.³⁷⁷

374 ‘Ōshū daisensō-go no shinkeisei’. *Jitsugyō no Nihon*, 1918.1: pp.32-33; ‘Kōkyū heiwa no jitsugen to Kirisuto-kyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1918.10: p.10.

375 ‘Kōkyū heiwa no jitsugen to Kirisuto-kyō no shimei’. *Shinjin*, 1918.10: pp.12-15; ‘Kokusai renmei wa kanō nari’. *Rikugō Zasshi*, 1919.1: pp.130-32.

376 ‘Ōshū daisensō-go no shinkeisei’. *Jitsugyō no Nihon*, 1918.1: pp.33-34.

377 ‘Guree-kyō no kokusai dōmeiron wo yomu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.7: p.62.

Besides, when considering his attitude in the Shandong question, it is clear that Yoshino did not have any revolutionary intentions to overthrow the international status quo at one go but as usual adhered to gradual progress. This does not mean that he did not look with sorrow on how, in contravention to ‘the spirit of the League of Nations’, the United States opportunistically demanded that the Monroe doctrine be included in its charter and “the nationalistic politicians of England, France and Italy distorted the League further and further”.³⁷⁸ Nevertheless, in the end he considered the latter two countries the main culprits and tended to look upon the former two countries, in spite of their minor fallacies, as the most prominent representatives of the new international spirit, an honour which Yoshino’s motherland was not allowed to share since, he criticised, it had merely been a passive spectator and had completely failed to make even the slightest contribution to the ideal of world reform.³⁷⁹ Therefore, in sharp contrast to many other Japanese reformers Yoshino hardly showed any serious signs of frustration and seemed to be rather satisfied with ‘the great conference of world reform’ and more than willing to support what Konoe Fumimaro had disapprovingly termed ‘pacifism on Anglo-American terms’ (*Ei-Bei honi no heiwashugi*).³⁸⁰

Discovery of the Proletariat

Moral support for the pacifist world trend: the common people as the new agent of change

There was another reason why Yoshino was able to remain optimistic in spite of the somewhat disappointing results of the Paris Peace Conference. The year 1918 in Japan was chiefly marked by various large-scale protests of the lower strata of Japanese society against their social plight in the form of the Rice Riots of August, a sharp rise in the number of labour and tenancy disputes, and the rapidly increasing number of workers being organised in labour unions.³⁸¹ The direct impact of this manifestation of the force of the common people was unprecedentedly strong: the transcendental cabinet of army general Terauchi Masatake had to resign and the *genrō* saw themselves forced to recommend Seiyūkai leader Hara Takashi as his successor, thus creating Japan’s first true party cabinet. Moreover, whereas those in power had not been terribly concerned about the plight of the people, even an archconservative politician

378 ‘Jinshu mondai to Nichi-Bei kankei’. *Kaikoku Kōron*, 1919.5: p.11; ‘Tai-Doku kōwa jōken no kakoku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.98.

379 ‘Nan no ten ni kōwa tokushi no seihai wo ronzubeki’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.9: p.1.

380 Konoe Fumimaro, ‘Eibei hon’i no heiwashugi wo haisu’. *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*, 1918.12.15: pp.23-26. One had better not use an often-cited reprint of this famous article in a compilation of Konoe’s articles and speeches, *Konoe Fumimaro seidanroku*, Chikura Shobō, 1936, since it is rife with misprints. A recent and faultless reprint can be found in Kitaoka Shinichi, ed., *Sengo Nihon gaikō ronshū*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1995: pp.47-52.

381 The standard treatment of the Rice Riots is Inoue Kiyoshi & Watanabe Tōru, eds., *Kome sōdō no kenkyū*, Yūhikaku, 5 vols., 1959-1962. On the growth of the labour unions and the rise in labour and tenancy disputes, see Stephen S. Large, *The Rise of Labor in Japan: The Yūaikai, 1912-1919*, Sophia University, 1972; Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, University of California Press, 1991 and Ann Waswo, *Japanese Landlords: The Decline of a Rural Elite*, University of California Press, 1977.

like Yamagata Aritomo was now urging the government to make sure first of all that the people had enough rice to eat.³⁸²

Yoshino was equally impressed by the sudden force of the populace, but unlike Yamagata's measures to contain it he concentrated on measures to promote it. Although it is true that he had always publicly expressed his hopes that the common people would become the driving force of political, social and cultural progress, when one considers his frequent mention of their uncivilisedness and ignorance it is evident that up till then he had not thought the moment to be near at hand. He emphasised rather the incredibly heavy social responsibility of the intelligentsia and, in particular, the Christians amongst them, whom he considered most adapted to the new age of internationalism and pacifism.³⁸³ But the national events of 1918 and the postwar international socio-political currents opened Yoshino's eyes to the irrefutably increased potential of the people as an active social and political force; it was their outburst in protest which had directly resulted in the political progress from transcendental cabinets (*chōzen naikaku*) predominantly manned by bureaucrats and members of the House of Peers to cabinets responsible to the people and their representatives in parliament (*sekinin naikaku*) and predominantly manned by party politicians. What was the sense of relying any longer on an insignificant minority of Christian intellectuals to realise one's ideals when the majority of the people was already rising against the common enemy? Thus Yoshino shifted his focus to the common people as the main medium of change in both national and international society.

A result of Yoshino's change of focus was that he started to depict Japan as a fundamentally divided country. On the one hand, there was now the good 'peaceful Japan' (*heiwa no Nihon*) represented by the people, and on the other hand there was the evil 'aggressive Japan' (*shinryaku no Nihon*) of the small but influential bureaucratic, military and financial cliques (*kanryō gunbatsu naishi zaibatsu*).³⁸⁴ Whereas Yoshino used to criticise his people for their complete ignorance of moral principles in international matters, he was suddenly willing to forgive and to include them in 'the good and peaceful Japan', thus making it into an overwhelming majority. He pointed out that "it cannot be denied that in their ignorance the Japanese people have come to support aggressive policies, but by nature they are not an aggressive people". From this assessment it was only a small and logical step to say that Japan's somewhat disputable actions against its neighbours, which had increasingly come under international scrutiny, had merely been "a temporary aberration", originating in "the historical circumstance of foreign pressure and according priority to national defence" and, last but not least, in "the influence of the military clique".³⁸⁵ Moreover, in contrast to 'the bourgeoisie', whom he accused of a distrusting view of international society, 'the common people' were endowed with a humanitarian view of international society. Accordingly, he proclaimed the latter 'the force of the future' and predicted that they would bring about international justice and world peace.³⁸⁶ It will be clear that these lines of argument were rather simple and produced a

382 There seem to have been hardly any meetings between Hara and Yamagata during the first year of Hara's premiership in which Yamagata did not raise the issues of the rice price, the import of rice and the general food problem. Hara Keiichirō, comp., *Hara Takashi Nikki*, vol.5, Fukumura Shuppan, 1965.

383 'Kōkyū heiwa no jitsugen to Kirisuto-kyō no shimei'. *Shinjin*, 1918.12, p.16.

384 'Pekin gakusei no kōdō wo manba suru nakare'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.1.

385 'Shina, Chōsen no hai-Nichi to waga kokumin no hansei'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1919.8: pp.110-12.

386 'Kokusai renmei to minshū no yoron'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: p.72.

black-and-white picture that no academic could be proud of. However, scholarly acclaim was not on Yoshino's mind in his haste to reach his conclusion. A more detailed and probably bleaker picture of Japan's imperialist roots was sacrificed on behalf of his message that, in imitation of the European example, the Japanese people might also be heading back on the non-aggressive track, away from militarist influence, and in the near future would voice their "labour class demands", which would "more and more challenge imperialism". As a result they would become part of the international labour movement, which Yoshino characterised as a "universal movement looking for global solutions to labour class problems", and he raised the example of international labour class action against the harsh peace conditions levied against Germany and the armed intervention in Russia.³⁸⁷ Yoshino thus depicted a very simplified view of modern society, made up of an internationalist labour class that was horizontally connected with its comrades all over the (civilised) world, and a militarist ruling class that was blindly sticking its head vertically deep into the national territory.

The redefinition and separation of state and society

From the above it will be clear that simultaneously with his view of international society Yoshino had significantly changed his view of the state and national society as well. His erstwhile view of society as a collective consisting of a homogeneous nation that had an organic and harmonious relation with the state, which was no more than the people's own institution of political rule, had come under increasing pressure over the years of social turmoil that resulted in the general upheaval of 1918 and 1919. It became quite impossible to deny any longer the existence of a pluralistic society plagued by class struggle. In Japan's polarising society it was time to show one's true colours and so Yoshino did.

Not surprisingly he once again supported society (the whole) over the state (the part), with the significant difference that he now identified the entities 'society' and 'the people' more or less with the propertyless class (*musan kaikyū*) or labour class (*rōdō kaikyū*). Since the proletariat made up the major part of society, he argued, it would, under normal democratic circumstances, only be natural for the members of this class to exercise political rule. However, with general suffrage still not being implemented the representatives of this class of 'have-nots' were completely absent from both parliament and cabinet and the rule by an elite minority of 'haves' continued. Within this framework Yoshino no longer looked upon the whole set of state organs as a natural extension of society, but much rather as a 'coercive construction' (*kyōseitēki soshiki*), a mere instrument in the hands of the bourgeois ruling class (*būrujoajū kaikyū*) which seemed to function mainly in order to suppress the people.³⁸⁸

One of the first things which is conspicuous in Yoshino's revised characterisation of the Japanese state and society and their interrelation is of course the sudden proliferation of socialist vocabulary. Yoshino was not a socialist and although he was to a considerable extent

387 'Rōdō fuan no sekaiteki ryūkō ni mesameyo'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: pp.82-83; 'Doitsu no shōrai to kōwa no zento'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: p.80; 'Kokusai renmei to minshū no yoron'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: p.72.

388 'Seijigaku no kakushin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1: pp.237-38; 'Kokkateki seishin to wa nanzo ya'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.3: p.69. For a detailed and somewhat different analysis of Yoshino's 'discovery of society', see Iida Taizō's 'Nashionaru demokuratto to [shakai no hakken]' in his *Hihan seishin no kōseki*, Chikuma Shobō, 1997: pp.194-221.

sympathetic to their goals in this period he was still very careful to steer clear of any public connection with them. For instance, the first thing he and Fukuda Tokuzō decided was not to allow any socialists in their Reimeikai.³⁸⁹ Nevertheless, even if one could still succeed relatively easily in not becoming directly involved with any prominent socialists, it was very hard to avoid not being ‘tainted’ by the overwhelming influence of socialist vocabulary in the immediate postwar period. The discourse on national and international reform was suddenly performed on the basis of such new concepts as class, bourgeoisie and proletariat which presupposed a fundamentally divided society. Even if one had second thoughts about making such distinctions, one was more or less forced to adopt these concepts in order to continue to partake in the debate. Accordingly Yoshino had to discard his former broad definition of the state as ‘the national community’ in favour of the narrow definition of the state as a ‘coercive authority’. In the footsteps of Hasegawa Nyozeikan, who incidentally had been rejected as a member of the Reimeikai, he now pointed at the gap which had developed between state and society and like many other intellectuals urged the need for the socialisation of the state (*kokka no shakaika*) in order to bridge this once again.³⁹⁰ However, in contrast to Hasegawa he mainly defined this process of socialisation in political terms and as such it was in essence not that different from his earlier advocacy of further democratisation. And although he presented a new form of ‘*minponshugi*’, in which he expressed in plain terms his support for the overthrow of capitalism and recognised the (numerical) superiority of the proletariat, his support was as ever circumscribed by his insistence on a form of social harmony that hardly had a socialist character. Whether it was ruled effectively by the proletariat or not, society had to be most of all an organic system which included all social classes.³⁹¹

The modification of the position of the intelligentsia

The fact that the common people had suddenly taken over centre stage implied that the position of the intelligentsia had to be redefined. Many of the intellectual class, especially those strongly influenced by socialist theory, became increasingly tormented by the dilemma of how to justify their erstwhile elevated position as the moral leaders of the people in a situation where they no longer belonged to the socio-economic class that formed the core of the nation. The only way out of this moral problem seemed to be to exert themselves to nullify their own position by uplifting the people. In contrast to his socialist contemporaries, Yoshino showed comparatively few symptoms of this identity crisis of the social-minded intellectual. As always, he emphasised the mission of a wise and moral elite and he was definitely not willing to contribute to the demise of the class of intelligentsia to which he himself felt so strongly attached. This, for instance, is also evident from Yoshino’s ‘ideal village’ project, a hot spring resort that was only open to the

389 Matsuo Takayoshi, *Taishō demokurashii*, Iwanami Shoten, 1974: pp.164-71.

390 Hasegawa’s articles on the need to socialise the state can be found in his famous *Gendai kokka hihan*, Kōbundō Shobō, Kyōto, 1921. For a discussion of this work and its co-volume *Gendai shakai hihan*, see Andrew E. Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan - The Public Man in Crisis*, University of California Press, 1988: pp.163-81.

391 ‘Minponshugi, shakaishugi, kagekishugi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6: p.28; ‘Rōdō undō ni taisuru yo no taido’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.11: p.86.

happy, enlightened few.³⁹² Even though he now theoretically ranked the proletariat as the main medium for change it is not hard to see that he was still not all that confident. He toned down his remarks which made light of the wisdom of the Japanese common people somewhat, but never completely. The following are two blunt examples from the immediate postwar period:

I do not respect most of my Japanese brothers. However, I love them sincerely. Because I love them, I pray that they become worthy of respect.³⁹³

One cannot compare the ignorant Japanese labourers to their European and American counterparts, (...) who have already become self-aware and independent persons.³⁹⁴

Thus it will come as no surprise that Yoshino was of the opinion that the intelligentsia, as before, shouldered the heavy responsibility of leading the process of social and political development:

It is irresponsible for the lower classes to topple the ruling class just because they are the lower classes. Just toppling the upper classes because they consider them inconvenient is not sufficient; they must also shoulder the responsibility of managing society. It is alright for the labour movement to advocate merely the rights of the labour class, but if it wants to contribute its share to the harmonious and sound development of society, it has to bring the advocacy of the rights of the labour class in line with the goal of the whole of state and society. As long as the labourers have not developed their views to the extent that they can do so unerringly, it remains the task of the intelligentsia (*shikisha*) to lead them in the right direction. (...) I hope many refined and cultivated men are willing to sacrifice themselves by mingling with the lower classes, and becoming their humble friend and servant (*ekishi*).³⁹⁵

Nevertheless, in reaction to the sharply increased political prominence of the proletariat Yoshino did apply a subtle modification to the social role the class of intellectuals in his opinion had to play. Although he still thought it inevitable that the intelligentsia join the organisations of the people such as the labour movement, which in principle had to consist strictly of workers only, he no longer considered it desirable that the intelligentsia should formally head the reform movement. They should not cling to positions such as trade union leader and invite internal division, like Suzuki Bunji in the case of the Dai-Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei Yūaikai. Instead they

392 Yoshino commented that in order to create an ideal village not troubled by the bad customs of the usual villa resort “(...) we have to select the people. Moreover, since it is a nuisance if strange elements would come and live in the vicinity of our villas, we are planning to buy up all the land (...)”. ‘Iwayuru [watakushidomo no risōkyō]’. *Kaizō*, 1921.7: p.6. This village was located near Hatage, on the Izu peninsula. See also Tazawa Haruko, *Yoshino Sakuzō*, Minerva Shobō, 2006: pp.172-75.

393 ‘Gaikō seisaku no sekaiteki kiso’. *Shinjin*, 1919.5: p.7.

394 ‘Rōdō fuan no sekaiteki ryūkō ni mesameyo’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: pp.82-83.

395 ‘Kasō kaikyū no sekinin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.8: p.105. Whereas in the Chinese classics the phrase ‘ekishi’ is often used in the sense of having the common people work as slaves for the wise, Yoshino in his use of the phrase turns this former relation completely upside down.

should emulate the example of Kagawa Toyohiko who handed over the baton of the labour movement in the Kansai region to the ‘true representatives of the people’ and withdrew from the limelight, although he of course remained active trying to give ‘proper guidance’ from the wings.³⁹⁶ Thus the character of the intellectual as the servant of the people gained weight over his status as the leader of the people. He had to continue to give directions, but no longer from above (to lead) but from aside (to guide), from a slightly detached position. He was still very much concerned, but a little less directly involved. The intellectual had to be like an experienced and wise teacher (*senkakusha*) or, even more, like a self-renouncing parent: his vocation was to altruistically help his still uneducated children to determine and formulate their real needs, but it was at this elementary stage that his direct ‘interference’ in their reform movement was to end.³⁹⁷

Another argument Yoshino from this time onward very often put forward was that he thought the intellectual had to remain completely independent in order to continue his task of critically guiding the popular forces in a sound direction. The more the intellectual became directly involved in the people’s reform movement, the less he would be able to intervene when necessary. The reason Yoshino began to stress this point was the undeniable radicalisation of the various popular forces. Socialist and communist influences were gradually gaining the upper hand in the labour movement and even in the reform societies Yoshino had helped to establish, such as the Reimeikai and the Shinjinkai.³⁹⁸ Although it is clear this was a development he deeply regretted, he did not know immediately how to counter these forces. Yoshino more or less opted for a wait-and-see policy by promoting a position of the intellectual on the sideline, as a sympathetic but also a neutral outsider. ‘Sympathetic’ because he shared the main goals of the socialists and even of anarchists and communists, but ‘neutral’ because he did not want to become implicated in their ‘radical’ means.³⁹⁹ He had resigned himself to the fact that the thorough implementation of political democracy would result in the rule of the proletariat and he was not loath to admit that socialism, in the form of the topic of social policy, had from the very start occupied a natural place within the democratisation movement. Nevertheless, there was

396 ‘Rōdō undō ni taisuru yo no taido’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.11: p.88; ‘Puroretariaato no senseiteki keikō ni taisuru chishiki kaikyū no kansō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: p.69. According to Kawamura Matasuke Yoshino had by the year of 1920 realised that it was no longer the age of Suzuki Bunji but the age of Asoo Hisashi and Tanahashi Kotori. *Sekai* 112 (1955); p.106.

397 ‘Shakai to shūkyō’ *Shinjin*, 1921.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: p.205.

398 Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974: pp.30-34; Henry Dewitt Smith II, *Japan’s First Student Radicals*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1972: pp.96-126; Itō Takashi, *Taishō-ki [Kakushin]-ha no seiritsu*, Hanawa Shobō, 1978: pp.13-89.

399 Yoshino once said that in the immediate postwar period he had considered it his task to take the political views of the people from Marx to Kropotkin and eventually to Tolstoy. ‘Kuropotokin no shisō to kenkyū’. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1920.1.16, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1: p.243. Concerning anarchism, Yoshino made a distinction between nihilistic ‘negative anarchism’ (*shōkyokuteki anākizumu*), merely aimed at destruction of the present order, and ‘positive anarchism’ (*sekkyokuteki anākizumu*), the object of which lay beyond destruction in the creation of a new order. He moreover emphasized that this latter form of anarchism was not just another European import but had its roots in Asia as well, namely in the Daoist classic *Zhungzi*. Although this work by the philosopher Zhungzhou from the middle of the warring states period only pops up a few times in Yoshino’s writings of the early 1920s, he does mention the *Zhungzi* instead of something by Kant in a Chūō Kōron enquete of 1924 as the work that influenced him most. See ‘Tōyō no ichi anākizumu’. In Komatsu Kensuke, ed., *Shin-Nihon no kensetsu*, Iwanami Shoten, 1922: pp.105-34 and Iida Taizō, *Hihan seishin no kōseki*, Chikuma Shobō, 1997, pp.201-04.

never any doubt that his *minponshugi* was not to be a class movement but a movement of the whole of society. Democrats (*minponshugisha*) could be socialists or communists but definitely not radicals. As long as their 'ism' was of the non-revolutionary 'parliamentarist' variety and aimed at bringing about proletarian rule gradually through the introduction of general suffrage and the establishment of proletarian parties - thus not establishing the dictatorship but merely the rule of the proletariat and not eradicating but merely subjugating the capitalist class - Yoshino was willing to support their cause.⁴⁰⁰

Within this framework Yoshino considered it the most important task of the intelligentsia to moderate the excesses of the popular reform movement and to uphold some form of unity between the social classes:

The fact that I advocate humanitarianism does not mean that I side with the disguised egotism of the capitalists nor that I call upon the labourers to observe non-resistance like Tolstoy. (...) On the contrary, precisely because I have great sympathy for the labour movement I advocate humanitarianism in order to keep it on the safe and right track. Thus my humanitarianism transcends particular class interests and is advocated from a higher, universal plan. (...) My humanitarianism implies that I am neither the ally of the capitalists nor necessarily the ally of the workers. Because I try to side with all the righteous, in general I am the ally of the workers, but when I fear that the labour movement strays from the right track I will not refrain from opposition. Similarly, I do not hesitate to state publicly that in general I am an enemy of the capitalists, but neither am I loath to side with them if they are right. (...) Injustice is my enemy, justice is my ally. Present day capitalism is unjust and therefore I have no mercy whatsoever as far as its eradication is concerned. (...) However, one should not confuse antipathy against capitalism with antipathy against capitalists, which is like throwing out the baby with the bathwater.⁴⁰¹

Although Yoshino thus seemed to consider himself to be a strong ally of the labour movement, the fact that his support was not unconditional was interpreted by many in the socialist camp as a clear sign with which camp his true sympathies lay. They denounced him as a slave of the capitalist class, or in later years of fascism, since they thought his 'humanitarian stand' was in effect merely helping to suppress the proletarian movement.⁴⁰² However, rather than as a capitalist dog, Yoshino, a self-professed member of the intellectual class, preferred to look upon himself as a doctor of society. From this period of social unrest onward he often used to compare the relation between the intellectual and the people with the relation between the doctor and the patient. Reflecting his awareness that the people had assumed the centre of political legitimacy, he argued that the doctor should not sit on the chair of the patient who after all knew best where

400 'Minponshugi, shakaishugi, kagekishugi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.6, pp.28-29, 33-34.

401 'Rōdō undō ni taisuru yo no taidō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.11, pp.85-86.

402 Ibid.: pp.84-85. In this article Yoshino cites the criticism of Sakaguchi Kiichi in his 'Yoshino Hakase ni teisu', which was published in the October 1919 issue of Ōyama Ikuo and Hasegawa Nyozeikan's mouthpiece *Warera*. This latter article was a reaction to Yoshino's 'Rōdō undō no jindōshugiteki shidō' in the special 'Labour Problem' issue of *Chūō Kōron* of July 1919.

it hurt, but that the doctor nonetheless was still the one who knew best how to cure. In the same vein, the intellectual, through his wisdom, experience, moral superiority, compassion and neutral position, was fully legitimised to continue to guide the movement of the labour class within humanitarian channels.⁴⁰³

3.4 Summary: Victory of Reason

Although not all of the above-mentioned events in the period 1917-1919, which shook the established national and international order, seem to have contributed equally to the diffusion of Yoshino's 'universal trends of pacifism and internationalism', on the whole he was quite optimistic. At the beginning of 1920 he looked back and made specific mention of what he thought were the three major issues of the year which had just come to an end. Not surprisingly he ranked the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Versailles and the establishment of the League of Nations first, followed in second place by the international advance of the labour movement and in third place by the anti-Japanese and national independence movements in respectively China and Korea. However, these were not mere political events to Yoshino. He depicted all of them as part of an all-encompassing struggle between light and darkness and reassuringly remarked: "Although we had to compromise here and there, did light not win over darkness eventually?". From his point of view the world could set its mind at rest since the victory of reason (*dōri*) was only a matter of time.⁴⁰⁴

403 A concise summary of the 'intellectual as the doctor of society' argument can be found in 'Shakai hyōron zatsudan - kakujin no riei wa kakujin mottomo yoku kore wo shiru', *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12, pp.230-31.

404 'Heiwa kokufuku no dai-issun'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1, p.1.

4 YOSHINO AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AMERICAN DOMINANCE IN EAST ASIA; 1919-1926

4.1 The First Instances of Japanese Retreat in the Face of American Power

In the previous chapter we have seen that in 1919 Yoshino was very reluctant to give in to China's demands concerning Shandong. However, at the same time he curiously enough did not raise any objection to the proposal by the United States for the establishment of a new Four Power Loan Consortium for China, an endeavour that on the one hand would imply a considerable sacrifice of Japanese rights and prerogatives in China while on the other hand it was still vague what Japan stood to gain from it. Instead he argued large-heartedly that China's interests were of primary importance and accordingly the main consideration should be whether China needed the consortium or not. On the basis of his judgement that China was not yet a modern state where free competition was doing its beneficial work he decided that for the time being the consortium was essential for the country.⁴⁰⁵

The fact that in the case of the consortium the threat to Japan's position in China came in the form of a proposal to join the honourable cause of a united effort to help 'the weak giant' - about which China itself, incidentally, was not even consulted - and not in the form of an outright demand to clear out made a considerable difference. Needless to say, this 'format' was much more in line with Yoshino's brand of international cooperativism. Still, the factor that probably carried most weight was that the new consortium was an American proposal. Whereas in the case of the Shandong question Yoshino's refusal was not only based on the 'universalist' argument of breaches of international law and precedence but had also been adorned with particularistic economic arguments, in the case of the consortium he all of a sudden remonstrated that Japan was not to demand an exceptional position for its rights in Manchuria. He criticised the line of action his government had taken by saying that "in this new age, it would have been better if we had joined the consortium without making any reservations". As usual he paraded his hobby horses that Japan should not merely aim at Manchuria but at the whole of China and that it also had to bare in mind the general opinion of the Chinese people, but his main argument was that the exemption of Manchuria from the range of the consortium was "an act of excessive greed unworthy of a great nation".⁴⁰⁶ Yoshino forgot to give a clear definition of what it meant 'to act as a great nation', but it is clear that in the case of Japan this did not so much comprise listening to the demands of the Chinese people as acting in line with the other 'great nations'. Just as prime minister Hara Takashi had realised that there was no other choice but to gauge Japan's postwar diplomacy on the United States (and to a lesser extent on England) and by January 1920 had conceded to the American demands on the consortium issue⁴⁰⁷, for Yoshino this was also the

405 'Tai-Shi shakkandan kanyū no zehi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.8: p.106. It is interesting to see that the economist Horie Kiichi estimated the chances of free competition in China rather differently and accordingly argued against the new consortium as being not in line with China's interests. Horie Kiichi, 'Tai-Shi shakkandan mondai to Nisshi keizai kankei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.7: pp.24-31.

406 'Manmō jogairon wo haisu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.9: p.225.

407 Mitani Taichirō, '[Tenkanki] (1918-1921nen) no gaikō shidō - Hara Takashi oyobi Tanaka Giichi wo chūshin to shite', in Shinohara Hajime & Mitani Taichirō, eds, *Kindai Nihon no seiji shidō - Seijika kenkyū II*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965: pp.358-68. Hirano Kenichirō, 'Nishihara shakkan kara

first instance of acknowledging America's political hegemony - on top of its moral hegemony - in the postwar world order.

Yoshino's almost complete subjugation to the dominance of the United States was most obvious at the time of the so-called 'Yap Question'. Yap is an island in the Caroline archipelago which had been part of the German colonial empire since 1899 and was occupied by the Japanese navy in 1914 within the framework of the Allied war effort. Under the Peace Treaty of Versailles the island was made into a mandatory territory, entrusted by the League of Nations to the rule of Japan. However, since Yap was of specific strategic interest because it functioned as a relay station for three transoceanic cables, some powers in the region were not at ease with the de facto Japanese seizure of the island. These included the Netherlands, China, and, most of all, the United States, which in October 1920 publicly claimed that Yap was exempted from the Japanese mandate over the Micronesian islands. The United States had not ratified and thus formally was not bound to the Versailles Peace Treaty, but its position was rather weak since it had not made any reservations either at the peace negotiations or on any later occasion. Nevertheless, in April 1921 it demanded Japan give it equal rights as far as Yap was concerned on the basis of the American right as an ally in the war victory. It goes without saying that the basis of the arguments was arbitrary and, moreover, was at odds with international jurisprudence and usage.⁴⁰⁸ Yoshino, however, did not simply turn the American demands down on legal grounds, as he had done so often in the case of Chinese demands, but instead suggested full compliance:

Japan's arguments are too legalistic. (...) America's real intention is the international management of the communication facilities. They do not care who rules Yap as long as this one point is settled. (...) Although Japan is within its right on legal grounds, the United States has the moral support of the people of the world on its side. (...) They do not want the management of international communication facilities under the selfish control of the Japanese. (...) Japan stands to lose nothing by giving in to the rational American demands. (...) Doing so can help us in easing the anti-Japanese movement in the United States and the general distrust towards us all over the world. And at the same time we can help to establish the rule that civilised nations should sacrifice particular egoistic demands on behalf of international principles. Thus we might also be able to break the Anglo-Saxon bigoted policy of a 'White Australia' and the closed-door policy against Asian immigrants in India and South Africa. (...) Seen from this point of view the Yap Question is not a nuisance but rather a rare opportunity.⁴⁰⁹

shin-shikoku shakkandan he', in Hosoya Chihiro & Saitō Makoto, eds, *Washington taisei to Nichi-Bei kankei*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978: pp.306-12.

408 On the 'Yap Controversy' between Japan and the United States, see Sumitra Rattan, 'The Yap Controversy and its Significance', *Journal of Pacific History*, no.7 (1972): pp.124-36 and Mark R. Peattie, *Nanyō: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1895-1945*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1988: pp.57-60.

409 'Yappu-tō mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.5, pp.68-71.

It will not be easy to find any other opinion leader who was so bold as to give such an optimistic and idealistic twist to a matter which from beginning to end amounted to a complete humiliation of Japan. Although this is something I cannot yet verify, I find it difficult to fight the impression that Yoshino's stand on this issue and similar issues probably cost him the support of a considerable part of his moderate reading public, which ever since Japan's glorious role in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 had continued to think of Japan as some sort of 'great power' (*taikoku*) and was less eager to bow down to the sometimes arrogant behaviour of the new world leader. In any case, it is hard to conceive that there were many who attributed the United States with moral qualities to the same extent as Yoshino did and who were willing to explain away even the most blatant excesses in its foreign policy, such as the Yap Question.

4.2 Continued Recognition of American Moral Superiority and Japanese Inferiority

The fact that Woodrow Wilson, who in Yoshino's eyes figured as the living proof of America's moral superiority, saw his invention of the League of Nations turned down not by the European allies but by his own Congress and subsequently disappeared from the political scene must have been a bitter pill for Yoshino to swallow. In a very rare uncontrolled outburst of resentment he accredited the shift in political power from the Democrats to the Republicans to "the support of indignant German, Italian and Irish members of the American population".⁴¹⁰ However, in general he did not show his disappointment and invariably expressed his unconditional trust in the American people. Although he admitted that the present strong great power was no longer the land of justice as symbolised by George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, he thought it was a mistake to look upon the United States as Japan's enemy. He also rejected the common characterisation in Japan of America's foreign policy as 'arrogant' and 'blind to the interests of others':

One striking characteristic of the American attitude towards the outer world is that their viewpoint is always very global. The spirit at the time of the foundation of the state was to offer the oppressed of this world a land of freedom. Therefore, the people lack the notion of being an ethnic nation (*minzoku*). (...) Their ideal is to manage the United States on behalf of the people of the world.⁴¹¹

It will be abundantly clear that this line of argument was at loggerheads with well-known exclusionist constants in American policy such as the Monroe-doctrine and the limitation or prohibition of immigrants from Asia. Yoshino tried to stay ahead of the anticipated criticism by stating that the original aim of the Monroe-doctrine was not to oust foreign interference, and that the anti-Japanese legislation was definitely not founded on racism. Both were merely 'inevitable temporary measures to protect the more fundamental ideal of freedom'. He did concede that the policy of Monroe-ism in recent times had run somewhat astray from its original objective, but that was as far as he was willing to give in, because he was adamant that "the fundamental American spirit of cosmopolitanism is in a constant struggle with Monroe-ism and will not

410 'Haadingu seikō no yōin'. *Kokka Gakka Zasshi*, 1921.6, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6: p.162.

411 'Beikoku no sekai seisaku kōsei no shu-yōso'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.6: p.88.

permit its rampancy any more than strictly necessary” and he had absolutely no doubts about “the fact that Monroe-ism will gradually be purified by cosmopolitanism”. In his eyes the selfless participation of the United States in the Great European War was more than sufficient proof that it was not he who mistook the true nature of the Americans.⁴¹² As for the immigration question, Yoshino did not change his prewar stand that Japan was most to blame for the crisis in the American-Japanese relations, regardless of the increasing ruthlessness of the American anti-Japanese measures, such as the second Californian prohibition of 1920 for Japanese settlers to own land which even Yoshino had to characterise as “somewhat over the top”.⁴¹³ In short, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that whatever the country was up to, he tended to back it up, claiming that, although measures taken by the United States government at first sight might from time to time seem arbitrary and high-handed, the actions of the American people were as always motivated by just arguments.⁴¹⁴

Even in case of the American refusal to join the League of Nations, which had been a serious blow from an unexpected direction to Yoshino’s optimistic interpretation of the postwar world, he came in due course to understand this fully:

Why did the United States take such an extremely passive attitude in the case of the League of Nations? (...) This is a question one has to study with the utmost care, but in my opinion the solution is that the American common people are touched by the true spirit of the League of Nations. In other words, precisely because they grasp the true spirit of the League of Nations and endeavour to make it come true, they are opposed to the present League of Nations (...) The American position is that they do not wish to join a League operated by a bunch of insincere countries and to be manipulated by Britain and France into shouldering the obligation of a military intervention. Thus we are confronted with the curious situation that those who lack sincerity in their support for world peace such as Britain and France have become advocates of the League of Nations, and the sincere United States stands on the side of its opponents. (...) Monroe-ism is merely a pragmatic excuse they have hit upon in order to oppose it under the present circumstances.⁴¹⁵

Once again Yoshino seemed to be willing to explain everything away by means of his exceptionally virtuous interpretation of America: not as a nationalist and isolationist country but as a through and through cosmopolitan and big-hearted nation. Just as hard to digest was his contention, for reasons not altogether clear, that this cosmopolitan attitude had become even more evident under the new Republican administration of Warren G. Harding than during the reign of Woodrow Wilson.⁴¹⁶ I will not go further into these ideas, which from both a contemporary and a present-day point of view are too odd to be able to find the common ground

412 Ibid.: pp.88-89.

413 ‘Nichi-Bei kōshō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.10: pp.92-93; ‘Nichi-Bei mondai’. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1920.11: pp.22-23.

414 ‘Nichi-Bei kankei ni kansuru kōan’. *Shinjin*, 1920.9: p.8.

415 ‘Kokusai mondai ni taisuru Beikoku no taido no mujun’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: pp.70-71.

416 ‘Beikoku no sekai seisaku kōsei no shu-yōso’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.6: p.90.

necessary for discussion, but I would like to conclude by pointing at the consistency between Yoshino's treatment of the position of the intellectual in national society and that of the United States in international society. Much in the same way as the superior intellectual who, although sincerely caring, should not become directly involved in the proletarian movement, he now gave his fiat to the American decision to stay aloof from the League of Nations as a very sensible strategy in order to in the long run realise the overriding aim of true cosmopolitanism. To remain at a neutral spot outside the organisation would instead be a very effective position from which to check 'the selfishness' and 'lack of sincerity towards international peace' of the European states and to guide the League into sound channels without becoming contaminated oneself. For there was no doubt whatsoever in Yoshino's mind that it was the United States, the champion of international morality, that had to bring the League to its perfection.⁴¹⁷

On the basis of the above-mentioned depiction of the League of Nations as a pseudo organ for the promotion of international cooperation and peace, Yoshino could have easily made a case against Japan joining this bastion contaminated by the insincere. The fact that he was instead a fervent supporter of Japan's membership in the League and became a prominent member of its unofficial Japanese branch, the *Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai*, did not mean that he was an opportunistic hypocrite who on the home front, for the sake of his own image, made sure not to be included with more outspoken opponents of the League such as Konoe Fumimaro and Nakano Seigō.⁴¹⁸ In Yoshino's assessment of the various countries of the world, there can be no doubt that he made a rigid distinction between those that could afford to stand above the League, those that should exert themselves to improve the League from within and, last and not least, those that should join the League at all costs in the hope of benefiting from its good influence. There will be hardly any need to mention that in Yoshino's opinion Japan and the United States belonged to classes wide apart and accordingly it was anything but strange that the deliberation and conclusion whether to join the League or not was fundamentally different for the two countries.

In sharp contrast to his increasingly rosy view of the world in general and the United States in particular, his evaluation of his own country was still very bleak. Although the government had changed in form from transcendental cabinets to 'responsible cabinets' (*sekinin naikaku*) headed by the party leader of the majority faction in the popularly elected House of Representatives, he hardly acknowledged any change in content. In internal matters the hope he had cherished, although scant, was soon betrayed by Seiyūkai premier Hara's staunch resistance to the introduction of general suffrage. Yoshino, like most intellectuals a strong critic of the Seiyūkai because of its long history of co-optation with reactionary non-constitutional forces such as the *genrō*, the army, the bureaucracy and the House of Peers, pointed out time and again

417 Ibid.: p.90; 'Kokusai mondai ni taisuru Beikoku no taido no mujun'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: p.71.

418 On the *Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai* (1919-1933), see Ikei Masaru, 'Nihon Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai – Sono seiritsu to henshitsu'. *Hōgaku Kenkyū*, vol.68, no.2 (1995): pp.23-48 and Ikei, 'Nihon Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai – Sono hikari to kage'. *Gaikō Jihō*, no.1336 (1997): pp.2-3. Nakano Seigō is famous for fleeing from the Paris Peace Conference in disgust and immediately afterwards publishing his *Kōwa kaigi wo mokugeki shite*, Tōhō Jironsha, 1919, an indictment of the conservative atmosphere ruling the conference and the incompetence of the Japanese delegation

that under this party true constitutional government would never come about.⁴¹⁹ Although he took into consideration the extenuating circumstance that the Japanese electorate was still not fully aware of what he called ‘election virtue’ (*senkyo dōtoku*), he nonetheless attacked the established parties for not even seriously trying to raise the people to the level where they could become the sole and solid foundation of the political parties. The parties did not increase their influence by trying to represent the people, they merely tried through behind-the-scenes conspiracies to get into power and, once in power, to increase their influence by means of pork-barrel tactics. Democracy, Yoshino’s main criterion in judging a country’s international standing, still had a long way to go in Japan and since he did not consider the two main established parties - the Seiyūkai and the Kenseikai - as the true representatives of the will of the people he was even loath to renounce the reintroduction of transcendental cabinets in 1922 after four years of Seiyūkai rule. This was a clear recognition of Japan’s backwardness in the field of national politics.⁴²⁰

Neither was Yoshino much impressed by the international policy of the new party cabinet. Although he was aware that it was somewhat curtailed in its actions by Terauchi’s legacy in the form of the Siberia Intervention, he did take the Hara Cabinet severely to task over the continuation and expansion of the intervention. He pointed out that the justification for the intervention was very shaky and as a result the cabinet had not been able to rouse popular support in either Russia or Japan itself. Moreover, he attacked the Japanese government for allying itself to such weak, unpopular and reactionary figures as Semionoff and Korcsak. Accordingly there remained no doubt that he considered the cabinet’s mistaken policy responsible for the massacre of Japanese civilians in Nikolaevsk in the spring of 1920.⁴²¹ In the case of Hara’s China policy Yoshino did appraise the cabinet’s swift proclamation of neutrality in China’s internal struggle, but his overall judgement was again rather harsh; the cabinet was not making any progress in the top-priority field of fostering Sino-Japanese friendship. The most obvious opportunity to do so were the negotiations over Shandong, but these could not even be commenced because of the Chinese refusal to settle for anything less than the unconditional restoration of its rights on the peninsula. At the time of the Paris Peace Conference Yoshino had still fully supported the cabinet policy concerning Shandong and had even been helpful in pointing out the legal and formal fallacies in China’s demands. However, in January 1920 he indirectly admitted that he

419 Although Yoshino is known for his strong resentment against the Seiyūkai throughout his life and his support for the non-communist proletarian parties Shakai Minshūtō and Shakai Taishūtō, his attitude towards ‘that other established party’, whether in its Dōshikai-, Kenseikai- or Minseitō-stage, was never so outspoken. Yoshino conducted a few campaign speeches on behalf of the Kenseikai members Oyama Tōsuke and Uchigasaki Sakusaburō, but these are probably better characterised as personal support for these two Christian friends from his days in Sendai. Nonetheless, considering the fact that he did not contribute a single letter to the party organ *Seiyū* while his name can be found in the index of the party magazines *Kensei*, *Kensei Kōron* and *Minsei*, it is evident that Yoshino and the Kenseikai/Minseitō were at least on speaking terms.

420 ‘Hara shushō no kunji wo yomu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.7, reprinted in Matsuo Takayoshi, ed., *Kindai Nihon shisō taikai 17: Yoshino Sakuzō*, Chikuma Shobō, 1976: pp.239-41; ‘Chihō ensetsu no kansō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.12: p.54; ‘Katō naikaku sonritsu no konkyo’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.7, reprinted in YSS, vol.4: pp.33-34.

421 ‘Chūheiron no senketsu mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: pp.69-71; ‘Waga kuni genka no san dai-gaikō mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.7: p.10.

had been in the wrong when he mentioned that “in the postwar situation legal considerations should come in the second place”. In the new age of international cooperativism content took priority over form. He now attacked the government for anachronistically clinging to formal arguments and put all the blame for the failure of the negotiations on his own country.⁴²² Overall, not only in its China and Russia policies, but also in its policy towards the United States and Korea, Yoshino accused the Hara Cabinet of implementing an outdated ‘*chonmage* (topknot) policy’ of ‘small-minded nationalism and usurpation militarism’ which turned a blind eye to international reason and world peace and was thus making Japan once again into ‘an ideological pariah (*shisōteki tokushuburaku*) on the world stage’.⁴²³

4.3 Warm Welcome of the Washington Conference

The Moral Argument

Within this psychological framework of American superiority and Japanese inferiority (and European mediocrity and Chinese super-inferiority) it is not that hard to understand Yoshino’s very positive reaction to the American invitation to the Washington Conference on naval disarmament, the Pacific and the Far East. Whilst many others at the very least harboured great doubts concerning the true intentions of the United States and sometimes even showed outright fear of what was awaiting Japan on the other side of the Pacific, Yoshino was filled with nothing but trust and good hopes:

This conference forces us to clarify our foreign policy which used to be extremely vague. Some people say that on account of the conference our empire faces a great crisis. However, I would rather think of it as a most welcome turning point which will lead our country to true progress and development. (...) It is too absurd to think that a conference on such a grand scale was especially set up to bring Japan down a peg or two. (...) This conference is of such great consequence for our national destiny precisely because it springs from sincere motives. And even if some intricate insincere motives come to the fore, the people of the world will not be deceived and these abject motives will never be able to win a moral victory before the people’s court. (...) I think it is a major disgrace that we did not immediately accept the invitation without coming up with reservations concerning

422 ‘Santō mondai’ *Reimei Kōenshū*, vol.5, 1919.7: pp.7-9; ‘Seitō senkan kyoryūchi mondai ni tsuite’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: pp.221-27; ‘Santō mondai no chokusetsu kōshō no kyozetsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: pp.138-39.

423 ‘Teikoku gaikō no shittai’. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1921.1.5: p.2; ‘Nichi-Bei kankei ni kansuru kōan’. *Shinjin*, 1920.9: pp.7-8; ‘Nichi-Bei mondai’. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1920.11: pp.18-19; ‘Santō mondai no chokusetsu kōshō no kyozetsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.140. By the way, it is interesting to see that Kita Ikki in his maiden work *Kokutairon oyobi junsei shakaishugi* (1906) used the somewhat similar phrase *dojin buraku* (village of uncivilised natives) to criticize his country. He analysed that while Japan economically had become ‘the England of the Orient’, socially and intellectually it was nothing but ‘an Oriental village of uncivilised natives’. See *Kita Ikki chosakushū*, vol.1, Misuzu Shobō, 1959: pp. 90, 211, 271.

the scope of the conference and the exact definition of ‘Pacific and Far Eastern problems’. (...) If it is considered essential for peace and prosperity in this world, the scope of the debate cannot be wide enough. (...) The results of this conference may be partially disadvantageous to Japan, but since we have come this far as a result of the ardent demand for international peace and prosperity we should not cling to our petty interests and benefits from the past but instead take up a fair and square position.⁴²⁴

In the first place, Yoshino could not care less that the United States were intruding into League territory such as disarmament and international peacekeeping. Even though he was perfectly clear about the League of Nations having to be defended at any cost, he did admit that it was “at present imperfect” and that the members of “this bourgeois institution” themselves every now and then acted against the spirit of international cooperation.⁴²⁵ If there was another country that more faithfully served the cause of ‘the three postwar principles of no annexation, no indemnity, and ethnic national self-determination’, which Yoshino claimed had been betrayed at the Paris Peace Conference, and that could help out in realising the fundamental spirit of the League ‘to make this world a better place to live in’, it was fully entitled to try and do so. Who else but the United States, ‘the objective judge’ and ‘the protector of international justice’, fitted this definition?⁴²⁶

As far as the mingling of the United States in an extra-regional issue like the international relations in the Far East was concerned, another important factor was that Yoshino was of the opinion that “in the new international life which is aimed at world peace” it would no longer do to ignore one’s responsibilities and leave an external matter to run its own course. Echoing Fukuzawa’s often used metaphor in the case of Sino-Japanese relations, he admitted that it was no longer necessary to watch and wait helplessly while the burning house of the neighbours was coming down on one’s own: “The golden rule of prewar international law that sovereign states are not entitled to interfere in each other’s internal affairs is not absolutely binding under the new international law of the postwar period”. All countries now bore a responsibility towards the international environment, which gave them ‘a certain right to intervene’.⁴²⁷ Accordingly the Yap and Shandong issues could no longer be treated as strictly national or bilateral questions where interference by third parties was not allowed; on the contrary, a country like the United States was fully legitimised to intervene in Sino-Japanese relations.⁴²⁸ Moreover, for someone who dared to confront his reading public with statements such as “The settlement of the immigrant issue can only be realised if we share the ideals of the white man towards life and make an equal effort towards the progress of a universal world culture” and “only the Japanese delegation exposed its deplorable stupidity of clinging to outdated nationalist ideas”, there was neither indignation nor hesitation in following the lead of ‘the moral superior’ and going all the way to the West coast of the Atlantic Ocean to humbly join discussions over matters concerning

424 ‘Gunbi shukushō kaigi ni tsuite’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.8: pp.127-32.

425 ‘Gendai shichō no teiryū wa kokusai kyōdōshugi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.2: pp.66-67.

426 Ibid.: pp.68-69; ‘Airando mondai no sekaiteki jūyō igi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.128; ‘Shina kinji (hei) - Washinton kaigi ni okeru Shina no chii’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: pp.195-96.

427 ‘Kokusai mondai ni taisuru Beikoku no taido no mujun’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: pp.69-70.

428 ‘Taiheiyō kaigi ni taisuru Beikoku no seishiki shōtai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: pp.308-09.

the Pacific and East Asia.⁴²⁹ Even in the few cases where it was legally and formally in its right, Yoshino seemed to consider it better for Japan to be flexible and ready to compromise. The morally backward pariah could not afford to be isolated any further from the postwar intellectual trends and therefore it had to obtain the moral sympathy of the world, especially the moral sympathy of the United States.⁴³⁰

The Economic Argument

Yet there were other more common arguments as well which made him welcome the Washington Conference. First of all, there was the economic need to enforce substantial cuts in arms expenditures. Since 1920 Yoshino had regularly expressed the view that the emphasis of the Japanese authorities on unproductive militaristic facilities had been at the expense of the social and economic development of the country and, as a result, the people were suffering in ignorance and poverty. The government, he stressed, had made a very serious mistake when deciding priorities in national policy: “Industry, transport infrastructure and, most of all, education are at least equally important as armament in maintaining the life of the state (*kokka no seimei*)”.⁴³¹ Moreover, he pointed out, the civilian and military authorities had also forgotten the relative importance of education and industry in times of war. Therefore, in spite of the huge arms expenditures, he thought Japan’s national defence to be far from complete. In case war broke out, he argued, Japan would not even be able to utilise all of its present armament for the simple reason that it lacked the know-how, transport facilities, industrial power, raw materials, fuel and other supplies to get its men and equipment to the scene of the fighting and sustain them for a considerable time. Although he did not think the country was completely safe he did think it was excessively armed: “In a country like Japan, the extent to which the nation can be mobilised should determine the size of the armed forces and not the other way round.” Accordingly he advised that further expansion of the armed forces be postponed for at least ten years and retrenchments should even be considered so that financial means could be reallocated to other fields of national life with a more immediate urgency.⁴³²

It is interesting to see that Yoshino claimed that the majority of the population for various reasons, economic distress being not the least of these, supported him in his call for military retrenchments. Although parliament had voted down Ozaki Yukio’s bill for disarmament in February 1921 by an overwhelming majority of 285 to 38, Yoshino hardly took any serious notice, merely noting that there was a huge gap between the ideas of the politicians and public opinion.⁴³³ At that time he did not give either of the established political parties any credit and tended to lump them together with the civil and military bureaucracy, thus refuting the often repeated foreign criticism that Japan had a ‘double-government’. He alternatively put forward the

429 ‘Jinshu byōdō-an no teishō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.10: p.93; ‘Nichi-Bei kōshō no ichi mondai to shite no Santō mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.7, reprinted in YSS, vol.6: p.177.

430 ‘Ishii-Lansing kyōyaku to Taiheiyō kaigi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.8: pp.132-33.

431 ‘Gunbi shukushō mondai’. *Shinjin*, 1921.4: p.5.

432 ‘Ibid.’: p.7; ‘Kokubō keikaku no konpongi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.10: pp.84-85.

433 *Teikoku gikai shūgiin giji sokkiroku*, vol.38, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982: pp.228-38; ‘Gunbi shukushō mondai’. *Shinjin*, 1921.4: p.2; ‘Gunbi seigenron no ichi hihan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.3: p.96.

argument that there was a ‘double Japan’, consisting of the two elements of the ‘old Japan’ of the bureaucracy and the ‘young Japan’ of the people.⁴³⁴ On previous occasions Yoshino had also been aware of a gap between the authorities and the people, but had often ended up supporting the side of the ‘comparatively wise authorities’.⁴³⁵ However, since the end of the war the tables seemed to have turned; in contrast to his former description of the popular voice as ‘the pressures of the ignorant public’, he now professed to be “overjoyed by the greatly increased public criticism of the militarist and bureaucrat factions”. Notwithstanding his emphasis on the neutral position of the intellectual in society it is evident that he more and more took the side of the common people. Moreover, riding on the wave of unprecedented unpopularity of the army and the Seiyūkai in the immediate postwar years as a result of the economic crisis and the fiasco of the Siberian Intervention, Yoshino clearly used its ‘support’ and was more defiant than ever in the face of government repression.⁴³⁶ Whereas at other times he could not always hide a feeling of frustration, since he sensed himself to be crying out in the desert, in these few years Yoshino really seemed to consider himself as the true representative of the people. Merely based on his experiences during his regular lecture tours in the countryside he professed to believe that the majority of the common people understood and supported what he said.⁴³⁷ Similarly, merely based on a few opinion polls conducted by Ozaki Yukio, who was far from impartial in this matter, he was willing to assert that “there is a strong popular demand for arms reductions”.⁴³⁸

Yoshino’s reading of the popular opinion is less surprising when one knows that in his opinion it was a common phenomenon of modern states that the burden of armament severely threatened the people’s lives and the people would sooner or later inevitably rise against its plight. So it had been merely a matter of time before the Japanese people cried out for disarmament.⁴³⁹

434 ‘Nijū seifu yori nijū Nihon he’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.3: pp.92-94.

435 In an article from 1922 he described the Ōkuma government as the turning point from an ignorant people and a wise government to a wise people and an ignorant government. ‘Kokusai mondai no shori ni kansuru odorokubeki muchi to musekinin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.12: p.1.

436 Although it is hard to find solid proof for the extent of and changes in Yoshino’s popularity, the standard interpretation is that his heyday was roughly from 1916 until 1919. Nevertheless, there are several ‘incidents’ which indicate that in the early 1920s he still enjoyed such a prominent position that the temporarily weakened civil and military authorities were deterred from closing in on him. For instance, under ‘normal circumstances’ it is almost inconceivable that no charges were brought against Yoshino for the fact that in several articles at the beginning of February 1920 he associated Japan’s national polity and the emperor with Kropotkin’s ideas and was even so bold as to characterise the emperor’s moral rule as ‘of an anarchistic beauty’. This characterisation was based on Yoshino’s opinion that the relation between the imperial family and the nation in Japan was not a superficial, state-coerced relation of order and submission but ‘a much deeper and much higher, spontaneous moral relation’, in which the imperial family functioned as ‘the moral and lofty centre of popular respect and worship’. See ‘Anākizumu ni taisuru shinkaishaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2 and ‘Koropotokin no shisō no kenkyū’. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1920.1.18, both reprinted in *YSS*, vol.1: p.260 and pp.250-51. Another example is his article ‘Seinen shōkō no mitaru Shiberia shusseigun no jitsujō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.5: pp.133-48, in which the censors - usually excessively strict in the case of reports on Japan’s military exploits in foreign territory - let him expatiate in detail upon a whole series of abuses of the expedition army in Siberia. This was even more exceptional since Yoshino did not even try to veil the fact that his disclosures were based upon direct information from within the army itself.

437 ‘Chihō ensetsu no kansō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.12: pp.53-56.

438 ‘Gunbi shukushō mondai’. *Shinjin*, 1921.4: p.4.

439 ‘Gunbi shukushō no tetteiteki shuchō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.1.

He rejected the widespread view that Japan's most critical problem was the discrepancy between its limited territory and its large and ever growing population. He also denounced the accompanying solution, furthered by the authorities, to simply ship part of the population to the other side of the Japan Sea, on the one hand alleviating the nation and on the other hand securing Japan's hold over its new 'lebensraum'. Just like Horie Kiichi, he stressed that the only fundamental solution to its economic and population problems had to be sought within the national (insular) borders: to follow the European example of ever increasing industrialisation. Thus he thought it was preferable for Japan to invest its scarce financial resources in the expansion of industry rather than to spend half of the national budget on armament.⁴⁴⁰ Within this framework he argued that the Japanese were incredibly lucky to have received the invitation to the Washington Conference. Although normally, due to strategic reasons, countries were not inclined to carry out disarmament on their own and thus international agreements were a first precondition, Japan, he remarked, had been suffering under the burden of arms expansion to such an excessive extent that reductions on an individual basis could no longer be delayed. Japan had to count its blessings that just at that moment it had been bestowed with an offer to come to collective arms retrenchments. Therefore, he was convinced it was Japan that stood most to benefit from a successful conclusion of the Washington Conference.⁴⁴¹

The Strategic Argument

Another reason for Yoshino to warmly welcome the Washington Conference was that on strategic grounds he considered it no longer necessary or even futile for Japan to expand its armament. As a result of the various events during the war and the progress of the 'universal trends' in the postwar period, the country was safer than it had ever been before. In the first place, he posed that there was no longer any serious threat overland to the continental outposts of Japan's colonial empire - Korea and Manchuria. He was respectively still not and no longer afraid of Japan's immediate neighbours China and Russia. Although the former was distinctly hostile, Yoshino, as most Japanese, thought China still too weak and underdeveloped to seriously threaten Japan's position and thus unfit to be ranked even as an enemy. As for Russia, the tsarist regime had collapsed due to the revolution and accordingly the former principal enemy in the region had ceased to be a dangerous military force and, Yoshino maintained, would definitely not

440 'Jinkō zōshoku to tokushu chii'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.141. A concise account of his views on Japan's so-called 'population problem' can be found in 'Jinkō mondai no gōriteki kaiketsu'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1926.2, pp.214-17 and 'Iwayuru jinkō mondai no kaiketsusaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.7: pp.145-48. It is difficult to fight the impression that Yoshino, who was hardly trained in economic theory, was considerably influenced by the Keiō economist Horie Kiichi. Most of Yoshino's rare economic arguments, such as his rejection of emigration in order to solve Japan's 'overpopulation' problem, his stress on the relative importance of industrialization, his economic comparison of Japan and England, and his economic priority to China proper over Manchuria seem to have their precedent in articles by Horie. When one considers the huge influence Horie had as one of the most prominent economists of his day, whose articles on a regular basis adorned the pages of the three major all-round magazines of the 1910s and 1920s, this impression seems to be even more plausible. See my 'The Break with Europe - Japanese Views of the Old World after the First World War'. In Bert Edström, ed., *The Japanese and Europe - Images and Perceptions*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 2000: pp.39-57.

441 'Gunbi shukushō no tetteiteki shuchō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.1.

revive as such.⁴⁴² In contrast to many others, who had considered the homogeneous tsarist Russia not merely as a competitor in the imperialist struggle but also as a partner in the endeavour to ward off American expansion into East Asia and who, moreover, could not imagine a greater ideological enemy than the heterogeneous communist Soviet Union, he had a rather rose-coloured view of the new radical government. On the one hand, he thought that there was quite some sense in the Soviet interpretation of social and international justice, rejected simply designating their ideology as harmful and suggested that Japan should also reflect upon ‘its own militaristic capitalistic power’.⁴⁴³ On the other hand, he noted that even in case the Soviet Union, as ‘the representative of the oppressed people in the world’, once again became a strong power and really tried to conquer the rest of the world, it would not do so with the classical means of armed force but with ideology. Therefore, if one wanted to defend one’s country against the new Russia, classical means - such as the armed intervention in Siberia - would no longer suffice.⁴⁴⁴ As for the internal ‘overland’ threat from the colonies themselves, he admitted that due to outbursts of anti-Japanese feelings it might not be possible to reduce Japan’s armed presence dramatically. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the March First Uprising and the May Fourth Movement, in matters concerning the size of Japan’s standing army it was Russia which carried most weight and accordingly he continued to advocate a ‘rational’ reduction of the Japanese army, a cause which he had taken up at a comparatively early stage not long after the October Revolution.⁴⁴⁵

The case of the imperial navy, however, was an entirely different matter. Here there was no lack of strong opponents; the Japanese marine had chosen the United States and Great Britain, the world’s two strongest naval powers, as its potential enemies. Apart from the fact that Yoshino often rigidly refused to consider treating these democracies as enemies, he also pointed out that, even if they were considered as such, going to war with either one of these countries would be completely irrational. In his opinion Japan had only been able to fight and win the wars against China and Russia because of the loans and the supplies from England and America, and as yet he could not think of a country that could take over this role in case Japan decided to fight either of them.⁴⁴⁶ Moreover, he argued, apart from the problem of who would finance such a war, the problem of who would supply Japan with all the products and resources to be able to wage a war was just as hopeless. The country, even when its colonial possessions were included, did not form a self-sufficient economic unit that on its own could sustain a major war for more than an extremely limited period. Far from it, Japan’s economy was to a very great extent dependent on its imports from and exports to other countries, and especially on the projected enemy the United States.⁴⁴⁷

442 ‘Rikugun kakuchō ni hantai su’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.11: pp.49-50; ‘Shiberia hakengun no shimatsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.11: pp.80-82.

443 ‘Kagekiha no sekaiteki senden no setsu ni tsuite’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.2: p.85; ‘Nani wo shōnin suru no ka’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.6: p.118.

444 ‘Kagekiha no sekaiteki senden no setsu ni tsuite’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.2: pp.84-85; ‘Gunbi seigenron no ichi hihan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.3: pp.100-01.

445 ‘Rikugun kakuchō ni hantai su’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1918.11: p.51; ‘Gunbi seigenron no ichi hihan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.3: p.95.

446 ‘Gunbi shukushōron’. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1921.11: p.66.

447 ‘Nichi-Bei kankei ni kansuru kōan’. *Shinjin*, 1920.9: pp.2-3.

Thus in general, and particularly in the case of Japan, war and economy were at complete loggerheads. Aware of this fact, Yoshino noted, the Japanese business world had merely agreed to arms expansion in the preparatory stage to the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars because they were certain of British and American moral and material support and because they had entertained good hopes of the establishment of a monopolistic sphere of influence in Korea and parts of China. In sharp contrast, these same businessmen would never support extensive military preparations for a war against countries on which Japan was economically completely dependent. He was sure they were just as aware as he was that Japan's economy was not yet ready, nor in the near future would be ready, to sustain a full-scale modern war of attrition. In his opinion it was far more likely that 'Japan's industry will not even be able to endure a declaration of war'.⁴⁴⁸ For the moment Japan was not yet 'a great power' (*taikoku*), neither economically nor financially, and it would be "stupid to even think it can join in the [naval] arms race [with the United States]". And even if it fully concentrated on becoming economically stronger by means of modernising and industrialising and becoming economically 'self-sufficient' by means of teaming up with China, Japan had to face the fact that for at least the next ten or twenty years and probably far, far longer it would have to rely on England and, most of all, America.⁴⁴⁹ Thus, although the Japanese navy, in contrast to the army, did have some very serious potential enemies that would justify a considerable strengthening of its forces, the problem was that these countries were so strong and so vital to Japan that "war against them will mean certain death". According to Yoshino, naval arms expansion was no rational option, naval arms reduction was.⁴⁵⁰

However, as touched upon before, it should not be forgotten that in Yoshino's case there was, apart from such 'comparative' economic and strategic arguments, a very important 'absolute' argument. Regardless of the relative strength of the various actors on the East Asian scene, in the very rosy view of the world Yoshino every once in a while expounded, there were no real or potential enemies to be found in Japan's vicinity, either for the army or for the navy. Accordingly, there was no need whatsoever for the 'active defence' called for by the militarists and armaments to the level of 'passive defence', in the meaning of a national guard, would be the justified maximum. He had to admit that to his regret the authorities did not share his view, instead tended to look upon all surrounding countries as enemies and, as a result, endeavoured to overpower all these countries at the same time. Although the armament implemented within this framework was presented as 'self-defence', Yoshino made sure to characterise it as nothing else but 'excessive arms expansion' and emphasised that it was an undeniable fact that the ever growing size of Japan's army and navy was inevitably considered a great threat to peace in the Far East by the other countries in the region.⁴⁵¹ Thus, in contrast to the invitation to a Pacific conference, he was hardly surprised by the invitation to a naval disarmament conference and probably considered it even partly justified that Japan, as many Japanese felt indignant at the

448 'Jitsugyōka no dasanteki gunbi seigen undō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.4: pp.219-20; 'Buraisu no Nichi-Bei ron'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.11: p.177.

449 'Teikoku gaikō no shittai'. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1921.1.5: p.2; 'Gunbi seigenron no ichi hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.3: p.101; 'Gaikōjō ni okeru Nihon no kukyō'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1921.1, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: pp.163-64.

450 'Gunbi shukushōron'. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1921.11: p.66.

451 'Gunbi shukushō no tetteiteki shuchō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.1.

time, was called to the dock at a court of justice in Washington.⁴⁵² Be that as it may, what is clear is that he most of all hoped that the conference would function as an external pressure to curtail both the size of Japan's armament and the influence of the military in Japan's national and international policy.

The Washington Treaties

Notwithstanding his awareness of Japan's 'bad record' as an excessively militarist nation that had to be called to order by the world's democracies, Yoshino professed to trust in the compassion of the other powers and their good faith in the true intentions of 'the real Japan' of the people and predicted that the Washington conference would probably result in an agreement on an equal percentage of arms reduction.⁴⁵³ The fact that he thought his country would get off so lightly at the conference is one of the many mistaken predictions he made throughout his life due to his usual idealist optimism and it is a good example of how he was often rather out of touch with practical power relations. Although he did not completely lack the pragmatic realism of more commonsensical men like Horie Kiichi and Mizuno Hironori, who for instance knew very well that Japan would have to make considerable sacrifices at the conference, Yoshino was prone to wishful thinking in his writings. As we have already seen, he partly raised the same economic and strategic arguments for arms reduction but, in the end, it is hard to deny that he was aiming for higher ground. Just as he had criticised Ozaki's retrenchment proposal for lacking a solid moral foundation, Yoshino often stressed the fact that true international cooperativism could not be based on merely economic and strategic pillars; human sentiment in the form of friendship, brotherhood, compassion, respect and mutual love was indispensable.⁴⁵⁴ Thus it is not surprising that his final judgement of the results of the Washington Conference was in essence a moral judgement and was not altogether favourable. He told his readers he was 'not completely satisfied'. Although he called it 'the best pragmatic solution' and grudgingly admitted that "at present politicians have to stick to the fact that arms limitation is most likely to be achieved by the most simple motivation of economic hardship", he clearly deplored the fact that the whole conference had not featured the more lofty motivation of 'theoretical pacifist arguments'.⁴⁵⁵ Interestingly, Yoshino kept completely silent about the generally unexpected large-scale *quantative* decrease in naval strength the powers had decided upon, but rather chose to highlight the fact that the treaties had created a precedent in international cooperativism and thus had *qualitatively* changed the atmosphere in international relations. And it is equally significant to see that he did not discuss the rather detailed and practical Five and Nine Power Treaties but instead decided to write a lengthy article solely dedicated to the Four Power Treaty,

452 Ibid.: p.1; 'Taiheiyō kaigi kaisai no setsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.7: p.126; 'Rikugun kashi seido kaizen no hitsuyō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.6: p.162.

453 'Gunbi shukushōron'. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1921.11: p.65.

454 'Gunbi seigenron no ichi hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.3: p.101; 'YMCA bankoku taikai ni okeru wadai'. *Shinjin*, 1922.3, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6: p.259; 'Sekai heiwa to jinruiai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.7.15: p.1; 'Kokusaiteki seishin no kuniku - Kanto tanjō nihyakunen kinen ni saishite'. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1924.4.16, reprinted in *Kōjin no jōshiki*, Bunka Seikatsu Kenkyūkai, 1925: pp.25-27.

455 'Washinton kaigi wo chūshin to shite tadayou heiwateriki kibun'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.1: p.311; 'Seijika no ryōri ni makasareta gunbi seigen-an'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.1: pp.307-08.

a treaty which merely consisted of a list of lofty abstract intentions and has gone down in history as the ‘lightweight of the three Washington treaties’. Not so for Yoshino. In his eyes it was the most important; it was a ‘tangible symbol of the new age’ in the sense that it was ‘an attempt to settle issues on the basis of universal justice’.⁴⁵⁶

Yoshino did not see that the main aim of the Four Power Treaty was to replace the Anglo-Japanese Alliance but, even if he had done so, he probably would not have minded that much. Whereas during the war he had obediently repeated the government position that ‘the Alliance is the nucleus of our diplomatic relations in the Orient’ and that minor frictions in China and the sudden disappearance of the common enemy Russia did not at all outweigh ‘the continued mutual benefit of the alliance’, by 1920 he was hardly interested anymore. In his opinion it had devalued into an agreement on the demarcation of imperialistic spheres of influence, which was merely based on calculations of national interest and which lacked any trace of a spiritual union between Japan and England.⁴⁵⁷ Yoshino was not the only one who even up to the very beginning of the Washington Conference had predicted that the Alliance, in spite of great pressure from the United States and many countries of the British Commonwealth, would undoubtedly continue after Japan and the United States had ‘cleared up some problems’ - yet another of his misjudgements.⁴⁵⁸ However, unlike many of his compatriots he did not show any signs of bewilderment or anger over the ‘British betrayal’. Before the conference he had already observed rather aloof that England’s enemy in India were the Indians themselves and Japan’s enemy in some people’s eyes – although definitely not in Yoshino’s own eyes - was the United States, and that in this situation the allies could no longer be considered willing to help each other. China seemed to be the one region left where the two countries still could cooperate, but conflicting national interests and Chinese opposition made such a prospect nigh to impossible. The only option Yoshino could think of for the alliance to retain some meaning was to change it from a military alliance into a peace alliance. However, he added, in case both countries really acted in the spirit of the preservation of peace in East Asia there was no specific need to hold on to an alliance anyhow.⁴⁵⁹ Thus, he was perfectly willing to surrender national interest, in the form of a very practical alliance which at the least still had the psychological benefit of giving the idea that Japan was not completely isolated in international society, on behalf of international morality, in the form of an abstract, meaningless and noncommittal manifest such as the Four Power Treaty.

456 Ibid.: p.311; ‘Shikoku kyōshō no seiritu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.1: pp.302-04.

457 ‘Kyōshō wa ka, dōmei wa fuyō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1915.10: p.75; ‘Waga kuni genka no san dai-gaikō mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.7: pp.2-7.

458 ‘Taiheiyō kaigi ni tsuite’. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1921.9: pp.30-31.

459 ‘Waga kuni genka no san dai-gaikō mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.7: pp.3-7.

4.4 Sino-Japanese Relations within the Framework of American Supremacy

Settlement of the Shandong Question

The area where the changed power structure in East Asia had become most obvious was the field of Sino-Japanese relations. During the war the Japanese had envisioned keeping a firm hold on the former German rights and properties on the Shandong peninsula and accordingly they had been perfectly willing to make use of crude measures to achieve this aim. Apart from the secret arrangements made with the various European allies while the fighting was still going on, after the war this attitude resulted first in Japan's endeavours to keep the Chinese out of the negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference and later in its bold ultimatum to the Allied Powers. In this way it succeeded in settling the Shandong question on Japanese terms. The German rights and properties were granted to Japan, making the Shandong settlement a strictly bilateral Sino-Japanese affair in which Japan was obviously by far the stronger negotiating partner, since it enjoyed the formal rights over and the military occupation of the territory concerned. However, in the second half of 1921, with the Washington Conference in sight, the Japanese authorities frantically started to tone down their former high demands concerning Shandong in the hope they could lure the Chinese into a compromise and thus avoid Shandong becoming included on the conference agenda. As long as Japan had considered itself to be the indisputable leader in East Asia it had shown no haste whatsoever in coming to an agreement with the Chinese and changing the advantageous status quo in Shandong, but as the United States were preparing to take over Japan's position it had evidently become time for Japan to try to come away with the best possible terms. The Japanese government was even willing to make use of the exceptional measure of asking England and America to put pressure on China, which had continuously refused to negotiate directly with Japan about this issue and had sought to make it a case to be decided on by the League of Nations. However, no matter how the Japanese begged, the Chinese leadership, equally aware of the fact that American sympathy lay with China and also tightly restricted by strong anti-Japanese feelings amongst the population, could not easily be enticed to the negotiation table. It aimed for unconditional retrocession of its territory and, as Japan was indeed forced to agree to talks with the Chinese in the wings of the Washington Conference under close scrutiny of the United States and England, came remarkably close.⁴⁶⁰

Considering Yoshino's recognition of American moral and political supremacy in the postwar world, it is hardly surprising to see how he welcomed its 'intervention in the Shandong question'. Fully aware of the strong feelings concerning this issue in both the American media and the Senate, he knew that such an intervention would mainly amount to support of the Chinese stand but, judging by his remark that "in Sino-Japanese relations it was usually Japan whose actions lacked reasonableness", he did not seem to mind and appeared to consider it merely the natural course of events.⁴⁶¹ Obviously this remark is somewhat strange from someone

460 Shimizu Hideko, 'Santō mondai', in *Kokusai Seiji*, no.56 (1977): pp.117-36; Usui Katsumi, *Nihon to Chūgoku - Taishō jidai*, Hara Shobō, 1972.

461 'Kokusai mondai ni taisuru Beikoku no taido no mujun'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: p.71; 'Shina kinji (hei) - Washinton kaigi ni okeru Shina no chii'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: pp.195-96.

who at the time of the Paris Peace Conference had described his government's demands concerning Shandong as perfectly justified. As a matter of fact, Yoshino had not changed his opinion that the Chinese arguments lacked any formal legal ground and neither was he willing to go as far as to call the Twenty-One Demands invalid.⁴⁶² There was a significant shift in his stand, however, in the sense that by this time he had definitely changed his mind on the order of priority between formal legal considerations on the one hand and practical political or moral considerations on the other. Although since 1917 he had stressed that times had changed and that a new and moral world order had come into being, it had cost him some two years to fully apply his new awareness to Sino-Japanese relations; it was only in January 1920 that he acknowledged that the presentation of the Twenty-One Demands had been 'morally reprehensible' and proposed that in the negotiations concerning the Shandong question Japan's demands should also be in line with the new moral thought of the postwar era. He no longer confined himself to merely repeating his long cherished argument that it was "most important to consider whether Japan's actions would benefit Japan's relations with China and thus Japan's social and economic future"; for the first time this argument did indeed feature prominently in his final evaluation of how best to settle the Shandong issue.⁴⁶³ For instance, in the case of the establishment of an exclusively Japanese concession in Quingdao, he contended that, although Japan was legally fully entitled to do so, such an act would be 'anachronistic and harmful' and had better be refrained from. Instead of the establishment of new Japanese concessions and rights in China, it was the establishment of Sino-Japanese friendship that should have top priority. Henceforth Japan should pursue a 'morally persuasive policy' towards China in order to obtain the understanding of the Chinese people and to compete for the sympathy of the so-called 'Young China' or 'pro-America faction', the group in Chinese society which he thought most truly represented 'the people'.⁴⁶⁴

Within the framework of this plan of action Yoshino also proposed to concede to the Chinese argument that the war had been a common effort to realise common aims, and accordingly the spoils of the war should be commonly decided upon as well. In line with the American argument concerning Yap, this principle should theoretically give China - like the United States a participant, although a late one, in the common war effort who had rejected the Paris Peace Treaty - an equal right to have a say in the settlement of the Shandong issue. However, what this 'concession' would amount to in practice was not altogether clear. Yoshino's mention of the condition that the practical application of the principle should be limited to the period after the American participation in the war, that is, the moment that in his opinion the various individual war aims gave way to common war aims, does not sound very promising.⁴⁶⁵ It is very doubtful whether Young China would have been persuaded by the dubious quantity of moral power in Yoshino's practical compromise, but we shall never know since the Japanese government had been even slower than Yoshino in relaxing its demands. By the time it did so China was still the only negotiating partner in official terms, but in practical terms the United

462 'Santō mondai no chokusetsu kōshō no kyojetsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.138.

463 'Seitō senkan kyoryūchi mondai ni tsuite'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: pp.221-23, 225-27. See also 'Nichi-Bei kōshō no ichi mondai to shite no Santō mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.7: p.178;

464 Ibid.: pp.221-27; 'Taigai seiron no shoha'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.12: p.94; 'Waga kuni genka no san dai-gaikō mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.7: pp.12-15.

465 'Santō kanpu no seimei to chokusetsu kōshō no kyojetsu'. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1921.10.29: p.3; 'Santō mondai no chokusetsu kōshō no kyojetsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.138.

States and England had already taken their place around the negotiating table. Although he deemed the considerably softened Japanese proposal of autumn 1921 to be ‘fair and moderate’ and thought that it might have formed the basis for ‘a just solution’ at an earlier stage, he knew that now it was far too late.⁴⁶⁶ In order to solve the issue the Japanese government had to obtain the moral support of both the Chinese people and the Western powers - of which the United States in the form of the Republican administration had committed itself strongly to a ‘just solution of the Shandong question’⁴⁶⁷ - and therefore it had to bow even deeper to the Chinese demands. As mentioned before, Yoshino had been very able in discerning a positive side to the American-English ‘intervention’ and he also welcomed the development that China, in order not to lose the sympathy of the Western powers, could no longer unnecessarily reject or prolong negotiations.⁴⁶⁸ But, after all, when judging both the settlement of the Shandong question and ‘The Treaty between all Nine Powers Relating to Principles and Policies to be Followed in Matters Concerning China’, it is hard to ignore some traces of bitterness in his conclusion that China had been doing very well at the Washington Conference:

The one that is gaining most from the Washington Conference is undoubtedly China. The fact that China’s gain in a certain sense is equivalent to Japan’s loss will be clear from the telegrams arriving daily that report incessantly about Japanese compromises. (...) Even if the country itself does not demand material gain (*jitsuri*), this is what the powers bestow upon China in the name of peace. It is not the result of China’s efforts, it is the reflection of the fact that the powers at last have come to regret their former aggressive attitude. (...) Their way of treating countries like China which do not have actual power (*jitsuryoku*) has changed. (...) Their new attitude is like an aunt or uncle who takes care of an orphaned relative. In other words, they will not merely refrain from utilising such a powerless creature for their own ambitions, but they will also actively seek to give it the opportunity to develop. (...) If China, taking the grace of this era for granted, recklessly pushes its demands too far it will soon see a backlash from public opinion. In contrast, if China tries to become an autonomous ethnic nation and an autonomous state in both word and deed, and limits its demands to a justified degree, all its demands will be readily recognised by the powers according to the extent the country has built up actual power.⁴⁶⁹

Although Yoshino certainly did not begrudge the Chinese their ‘victory’ at the Washington Conference, it is clear from the citation above that, at the bottom of his heart, he thought the Chinese had actually gained more than they deserved. They had not themselves exacted their recent diplomatic successes by means of their civilisation or by means of pure national strength; these had simply been bestowed upon them in order to ‘satisfy the conscience of the new age’ or, to put it more bluntly, as a result of the establishment of American political and moral hegemony

466 ‘Santō mondai no chokusetsu kōshō no kyozetsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: pp.138-39.

467 Emily O. Goldman, *Sunken Treaties: Naval Arms Control Between the Wars*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994, pp.133-35.

468 ‘Santō mondai no chokusetsu kōshō no kyozetsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.140.

469 ‘Shina mondai gaikan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.1: pp.304-06.

in East Asia. Compared to Japan, China was not only a lucky but also an invariably underdeveloped country.

Hope versus Reality: The Rise of a Chinese Nation and 'Non-Interventionism'

To get a better grip on Yoshino's not fully consistent view of China, it is best to make a distinction between his view of 'the new China in the making' and 'present China'. As far as the former is concerned he was very optimistic, at least much more optimistic than most of his Japanese, Western and even many of his Chinese contemporaries. He emphasised that the knowledge of the Chinese people had increased and professed for instance that international cooperativist thought had gained a considerable stronghold in Chinese society and would gradually become the dominant ideological force of the new China.⁴⁷⁰ His opinion that the interlinked destinies of the bureaucratic and autocratic China of yore and the democratic and internationalist New China had already been decided in favour of the latter led Yoshino to refute the then standard image of China. To begin with, he warned his fellow-countrymen not to slight China as a country of never-ending chaos and urged them rather to interpret the present state of confusion in China as the customary labour pains that accompany the birth of a new nation but which because of the country's sheer size were taking somewhat longer than in the case of the Japanese Meiji Revolution.⁴⁷¹ In the second place, he refuted the tenacious adage - to which he himself, by the way, had paid extensive lip-service at an earlier date - that the Chinese were above all Mammonists, had no national awareness worth mentioning, were doomed to remain divided and thus were not to be considered as a modern nation-state. Whereas he was willing to go along with this general view to the extent that he admitted that the bulk of China was more or less made up of almost completely autonomous villages and that the average Chinese did indeed tend to attach priority to his individual interests over national interests⁴⁷², his elaboration of these 'facts' differed markedly:

When talking about China's future, the first and foremost thing one should keep in mind is that the Chinese ethnic nation does not need a state to develop itself further. [Therefore,] it is no use urging the Chinese that they must soon bring about unification in the form of a state. (...) They do not have the disposition to become unified in the form of the state as we know it. (...) However, this does not

470 'Atarashiki Shina no shisōteki kaibō (ge)'. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1922.5.24: p.2. Yoshino was for instance very favourably impressed by the Chinese representatives at the Paris and Washington Conferences, as opposed to the Japanese delegates. 'Shina kinji (otsu) - Rekkoku no tai-Shi seisaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: p.194.

471 'Shina ni okeru kenpō seitei undō no zento'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.11: p.178. Yoshino also pointed out neatly that the Meiji Restoration had been a comparatively bloodless and brief revolution merely because of the submissive and unquestioning reaction of the people. Thus the fact that the turmoil in China was of a protracted nature even seemed to be something the Chinese could be proud of; it was a sign that they were not such blind nationalists as the Japanese.

472 'Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi'. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.16-17. This is the written record of a *zadankai* (round-table talk) on Japan's China policy organised on 11 October 1924 by the journal *Kaizō* in reaction to the outbreak of the Second Fengtian-Zhili War. The other discussants were Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Horie Kiichi, Nagai Ryūtarō, Maida Minoru, Fukuda Tokuzō, Komura Shunzaburō and Yamamoto Sanehiko.

imply that the Chinese are individualists from head to toe and will under no circumstance unite. (...) In short, they will unite on behalf of their actual interests (*jitsuri*) but definitely not on behalf of a hollow slogan (*kūmei*). One should not generalise and say that all unifications in the form of a state are equivalent to gathering together under an empty name, but in the case of the state structures that China has experienced and is presently experiencing, it cannot be helped that from the point of view of the utilitarian Chinese these were considered to be empty forms of unification. The Chinese do not dislike the state as such, they merely ask to be excused from becoming part of the sort of state they have experienced up until this day. (...) However, judging by the commercial associations (*shōmu sōkai*) and the self-governing councils (*jichikai*) that spring up all over the country, it is evident that they can form an amazingly ingenious and strong collective as soon as they understand that this is in direct line with their interests. Thus we see a completely different side of the Chinese: (...) they are not inferior to any other ethnic nation when it comes to the capacity to develop their lives by means of the force of unity.⁴⁷³

Yoshino's future scenario for China was very clear: the ever-growing scale of Chinese readiness to unite themselves, as exemplified by the above-mentioned forms of regional autonomy, would gradually expand to the provincial level, forcing the unpopular warlords out and establishing sovereign states in their stead. And in due course, when the feeling of oneness had developed one step further to the national level, these provincial states would eventually merge into one united Chinese nation-state.⁴⁷⁴ This strong belief in the future nation-building and state-building potential of the Chinese was the reason why, although he admitted that "China does not nicely fit into the present academic definition of 'a state' (*kokka*)", he was adamant that legally it should be treated as such.⁴⁷⁵ It will hardly come as a surprise that this line of thought is exactly the same as in the case of his defence of democracy and equal rights on the national level; even though it is impossible for all members of society to be exactly equal at the same moment in time, as long as the inferior elements have the potential to become equal in their lifetime, they should be treated as equals. As in national society, so in international society. I have already discussed that Yoshino's conviction was not so deep and universal that it could overcome his limitations as a child of the colonial times and make him proclaim equal rights for the Koreans and Taiwanese. Nevertheless, it is to his credit that, in contrast to the majority of his contemporaries, he at least was so broad-minded as to give China the benefit of the doubt and to remind his own country time and time again that it was dealing with 'an independent and equal

473 'Shina no shōrai'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1924.11, reprinted in YSS, vol.9: pp.315-17. Yoshino thus clearly refuted the often heard view - also brought to the fore by Sugimori Kōjirō at the time of the Manchurian Incident - that the Chinese were strong as individuals but weak as a nation and accordingly could survive anywhere and under any circumstance, implying that they did not need a state of their own. It will be clear from the citation above that Yoshino highly estimated the Chinese capacity to form a solid state in the near future and strongly warned against judging China's future by looking at their 'miserable past and present'.

474 'Riku Ei-tei no shikkyaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.8: p.134; 'Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi'. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.16-17.

475 'Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi'. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.16-17.

foreign country'.⁴⁷⁶ And Yoshino would not be Yoshino if he did not let himself get carried away every once in a while by his optimism about China's capacities and end up presenting a picture of the country that no Japanese would seriously consider:

Even in China the real political power is slipping out of the hands of the bureaucrats and the military faction (*kanryō gunbatsu*). As to the question who will grasp it next, a dispute has broken out between the intelligentsia (*yūshiki kaikyū*) and the masses (*minshū*). If we have a look at the history of other countries, [the common pattern one can discern is that] political power first goes from the hands of the bureaucrats and the military faction into the hands of the intelligentsia, and that only very recently the masses have risen and are forcing the intelligentsia to convey the political power to them. However, since China is a late-developer country, these two classes have risen at one and the same time and the political arena is accordingly very complex and rife with violent fluctuations. In observing this, though, we should not ridicule the confusion of the Chinese politicians. It remains to be seen how cleverly they overcome the present problems but, depending on the way they accomplish this task, they may very well in one jump leap to a stage higher than ours.⁴⁷⁷

Nonetheless, aside from this sort of wishful thinking in relation to the new China in the making, Yoshino also had to deal with more practical problems involving the present or 'old' China. In such cases he presented a rather different view of the country and plainly stated that of the 'civilised countries' (*bunmeikoku*) of the world China was the most backward.⁴⁷⁸ As I discussed earlier, Yoshino's most important criterion in deciding the level of civilisation of a country was the extent to which constitutional government had gained ground or, in his own words, the extent to which 'the process of ethicalisation of the political struggle that will result in the establishment of complete supervision and control by the masses' had made headway. When judged by this criterion of political development, Yoshino remarked that it was completely senseless to even try to make a comparison between Europe and China, since they were at entirely different stages in the political ethicalisation process. Whereas he considered Japan to be somewhere in the middle between Europe and China - having copied the form of constitutional government but lacking the content, that is, the moral support of the people - China's political system was characterised as 'still in the feudal stage' in both form and content. Therefore in Japan, with its 'relatively developed electoral system and political tradition', he cherished the hope that, if only the people showed just a little more self-awareness and exertion, they would be able to make progress relatively easily because at least the framework was there to achieve a large extent of supervision over the political system. However, he deplored, in China things were

476 It would go too far to give all references for the instances where Yoshino calls China an independent state (*dokuritsukoku*). I have confined myself to this citation from 'Tai-Shi bunka jigyō ni tsuite (chū)'. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1923.5.9: p.1, because it mentions both the element of sovereignty and the element of equality of Yoshino's characterisation of China as an independent state.

477 'Shina ni okeru kenpō seitei undō no zento'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.11: p.178.

478 'Seiji hattatsushi-jō yori mitaru Shina to Nihon to Ō-Bei'. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1923.1.1: p.5.

completely hopeless and “yet another revolution will be needed to bring about fundamental reforms and political progress”.⁴⁷⁹

Yoshino’s assessment that Chinese society was still underdeveloped was thus not so much based on the fact that the country was in chaos and divided and could hardly be called a true state, but was based on its lack of democratic constitutional government. When he voiced his doubts as to whether the Chinese deserved the generous treatment they had received at the Washington Conference, he was mainly querying whether they were already democratically fit.⁴⁸⁰ Yoshino’s diagnosis of the main root of China’s weakness being quite different from that of his contemporaries, his idea of both a suitable cure and the way Japan could best contribute to the convalescence of the patient was remarkable as well. He was so bold as to prescribe ‘the decentralised Soviet model of gradual federalism’ and told his fellow-countrymen that they had better leave the patient on its own for a while. Supporting one faction in the Chinese internal power struggle with the necessary financial and military means may very well bring about a united China for the time being but, Yoshino warned, such an attempt at unification from above would not make China into either a solid or, even more importantly, a democratic nation-state. Since he did not consider either of the military factions strong enough to ever command a decisive victory over the others and to force their autocratic rule on the whole of China, from a long-term perspective he was not altogether unhappy with the idea of having the warlords fight each other to exhaustion. This would only facilitate their ousting by the autonomy movement of the Chinese people, which he thought to be the only medium that could bring an end to the detrimental armed struggle amongst the warlords and establish a firm nation-wide rule.⁴⁸¹

Apart from this somewhat abstract and altruistic argument, there was also a more opportunistic, economic element to Yoshino’s call for a policy of non-intervention. We have already seen how he time and again emphasised the importance of China for Japan’s economic ‘self-sufficiency’ and had since 1916 propagated a Sino-Japanese economic alliance, but when Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo in May 1921 secretly launched an identical ‘plan to establish an East Asian economic force’ we find Yoshino to be a staunch opponent. The grounds for his opposition are already evident in an article he published a few months earlier:

One of the reasons why Sino-Japanese relations have to be cordial is economic necessity. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with obtaining privileges in China on the basis of the cultivation of foreign relations, as long as the means are just and fair. It is of course also good to try to uphold these privileges, but we have to be careful that this object is not achieved at the sacrifice of our overall foreign policy. (...) Our country has obtained various privileges by becoming intimate with the Duan Qirui administration. Our efforts to uphold these privileges imply that it is advantageous, no, even essential that Duan stays in power. Didn’t we for this

479 Ibid.: p.5.

480 ‘Atarashiki Shina no shisōteki kaibō (jō)’. *Yokohama Bōeki Shinpō*, 1922.5.22: p.2; ‘Shina kinji (otsu) - Rekkoku no tai-Shi seisaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: p.194.

481 ‘Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi’. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: p.18; ‘Shina no shōrai’. *Fujin Kōron*, 1924.11, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: p.321.

reason over-commit ourselves to this unpopular faction and thus incur the wrath of the people? If we sacrifice our foreign policy too much, this might eventually very well lead to the situation that people will even start doubting the rightful acquirement of our established privileges.⁴⁸²

Takahashi's plan presupposed the existence of a central Chinese government. However, since in Yoshino's opinion the then so-called 'central government' did not even have the authority of the Beijing city hall, he pointed out that implementation of this plan would come down to helping the faction presently in power in Beijing to win in the competition with the other military factions and to unify China by force. Therefore, he considered such plans 'far too premature' and 'most dangerous' to both the process of China's unification and Japan's economic interests in the country.⁴⁸³ He did not say when he thought the time would be ripe for the execution of his top-priority policy of establishing an economic alliance with China, but he did make clear that Japan needed to have considerable patience: "For China to become a unified nation-state, one has to wait for the gradual process of an ever-growing scope of regional autonomy". And although this probably did not mean that Japan had to wait with the cultivation of close economic ties until the whole process had come to its conclusion, it was evident that he considered the replacement of the warlords by popularly supported regional governments to be a minimum precondition.⁴⁸⁴

Thus Yoshino warned against every form of over-commitment in China, from its early form of support for Duan Qirui's Anhui-faction to the later common form of support to Zhang Zuolin's Fengtian-faction, and propagated rather a policy of non-intervention. He considered the combination of the loss of Japan's dominant position in Beijing as a result of the demise of the 'pro-Japanese' Anhui-faction in the 1920 Anhui-Zhili War and the change in international relations as a result of the World War to be 'the perfect opportunity for reform'. From now on, he argued, Japan had to face 'equal competition' in China, and this sort of competition could be won only if the country made 'sincerity and righteousness' into the spearheads of its future China policy. Japan had to cater for China's sympathy by showing its 'true nature' as a friendly neighbour that was benignly and patiently looking on how the above-mentioned 'long-term process of an ever increasing scope of regional autonomy' was to bear the fruit of China's democratisation and unification.⁴⁸⁵

However, in spite of this often repeated expression of Japanese good intentions, his non-intervention policy would have no practical value at all if he did not make clear what it came down to in the case of Japan's most acute problem on Chinese soil, namely, the protection of Japanese concessions, possessions, rights, prerogatives and interests in the face of nationalist China's demand - and some Western pressure - for the retrocession of the same. What Yoshino proposed within the scope of his non-intervention policy was neither to give it all away, a step almost impossible to take as a Japanese, nor to retain it all, a position almost impossible to hold

482 'Tai-Shi seisaku no tenkai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.9: p.111.

483 'Riku Ei-tei no shikkyaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.8: p.134. Once again Yoshino's comments on an economic topic was predated by a similar article by Horie Kiichi, in this case his 'Nisshi keizai dōmeiron ni jikkōteki kachi ari ya', which was published in the previous issue of *Chūō Kōron* (1921.7: pp.17-28).

484 'Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi'. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.16-17.

485 'Tai-Shi seisaku no tenkai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.9: p.109.

as a self-proclaimed supporter of both ethnic national self-determination - including Chinese nationalism - and international cooperativism. He thus had to walk the thin, vague line between 'intervention' and 'non-intervention' by trying to keep a pragmatic balance between give-and-take (in this case better named 'return-and-retain'), which was rather similar to the 'non-interventionist China policy' later to be practised by Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijūrō. In the case of the 'Shidehara policy', where at least the relatively solid level of official policy implementation can be scrutinised, there is even an ongoing controversy over what this policy actually involved.⁴⁸⁶ It is therefore not surprising that in the case of Yoshino's brand of a non-interventionist China policy, which we can merely judge by his writings and not by its practical implementation, it is also not very easy to lay one's finger on the exact content.

The first instance in which we find Yoshino seriously contemplating the revision of the series of unequal Sino-Japanese treaties is at the beginning of 1923, in reaction to China's unilateral notification of the abrogation of some of these treaties.⁴⁸⁷ He started out by saying that he was, of course, not a proponent of 'giving up all our possessions from the imperialist era', but that on the other hand he was also of the opinion that 'within the light of the ideals of the new age' Japan's position in China was 'larger than justified'. It had become 'too much of a good

486 As yet there is still no consensus of opinion in the debate over the true content of Shidehara's policy of non-intervention in Chinese affairs, let alone agreement on the evaluation of the so-called '*Shidehara gaikō*' in relation to its 'antipode', the so-called '*Tanaka gaikō*', named after Tanaka Giichi who served as Foreign Minister (and Prime Minister) in between Shidehara's two stints as foreign minister (June 1924 - April 1927 and July 1929 - December 1931). The two main points of dispute are whether 'the Shidehara policy' was indeed non-interventionist and whether in the end it is any different from 'the Tanaka policy'. The most prominent contributions to this debate are Imai Seiichi, 'Seitō seiji to Shidehara gaikō'. *Rekishigaku Kenkyū*, no.219 (1958): pp.20-26; 'Usui Katsumi, '[Shidehara gaikō] oboegaki'. *Nihon Rekishi*, no.126 (1958): pp.62-68; Nezu Masashi, 'Shidehara gaikō no hyōka ni tsuite Imai Seiichi-shi ni kotaeru'. *Rekishigaku Kenkyū*, no.227 (1959): pp.41-43; Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism - The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931*, Harvard University Press, 1965; Etō Shinkichi, 'Keihō-sen shadan mondai no gaikō katei - Tanaka gaikō to sono haikai', in Shinohara Hajime & Mitani Taichirō, eds, *Kindai Nihon no seiji shidō - Seijika kenkyū II*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965: pp.375-429; Ikei Masaru, 'Dainiji Hō-Choku sensō to Nihon'. In Kurihara Ken, ed., *Tai-Manmō seisakushi no ichimen*, Hara Shobō, 1966: pp.193-224; Fujii Shōichi, 'Seitō seiji to Shidehara gaikō', in *Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai*, ed., *Taiheiyō sensōshi 1 - Manshū jihen*, Aoki Shoten, 1971: pp.85-100; Usui Katsumi, *Nitchū gaikōshi - Hokubatsu no jidai*, Hanawa Shobō, 1971; Nobuya Bamba, *Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma: New Light on Japan's China Policy, 1924-1929*, Minerva Press, Kyoto, 1972; Sidney De Vere Brown, 'Shidehara Kijūrō: The Diplomacy of the Yen', in R.D. Burns & E.M. Bennett, ed., *Diplomats in Crisis*, ABC-Clío, 1974: pp.201-25; Fujii Shōzō, 'Senzen no Chūgoku to Nihon - Shidehara gaikō wo megutte'. In Irie Keishirō & Andō Masashi, eds, *Gendai Chūgoku no kokusai kankei*, Nihon Kokusai Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1975: pp.32-66; William F. Morton, *Tanaka Giichi and Japan's China Policy*, St. Martin's Press, 1980; Banno Junji, 'Seitō seiji to Chūgoku seisaku'. In *Kindai Nihon Kenkyūkai*, ed., *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyū 2 - Kindai Nihon to Higashi Ajia*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1980: pp.96-113; Banno Junji, 'Daiichiji Shidehara gaikō no hōkai to Nihon rikugun'. In Banno Junji, *Kindai Nihon no gaikō to seiji*, Kenbun Shuppan, 1985: pp.122-50; Seki Shizuo, 'Shidehara Kijūrō no [Tai-Shi gaikō] - Naisei fukanshōshugi wo chūshin ni'. In Okamoto Kōji, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Ajia-kan*, Minerva Shobō, Kyoto, 1998: pp.121-47.

487 1923 was originally the year that the Russian lease of the Guandong peninsula and the Manchurian Railway - and thus, if one took the position that the treaties resulting from Japan's Twenty-One Demands were not valid, the Japanese inherited lease of the same - would expire.

thing' (*arigata meiwaku*) and he accordingly proposed that 'an objective justified balance' be found through 'spontaneous Japanese proposals aimed at reform'.⁴⁸⁸ In this sense he was very pleased with the performance of the Japanese delegation at the Special Tariff Conference on China in October 1925 in Beijing. In sharp contrast to Horie Kiichi, who foresaw that the sudden Japanese generosity to restore China's tariff autonomy would be accompanied by numerous conditions very unfavourable to China and thus characterised it as 'egoistic play-acting', Yoshino uncritically heralded this autonomous Japanese diplomatic action as 'a new course in Japan's China policy based on a more equal and just basis'.⁴⁸⁹ And he was even so bold as to characterise the armed revolt of Guo Songling in November of the same year, which incidentally brought the Beijing Conference to a premature end, as a good opportunity for Japan to show 'the unprecedented heroic decision' to give up its former rights, in the form of its strategic special position in Manchuria, on behalf of its future interests, in the form of strong and friendly economic relations with the whole of China.⁴⁹⁰

This indeed all sounds very much like 'a fundamental policy of Sino-Japanese friendship based on non-intervention in the Chinese internal struggle', but there were some conditions to this policy. Although he publicly pronounced his sympathy for China's demands for the restoration of its tariff autonomy and the abolition of the various extra-territorial rights and admitted that the existing Sino-Japanese treaties had been forced upon China by unjust means, he was not ready to simply start with a clean slate. This is probably one of the reasons why he emphasised 'spontaneous proposals for reform' from the Japanese side and tended to firmly refuse the 'unjustifiable and extreme Chinese demands', let alone unilateral 'Chinese cowardly notifications of abrogation of the treaties'.⁴⁹¹ His dilemma was that while he was keenly aware of the need for Japan to adjust its China policy, directly to the demands of Chinese nationalism and indirectly to the new general framework of international cooperativism, he wanted to do it as far as possible on Japanese terms. To use the same comparison Yoshino often used when describing the relation between the proletariat and the intelligentsia, China was the patient and

488 'Nisshi jōyaku kaitei mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: p.1.

489 'Manshū dōran taisaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.1: p.159. For the Beijing Conference, see Banba Nobuya, 'Pekin kanzei tokubetsu kaigi ni nozomu Nihon no seisaku kettei katei'. In Hosoya Chihiro & Watanuki Jōji, eds, *Taigai seisaku kettei katei no Nichi-Bei hikaku*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1977: pp.375-417. Horie's evaluation is to be found in 'Shina no kanzei jishuken to Nihon no tai-Shi keizai kankei'. *Kaizō*, 1925.12: pp.44-61.

490 'Manshū dōran taisaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.1: pp.159-60. Yoshino's claim that the Guo Songling revolt was 'a good opportunity' is not easy to understand unless one is aware of his quite exceptional interpretation of the incident. In contrast to his portrayal of Zhang Zuolin as a feudal dictator, Guo Songling was graced with the honorary title of a 'political reformer' who was trying to establish an enlightened rule in the country and merely had to use force because of the still immoral political system in the country. Yoshino of course thought that the comparatively democratic Guo would succeed in ousting the autocratic Zhang, and that accordingly the greater part of Japan's special privileges in Manchuria that depended on the tacit approval of Zhang would come to an end. 'Manshū dōran sono go no mondai' and 'Jitsuryoku kakkyo ka hōtō sonchō ka'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.2: p.98 and p.105. Another thing one should not overlook in this clear display of partiality is that Yoshino's closest Chinese friend, Yin Rugeng, acted as Guo's head-in-charge of foreign relations, an act for which he had to seek refuge in Japan after the failure of the short-lived revolt.

491 'Rinpō no tomo ni atau'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.2: p.1; 'Nisshi jōyaku kaitei mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: p.1; 'Shina jōyaku haiki tsūchō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: p.233.

knew best where it hurt, but Japan was the doctor that knew best how the pain had to be cured. Moreover, in this case the doctor had considerable interests of his own and, although knowing that it was a breach of the professional code, demanded some ‘inevitable’ guarantees before starting to operate.⁴⁹² Earlier on I discussed how Yoshinofavoured a policy of economic expansion aimed at China proper over the traditional policy of strategic expansion centred around Manchuria. He was thus evidently following in the traces of the editors of the economic journal *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*. Now he once more found himself in their company as he echoed Ishibashi Tanzan’s call to abandon Manchuria (*Manshū hōkiron*). Yoshino seemed to have become equally willing to go as far as to sacrifice part of Japan’s long-cherished position in Manchuria when he exclaimed: “What have our so-called established interests in China ever contributed to the majority of the Japanese people?”⁴⁹³ However, in the case of such pivotal ‘mainland China’ (*Shina hondo*) interests as the future management of the Hanyeping Coal and Iron Company - the Japanese dominated iron-manufacturing conglomerate in Shanghai which supplied Japan’s iron works with a major share of its pig iron and iron ore - Yoshino’s stance was rather different. On the basis of a British precedent in reaction to the rapid successes booked at the start of the latest Northern Expedition campaign in the summer of 1926, he even proposed a policy of ‘new interventionism’. This was a form of interventionism which was suited to the practical reality of a disorderly and divided China and which provided for small-scale and temporary military interventions in vital cases:

If China itself is unable to secure the rights and interests of other countries, it must de facto permit these countries to take free action, under the condition that their free action will not result in the eternal violation of China’s sovereignty. Therefore, it goes without saying that exploits such as occupying territory and seizing control (of industries) are forbidden. On the other hand, I do not think there is any need to protest so clamorously, if these interventions are merely of a temporary nature and do not leave behind effects which are hard to remove at a later date. (...) Aren’t the warlords the ones who obstruct China’s unification and development and the welfare of the people? (...) However, the Chinese people are not able to get rid of the warlords on their own, so it will not be to the disadvantage of China if Japan suppresses the warlords effectively and severs their lifeline. Naturally we will not be so senseless as to ask for China’s gratitude. On the contrary, we are really very sorry that we might intrude somewhat upon China’s sovereignty, but it is inevitable (...) and I think the Chinese will forgive us.

492 ‘Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi’. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: p.32; ‘Saikin no Ei-Shi kattō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.10: p.100. The characterisation of China as a sick man, or by Westerners as ‘the sick man of Asia’, was anything but original and is omnipresent in Japanese writings on contemporary China ever since the early Meiji Period. See, for instance, Joshua A. Fogel, *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China, 1862-1945*, Stanford University Press, 1996: pp. 66-125. However, turning China from a mere sick man or ‘an ailing organism’ into a mature patient, who stood in a direct relation to a Japanese doctor and who evidently had the right of informed consent, was definitely very uncommon.

493 ‘Kanton seifu wo shōnin seyo’. *Shakai Minshū Shinbun*, 1927.1.20: p.2.

When the warlords have been destroyed and the representatives of the people are willing to restore order in their country, we will back out at any moment.⁴⁹⁴

The last few sentences of this citation make clear that Yoshino was well aware that by his sanction to ‘intrude somewhat upon China’s sovereignty’ he was treading on slippery ground. It was not for nothing that he took great pains to explain that this temporary emergency measure of ‘new interventionism’ was not necessarily at odds with his fundamental policy of non-interventionism, in the sense that it formally recognised China’s territorial sovereignty and thus was definitely not aimed at the acquisition of new rights and territory. Still, in the face of serious threats to vital interests of the Japanese *people* and the continued Chinese ‘state of underdevelopment’ he could not think of any other alternative. His fundamental stand that Japan should not stubbornly hold on to what he thought it should concede was consistent, his support for China’s proper development and his sympathy for its demands for the restoration of tariff autonomy and the abolition of extraterritorial rights were sincere, but his admonition to China that it first and foremost had the duty to exert itself to improve the present unlawful situation in the country was just as heartfelt.⁴⁹⁵ Thus, because of the fact that the main precondition of a ‘developed China’ was slow to materialise, Yoshino’s policy of non-interventionism more or less came down to an impromptu policy, which consisted of a combination of piecemeal concessions, in the case of improvements, and minor interventions, in the case of deterioration in China’s process of civilisation and inner strengthening.

The fact that Yoshino nonetheless supported the concessions his country made to China on the respective occasions of the Washington Conference, the Sino-Japanese negotiations on Shandong, and the Beijing Conference, shows that his line of argument during the period 1921-1926 was more influenced by the changed international framework than by the scant developments in China itself. His grumbling remark at the time of the Washington Conference that China had earned more than it actually deserved on the basis of its development tells us as much. On the whole it was not Japan that could autonomously decide how much China was to have, but it was the United States (and to a lesser extent England) which took the initiative and set the pace. Japan, Yoshino was aware, was fully occupied just trying “not to fall behind the progressive trend of the world” and in spite of his frequent calls upon his country to become a forerunner in its China policy he probably resigned himself to the fact that Japan was not up to it.⁴⁹⁶ In this sense Yoshino’s ‘policy’ of non-interventionism was hardly different from Shidehara’s, which I would characterise as mainly a wait-and-see policy that roughly came down to not returning what you do not necessarily have to return but at the same time not holding on by means of considerable armed force to what no longer can be held onto by any other means. Thus, in both cases non-interventionism is better defined as ‘no large-scale military interventions’ rather than interpreted in absolute terms. Like Shidehara, Yoshino thought that by means of such a reactive, low-profile policy - which, as mentioned, included small-scale military interventions in case of emergency - Japan could stay within the bounds that the new world leader would

494 ‘Saikin no Ei-Shi kattō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.10: pp.99-100.

495 ‘Nisshi jōyaku kaitei mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: p.1; ‘Rinpō no tomo ni atau’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.2: p.1.

496 ‘Nisshi jōyaku kaitei mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.4: p.1.

tolerate and, in the end, in spite of the fundamental differences in point of view between the more 'idealistic' United States and the more 'pragmatic' Japan, he hoped to come to a working relation based on 'practical arguments'.⁴⁹⁷

4.5 Summary: Japan's Moral Bankruptcy and the Veneration of Foreign Icons

In this section I have discussed how Yoshino, in sharp contrast to the majority of his fellow-countrymen, was quite willing to recognise the supremacy in the Far East of the new strong great power of the postwar world, the United States of America, and to pledge allegiance to the epitomisation of this supremacy in the form of the Washington treaties. Further, I have pointed out that he was very exceptional in the sense that his support for naval disarmament, the abolition of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, etcetera, should to a large extent be understood within the framework of his bowing to American *moral* superiority. What is even more surprising, however, is that there is no marked change in his stance in the years after the Washington Conference. Although the United States doggedly refused to take part in and thus strengthen the League of Nations, the deficient but still main institution of international cooperativism, and in 1924 enacted in Congress a new and explicitly discriminating immigration law, Yoshino continued to place the country on a pedestal.

There are two factors which contributed to this 'eccentric behaviour'. In the first place the United States never became a 'normal country' in Yoshino's view. He treated it as an exceptional country which was inspired by lofty principles, not as just another country which merely sought to attain its basic national ambitions. This is why Yoshino was prone to take American demands into account: not on the grounds that the country had become the new superpower which could not be ignored, but on the grounds that it was the sole true representative of the new era of international justice. It also explains why he just could not admit that America constituted a potential enemy for Japan.

Secondly, his already low public esteem of his motherland during the first postwar years was even further aggravated in the year 1923. Previously he used to describe Japan as a morally inferior nation that still had to commence the great task of reform whereas the Western nations had already more or less accomplished this mission, but at least he was convinced that the Japanese were on the verge of making a serious start. However, the mass-slaughter of Korean immigrants in the wake of the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1 September seriously undermined this 'optimistic' assessment. That the military authorities had made use of the chaos to secretly get rid of some communists and other dangerous elements⁴⁹⁸ was an act which was still pretty much in line with Yoshino's view of the military clique (*gunbatsu*), but the incontestable fact that the common people themselves, the group on which he had staked his hopes for the progress of the Japanese nation, had resorted to what Yoshino himself admitted to be 'the indiscriminate murder

497 'Shina kinji (hei) - Washinton kaigi ni okeru Shina no chii'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: pp.195-96.

498 There have been several indications that Yoshino together with Ōsugi Sakae was also on the hit-list of the army, but as yet no concrete proof has been found. See Yasunari Jirō, *Museifu jigoku – Ōsugi Sakae shūki*, Shinsensha, 1973: pp.175-76; Nomura Masayasu, 'Amakasu tai-i'. *Gunji keisatsu zasshi*, 1924.10 and Yoshino Sakuzō, 'Warumono atsukai saruru watakushi'. *Bunka seikatsu no kiso*, 1924.11. Reprinted in *YSS*, vol.12: pp.33-34.

of innocent Korean citizens' must have been a great blow to his view of the future Japan. There was no way to treat the misdeeds of the so-called 'vigilance groups' (*jikeidan*) as mere incidents. He knew this was something that directly concerned the countenance of the whole of the Japanese nation as a civilised nation and he did not refrain from telling them:

There is an almost countless number of people who have lost many of their beloved and many of their possessions as a result of this earthquake, but there is no one as wretched as the dead souls of those innocent Koreans who have fallen victim to the hysteria of the masses. (...) How can we ever face the rest of the world after the huge disgrace of having indiscriminately murdered Koreans, regardless of age or sex, as a form of national retaliation. (...) At present, the first measure we should take concerning the genocide of the Koreans, is to give relief and make reparations to the victims. This would have amounted to an extremely grave diplomatic incident if the victims had been foreigners, but the fact that Korea is Japanese territory does not imply that we can skim lightly over this question. (...) Subsequently, I also think it necessary to implement tangible measures in order to express the national feeling of remorse and apology of the Japanese (*naichijin*) for the massacre of Koreans. This does not derive from some sort of political expediency to improve cordial Japanese-Korean relations, but is rather our natural moral duty as a great nation.⁴⁹⁹

Yoshino was almost the only Japanese who felt called upon to break the silence enforced by the censure of reports on the massacre of the Koreans. Through his pivotal position as a medium between the Japanese academia, media and elite on the one hand and the Koreans in Japan on the other, information about the cruelties naturally flooded in Yoshino's direction, but one cannot deny that he also exerted himself to collect and publish data⁵⁰⁰. Those activities were not merely aimed at exposing and denouncing the complicity of the authorities or to ease his conscience as the Korean's best friend. By showing them the vast number and the structural pattern of the assassinations, Yoshino tried to make the people aware of their joint responsibility and, most important in many of his public actions, to make them self-reflect.⁵⁰¹ However, the same facts

499 'Chōsenjin gyakusatsu jiken ni tsuite'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.11: pp.173-75.

500 For Yoshino's pivotal position in nonofficial Japanese-Korean relations, see Matsuo Takayoshi, 'Yoshino Sakuzō to zai-Nichi Chōsenjin gakusei', in Matsuo, *Minponshugi to teikokushugi*, Misuzu Shobō, 1998. Yoshino collected data concerning both 'the suppression of labour activists and socialists' and 'the genocide of Koreans', which he intended to publish in the special earthquake issue of the magazine *Kaizō*, but the Home Office did not allow him to make his data public. The drafts are preserved in the Yoshino collection of the library of Tokyo University's law faculty and have been published in Kang Tōksang & Kūm Pyōngdong, eds, *Gendaishi shiryō 6 - Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, Misuzu Shobō, 1963: pp.345-62. As representatives of the Nijusannichikai, which was made up of prominent contributors to *Kaizō*, he and Horie Kiichi visited the various ministries in order to call attention to and protest against the killings. See Yoshino diary, 1923.10.8 in *YSS*, vol.14.

501 'Chōsenjin gyakusatsu jiken ni tsuite'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.11: pp.174-75. In the above-mentioned data collected by Yoshino, his orderly and systematic calculations added up to a total of 2613 Korean casualties, as far as known by the end of October 1923. Kang Tōksang & Kūm Pyōngdong, eds, *Gendaishi shiryō 6 - Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, Misuzu Shobō, 1963: pp.360-62.

made Yoshino himself admit that this was not an act of ‘a morally inferior people’ slowly working its way up, but an act of a nation fundamentally and totally morally bankrupt and that as a result of its ‘morality of submission’ and its ‘inability to spontaneously and creatively contribute to society’ could not but ‘abuse every little bit of authority it was given’.⁵⁰²

In this frame of mind it was no wonder that Yoshino’s tendency to venerate the ‘civilised and ethical’ America and England rather than his own ‘backward and barbaric’ country was reinforced. Moreover, his constant search for a *moral* leader outside Japan sometimes made his view of those countries he was attracted to somewhat uncritical, an inclination which was also facilitated by the fact that in most cases he had to rely on second-hand information or his own outdated and restricted impressions of the prewar world.⁵⁰³ Hence his characterisation of the two evangelists of the internationalist gospel, the Christian United States and the socialist Soviet Union, as countries that stood to the utmost by their principles. Although Yoshino was rather pragmatic himself, especially when it came to internal politics, he did not expect these ‘principled countries’ to compromise and, moreover, did not even seem to think that they should.⁵⁰⁴ This interpretation of various foreign countries, in sharp contrast to Yoshino’s interpretation of the ‘unprincipled Japan’, tended to result in a rather distorted and idealistic view of the international world order, in which conforming to the whims of the moral and political leader could be explained as promoting world civilisation.

502 ‘Jikeidan bōkō no shinri’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.11: p.1.

503 Apart from a one-week lecture trip to the Japanese YMCA in Shanghai in early August 1923 and a few lecture trips to Korea, Yoshino did not travel abroad to see for himself what the new, postwar world was like.

504 A good example is ‘Nichi-Ro kōshō no zento’. *Fujin Kōron*, 1924.11: pp.286-88.

5 PUTTING THE UNITED STATES INTO PERSPECTIVE, 1927-1931

5.1 England as the Proletarian Paradise

Return to England

Although Yoshino had come to acknowledge the political and moral superiority of the United States in the field of international politics, he always held a weak spot for the cradle of parliamentary democracy England. Throughout his life he held up the example of England to his own people, not only as the oldest of the modern democracies but also as the most advanced and the most suitable to Japanese needs. In his opinion the country had a well functioning and stable political system, because of its system of two large political parties that alternately formed cabinets and the supremacy of the legislative power over the executive power. This, of course, was also more or less the case in the United States, although here the position of the cabinet leader, the president, was much more pronounced and the two-party system was somewhat less stable because in theory the situation could arise that the president had to face a hostile Congress. Be that as it may, England clearly had some extra virtues. Yoshino, who on an earlier occasion had advocated the constitutional monarchy as the zenith of constitutional rule, very much appreciated what he termed ‘the strong and spontaneous relation between the democratic English nation and their symbolic leader’, but most of all he confessed to being immensely impressed by the high moral character of the ‘truly respectable and gentlemanly’ British political leaders.⁵⁰⁵ That was why, he argued, England’s political evolution towards democracy had been gradual and peaceful. Conservative forces did not have to be toppled by violent means as had happened in the case of Russia; the Tories had been wise enough to be aware of the inevitability of reforms and had gracefully given in.⁵⁰⁶ Another feature Yoshino highlighted was that in England, in sharp contrast to Japan, the system of political decision-making through the majority vote worked almost perfectly. In his opinion there were hardly any machinations by the higher party echelons that tied the individual representatives to the official party line and prevented the reflection of public sentiment (*minshin*) in national politics, and as a result “politics and morality are usually in harmony”.⁵⁰⁷ Therefore, Yoshino was confident that, due to its ‘superb training in common sense’, Britain would never turn fascist like the ‘religiously fanatic Italians’ and he had no hesitation in presenting the country as *the* model of sound evolution towards democracy for the Japanese nation.⁵⁰⁸

This worship of the English as a politically supremely moral nation, which every once in a while went to incredible extremes, is not markedly different from his views before and during

505 ‘Eikoku no idai’. *Shinjin*, 1923.7: p.10. Apart from Yoshino’s esteem for David Lloyd George he also highly appreciated Neville Chamberlain, notwithstanding the fact that the latter had ‘betrayed’ the former by returning to the Conservative Party. ‘Shōdai shōgen sansoku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.1: pp.277-78.

506 ‘New Thought in Japan’. *The Japan Review*, 1920.6: p.235. This article is a rendition of a lecture Yoshino gave at a meeting of foreign residents in March 1920. It was first published in the *Japan Advertiser* of 2 April 1920 and apart from this reprint in *The Japan Review* also resurfaced as a chapter on ‘Liberalism in Japan’ in K.K. Kawakami, ed., *What Japan thinks*, Macmillan, New York, 1921.

507 ‘Shin-eiyūshugi (ge)’. *Bunka Seikatsu*, 1922.12: p.48.

508 ‘Shōdai shōgen sūsoku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.12: p.148.

the war. However, what is striking is that Yoshino remained completely silent when England seemed to be partially living up to this image of a democratic forerunner by the installation of its first 'socialist' cabinet in January 1924.. This silence becomes even more difficult to understand when we consider that, at the time many, Japanese political commentators and *Kulturkritiker* all of a sudden turned their attention to England, and the fact that he himself had mentioned only a year earlier that 'the shifts in power on the British political scene are of extreme importance to us'.⁵⁰⁹ The most likely excuse for this inconsistency is that at the time of the inauguration of Ramsay MacDonald's first administration Yoshino was making his transfer to the *Asahi Shinbun*, a newspaper that might not have been primarily interested in his views of England. He nevertheless continued to write articles for numerous magazines, including his anonymous opening editorials (*kantōgen*) for the *Chūō Kōron*, which dealt mainly with developments in Japan, but also in China, Korea and Russia. The only instance he mentions England throughout the year 1924 is in connection with an 1867 translation of the English book *How We Are Governed*, which gives an outline of the English political system of more than half a century ago.⁵¹⁰

However, maybe even more remarkable is that by the middle of 1926, when all other reform-minded commentators had long ago turned their eyes away from England in utter despair over the fall of the short-lived Labour Party cabinet followed by the restoration of conservative rule, Yoshino's attention after a three-and-a-half-year absence was suddenly restored. This rather unexpected shift of focus can hardly be explained by the scant developments on the British political scene at the time. The Tory cabinet led by Stanley Baldwin was still going strong in the second year of its administration, and elections that could make a change in this situation were not expected for another two or three years. Yoshino's renewed attention for England should thus be seen in the light of developments in Japan itself, namely the introduction of 'universal' male suffrage in the previous year by the coalition cabinet under Katō Takaaki and the ensuing hasty preparations made in various quarters towards the establishment of proletarian parties in view of the first elections under the new system that were due at the latest by the beginning of 1928.

On a Moderating Mission

Until 1925 Yoshino had remained true to his motto that the intellectual, and especially 'the independent and pure scholar' which he had once again become after his short stint as a 'base' newspaperman, should stay aloof from the 'practical movement' (*jissai undō*).⁵¹¹ He did not merely stay aloof himself from the first unsuccessful attempts to establish a proletarian party, he also publicly recommended the proletarian class not to automatically throw in its lot with the proletarian parties but to remain neutral and rather to support the bourgeois parties - read: the *Kenseikai* - if these were on the right track. He even went so far as to give the proletarian candidates the unsolicited advice not to form a party yet, but rather to prepare themselves individually for the elections and to only start thinking about forming a party once they had been elected.⁵¹² Needless to say, this sort of advice was completely out of line with the political reality

509 Ibid.: p.148.

510 '[Eisei ikaga]'. *Kokka Gakkai Zasshi*, 1924.8, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.11: pp.72-78.

511 'Gakuen no jiyū to rinkin sōsa'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1923.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: pp.150-51.

512 'Musen seitō mondai ni taisuru gojin no taido'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: p.166.

of Japan's electoral system and was thus not heeded by any politician in his right mind. Still, Yoshino's at first rather ambivalent stand on the formation of a proletarian party, a cause which he supported wholeheartedly, is not that strange when one considers that the socialist and communist influenced left wing of the proletarian movement participated prominently in the first attempts to bring about a unified proletarian party.⁵¹³ His remark in October 1925 that it was "still premature to form a proletarian party" might thus be better interpreted in the light of "it is still premature to adopt socialism", a citation from an article only eight months later.⁵¹⁴ In fact, Yoshino knew very well that it was essential for the proletarian reform movement to form a strong and united front in order to make any political headway and accordingly his true feeling was to lament the fact that the movement had become extremely divided. It is clear that he mainly blamed the extremist left wing of the movement for this situation, and his usual recommendation not to "unnaturally recreate a common front" should rather be seen as a mere expression of his reluctance to cooperate with socialists and communists.⁵¹⁵

His awareness that a strong and united proletarian party was needed and that to this end the radical left wing elements first had to be ousted was the framework in which Yoshino became much more active than his self-imposed initial limitation of 'a neutral adviser to the proletarian class' had permitted. He did not merely exert himself by means of writing an imposing number of articles on the way the proletarian movement should ideally progress. From early 1926 onwards, although never a formal party member and most of the time outside the public eye, he was also very active on behalf of the creation of a moderate proletarian party. This is evident from his strong commitment to the Shakai Minshūtō (Social Democratic Party), which he helped found in December 1926 together with Abe Isoo and Horie Kiichi, and his constant and important role in the long-term process of establishing a merger between the various proletarian parties, which was only successfully concluded shortly before his death with the formation of the Shakai Taishūtō (Social Masses' Party) in July 1932.⁵¹⁶ These activities to a large extent included intricate schemes to outflank the above-mentioned 'radical elements'. Since in the first phase of the proletarian party movement these 'radical elements' mainly consisted of communists and socialists, Yoshino and other middle-class 'mentors' were considerably aided by the strong arm of the law which crushed down on every association suspected of communist ties or

513 For the first attempts at the formation of proletarian parties, see Stephen S. Large, *Organized Workers and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 1981: pp.101-118 and George O. Totten, III, *The Social Democratic Movement in Prewar Japan*, Yale University Press, 1966: pp.47-63. In order to better understand the support of Yoshino and other 'middle-class' intellectuals for a proletarian party one should take heed of the fact that in Japan 'proletarian party' was never synonymous with a socialist or leftist party. As is clearly evident in the cases of the Shakai Minshūtō (1926-1932) and the Shakai Taishūtō (1932-1940), these were more 'a motley crew' that together covered an extreme breadth of political sympathies.

514 'Shin-jiyūshugi no teishō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.6: p.1. In this article Yoshino did not reject socialism as such, but rather emphasised that it was 'only after the baptism by liberalism and the formation of regional and central autonomous organs that a socialist type of industrial management can be considered'.

515 'Kyōdō sensen-ron wo hyōsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.11, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: p.175; 'Tanitsu musantō-ron to gunbi shukushō no teishō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.12: p.1; 'Musantō ni taisuru kokumin no kanshin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.5: p.1.

516 Yoshino also became a distinct part of the Shakai Minshūtō entourage through his regular campaign speeches for election candidacies from this party, in particularly for Abe Isoo and Akamatsu Kakumaro.

inclinations. While it is true that this sort of help had not been sought, it is hard to deny that Yoshino had not been rueful over the prohibition of a communist party in Japan and he also showed ample consideration for government intervention in the case of left wing proletarian parties such as the Rōdō Nōmintō (Labour-Farmer Party), which was forcibly disbanded in April 1928.⁵¹⁷ However, when at the end of the decade the right wing of the proletarian movement gradually took over the role from the left wing as the main group of ‘radical elements’ that formed an obstacle to the materialisation of a united proletarian party, such outside help could not be counted on and the ‘sound elements’ had to do the job themselves. Yoshino was not loath to do his part and accordingly he gladly ‘helped’ his son-in-law Akamatsu Katsumaro, the flamboyant secretary-general of the Shakai Minshūtō and leader of its state-socialist faction, to make his decision to secede from the party, thus making the way free for a merger between the two big proletarian parties of the day. And as a clear sign of his direct and very active involvement in the merger between the Shakai Minshūtō and the Rōnō Taishūtō, Yoshino even accepted the function of counselor of the newly formed Shakai Taishūtō.⁵¹⁸

In Praise of Moderation: England as the Model in the Field of Domestic Policy

Yoshino considered ‘radicals’ as the main opponents to be faced on the way to a strong and unified proletarian party. This point of view was reinforced by the fact that the objects of their adoration were ‘radical regimes’: Bolshevik Russia in the case of his socialist and communist opponents and fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the case of his state-socialist opponents. In such circumstances, was there a better device to use for the counterattack than England, the country he had once described as ‘the champion of moderation’?⁵¹⁹ In the instance of the Soviet Union his argument was twofold. On the one hand he vented the view, as mentioned before, that the adoption of socialism was still a bridge too far. The socialist model, he argued, could only be considered after ‘the baptism by liberalism’. In other words, although the Soviet example might seem attractive to the proletarian class, it could not go straight there but had to go by way of a liberal country.⁵²⁰ On the other hand, and this was the more common argument, he stressed that Japan and Russia were at different stages of civilisation and the Japanese could no longer be expected to align themselves blindly behind one socialist party, which was moreover endorsing violent means:

517 ‘Okoriuru shi-go no mondai ni tsuite no shiken’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.5, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: pp.248-55.

518 For Yoshino’s pressure on Akamatsu, see Yoshino diary, 1932.1.19-20, 1932.4.13, in *YSS*, vol.15. Yoshino’s strong involvement in the merger can be traced in the same 1932 diary, from January until July.

519 Although Yoshino sometimes mentioned the United States in the same breath as England, the fact that he chose the former strong great power and not the world leader of the day as the example to emulate was probably due to both his own preferences discussed in this section and the impossibility of putting forward the United States, the champion and symbol of capitalism, as the example for the proletarian class. England of course was also capitalist, but since it at least spawned a socialist government once in a while, it was a lot more acceptable and therefore acted as the antipode of both the Soviet Union and Italy in Yoshino’s view of the world.

520 ‘Shin-jiyūshugi no teishō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.6: p.1.

It is very doubtful whether [the idea of dictatorial rule by the proletarian class in the form of a single-party system] will succeed in obtaining the support of the masses in our country in the same way it did in Russia. The Japanese are not so extremely ignorant and backward as the Russians. Even if one party claims that it is the most faithful representative of the masses and that it is self-evident that the masses as one man will join the ranks of the party, at present there are so many self-proclaimed ‘true representatives of the masses’ who are intoxicated by their own subjective views. (...) It is a grave mistake to think that the Japanese masses, like the Russian ignorant people (*gumin*) will heedlessly run in the direction of the one that shouts loudest.

I don’t think that in this country there is any prospect of the realisation of exclusive rule by one party. We should therefore conclude that the objective situation proletarian parties will experience in the near future will be the co-existence of various political parties. If one accepts this as a fact, the only option left is to do everything in one’s power on behalf of the liberation movement, in which the proletarian masses have collectively placed their high hopes. In other words, [they should exert themselves] on behalf of a rational alliance or merger [of the various proletarian factions] on a democratic basis.⁵²¹

His argument in the case of Italian fascism was identical: he treated it only in terms of ‘undemocratic’ and ‘dictatorial one-party rule’ - thus more or less including Italy and the Soviet Union in one category - and simply disposed of it as not suitable for a civilised country like Japan.⁵²²

Thus stressing a plural party system, liberalism, rationality and the importance of just and democratic means Yoshino turned to England. His choice might have been ‘instinctive’, but considering the above-mentioned conditions, it is no wonder he took to the British Labour Party of the 1920s, whose program has been characterised as “a program of gradualist, democratic socialism operating through customary British parliamentary procedures and hence able to gain the good will of large sections of the middle classes”.⁵²³ This last characterisation is especially important in the case of Yoshino. Although he supported the establishment of a strong proletarian party, being a member of the middle class himself he always emphasised that such a party should not become parochial but had to strive to be national, that is, to cater to the needs of all classes. Moreover, as a pragmatist, his argument was not based on the doctrinal premise that a proletarian party would rule Japan on its own but usually on the much more humble hope that a proletarian party could support the Kenseikai (from June 1927 onwards Minseitō) against the Seiyūkai, the ‘arch-enemy of the people’ in Yoshino’s idiom, and in the process influence the former established party to become more social. Although the relative weight of the coalition partners was completely reversed, this concept was rather in the vein of the English Labour Party cabinets of the 1920s, which with the support of the Liberal Party were able to hold down the Conservative Party.⁵²⁴

521 ‘Musantō gōdō-ron no senketsu mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.12, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: pp. 277-78.

522 *Ibid.*: pp.273-74.

523 R.R. Palmer & Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World*, sixth edition, Alfred A. Knopf, 1983: p.774.

524 Ozeki Motoaki, ‘Minponshugi-ron no shūen to ni dai-seitōsei-ron no kaizō’. *Shirin*, 80-1 (1997):

In short, it was simply impossible for Yoshino to feel any form of sympathy for such ‘excrescences of civilisation’ as the Italian Fascist party or the German Nazi party, and if there was any socialist party to be venerated it was definitely not the Russian Communist Party or any of its satellite parties in other countries, which he despised for their tendency to “first and foremost point their guns at the social democrats”, but rather the ‘pragmatic, realistic, commonsensical, democratic, non-radical, parliamentary and anti-communist’ British Labour Party.⁵²⁵ Still, Yoshino’s admiration for the English model was certainly not restricted to this one party. At times when the Labour Party was not in office he just as easily lauded the Conservative Party, which in his eyes was definitely not the British equivalent of the Seiyūkai he detested so much. When, for instance, in 1926 the Tories were looking for a rapprochement with Soviet Russia, only shortly after they had driven the Labour Party out of office by means of allegations of communist connections, he was very much impressed:

The conservative delegates to Russia are excellent. (...) In doing their investigations and research, they strive to be completely free from earlier prejudices. (...) Neither is the English government reluctant to admit its past mistakes and to reform its policy on the basis of such research. (...) I am very envious of the Conservative Party which permitted the publication of such unrestrained opinions. And I can only express my limitless admiration for the four members of parliament who were so honest in their observations and their reports.⁵²⁶

And when the conservative Baldwin cabinet stood down after its severe loss in the 1929 elections, Yoshino merely highlighted the fact that it ‘bravely and rightfully’ handed in its resignation because it was no longer supported by a majority in parliament, but he did not say a word about the meaning of the change from a Conservative to a Labour administration.⁵²⁷ Although such uncritical praise for both sides of the political spectrum seems rather odd at first, it becomes a lot easier to understand when one considers that Yoshino confessed to “envy all British political parties” and thought the English government and people in general to be ‘excellent’ (*erai*).⁵²⁸ In his eyes most British were sensible and righteous and as a result of this ‘national quality’ political rule could be, and in fact was, completely based on the opinion of the people:

The [British] workers do not necessarily aim to annihilate the capitalists and the capitalists do not necessarily aim to oppress the workers. A war that is not aimed to bring down the enemy may sound somewhat odd, but what they try to do is to call upon the sympathy of the public and by means of its support to make their enemy give in to their demands. (...) In this connection we should not forget that in every type of social conflict in England there always solemnly exists a sound

pp.109-13.

525 ‘Musantō gōdō-ron no senketsu mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.12, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: pp. 273-74; ‘Eikoku Rōdōtō no shin-seikō’, *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.10: pp.62-63.

526 ‘Eikoku Hoshutō giin no Rokoku hōmon’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.7: pp.142-43.

527 ‘Sōjishoku to kensei jōdō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.7: p.1.

528 ‘Eikoku Hoshutō giin no Rokoku hōmon’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.7: pp.142-43.

third party. That is to say that in each case the popular masses pass a fair judgement as a sound and objective party. This is precisely the reason why England's public life (*kōteki seimei*) proceeds at a moderate but imposing pace and on a solid basis that almost makes one spiteful (*nikurashii*). (...) This relationship is of course most conspicuous in the world of politics. The English political parties do not have so-called regional footholds (*jiban*) such as in Japan. This is because the general populace stands above the enticements of the political parties.⁵²⁹

This was what Yoshino termed 'the superior soundness of English politics' (*Eikoku no sugurete kenzen naru*): the people entrusted politics to the politicians, but since the people like objective outsiders would only side with the righteous and would not blindly throw in their lot with one party without having critically evaluated its actual achievements, all the parties could do to be victorious in the political struggle was to be moderate and virtuous.⁵³⁰ A government elected within such a system or, more precisely, a government endowed with the blessing of an eminent nation, was in principle 'good' and a change of government accordingly became a minor alteration of not too great importance.

Yoshino professed to be aware of the shortcomings of political democracy, such as the fact that 'the rule by the undisciplined and irresolute many' was a very complex and faltering system that in all its time and labour intensiveness often seemed far less attractive than the fascistic 'rule by the disciplined and resolute few'. Nevertheless, mainly based upon his observations of the working of democracy in England, he optimistically predicted that "in the West, parliamentary government can and probably will survive [fascist tendencies], because those who implement it realize its defects and are constantly striving to remedy these". In sharp contrast, Yoshino was not so sure about 'the East' (read: Japan).⁵³¹ The reason is simple. Although he must have seriously hurt the dignity of his fellow-countrymen by time and again emphasising that they should learn from the English and thus should not look backwards by following the Soviet model but should aim to go 'three grades ahead', he simultaneously often warned that the Japanese reformers had to be aware that developments in England were taking place in 'a completely different dimension' and that there was 'an immense gap' between the two countries. Whereas Japan was still haunted by feudal relations and customs, the English had "long ago solved the problems that we are confronted with at present"; they could not merely boast of a long tradition of political equality but had also recently attained 'industrial justice' in the relation between capital and labour.⁵³² Yoshino thus held up the example of England to the Japanese nation and more or less promised the proletarian class this same paradise of political, social and economic justice once they had advanced to the high level of the British system.

529 'Eikoku no saikin no rōdō sōgi yori no kyōkun'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1926.7, reprinted in Yoshino Sakuzō, *Furui seiji no atarashii mikata*, Bunka Seikatsu Kenkyūkai, 1927: pp.309-10.

530 Ibid.: p.310.

531 'Fascism in Japan'. *Contemporary Japan*, 1932.9: pp.185-197.

532 'Eikoku no saikin no rōdō sōgi yori no kyōkun'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1926.7, reprinted in Yoshino Sakuzō, *Furui seiji no atarashii mikata*, Bunka Seikatsu Kenkyūkai, 1927: p.302; 'Eikoku tankō sōgi to waga kuni kosaku mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.7, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.10: pp.207-10.

However, when we consider his own reaction to a questionnaire in June 1931 that there was absolutely no prospect of a proletarian cabinet in Japan and the most one could hope for in the near future was female suffrage, it is evident that he knew very well that such promises were predominantly based on wishful thinking.⁵³³

5.2 The Advent of China as an Important Power in Asia

The New Unified Nationalist China

Yoshino's mid-1926 turn to England for guidance and inspiration, as a result of developments on the Japanese domestic political scene, set in motion a process of putting into perspective the overwhelming stress he had laid in the first half of the 1920s on the political and moral supremacy of the United States. The extent of this process was rather limited at first, since Yoshino treated England and the United States as the champions in the seemingly unconnected fields of respectively national and international affairs. However, it was considerably furthered at the end of the same year by the arrival on the Asian scene of a new force that in Yoshino's eyes seemed sufficiently strong and moral to partly take over the American role of a progressive reformer of international relations in East Asia. This 'new force' was nationalist China, in the form of the Guomindang led by Chiang Kai-shek. The Guomindang had of course been around for quite a while, but up till then Yoshino had paid no serious attention to the so-called 'Southern Faction' and hardly ever mentioned the party in his many articles on developments in China. As described earlier in this chapter, he had concentrated mainly on the rather abstract 'Young China' and on initiatives aimed at regional autonomy, and as late as September 1926 we even find him flying the colours of 'warlord renegades' like Guo Songling and Feng Yuxiang.⁵³⁴ However, all these mediums to fulfil his hopes for a revolution in China faded from sight when in December 1926 he suddenly started to express his full support for Chiang's Guomindang as the one and only unifying power. Needless to say, this was the direct result of the increasing headway the joint Guomindang and communist troops were making on their Northern expedition.⁵³⁵

Although this was a joint force, Yoshino at first chose to ignore the presence of communist 'extremist elements' and merely highlighted the fact that the new force was 'nationalist' and 'popular' and thus worthy of Japan's support:

We should unconditionally recognise the Guomindang government in Canton. (...)
It goes without saying that the Canton government at present forms a great force

533 'Eikoku no seihen to gikai seiji'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1931.12: p.1; 'Kongo jūnen no yogen'. *Fujin no Tomo*, 1931.6: p.31.

534 For Yoshino's support of Guo and Feng, see respectively 'Manshū dōran sono go no mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.2: pp.98-99 and 'Shina to Roshia to Nihon'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.9, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: pp.331-34.

535 Some may be attracted to also consider the fact that Chiang was Christian and thus more acceptable in the eyes of Yoshino. However, although Chiang married the Christian Song Meiling in December 1927, he was only baptised in 1930. Moreover, from the same point of view it is very difficult to explain Yoshino's lukewarm attitude towards Sun Yat-sen, an outspoken Christian for most of his life.

in the whole of South China, with Wuchang as its centre, and that by means of its traditionally ingenious political activities since Sun Yat-sen's *sanmin zhuyi* (the Three Principles of the People) and the success of the recent Northern Expedition it has already become a power that will be impossible to once again uproot as the ruling force in the South. Moreover, although it is still an unknown quantity as a force able to rule the whole of China, judging by its present embryonic condition it does promise to have ample possibilities for the future. However, the feat that it has succeeded in obtaining the immense trust and esteem from those living along the banks of the Yangtze, China's most keen and active citizens, is still the strongest point of the Guomindang government and this, together with the fact that it is essentially democratic in nature, will surely secure the permanency of the Guomindang government in Canton.⁵³⁶

It was only when the so-called First Common Front of Guomindang and Communist Forces fell apart in April 1927 that Yoshino mentioned the not insignificant fact that the 'Southern government' had consisted of two elements. But even then he seemed to raise this 'minor question' merely in order to settle it immediately. He told his reading public that "we now have to determine which faction is the legitimate force that represents the hopes of the Chinese masses", but he left them hardly any time to think it over for themselves; the correct answer was "the Guomindang, which has remained strictly true to the Three Principles of the giant Sun Yat-sen".⁵³⁷ Considering Yoshino's record as someone who did not harbour much sympathy towards communists in general and who even considered these 'radicals' as his opponents in the proletarian party movement at home, his choice is hardly surprising, but his argumentation is. Yoshino had met 'the giant Sun Yat-sen' in 1915 while the latter was in exile in Tokyo and he had discussed him extensively in his *Shina kakumei shōshi* (A Short History of the Chinese Revolution) of 1917 and also in his many articles on the Chinese revolutionary movement in later years. However, he had always kept himself somewhat at a distance, often pointing out that the direct influence of Sun on the movement was very limited, and sometimes even becoming outright critical. So it is rather unexpected to suddenly find Yoshino calling Sun 'a great man one hardly comes across nowadays' who had persistently clung to his 'idealistic point of view' (which, by the way, seems to me the wrong sort of praise for a pragmatist who was not loath to cooperate with Japanese imperialists, Chinese warlords and Russian communists). He even took Sun's Three Principles of the People, which in Yoshino's words came down to ethnic nationalism, democratic republicanism and socialism, as the criterion to find out which party was the true popular power in China. Whether it was because of the saying 'Nothing but good should of the dead' or because of the sudden success of Sun's disciples, the fact remains that Yoshino's volte face was complete.⁵³⁸ The other related argument Yoshino put forward on behalf of the Guomindang was popular support. He made sure of pointing out that in contrast to this party, which he described as "the nucleus of the hopes of the majority of the Chinese people", the

536 'Kanton seifu wo shōnin seyo'. *Shakai Minshū Shinbun*, 1927.1.20: p.2.

537 'Nisshi ryōkoku taishū no seishinteki renkei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5: p.1.

538 Ibid.: p.2; 'Sanminshugi no kai'. *Fujin Kōron*, 1926.12, reprinted in Yoshino Sakuzō, *Gendai kensei no unyō*, Ichigensha, 1930: pp.478-81.

Chinese Communist Party only had a very tiny power base which was ‘like dust before the wind’ and could only attribute its present prominence to temporary exceptional circumstances.⁵³⁹

Still, no matter how opportunistic or arbitrary the basis of his argument was, his feeling that “the Guomindang is the only realistic option for the Chinese people” was sincere and his support was active. He paid them all the lip-service they could have asked for, besieged the Japanese authorities with the demand to unconditionally recognise the Guomindang government as ‘a Chinese government’ or at least as ‘a national entity at war’ (*kōsen kokutai*) and was more than willing to hush up the massacre of communists and other ‘radicals’ by Chiang in the spring of 1927 in order to ‘moderate’ his ranks. Maybe it is not even such a far-fetched thought to suppose that he considered the Guomindang leader and himself to be on an identical mission of ‘moderation’ and was willing to condone Chiang’s considerably cruder means, analogue to his earlier approval of Guo Songling’s armed revolt, as inevitable in the framework of China’s underdeveloped political system.⁵⁴⁰ Be that as it may, one clear reason for his large-scale and uncritical support for the Guomindang was that, among the long list of Chinese ‘forces’ and ‘movements’ Yoshino on previous occasions had approved as ‘popular’ and had set his hopes on, this was the very first instance that such a force was seriously breaking ground. On the basis of the Guomindang seizure of Wuhan, Shanghai and Nanjing by March 1927 and the ‘clean-up’ of its communist liaisons in April of the same year, he concluded that the party would no longer be willing to compromise with the warlords nor allow themselves to be led astray by the communists and would fight on until the final victory, which he was sure was not that far off anymore.⁵⁴¹

The Revival of Sino-Japanese Cooperation

The prospect of a popularly supported and thus strong and legitimate central government in China induced Yoshino to immediately dig up his favourite showpieces: Sino-Japanese spiritual friendship, co-prosperity and the joint peaceful development of the Orient. With the ‘ideal partner’ of the Guomindang as the most prominent and most promising party on the Chinese political scene, there was no longer any need to wait with the implementation of the long-cherished idea of a Sino-Japanese economic alliance on the grounds of moral and practical inconsistencies. It was within this framework that as early as January 1927 Yoshino pointed out that, from the viewpoint of Japan’s economic interests, it would be best to recognise the Guomindang government at short notice - although he added that Japan should still restrain itself somewhat by not all too openly supporting the Canton government as long as it had not brought down the Beijing government of warlord Zhang Zuolin.⁵⁴² When by the summer of 1928 ‘the

539 ‘Shina kinji’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5: pp.109-10; ‘Shina jikyoku no seishi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.7: p.1.

540 ‘Nisshi ryōkoku taishū no seishinteki renkei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5: p.1; ‘Kanton seifu wo shōnin seyo’. *Shakai Minshū Shinbun*, 1927.1.20: p.2; ‘Manshū dōran sono go no mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.2: p.98.

541 ‘Nisshi ryōkoku taishū no seishinteki renkei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5: p.1. Reading Yoshino’s comments on Sun Yat-sen and the Guomindang it is hard to avoid the impression that he was quite puzzled by this ‘great man’, since he clearly did not know how to explain ‘the idealist’ Sun’s decision to cooperate with the communists in the first place.

542 Ibid.: p.1; ‘Nisshi ryōkoku taishū no seishinteki renkei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5: p.1; ‘Kanton seifu wo shōnin seyo’. *Shakai Minshū Shinbun*, 1927.1.20: p.2.

logical result' of the unification of China by the Guomintang forces had at last been accomplished, Yoshino's urge on the Japanese government to officially recognise the new central government and to establish friendly relations became stronger and stronger. In doing so, he emphasised that the Guomintang did not enjoy merely the practical support of the Chinese people but also the moral support of the majority of the Japanese people.⁵⁴³ However, in his ardour to promote Chiang's case he once again presented a view of the new 'nationalist' China as almost superior to Japan, a view which, as before, most of his fellow-countrymen undoubtedly still found difficult to accept:

It may be said that China has finally come under the rule of a public opinion. (...) However, the difference between Japan and China is that in our case the public opinion which is supported and recognised by the popular masses (*kokumin taishū*) does not have any real influence and that the only truly influential group is a privileged class extremely limited in number. (...) In Japan there is a clash between two ways of thinking (*shisō*), in China there is not.

In Japan there was also a time when the land was ruled by the passing whim of a few persons. However, the force of the masses opposed to this situation encouraged the unity between these men and, once having obtained the support of the bourgeoisie who were so shameless as to opportunistically curry favour with the oligarchs, they succeeded in forming a distinct privileged clique. The phenomenon that the land was swayed by the whim of a few men thus came to an end, but the opinion which rules the land in its stead still has no relation whatsoever to the will of the masses. In China the enlightenment of the people came comparatively late and as a result the bureaucrats were permitted to idle their time away while the people suffered under their arbitrary tyranny for a long period. However, once fate smiled in the direction of the masses and they started to open their eyes, the hegemony of the bureaucracy crumbled to pieces and in a giant leap they reached the stage where public opinion rules the land. If Japan has left the first stage behind and is presently struggling at the second stage, then China has skipped the second stage and has rapidly advanced to the third stage.⁵⁴⁴

In this way Yoshino, as he so often did, undermined his own 'campaign' on behalf of the Guomintang by confronting the Japanese people with idealist arguments that were completely out of touch with public opinion. In contrast, he approached the Chinese people in a much more realistic way. He not only pointed out that Japanese recognition of China's new central government was a minimum precondition in order to start considering more intensive Sino-Japanese cooperation, but, as he usually did in the case of the 'practical-interest minded' Chinese, he also stressed that a mere expression of Japanese good intentions would not be

543 'Shina no keisei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.7: pp.79-80; 'Musun seitō ni kawarite Shina Nanpō seifu daihyōsha ni tsugu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.4: p.1.

544 'Shina no seiji to Nihon no seiji'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.12, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.9: pp.357-58. It goes without saying that the thesis that there was no ideological conflict in China could only be uttered by someone who did not particularly care that the communists were being slaughtered in large numbers.

sufficient and had to be accompanied by “a tangible sign that Japan was abandoning its former imperialist policy towards China”:

[Confronted with the unification of China], Japan has to change its attitude towards China fundamentally. (...) Due to the fact that the internal troubles were not easily settled we had to demand various special rights for the sake of self-defence. However, it is beyond doubt that amongst our so-called established rights there are some that we must and others that we had better give up on our own initiative as a result of the recent change in the situation. To say that one should under no circumstances let go of what has once been obtained is not the right attitude to take, especially not towards China, the country with which we have to cultivate friendly relations most of all. Even more so when we consider that some of these so-called established rights hinder the development of China. (...) The main point is that we have to establish a new and frank relation between the two countries based on the principle of co-existence and co-prosperity. (...) Therefore, we should bury the old agreements (*yakujō*), consider the interests of both countries anew, and decide on new ones that are in line with the instructions provided by pure reason and justice (*rigi*).⁵⁴⁵

Yoshino had long ago diagnosed that the Chinese people were rising to the call of nationalism and had approved of it, often even warmly welcomed it. Moreover, he was not blind to its implications. He was very much aware of the fact that *minzokushugi* (ethnic nationalism) - the first ‘*min*’ of the Guomindang’s *sanmin zhuyi*-ideology - which originally had been aimed against the Manchu dynasty, had been adjusted and redirected against the foreign powers ever since the successful revolution of 1911. Accordingly, in contrast to many ‘foreigners’, he considered ‘Chinese impudent behaviour’ like the recovery of the British concessions in Hankou and Jiujiang by the Northern Expedition army to be nothing but ‘the logical result of its program’.⁵⁴⁶ He had also drawn the conclusion that in the end there was no hope that Japan would be spared nationalist attacks and therefore thought it had better give up part of its position in China of its own accord. This was all the more so because Japan was the only foreign power in China that was looking for a very close relation with that country and such plans would not make any headway without clear Japanese concessions in the form of the abolition of rights and the retrocession of territory. This awareness was not new and has already been described in parts 3 and 4 of this chapter, dealing with the wartime and postwar periods, but with the establishment of a unified and nationalist government the need had become increasingly pressing. When in July 1928 the Foreign Minister of the new Nanjing government Wang Zhengting, a good acquaintance of Yoshino, officially notified the unilateral abrogation of the unequal Sino-Japanese treaties Yoshino did not only mention as usual that this amounted to ‘a breach of international courtesy’, but went on to say that the Japanese should no longer be amazed at such Chinese rudeness since “the treaties have been forced upon China (...) and it is obvious that they are unduly harmful to its interests and thus to peace in the Orient”.⁵⁴⁷ It is true that he still did not go so far as to

545 ‘Shina no keisei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.7: p.83.

546 ‘Kanton seifu wo shōnin seyo’. *Shakai Minshū Shinbun*, 1927.1.20: p.2.

547 ‘Tai-Shi seisaku hihan’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.9: p.83.

morally condemn Japan's endeavour to expand its political, military and economic sphere of influence in China by means of the Twenty-One Demands. There is, for instance, a fair amount of ambivalence in his remark that "It is not fully clear whether the Chinese despise our [industrial and military] expansion on the continent just because of its aggressive nature or because of the fact that they reject all forms of continental expansion", and is equally telling that he did not choose the imposition of the Twenty-One Demands but the Nishihara loans as the biggest blunder amongst the failures of Japan's China policy.⁵⁴⁸ On the other hand, it is hard to deny that by this time he at least fully acknowledged that it had been the implementation by force of the Twenty-One Demands that had "plunged the relations between the two countries into an almost irredeemable crisis (...) and had even led to the situation that 7 May, the day of the ultimatum, is commemorated annually as the day of national humiliation".⁵⁴⁹ On the basis of this keen awareness, he repeatedly urged his fellow-countrymen to self-reflect, to show compassion and understanding, and to act in accordance with the world trend, and pointed out that this mental process should crystallise into a swift adjustment of the basis of Sino-Japanese relations.⁵⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the fact that Yoshino's demands had become more pressing and his vocabulary had become more direct does not mean that we should take the phrase "we should bury the old agreements, consider the interests of both countries anew, and decide on new ones that are in line with the instructions provided by pure reason and justice" from the citation above at face value. Some authors have indeed interpreted this remark as a sign that Yoshino was ready to start with a clean slate in Sino-Japanese relations and have treated this article of July 1928 as a turning-point in Yoshino's attitude towards China.⁵⁵¹ In my opinion this interpretation overstresses Yoshino's good intentions to "bury the old agreements" and does not fully take into consideration the restriction, which was mentioned in the same article, that "there is of course absolutely no need to carry out excessive benevolence (*Sōjō no jin*): we should not return what we cannot do without and neither is there any objection to making requests for things we would like to have". Just as in earlier instances, there were still 'rational minimum demands' (*gōriteki na saiteigen no yōkyū*) attached to Yoshino's offer to give up part of Japan's position which, in case the rational minimum demands of the two countries were not compatible, could make his gesture as ambivalent as before.⁵⁵²

548 'Shina to Nihon (9)'. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1929.7.6: pp.19-20. By the way, this serialised article is Yoshino's only contribution to the *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*.

549 'Shina to Nihon (8)'. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1929.6.29: p.17. It seems that at the time of the May Fourth Movement the Chinese commemorated either May 7 or May 9, the day of Yuan Shikai's acceptance of the Japanese demands, as the day of national humiliation. Afterwards the dispersed commemorations were gradually standardised and from 1930 until 1940 May 9 functioned as China's formal memorial day of dishonour. See Yamamoto Tadashi, 'Chūgoku no [Kokuchi kinenhi] ni kansuru ichi-kōsatsu'. *Nihon Daigaku Daigakuin Sōgō Shakai Jōhō Kenkyūka Kiyō*, no.2 (2001), pp.107-16 (or on the net at <http://atlantic.gssc.nihon-u.ac.jp/kiyou/pdf/Inte/2-107-2001-Yamamoto.pdf>).

550 See for instance 'Tanaka naikaku no Manmō seisaku ni taisuru gigi'. *Shakai Undō*, 1927.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6: p.297; 'Tai-Shi seisaku hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.9: pp.83-84 and 'Shina to Nihon (9)'. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1929.7.6: p.20.

551 The clearest example in this case is Matsuo Takayoshi in his 'Yoshino Sakuzō no Chūgoku-ron'. In *YSS*, vol. 8: p.368.

552 'Shina no keisei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.7: p.83; 'Shina to Nihon (9)'. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1929.7.6: p.20. Yoshino's call to start with a clean slate was preceded more than one year by an article from the hand of Ishibashi Tanzan, in which the latter expressed the hope that Japan would "be completely free from the

Even though it is thus hard to find a substantial difference in the content of Yoshino's conditional offer to China before and after July 1928, we should not fail to see that a considerable change in the form of the offer had occurred. His awareness from the spring of 1927 onwards that a strong and unified China was in the making had not merely intensified Yoshino's call upon his own people to adjust its relations with China, but it had also clearly softened the way Yoshino put his 'minimum demands' to the Chinese authorities:

We will be glad to cooperate in revising the laws, customs and treaties. It goes without saying that amongst these arrangements, which up till this day have determined the relations between China and other countries, there are some that severely trample China's sovereignty. However, the positions that the various countries have thus occupied in China are merely in the interest of the propertied classes and probably have no connection at all with the common people. Therefore, speaking from the standpoint of the masses, there is absolutely no reason to cling to these special positions. On the contrary, they would prefer to relinquish these as soon as possible if these form but the slightest obstacle to the friendship between the two countries. We, the [Japanese] proletariat, definitely do not want to demand a special position any longer, not even in the case of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. (...) Through your good offices China is already starting to take a fine shape, and we have solemnly vowed to abandon imperialism. Still, in connection with our abandonment in principle of imperialism there is one thing we would earnestly like to request. As for the special position we presently occupy in China, we could not care less about that part which has no other function but to fulfil the self-interest of certain classes. However, we hope you will be especially lenient when rationally adjusting the part that has a direct influence on the life of the Japanese common people, no matter how [these rights and privileges] arose. This does not imply that we have any intention of giving imperialism another lease of life. By calling upon China's goodwill, we merely try to avoid a drastic deterioration of the lives of the people. There is of course no change in our fundamental stand to abandon all imperialist policies and fully honour the sovereignty of our neighbouring country.⁵⁵³

Yoshino's offer to give up Japan's special position in China and his mention of related minimum demands - which, although not clearly defined, seemed to comprise at least the Hanyeping

restraints of former treaties, start with a clean slate and develop a China policy that is in line with the true situation of the new age'. However, in this short article Ishibashi regrettably does not discuss the practical details of starting with a clean slate in Japan's China policy, so it is difficult to verify if he was as 'completely free from the restraints of former treaties' as he said he was. See Ishibashi, 'Hakushi no ue ni tai-Shi gaikō wo tenkai seyo'. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1927.2.5, reprinted in *Ishibashi Tanzan Zenshū*, vol.5, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1971: pp-141-43.

553 'Musans seitō ni kawarite Shina Nanpō seifu daihyōsha ni tsugu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.4: pp.1-2. This article has the somewhat odd style of a public address on behalf of 'the Japanese proletarian party' to the Southern government's delegate to Japan. This representative happened to be Dai Jitao (Dai Tianchou), the former confidant of Sun Yat-sen who had functioned as the pipeline between Yoshino and the Chinese revolutionaries.

conglomerate but not the South Manchurian Railway - were unchanged. However, what is significant when compared to similar offers before 1927 (see section 4.4) is that the accompanying demands are no longer formulated as such but rather as a kind request. Moreover, it is phrased as a request on behalf of the Japanese popular masses, a reflection of Yoshino's conviction that the majority of the Japanese at last subscribed to what he characterised as a moral duty towards the Chinese people and their new government.⁵⁵⁴ Leaving aside the problem whether Yoshino was as representative of the majority opinion as he claimed to be, what is most important to note is that here he is no longer acting as the Japanese doctor who is telling the Chinese patient what to do. On the basis of this distinct change in the manner in which he addressed the neighbouring country, I think we may conclude that Yoshino, after many years of considerable conflict between theory and practice, as a result of the advent of a seemingly strong central Chinese government had finally progressed to a form of Sino-Japanese cooperation which was based on equality.

Resignation or Opposition: the Question of Armed Interventionism Revisited

In the sense that Yoshino's demands were now void of threats and had merely become theoretical, his stance resembled that of Shidehara Kijūrō. It is thus not surprising that on various occasions he indeed expressed his strong support for Shidehara's 'weak-kneed' China policy of 'no armed intervention'. For instance, he lauded the decision by the Wakatsuki Cabinet not to join the Western powers bombardment of Nanjing in retaliation for the Southern troops' violent intrusion of the foreign legations. It is true that this cannot be dissociated from Yoshino's judgement that the communist forces were fully responsible for the anti-foreign incidents during the first stage of the Northern Expedition - the two major incidents occurred in Nanjing and Hankou on respectively 24 March and 3 April 1927, before Chiang Kai-shek's anti-communist coup d'état which ended the First Guomindang-Communist Common Front - and that the Guomindang forces were completely innocent. He thought that these incidents were all part of a grand communist plot to destabilise Chiang. An armed reaction, he pointed out, would inevitably force the latter into a compromise with the foreign imperialist powers and would give the communists the perfect argument to incite the people against Chiang, especially if this compromise included Japan, "the most unpopular country in China". Thus Japan had to take the utmost care not to get caught in the 'communist trap'. In his opinion sending in troops was the worst thing Japan could do and would be a major offence against 'Japan's moral duty towards the Chinese people to support Chiang'.⁵⁵⁵

Even if he had admitted that the Guomindang forces were very much implicated in the violent anti-foreign acts, Yoshino probably would not have changed his support for what he termed 'the comparatively just and fair policy of Foreign Minister Shidehara that will gratify the majority of the Chinese'.⁵⁵⁶ This becomes most of all clear from Yoshino's reaction to the so-called 'Tanaka policy' of the Seiyūkai cabinet headed by former army general Tanaka Giichi, which took over from Wakatsuki's Kenseikai cabinet in April 1927. This 'reverse course' policy

554 'Shina kinji'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5: pp.111-12; 'Tanaka naikaku no Manmō seisaku ni taisuru giji'. *Shakai Undō*, 1927.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6: p.297.

555 'Shina kinji'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.5: pp.108-12.

556 *Ibid.*: pp.107-08.

of armed interventionism was symbolised by the three Shandong expeditions of respectively May 1927 and April and May 1928, that is, after Chiang himself had eradicated every possibility of the communist plot Yoshino had so much feared. The expeditions were undertaken under the pretext of the protection of the lives and property of Japanese citizens in the Shandong area, which were soon to be 'endangered' by the advancing Guomindang forces on the way to the final destination of their Northern Expedition, but it was a public secret that the real aim of the military missions was to give the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin the opportunity to retreat in an orderly way to his stronghold and use him both as a means and as a legitimation to keep the Guomindang out of Japan's long-cherished sphere of influence. Yoshino strongly denounced the three armed interventions. He followed his usual line of attack, which consisted of first gently enumerating the opponent's formal arguments one by one, subsequently pointing out their rational inconsistencies and practical implications - which often hint at the opponent's real intentions - in order to end with a harsh denouncement of the same arguments he had started to present so kindly. In the case of the Shandong expeditions Yoshino did not leave much standing of the rational basis for the formal legitimation the government had given for the armed intervention:

Why only save the settlers in North China? (...) If a disturbance occurred in Japan, would we approve of foreign countries such as our neighbour China and our Pacific neighbour the United States intervening in Japan under the pretext of their proper right to protect their expatriate citizens? (...) If the foreign settlers in China have decided to stay on in spite of the war that is going on, they should be prepared to share the fate of the Chinese. Isn't it asking a bit too much to insist that only the Japanese must be protected from the tragedy of war? (...) The Chinese national movement is backed by the sympathy of the world. Shouldn't we also have helped them by ordering our citizens out and leaving the stage to them for the moment instead of obstructing their honourable cause. (...) This intervention is presented as a mere temporary action that is of hardly any significance, but in fact it will have extremely grave consequences for the future relations between Japan and China.⁵⁵⁷

Thus Yoshino rejected the argument of protection of Japanese settlers as not of such extreme importance to the existence and development of Japan to justify an armed intervention, and he pointed out plainly that if the government sincerely thought otherwise they should have evacuated them at an earlier date.

Next were the practical implications of the armed intervention in China. In his initial reaction to the First Shandong Expedition Yoshino made a point of noting that its most obvious effect was that "since Zhang Zuolin's days are counted, the expedition can only be interpreted as obstructing the Southern forces and giving Zhang another lease of life".⁵⁵⁸ Although he was so polite as to mention in the same article the possibility that the original intentions of the government were very different from what they effected, it is not hard to see that he himself completely discarded this same assumption. In the rest of the article and in later articles Yoshino

557 'Shina shuppei ni tsuite'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.7: pp.119-20.

558 'Shina jikyoku no seishi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.7: p.1.

ignores the government's formal intentions and instead focuses on another set of 'informal' motivations. He argued that under the present conditions Zhang's rule over the northernmost part of China had become solely dependent on Japanese support, and that the Tanaka cabinet was planning to make use of this rare opportunity to settle once and for all the so-called 'various pending problems concerning Manchuria and Inner Mongolia'. In short, the contours of a scheme to keep the north-eastern provinces separate from a unified nationalist China in the making were all too obvious. This scenario would be based on an agreement of understanding between the two comrades Zhang and Tanaka,⁵⁵⁹ in which Zhang would retain his position as the legitimate ruler over Manchuria, albeit as a plaything of the Japanese, and Japan would sustain its superior position in South Manchuria:

The Tanaka cabinet seems to have decided to solve the long pending problems in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, to secure our special position in this region, to do away with China's usual ambiguous attitude and, if necessary even forcibly, to make it recognise our unyielding standpoint. (...) What draws our attention is that the thorough implementation of this policy necessitates armed intervention. The newspapers say that our cabinet regards Zhang Zuolin as the sovereign of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia and will do everything to help him in preserving law and order in this region. This implies that in case Zhang's power is not sufficient to do so alone, we will inevitably have to deploy our forces.⁵⁶⁰

Yoshino could not condone such a policy. This was not merely because he had always considered Zhang a feudalist dictator who was not worth any Japanese support.⁵⁶¹ A more fundamental reason was that it was completely at odds with the priority he tended to give to the 'economically essential' whole of China over the 'strategically interesting' Manchuria. Moreover, he was convinced that an armed intervention aimed at the partition of Manchuria from China proper could only lead to widespread agitation against Japan and might very well escalate into an armed conflict between the two countries, which would nip in the bud any future design for an economic alliance with the new Guomindang government.⁵⁶² All these fears materialised when in May 1928, in the wake of the Second Shandong Expedition, the Japanese expedition force and the Guomindang troops clashed in the inland town of Jinan. Yoshino did not even consider finding fault with the Chinese and immediately took Tanaka severely to task:

As could have been foreseen, our latest intervention in China has led to an armed confrontation with the Southern faction. (...) We have no reason to be fighting the

559 It is said that the two were on terms of friendship since Tanaka saved Zhang's life during the Russo-Japanese war. Zhang had been caught and sentenced to death on charges of spying for the Russians, but Tanaka had intervened. Takakura Tetsuichi, *Tanaka Giichi denki*, vol.1, Tanaka Giichi Denki Kankōkai, 1960: pp.324-30.

560 'Tanaka naikaku no Manmō seisaku ni taisuru gigi'. *Shakai Undō*, 1927.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6: p.294.

561 'Manshū dōran sono go no mondai'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.2: p.98.

562 'Tanaka naikaku no Manmō seisaku ni taisuru gigi'. *Shakai Undō*, 1927.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6: p.295.

Chinese (...) and we merely seem to be helping the Northern faction. We definitely do not have right and justice on our side. (...) Moreover, the fighting is taking place in the middle of Chinese territory. (...) Our action has aggravated the antipathy of the Southern faction and the populace and will have a long-lasting influence on our future relations with China. (...) By giving rise to war we have also given the Chinese communists a good opportunity to promote their goal of class war. (...) The Tanaka cabinet has mistaken our country's most important long-term policy (*kokka hyakunen no taikai*) and should bear the political responsibility for this disgrace.⁵⁶³

Considering this criticism, it will not come as a surprise that Yoshino was more than happy when only a few months after the Third Shandong Expedition the Guomindang flag was nonetheless flying over Beijing, and at the end of the year over the whole of China including Manchuria and Inner-Mongolia. He had been right in predicting the bankruptcy of the Tanaka policy of armed intervention, but instead of rejoicing over its failure he was merely surveying with sadness the ruins that the Tanaka policy had left behind and that seemed anything but receptive to the seed of Sino-Japanese cooperation. His fury over the negative accomplishments of the Tanaka policy is evident from the verdict he passed at the end of Tanaka's term. The characterisation of the Shandong interventions as an undertaking which had done 'only harm and not one single good' (*hyakugai atte ichiri naki*) was still in a nice proverbial literary style, but the total denouncement of Tanaka as 'an incredibly stupid arsehole' (*tonde mo nai baka yarō*) is an extremely rare exception in Yoshino's usually very polite writing style.⁵⁶⁴

This harsh condemnation of Tanaka's actual policy towards China, however, should not cloud the fact that Yoshino in principle fully supported the aim of securing and if possible expanding Japan's position in China upon which the policy was founded. He said as much at the time of the First Shandong Expedition, and it was also in this sense that he saw a continuation in policy from the Kenseikai to the Seiyūkai administration. Still - and this is an interesting contemporaneous contribution to the ongoing debate over the differences and similarities between the so-called Shidehara and Tanaka policies - he also pointed out that there was a very important fundamental difference in the 'means' by which the two foreign ministers tried to achieve this aim and the effects this generated. Whereas Yoshino admitted having considerable respect for the China policy of the first Wakatsuki Cabinet, because it had chosen to support the wish of the Chinese people for a unified China in order to fulfil its aim, he condemned the Tanaka Cabinet for the too sudden and too drastic change to a policy that sought to attain the same goal by opting for the separation of China. Moreover, whereas he characterised the Shidehara policy as one which was relatively 'passive' (*shōkyokuteki*) but which at least tried to obtain Japanese rights 'in a fair and admirable way' (*dōdō to*), the Tanaka policy was portrayed as so 'active' (*sekkyokuteki*) that its executors did not even hesitate 'to act like a thief in the night' (*kajiba dorobō*) when they chose the chaotic situation during the Northern Expedition, a time of severe hardship for the Chinese masses, as a golden opportunity to settle the Manchurian

563 'Tai-Shi shuppei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.6: pp.64-66.

564 'Shina to Nihon (1)'. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1929.4.20: pp.15-16.

and Inner Mongolian issues.⁵⁶⁵ Clearly hinting at the fiasco of the earlier Siberia Expedition, which Tanaka as the then Vice-Chief of the General Staff had actively promoted, Yoshino cynically stated that “we should have learned by now that what one takes by controversial means will not remain in one’s hands for long”. And when March 1929 at last saw an agreement on the settlement of the Jinan Incident, an agreement which Yoshino depicted as a complete victory for the Guomindang, he even rubbed salt further into the wound by commenting that in the end the Tanaka policy had proven even more weak-kneed than the Shidehara policy.⁵⁶⁶

What is interesting to see is that, as far as a ‘weak-kneed policy’ towards China was concerned, Yoshino maintained that “the conscience of the majority of the Japanese people never asked for anything more”. When in March 1929 the Japanese and Chinese governments finally agreed upon the terms for solving the problems of apologies and indemnities resulting from the military clash at Jinan, he warned the Minseitō not to opportunistically throw in its lot with imperialist forces by using the fact that Tanaka had failed to force upon the Chinese the harsh terms he had promised in parliament as a pretext to try to bring down the Seiyūkai cabinet. Although he would rather see the Tanaka administration resign today than tomorrow, he could not make himself be so pragmatic as to give up his principles for the sake of convenience’s; no matter how enticing the direct political cause, the eminent Jinan agreement was not to be defiled.⁵⁶⁷ However, he did not merely argue that in his eyes this weak-kneed settlement of the Jinan Incident amounted to the first just Sino-Japanese agreement and thus could put the bilateral relations back on track again, but also strongly emphasised that it was an agreement with which the Japanese people were very satisfied.⁵⁶⁸ Whereas Yoshino admitted that the people had made considerable progress during the past two decades and he approvingly noticed how his ideas on national democracy had obtained their support, he often lamented the relative backwardness of the Japanese nation in international matters. However, by this time he had also become silent on this point of critique and especially in the field of Japan’s China policy he presented a picture as if the people had finally come to see the error of their former ways. For instance, time and again he mentioned that the Shandong interventions had been carried out against their will. Apart from clearly saying what the Japanese people did not want, he even tried to describe - although still in rather vague terms and often taking himself as a representative member of the people - their will in affirmative terms:

565 ‘Seiyūkai naikaku no tai-Manmō seisaku’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1927.9: pp.1-2; ‘Tanaka naikaku no Manmō seisaku ni taisuru gigi’. *Shakai Undō*, 1927.10, reprinted in *YSS*, vol.6: pp.295-96.

566 *Ibid.*: p.296; ‘Shina to Nihon (1)’. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1929.4.20: pp.15-17.

567 On an earlier occasion, when there was widespread clamour whether Prime Minister Tanaka had made use of an imperial message addressed to Minister of Education Mizuno Rentarō asking him to reconsider his resignation, Yoshino had also requested the opposition to refrain from using the so-called ‘imperial message’ question in order to get rid of this ‘worst cabinet in modern times’. He was afraid that such a victory of the principle of imperial rule over the principle of parliamentarism, even if it was merely used as an opportunistic political instrument, might set a precedent with grave consequences. ‘Yūjō mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.7: pp.71-79.

568 ‘Shina to Nihon (1)’. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1929.4.20: pp.17-18; ‘Tai-Shi gaikō no kōten’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.5: p.1.

The opinion of the majority of the Japanese people is in favour of a reform of our old-fashioned China policy. (...) They know that the way to break the present deadlock is to listen with attention and goodwill to the Chinese demands (*yōsei*) and only afterwards to gently express the minimum desires (*kibō*) necessary for our survival.⁵⁶⁹

The agreement [on the absolute protection of our established interests in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia] is nothing but the opinion of an extremely small minority amongst the people which is represented by the established parties. One should not forget that, apart from this minority, there are the proletarian masses consisting of millions of people. These are, of course, not completely indifferent to our interests in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. On the contrary, they are very much aware of the need to establish a special relationship in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia for the survival of the Japanese nation. However, they do not think this a matter for us to decide selfishly on our own but a matter that requires serious consideration of the opinion of our neighbouring friends. The masses strive to reconstruct our bilateral relations on a new rational basis unhampered by all that has passed.⁵⁷⁰

In Yoshino's opinion it was thus no longer the uncivilisedness of the Japanese common people that formed the major obstacle to a fundamental reform of Japan's China policy. And with the advent of a Guomindang government in China instead of the former warlord regime, he no longer had any clemency for the Tanaka Cabinet. Without any restraint he claimed it was 'the conservative and reactionary Seiyūkai, the representative of the privileged classes as ever indulging in sweet imperialist dreams', that hindered the masses on both sides of the East China Sea from starting a new era in Sino-Japanese relations.⁵⁷¹ It is evident from a great number of his articles that Yoshino had traditionally considered the Seiyūkai as one of his main ideological and political enemies, and his feelings towards the party had definitely not improved since a former army general had taken over its leadership. It nevertheless seems rather simple-minded to present the party as an isolated bastion in Japanese society that, without any significant popular support, was able to function as the major enemy of both the Japanese and Chinese nations and keep the two from co-prosperity by means of its policy of armed interventionism in China.

5.3 Summary: Minimum Japanese Needs and Superior Chinese Rights

Whether Yoshino truly believed that the majority of the Japanese people supported his own preference for Shidehara's weak-kneed policy of no armed intervention in China or whether this was mere rhetoric is hard to prove. Nevertheless, the fact that he presented his argument in this way at least shows his resolution that he was definitely not willing to oppose the Guomindang's Northern Expedition by force, not even if this in the end would inevitably lead to

569 'Tai-Shi kankei no zento to Tokonami-shi no tachiba'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.2, p.1.

570 'Tai-Shi seisaku hihan'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.9, p.86.

571 'Tai-Shi kankei no zento to Tokonami-shi no tachiba'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.2, p.1.

the surrender of Japan's special rights and interests in such areas as South Manchuria and Shandong. Yoshino had not changed his opinion on Japan's national *needs*, which as before included Japanese expansion into China, but merely recognised that these could no longer prevail over China's national *rights*. And this was especially so since nowadays these were accompanied by a considerable amount of force and were expressed by the new 'like-minded and trustworthy' central government led by the Guomindang, on its way to unify the whole of China. As is evident from the citations above, he considered attempts to secure Japan's needs by means of force both illegitimate and unrealistic and did not think it wise to go any further than to 'express' what he termed 'the minimum desires necessary for our survival'. This did not mean that Yoshino was of the opinion that Japan should immediately give up all its rights and possessions; as before he thought that there was no need whatsoever to give away what still could be held on to.⁵⁷² However, at the same time he had resigned himself to the idea that Japan at least had to give up what could no longer be held on to without the use of sheer force. His complete abandonment of the option of armed intervention, which is also evident from the fact that no more was heard of his erstwhile support for 'new interventionism', implied that the national goal of expansion onto the 'Asian continent' was from then on not to be pursued by any other than peaceful economic means and thus Japan's lot would to a very great extent be in China's hands. Whereas most Japanese were probably horrified by this prospect, Yoshino thought it inevitable and, helped by his optimistic view of mankind, placed his trust in the good intentions of the Guomindang government.

572 Although this statement dates from the time of the Guo Songling revolt, Yoshino was honest enough to admit that if there had been no pressure upon Japan to relinquish its special interests in Manchuria, no initiatives would have been expected to emanate from the Japanese and the most they would have done was to gradually look for a more just basis for these interests. 'Manshū dōran taisaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.1: p.160.

6 YOSHINO AND THE MANCHURIAN INCIDENT, 1931-1933

6.1 The Final Litmus Test: Faced with the Reality of the Manchurian Incident

Yoshino's Record of Rejecting a Manchurian Incident and His First Reactions to the Manchurian Incident

But what remained of Yoshino's strong support for a policy of no armed interventionism in China when in September 1931 the Japanese Guandong Army took the drastic measure of securing its 'homeland' of South Manchuria - and in the same momentum 'pacifying' the whole of Manchuria and parts of Inner Mongolia - by means of a large-scale armed intervention? There are quite a few cases known of opinion leaders who had paid lip-service to the cause of international cooperation or peaceful Sino-Japanese relations and on this basis had previously supported the Shidehara policy, yet who with the outburst of nationalism and popular energy as a result of the Manchurian Incident clearly converted to a so-called autonomous foreign policy or began to make the reservation that Manchuria was special and obviously different from the rest of China and thus had never been part of their overall debate on relations with 'China proper'.⁵⁷³ However, if Yoshino had done the same this would have been an undeniable case of 'high treason' towards his reading public. For when we have a look at his many articles on the Manchurian question - or the theoretically wider but practically identical 'Manchurian and Inner Mongolian' (*Manmō*) question - during the decade before the incident, it will be evident that Yoshino had been one of the few *Kulturkritiker* who had made very clear that he was rigidly opposed to all attempts to expand Japan's position in the region by any other than just (predominantly economic) means, had rejected all designs to establish a pro-Japanese marionette state, and who instead had even very openly sided with the 'theory in favour of abandoning Manchuria' (*Manshū hōkiron*). To briefly recapitulate in chronological order Yoshino's stand by means of his most telling statements:

In the postwar world, the rampancy of aggressive policies (*shinryakushugi*) will in no case be tolerated any longer. The idea has taken root that, no matter for what reason, it is not allowed to invade another country's territory against the will of its people. (1920)⁵⁷⁴

The only excuse which would justify Japanese overseas migration is the need to establish a monopolistic sphere of influence in overseas territories in order to protect our infant industries from superior foreign competition. However, it is very doubtful whether the other countries would recognise such claims. (...) I am not saying that we do not have the right to demand anything from countries with a

573 For the reaction of Japanese intellectuals and the media in the wake of the Manchurian Incident, see Eguchi Keiichi, 'Manshū jihen to daishinbun'. *Shisō*, no.583 (1973): pp.98-113; Eguchi, *Jūgonen sensō no kaimaku*, vol. 4 of *Shōwa no rekishi*, Shōgakkān, 1988: pp.99-132; Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, University of California Press, 1998: pp.78-88 and Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931-33*, Routledge, 2002.

574 'Quingdao senkan kyoryūchi mondai ni tsuite'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: p.226.

small population and a vast territory, but it is definitely not permitted to compel such countries to recognise our needs against their will. (1921)⁵⁷⁵

When seen from the point of view of our present age, in which the spirit of international cooperation flourishes, we have to admit that Harriman's aspiration [in 1905 to place the Manchurian Railway under international management] was a splendid plan which showed great foresight. (1921)⁵⁷⁶

It is not realistic to think we can sever Manchuria and Inner Mongolia from China proper (...) and establish an independent and pro-Japanese puppet state. (1922)⁵⁷⁷

There are some conditions to the abandonment [of Japan's special position in Manchuria], which concern its future disposal, but in the case of the railways, for instance, I am willing to give these up when stable and unbiased management is assured. (1924)⁵⁷⁸

Since the [Beijing] Tariff Conference our China policy has on the whole been restored on a very impartial and just basis. (...) Considering the great pains we have endured in advancing this far, we should not reverse this new course, no matter how fatal the blow will be to our special interests in Manchuria. (...) This is the time to show an unprecedented heroic decision. In my heart I think that clinging to our old rights will cause their destruction and that not clinging to them will instead sow the seeds for substantial future profits. (1926)⁵⁷⁹

The number of Japanese who think that Manchuria and Inner Mongolia make up a different world (*bettenchi*) apart from the rest of China is surprisingly high, and there are even some who believe that by means of Japan's power we could easily make it into a separate country. (...) However, having special interests in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia and making this region into a separate country are two completely different things. Those who are aware that the Guomindang's Northern Expedition is the start of the unification of the Han territory will not doubt that Manchuria and Inner Mongolia also share the inevitable fate of becoming part of the unified Chinese state in the near future. Due to what has happened in the past, the extermination of despotic rule over this region may still take a little while, but it is merely a matter of time. No matter who becomes the new tyrant in Zhang Zuolin's stead, his destiny will be no other than to fulfil the role of suppressing the chaos in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia and to offer the region to the central Chinese government when the moment is ripe. The trend of

575 'Jinkō zōshoku to tokushu chii'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.10: p.141.

576 'Shiberia tetsudō no kokusai kanri'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.11: p.176.

577 'Buki mondai ni yotte jakki seraretaru waga Tō-A taisaku no gimon'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.11: pp.144-45.

578 'Tai-Shi kokusaku tōgi'. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: p.32.

579 'Manshū dōran taisaku'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1926.1: p.160.

the times does not permit the establishment of a new independent empire that will follow in the footsteps of the former Manchu dynasty. (1928)⁵⁸⁰

As late as two weeks before the outburst of the Manchurian Incident Yoshino wrote an article very typically entitled ‘Self-reflection in relation to the Manchurian and Inner Mongolian question’. Sensing very well what was in the air in the wake of the popular outcry over the Wanbaoshan Incident and the arrest and execution by the Chinese of army captain Nakamura Shintarō, a Japanese intelligence officer, in this article he once more stressed the sagacity and the inevitability of the abandonment of a part of Japan’s position in Manchuria.⁵⁸¹ He particularly warned his fellow-countrymen not to be led astray by ‘the bigoted military clique’:

The Shidehara diplomacy may be weak-kneed, but I fear that a policy of immediately taking up arms and adopting an intimidating attitude will endanger the position of our country to a far greater extent. (...) Especially the egoistically biased call for an armed intervention by a minority of the Japanese settlers in Manchuria severely distorts the impartial judgement of the people. (...) If our country sends a military expedition to Manchuria and Inner Mongolia and occupies this region, this will result in great agony to China, but what benefits will we ever reap in return?⁵⁸²

Yoshino’s answer was that all Japan stood to gain by using military means in order to back up its demands was ‘nothing but the momentary pleasure of the military clique and concession hunters’. In contrast, as a result of inciting the wrath of the Chinese masses and going against the pacifist world trend, the majority of the Japanese populace would at the same time incur ‘eternal and vast damage’ out of all proportion to the temporary benefit. Accordingly Yoshino called upon the people to learn from the long list of mistakes that in his opinion Japan’s China policy had comprised, and tried to make them aware that the world would no longer tolerate that a country opportunistically closed its eyes to the drastic changes of the postwar era.⁵⁸³

However, by the time this article was published as a front-page editorial in the *Chūō Kōron*, Japan had already moved in the ‘foolish’ direction Yoshino had warned it not to proceed. In this same article he had noted how the newspapers had already thrown in their lot with the army and abandoned their stand of neutrality, and in the wake of the incident and the subsequent creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo he must have felt considerable outside pressure to do the same.⁵⁸⁴ Nevertheless, he did not let himself get swept away by the tide but, in line with his

580 ‘Shina no keisei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1928.7: p.80. In this citation ‘Han’ refers to the greatest ethnic group within the Chinese nation and ‘Manchu dynasty’ refers to the Qing Dynasty.

581 For the Wanbaoshan and Nakamura Incidents, see Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire – Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, University of California Press, 1998: p.39.

582 ‘Manmō mondai ni kansuru hansei’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1931.10: p.1. According to Yoshino’s diary this article was written on 5 September 1931. Yoshino nikki, *YSS*, vol.15.

583 *Ibid.*: p.1.

584 Apart from the various kinds of informal pressure the authorities usually preferred, the editor of the *Chūō Kōron* had also received a clearer sign in the form of a post-publication warning from the Home Ministry as a result of Yoshino’s contemplations on ‘Self-reflection in Relation to the Manchurian and Inner Mongolian Question’. Naimushō Keihōkyoku, *Shuppan keisatsu gaikan 1931*, reprinted edition, Ryūkei

earlier commitment, stood firm. Due to lack of accurate information, Yoshino was still somewhat non-committal in his first *Chūō Kōron* editorial after the incident. He did not yet accuse the military outright for their intervention in Manchuria, but instead started his attack indirectly by discussing ‘The Relation between Japan and the Movement for an Independent Manchuria and Inner Mongolia’, a movement which had suddenly come to the fore soon after the Manchurian Incident through the rapid succession of declarations of independence by the various provinces and regions in the north-east of China. That Yoshino thought there was a direct relation between Japan and this movement can easily be gathered by combining the above-mentioned title of the article with Yoshino’s observation that the movement for the independence of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia stood no chance of success as long as it was not backed up by large-scale foreign military and financial support. Nevertheless, for the moment he ostensibly left open the question whether such a relation had already been established and merely advised his country not to consider doing so:

It would be most opportune for our country if this movement were successful and resulted in the formation of an independent pro-Japanese state in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia which would be helpful in settling the hundred-or-so pending questions. (...) However, at the moment there is regrettably no hope whatsoever that any such sweet dreams will come true even for a short while.

Hence he frankly expressed his support for the Wakatsuki Cabinet by saying that its fundamental stand to forbid any contacts with the regional independence movements and instead to recognise the Nanjing government inalterably as the only legitimate ruler over Manchuria was both realistic and just.⁵⁸⁵

A month later, in his next editorial which somewhat surprisingly dealt with the results of the national elections in England and the regional elections in Japan, Yoshino once again addressed the Manchurian Incident. Notwithstanding his main topic, he managed to include a few lines mentioning ‘serious rumours’ that the Japanese army, with the object of securing Japan’s interests in Manchuria, had played a leading role in helping the regional independence movement in China. Although he persisted in his formal neutral stand of not knowing whether these rumours were true or false, he could not refrain from taking an advance on what was to come by using this opportunity to point out that such help would of course imply that ‘the wrong method’ had been adopted.⁵⁸⁶ As discussed earlier, Yoshino had on many occasions emphasised the point that, no matter how vital Japan’s cause in China, the means used to attain this cause were at least equally important to secure this cause in the long run and thus had to be legitimate. When seen in this light, the mention of his suspicion that the wrong means had been used hinted that he would not condone a situation, no matter how profitable to Japan’s good cause at first sight, that had arisen as the result of such means.

Shosha, 1981: p.176.

585 ‘Manmō dokuritsu undō to Nihon’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1931.11: p.1.

586 ‘Eikoku no seihen to gikai seiji’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1931.12: p.1.

Working within the Limits of the Tightened Censure

In his articles of the following year Yoshino let go of his initial neutrality. As the military occupation of Chinese territory dragged on and on, the amount of territory occupied increased until it encompassed the whole of Manchuria and the Eastern part of Inner Mongolia, the ‘independent’ puppet state of Manchukuo was established on 1 March 1932 by Japan’s Guandong Army, and as Yoshino himself gathered more and more accurate information, there was no longer any need for him to formalistically base his judgement on assumptions. In his last major contribution to the *Chūō Kōron*, a twelve page article for the New Year issue which dealt with the domestic reaction to the Manchurian Incident, he used the term ‘large-scale military operations’ without any further ado and tried to come to an assessment of their legitimacy in the case of Manchuria. As usual, Yoshino started out by going along with the argumentation of ‘the opponent’. He posed that, if one assumed that it was indeed true that the Chinese had launched an attack on Japan’s special interests in Manchuria by means of an assault on the South Manchurian Railway, the first armed reaction by the Japanese forces could in principle be regarded as a justified form of self-defence.⁵⁸⁷ Although he intimated that, in view of the Japanese army’s substantial record of plots and intrigues in China, he had strong doubts about this general assumption, his assessment nonetheless seemed to support the line of argument by which the army, the government and the mass-media were successfully selling the Manchuria Incident to the Japanese public. This observation, however, led Yoshino immediately to a conclusion which was directly and logically related but which hardly anybody dared to make in public, namely that the subsequent large-scale military operations which ‘merely seem to be aimed at ousting all anti-Japanese forces from the whole of Manchuria and helping a pro-Japanese government in the saddle’ could no longer be ranked under the heading of ‘the exercise of the Japanese right of self-defence’ and amounted to nothing but ‘acts of aggression’ (*shinryaku kōdō*) which in their essence were ‘imperialistic’.⁵⁸⁸

Judging by Yoshino’s impressive postwar track-record of publicly denouncing all forms of imperialism and expansionism which were not purely economic, one would expect this to be the very moment for him to come up with a scathing critique of this ‘aggressive imperialism’ (*teikokushugiteki shinryaku*) and to call upon the Japanese nation to do away with this phenomenon for once and always, but instead all he presents is an equivocal overview of the most common popular reactions to the Manchurian Incident in which it is not easy to discover Yoshino’s own stand on the issue. On the one hand he plays up to the army and the excited masses by pointing out the unlawfulness of the methods by which the Chinese added force to their demands for complete sovereignty over their own territory and resources:

When one considers Japan’s particularly pressing situation [due to its relatively small territory, poor natural resources and large population], it is not hard to see why its call for international equality concerning land and natural resources enjoys very strong support. (...) It is against morality for the Chinese to completely reject Japan which is so hard up. (...) Especially in the case of the Manchurian Question, I even feel anger at the attitude of the Chinese people and authorities who

587 ‘Minzoku to kaikyū to sensō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.1: pp.27-28, 32.

588 *Ibid.*: pp.28, 31.

disregard Japan's needs, and endeavour to place all sorts of unfair and unnecessary obstruction in the way of the exercise of our rights and interests. (...) The continuous direct and indirect violation by the Chinese authorities and Chinese people of our rights and interests in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia clearly forms a reason for the military actions.⁵⁸⁹

As we have seen in his articles ever since the First World War, Yoshino was a proponent of economic expansion in China and even thought this to be an essential precondition for the program of 'survival through industrialisation' he had prescribed his country. In this article he also stresses the importance of the Manchurian region for Japan's economy and points out that this, and not the arbitrary official argument of 'right of self-defence', is the real reason why the Japanese people support the armed intervention in Manchuria. And on the basis of Japan's 'essential needs' he even calls for a 're-evaluation of imperialism', in the sense of a legitimation of economic imperialism.⁵⁹⁰ Yoshino seems to suggest that as far as Manchuria was concerned he was not willing to consider restoring to China such vital Japanese rights regarding iron, coal and oil shale, even if the Chinese demands were valid, as long as the country was totally disinclined to cooperate in line with Japan's national absolute exigency to obtain natural resources for its industry. Let alone if the Chinese people and authorities actively started sabotaging Japan's endeavours and even turned to violence. Thus it seems as if Yoshino is not absolutely opposed to an open confrontation with the Chinese nation in the form of an armed intervention in Manchuria, as one would have expected from his past record.

Yet every once in a while he makes sure to note that this is not the whole story:

In the present situation there theoretically seems to be some extent of rationality (*ichiō no gōrisei*) to our imperialistic advance (*teikokushugiteki shinshutsu*) that is based on the need for ethnic national survival, but as a practical problem it will be impossible to evade the outside criticism that this advance has exceeded all proper bounds (*tekitō no shin'iki*).⁵⁹¹

Such remarks seem at odds with the tone of the first half of the article in which Yoshino appears to be considerably lenient towards the armed intervention. However, close reading of this part learns that what he is doing here is merely presenting the views of the army, the authorities and some representatives of the people, every now and then approving of the theoretical arguments - in particular the economic arguments voiced by the common people - they give as a legitimation of the armed intervention. Although this certainly does not look as if he disagrees with them, this on its own does not imply that he agrees with them. Just as in the case of the Tanaka diplomacy, Yoshino had no objection at all to the theoretical aims this interventionist policy was based on; his critique was usually restricted to the practical means by which it was applied. In the case of the Manchurian Incident his stand is identical and this explains the frequent and unexpected mention of 'practical problems' (*jissai mondai*) in the middle of his seemingly pro-intervention argument.

589 Ibid.: pp.30, 32.

590 Ibid.: pp.29-31.

591 Ibid.: p.32.

Another very significant point is that Yoshino at one stage in the second half of the article remarks that he is very much annoyed by the way China is presented in the coverage by the media of the Manchurian Incident:

Regardless of whether they are hostile to us or not, [the Chinese] in principle are not our enemies. They are the ones with whom, once the military operations are over, we have to join hands and cooperate for the exploitation of the natural resources. Thus it will hardly be necessary to mention that in this Manchurian Incident we should not position ourselves behind the short-sighted slogan of “Punish China”. This is especially true for those who wish the best for Japan’s future and long for just and amiable Sino-Japanese relations.⁵⁹²

In spite of his above-mentioned lip-service to the denunciation of China’s unlawful and immoral obstruction of Japan’s exercise of its vital rights and interests in Manchuria, it is not hard to see that he refused to treat the Chinese as an enemy and thus could not be expected to support a large-scale armed intervention which did exactly that and which would make hopes of close Sino-Japanese cooperation increasingly vain.

Still, most important to notice is that the gist of this article, comprising all of the second half, was to take the major newspapers and the proletarian parties to task for their lack of ‘free and unrestrained criticism of all aspects of the Manchurian Incident’. Yoshino had set his hopes on these organs to act as ‘spokesmen of the conscience of the nation’, but was completely deceived. He did not, however, put all the blame on these agents of the people. He was clearly and directly addressing all of his fellow-countrymen when he said that it was not something to be proud of to see that Japan, ‘the just’, was en masse crying out in joy over the securement of its interests in Manchuria by means of a large-scale armed intervention and chose to close its eyes to ‘the practical questions’ that would emanate from all this and which would not restrict themselves to China but would inevitably involve the rest of Japan’s outside world as well. It goes without saying that by attacking the one-sided reaction to the Manchurian Incident, Yoshino at the same time was of course indirectly criticising what he had termed ‘the disproportional (*ōgesa*) military operations which have come somewhat too soon and have gone somewhat too far’.⁵⁹³

If one is aware of the state of war fever Japan was in as a result of the army’s swift and successful actions in ‘retaliation’ for the Manchurian Incident, it is not so difficult to see why the way Yoshino presented his argument was so ambiguous and why he chose such an immense detour to denounce these actions. In fact, in a relatively unnoticed article in the February issue of a minor women’s magazine he makes specific mention of his great alarm over the fact that nowadays one is forced not only by the authorities but also by one’s friends to refrain from openly criticising the Japanese intervention in Manchuria.⁵⁹⁴ This external pressure is also evident from the above-mentioned article in *Chūō Kōron* itself, which is Yoshino’s first article to be heavily censored after a more than ten year long interval since the time of the Siberia

592 Ibid.: pp.33-34.

593 Ibid.: pp.33-38, 30.

594 ‘Sōsenkyo to taigaikō-ron’. *Fujin Saron*, 1932.2: pp.48-49.

Intervention. Apart from ‘controversial’ terms such as ‘military action’, ‘imperialism’, ‘act of aggression’, ‘military authorities’ and ‘the propertied class’, a lot of comparatively innocent phrases were torpedoed as well in order to make the purport of some parts of the article unintelligible.⁵⁹⁵ In a situation where there were hardly any allies and where a stricter censorship had been reinstated on matters pertaining to Japan’s dealings with certain neighbouring countries, what was the use of sticking one’s neck out by calling for the immediate withdrawal of Japanese troops, as Yoshino had done at the time of the Shandong Interventions? In 1932 this undoubtedly would have meant that the editor of the magazine would have deleted the ‘untimely’ article himself, without even considering showing it to the censors, and he would surely have reprimanded the writer for his utter lack of common sense. Thus, if one wanted to get something across in spite of the changed circumstances, one had to use delicate wording and intricate tactics.⁵⁹⁶

When we consider this tightening of censorship on matters pertaining to Manchuria, it is actually rather surprising to see how Yoshino was nonetheless able to speak out quite freely what was on his mind in a *Chūō Kōron* editorial of September 1932. With the recognition of Manchukuo by the House of Representatives already a fact and the official Japanese recognition of this puppet state by the Saitō Cabinet only a few weeks away - respectively 14 June and 15 September 1932 - Yoshino made his last stand:

The existing international law and customs do not acknowledge as a rightful act the premature recognition [of a new political body] which does not yet sufficiently possess the elements of an independent state. (...) Extending so-called legal recognition to Manchukuo in the present situation ... will be tantamount to a breach of the Nine Power Treaty and an open expression of animosity towards the Chinese government. However, this does not mean that just to leave Manchukuo unrecognised would make Japan’s position legally lawful. Until Manchukuo has truly attained its autonomy and independence Japanese actions with the objective of helping it will probably be difficult to explain by means of common legal principles.⁵⁹⁷

595 It may seem somewhat odd that one can tell which phrases were taken out without having the original manuscript at one’s disposal. However, due to the inconsistency of the censors not all ‘controversial’ phrases have been erased consistently and therefore it is sometimes even relatively easy to find out which words are missing. Thus this article is in accordance with the general impression that censorship considerably tightened soon after the Manchurian Incident, although it was still far from all-pervasive. See Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945*, University of California Press, 1988: pp.28-53 and Richard H. Mitchell, *Censorship in Imperial Japan*, Princeton University Press, 1983: pp.254-65.

596 It was almost at the same time that Ishibashi Tanzan saw himself compelled to adjust the traditional stand of his *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, the ‘radical liberalist’ economic magazine that was one of the first to support ‘small Japan-ism’ (*shō-Nihon shugi*) and ‘the abandonment of Manchuria’ (*Manshū hōkiron*). Ishibashi’s first articles in reaction to the Manchurian Incident had been as critical as ever but by March 1932, taking into consideration the future of the magazine and its sixty employees, he decided it was wiser for the time being to toe the line with the general opinion in favour of the armed intervention. Matsuo Takayoshi, ed., *Ishibashi Tanzan hyōronshū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1991: p.305.

597 ‘Manshūkoku shōnin no jiki’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.9: p.1.

Although the composition of this short front-page editorial was again intricate, it is impossible to overlook the fact that Yoshino rejected both the official government plan to recognise the non-independent state of Manchukuo at the earliest opportunity and the ‘fantastic idea’ in certain army circles simply not to recognise the puppet state with the twofold object of avoiding Japan’s responsibility towards international society and being able to continue to act freely. The reason why Yoshino was able to get this very unrestrained opinion published is probably that he was not treating the military operation of the intervention in Manchuria itself but was merely addressing the resulting civilian matter of the recognition of Manchukuo. This would also explain why in March of the same year he had chosen not to speak out on the establishment of Manchukuo, a festive event at which the Japanese Guandong garrison hardly made any serious effort to hide the fact that they were the ones who had staged it.

Working within the Limits of the Fait Accompli of the Establishment of Manchukuo

However, censorship and outside pressure were not the only reasons why Yoshino did not launch a frontal attack on the exploits of the Japanese army in Manchuria. He did confess “not to be able to suppress a certain feeling of anxiety and deep regret over the large-scale military operations” and he had made it very clear that he thought the legal basis on which the Japanese government tried to back up these exploits to be invalid, but he did not simply demand that the Japanese forces be withdrawn.⁵⁹⁸ On the contrary, he even explicitly said that in the situation that had arisen it was no longer a practical option to demand this.⁵⁹⁹ Considering Yoshino’s record before the Manchurian Incident and the few remarks that trickled out after the incident, I do not think there can be any doubt that he was in principle very much opposed to what the Guandong Army had been up to in the North-Eastern part of China. Nevertheless, apart from the fact that he suddenly found it nearly impossible to vent his views on the legitimacy of the intervention itself, he no longer thought it was of any practical use to do so now the government had decided to approve all military operations and, in the end, had even recognised the establishment of the puppet state as well. With the army and the cabinet so profoundly committed to Manchukuo and the moral support of the Japanese people so evidently behind them, any hope of a spontaneous withdrawal of the troops was in vain. Thus in Yoshino’s opinion all further discussion on the Manchurian question was of no practical value if it did not start out to treat the new situation of a Japanese occupied (but theoretically independent) Manchukuo as a fait accompli.

It of course is very easy to accuse Yoshino of ‘being fickle’ or ‘lacking principles’. However, it is insightful to compare Yoshino’s case with that of Ishibashi Tanzan. The latter’s decision to give up his ‘theory in favour of abandoning Manchuria’ (*Manshū hōkiron*) and instead ratify the armed intervention was made not long after the establishment of Manchukuo. His motivation in doing so, according to later commentators, was not merely his inevitable responsibility as the head of a small publishing company, but also his mission as a *Kulturkritiker* to serve the country. In order to be able to do so in a meaningful way, he saw no other option but

598 ‘Minzoku to kaikyū to sensō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.1: p.33; ‘Manshūkoku shōnin no jiki’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.9: p.1.

599 *Ibid.*: p.33.

to resign himself to the new situation and, on that basis, to do his utmost as a critic on behalf of the people.⁶⁰⁰ In my opinion Yoshino's consideration was not all that different from that of Ishibashi. Apart from the fact that as an individual he spent most of his time, money and energy on rendering selfless aid to others – especially to Chinese and Korean foreign students - in all possible forms, as an intellectual Yoshino was also sincerely driven by what he felt to be his duty to serve, guide and elevate the masses. It is true that his religious idealism every once in a while led him to put forward arguments that the majority of his reading public could not and would not follow but, anxious not to be ignored or to be silenced, he always made sure when coming to conclusions and making policy proposals that he was not taking a position that did not enjoy at least a minimal amount of support.

Yoshino's Reaction to the Western View of the Manchurian Incident: the Lytton Report

One needs to be aware of this emphasis on pragmatism to understand Yoshino's critical reaction to the Lytton Report. Yoshino wrote two articles on the report which came out on the same day: a regular editorial for the *Chūō Kōron* and an extensive critique at the special request of the periodical *Kaizō*, of which the latter is more revealing. The first merely stresses that “there exists divergence of opinion between Japan and Europe”, originating from the fact that whereas “the Europeans and Americans are proficient in the habitual practices of a completely orderly international society and treat the principles that have developed within this system as the golden rule”, the Japanese were confronted with “an abnormal situation in China and Manchuria that in its complexity was far beyond the Europeans' imagination”. Accordingly, the *Chūō Kōron* editorial ends with a call to search for “new particular principles that are founded on the present particular situation in the Orient”.⁶⁰¹ These remarks seem to direct us to the conclusion that when confronted with the particular problems in Manchuria Yoshino, one of the champions of internationalism and universalism in the post-WW1 world, had given up his belief in ‘Western’ universal principles. Still, such a conclusion is quite difficult to reconcile with the above-mentioned importance he seemed for example to attribute to the Nine Power Treaty, one of the pillars of ‘the Washington System’.

Fortunately the *Kaizō* article gives a more thorough insight into Yoshino's views on the matter. What immediately catches the eye is that he actually seems rather pleased with the report. Although he is aware that as a Japanese citizen, who looks upon the report from the viewpoint of the accused, one is prone to reject the whole thing as a mere inconvenience, he warns against taking such an easy stand and instead advises treating the report as objectively as possible. And when he does so himself he in fact cannot but express his “praise and admiration for the extensiveness of the investigations and the high value of the recommendations contained in the report”.⁶⁰² Subsequently Yoshino leaves no doubt about the fact that he subscribes to the vast

600 Matsuo Takayoshi, ed., *Ishibashi Tanzan hyōronshū*, Iwanami Shoten, 1991: p.305.

601 ‘Ritton hōkokusho’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.11: p.1. The original English version and an unabridged Japanese translation of the Lytton Report were included in the same issue of the *Chūō Kōron* as a special supplement.

602 ‘Ritton hōkokusho wo yonde’. *Kaizō*, 1932.11: pp.225-26. See also his diary notes of 3 October 1932 in *YSS*, vol.15.

majority of the findings of the Lytton Commission.⁶⁰³ He acknowledges that Manchuria was almost completely sinified and had become an inseparable part of China, that the so-called independence movements in Manchuria should not be seen as independence movements per se but had always been part and parcel of the overall power struggle in China, that Japan's interests in Manchuria are not purely economic and thus fundamentally clash with the Chinese interests in Manchuria, that the Japanese interests in Manchuria were not based on the support of the local population, that the damage to the Manchurian Railway as a result of the assault had been so marginal that it could not legitimise the large-scale military operations, that the subsequent occupation of Jinzhou and Harbin cannot possibly be seen as acts of self-defence, that there is no unanimous support for the newly formed autonomous state of Manchukuo in Manchuria itself, that Manchukuo would never have come about without the military support of the Japanese army and that in fact it is still under the direct command of the Japanese 'advisers', et cetera, et cetera.⁶⁰⁴ On the basis of this long list it seems more than justified to say that Yoshino hardly disagreed with 'Western opinion' and that his remark that "the conclusions of the Lytton Report collide frontally with the policy Japan has applied" might just as well be read as 'my conclusions collide frontally with the policy Japan has applied'.⁶⁰⁵ In this sense Yoshino made use of this 'Western opinion'; just by discussing and citing the Lytton Report he was able to say a lot of things that had become very difficult for a Japanese person to say in public and even in private. Although the report was highly critical of Japan's action and thus a considerable pain in the neck for the government, there was of course no way that it could censor the document. Considering its standing – it was written by an official research commission of the League of Nations – such an act would ensure Japan a wave of bad press all over the world at a rather critical moment. And although the authorities may have used their influence to avoid an all too wide distribution of some particularly inconvenient conclusions in the report, it could not compete with the business instinct of the publishers, who were keenly aware that there was a considerable market for the report and vied with each other to get their translation out first. Nevertheless, since Yoshino knew that the general public could not be expected to spell out the semi-official document, he clearly jumped at the opportunity and by what he termed 'merely highlighting' some parts of the report was able to tell the Japanese public more than the authorities wanted it to know and get off scot-free.⁶⁰⁶

However, notwithstanding the fact that Yoshino thus used the report as a medium for submitting his own views, there was also some 'divergence of opinion' between Yoshino and the West. For instance, he insisted that there was indeed some degree of spontaneous support in Manchuria for the establishment of Manchukuo, although this sort of hairsplitting was hardly more than a minor issue after he himself had already admitted that it was quite possible that the

603 Authoritative recent works on the Lytton Commission and Japan's dealings with the League of Nations over the Manchurian question are Ian Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China, and the League of Nations, 1931-33*, Kegan Paul International, 1993 and Usui Katsumi, *Manshūkoku to Kokusai Renmei*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1995.

604 Ibid.: pp.228-30.

605 'Ritton hōkokusho'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.11: p.1.

606 This strategy was clearly successful. Although his Kaizō article on the Lytton Report was in no aspect less critical of the authorities and the army than his 'Minzoku to kaikyū to sensō' in the January 1932 issue of *Chūō Kōron*, it was only very sparsely censored.

majority of the Manchurian population took the opposite stand.⁶⁰⁷ As there were hardly any differences in assessment or principle, Yoshino's main objection to the Lytton Report was practical. In his opinion the solution the commission suggested to the Council of the League of Nations, which was formulated in the last chapter of the report, could not escape 'the suspicion of being slightly inconsistent':

Although it recognises that the conflict of interests in Manchuria between Japan and China has its roots in the fundamental policies of these two countries and thus cannot be reconciled, it nonetheless tries to solve the conflict in a way identical to issues that can be reconciled, namely by means of an agreement between the two countries.⁶⁰⁸

Yoshino very much esteemed the commission's judgement that both the Japanese and the Chinese interests in Manchuria were not purely economic. Therefore, these interests were not easily compatible, for example in the form of the so often propagated Sino-Japanese economic alliance, without tumbling over thorny questions such as sovereignty and national security. For both parties there were vital strategic and political interests at stake which meant that some sort of a provisional working relation reflecting the balance-of-power of the day was the highest feasible solution. Judged by this criterion, the suggestion of the commission that for the time being a form of autonomy for Manchuria which incorporated a recognition of Japan's interests was probably not merely the best option at the time, but also an option that Yoshino supported on principle and would have settled for anytime in the period before the Manchurian Incident. However, he was aware more than the European and American members who made up the Lytton Commission he was aware that something had irreversibly changed:

The report mentions that it would be better not to create an independent Manchuria, but it is no longer a question of whether to create or not to create. Manchukuo has already come into being and has also been recognised. In the present situation there is nothing we can do with your advice but to thank you for your kindness.⁶⁰⁹

Yoshino knew that these were no longer the days of Japanese inferiority in the face of European superiority, as symbolised by the unequal treaties and the Triple Intervention, nor the days of international cooperation in the face of American superiority, as symbolised by the Washington Treaties and the retrocession of Shandong. This was a new epoch mainly characterised by defiance. The Japanese would not change an iota in their earlier declaration on the official recognition of Manchukuo and therefore any compromise that did not depart from the idea of Manchurian independence was unpragmatic.⁶¹⁰

607 'Ritton hōkokusho wo yonde'. *Kaizō*, 1932.11: p.230.

608 Ibid.: p.232.

609 Ibid.: p.231.

610 Ibid.: p.232.

Still, this practical point of critique should not cloud the fact that the content and the conclusions of the report were every much after his own heart. Although Yoshino was well aware that the combination of the weighty Lytton Report and the resolute stance of the Japanese authorities would inevitably lead to Japan's secession from the League of Nations, he refused to join the chorus of those who maintained that the Western members of the League would be blamed for Japan's unavoidable international isolation. Instead, he intimated that in his opinion it was rather his own country that would be the main culprit, if it continued to insist on its autonomous opinion regardless of the opposition of the rest of the world.⁶¹¹ This should also be borne in mind when interpreting his casual remark in the *Chūō Kōron* editorial that "the Lytton Report is the maximum result the Europeans can come up with". Yoshino, like many Japanese, did not excel in the art of irony; this was nothing but a very sincere expression of his esteem for the efforts of the commission. A note in his diary to the effect that the report represented 'the common sense of European justice' also suggests this.⁶¹² At most the first remark could be interpreted as a sign of his disappointment that the Westerners had not been able to produce a small miracle, as he had hoped. However, in this light his above-mentioned practical critique of the report could even be deemed somewhat unfair: it is a bit too easy to expect miracles from international society, and even more so when one comes up with the rock-hard precondition of an independent Manchuria, while one oneself seems to have completely given up finding a solution for the harmonisation of the Japanese minimum national demands and the Chinese sovereign national rights. Instead of doing so, Yoshino professed to have resigned himself to what was to come in the near future:

The policy of the Japanese Empire towards the Manchurian question is already fixed. As an individual I have ample objections to both the policy that has been decided upon and the order and procedure by which this policy has been determined, but it is no use repeating these over again. Once national policy has been decided upon, as part of the nation (*kokumin no hitori to shite*) one must fully obey this policy and do one's utmost to cooperate on behalf of its completion.⁶¹³

Thus he stressed the importance of his duty as a Japanese citizen over his opinion as an individual. Since Yoshino did not live long enough afterwards to prove what he had said, it is not easy to find out if he was serious and to what extent he was willing to efface his individuality on behalf of his duty to the nation. But what is clear from the articles he did write in the few remaining months before his death is that, no matter how increasingly circumscribed his actions were becoming, he at least did not forsake his self-imposed duty as an intellectual to act as the conscience of the nation.⁶¹⁴ For instance, on the very next page to the one where he pledged the

611 Ibid.: pp.226-27, 232.

612 'Ritton hōkokusho'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.11: p.1; Yoshino diary, 3 October 1932, reprinted in YSS, vol.15.

613 'Ritton hōkokusho wo yonde'. *Kaizō*, 1932.11: p.225.

614 Having learned their lesson from the Home Ministry's post-publication warning due to Yoshino's 'Manmō mondai ni kansuru hansei' in the October 1931 issue of *Chūō Kōron* and the ban from circulation of the November issue due to Inomata Tsunao's 'Dokusen shihonshugi to Manmō no kiki' (Monopolist Capitalism and the Manchurian Crisis), the following year the editors forced Yoshino to

docile fulfilment of his duty as a Japanese citizen, he quite contradictorily emphasised the need for his fellow-countrymen to take a neutral objective stand and we find him once again pointing out that only the principle of international cooperation, and thus not isolationist actions such as secession from the League, will lead to the true solution of the Manchurian question.⁶¹⁵ And a few pages further in the same article he is even so bold as to quote at length and with obvious approval the suggestion the Lytton commission makes as to how Japan could best confront its fundamental national problems:

Japan's vital interests in Manchuria will only be securely and effectively guaranteed by a government that is in line with the aspirations of the [Chinese] people and takes full account of their feelings and demands. (...) At present Japan is pinning its hopes on industrialisation as the method to deal with its agricultural crisis and its population problem. This industrialisation will result in a demand for new economic markets and the only vast and comparatively secure market in Asia is to be found in China. Therefore, it will definitely not be a wise policy for Japan to handle the Manchurian question as a matter separate and cut off from the overall question of Japan's relations with China and thereby make friendship with China impossible.⁶¹⁶

Needless to say, this sort of advice was diametrically opposed to the Japanese 'fixed national policy'. Yet, it was exactly what Yoshino had reiterated time and again during the past ten years and thus it can hardly be called a coincidence that he paid so much attention to this conclusion of the report. Albeit in this indirect way, there can be no doubt that Yoshino continued to vent his objections to the official policy in spite of the fact that he had only just confessed that his national duty compelled him not to do so anymore.

Yoshino's Legacy

The last article Yoshino wrote on Japan's relations with Asia was a front-page editorial for the December 1932 issue of the *Chūō Kōron* and was entitled "The Establishment of an Oriental Monroe Doctrine". Since Yoshino's opening editorials for the *Chūō Kōron* were published anonymously and he did not contribute to the magazine on another regular basis after 1928, it was established only after the recent publication of his diaries that almost all the editorials from his short-lived switch to the *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun* in February 1924 until the New Year's editorial of 1933, thus including the 'wartime editorials' of 1932, were also by his

adjust the tone of his October 1932 editorial and refused to publish an article in which he attacked Army Minister Araki Sadao. Yoshino complained that "it has become quite an awkward world if one is no longer able to say these sort of things", but he was sure the outside world would be able to see through the 'futile attempt to create an unnatural national unity'. Yoshino diary, 12 September 1932, *YSS*, vol.15; 'Sōsenkyo to taigaikō-ron'. *Fujin Saron*, 1932.2: p.49.

615 'Ritton hōkokusho wo yonde'. *Kaizō*, 1932.11: p.226.

616 *Ibid.*: p.231.

hand.⁶¹⁷ This has resulted in the ironic observation that the above-mentioned December 1932 editorial, which is often selected as proof of *Chūō Kōron*'s conversion (*tenkō*), was actually written by Yoshino, who is usually presented by the same sources as an exponent of 'the good Japan'.⁶¹⁸ This new factual information seems to lead us to the conclusion that, just like so many other intellectuals, Yoshino in the final stage of his life did convert, a conclusion which indeed seems legitimate when one considers his adoption of such idiom as 'driving out the unjust oppression of the Western powers' and 'the establishment of a Monroe Doctrine for the Orient' that had been in disuse for some fifteen years.⁶¹⁹

However, when one merely looks at the façade of this article and highlights the sudden shift in vocabulary compared to Yoshino's previous articles, one tends to forget that the Asianist idea of Asia for the Asians had always been shared by almost all Japanese citizens, including Yoshino, and thus was hardly new, let alone a sign of ideological recantation. In Yoshino's case it had not been opportune during the 1910s and 1920s to spell out that Western imperialism in East Asia was undesirable, mainly because what he tried to convey to his fellow-countrymen was that since 1905 Japan was guilty of the same offence and since 1915 in the case of China even to a far larger extent than the Western forerunners. In the sense that Yoshino in 1932 found it opportune to openly subscribe to 'Japan's lofty and ultimate aim in Asia to drive out Western imperialism', his way of formulating the aims of Japan's China policy did indeed markedly change, but his harsh and fundamental critique of the means Japan tended to use to this end was unhampered.⁶²⁰

Thus, the December editorial shows the same pattern as the *Kaizō* article on the Lytton Report, with the difference that Yoshino this time does not 'hire' a third party to convey his message; after having paid the required lip-service to newly reinstated semi-official idiom such as 'the establishment of a Monroe Doctrine for the Orient', he finely comments that a Japanese-Manchurian alliance completely dependent on the financially weak Japan would never be able to bring about the whole thing. Thus he made no secret of the fact that in his opinion the ideal of a Monroe Doctrine for the East was of no practical value if China did not participate, and that taking Manchuria against the will of the Chinese would definitely not contribute to making them participate.⁶²¹ However, since this was no longer a time in which Yoshino could tell his fellow-countrymen explicitly what they had to do in order to soothe the Chinese and obtain their cooperation, his exhortation was somewhat more abstract:

617 It was only from February until August 1925 that Yoshino did not contribute his monthly editorial because he had to take complete rest due to a serious resurgence of pleurisy.

618 Two fine examples in this case are Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945*, University of California Press, 1988: pp.48-51 and Eguchi Keiichi, *Jūgonen sensō no kaimaku* (Volume 4 in the *Shōwa no rekishi*-series), Shōgakkan, 1988: p.226.

619 'Tōyō Monrōshugi no kakuritsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.12: p.1. The most extensive work on intellectual conversion in Japan is the three volume *Shisō no Kagaku Kenkyūkai*, ed., *Kyōdō kenkyū - Tenkō*, Heibonsha, 1959-62, a body of work on 'the recantation' of prewar socialist and liberal intellectuals by their postwar successors.

620 Although the rhetoric in the 1930s was rife with the words 'the Orient', 'the East', 'East Asia' and 'Asia', one should not forget that these were in essence all about China and only very seldom included one or two other Asian countries in a substantial way.

621 'Tōyō Monrōshugi no kakuritsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1932.12: p.1.

The first step to a Monroe Doctrine for the Orient has been taken. This is without doubt a reason for joy in itself, but from now on it will depend on our prudence whether it will come to its ideal fruition or whether, if we take the wrong course, it will turn out to be a millstone round our necks, from which future generations will also suffer for a long time. This is why we have to exert self-reflection.⁶²²

With Yoshino all of a sudden mentioning terms like ‘taking the wrong course’ (*hōkō wo ayamashite*) and ‘self-reflection’ or ‘remorse’ (*hansei*) in connection with this Monroe Doctrine for the Orient, it will be clear that he was once again telling his readers of his objections to the Japanese establishment of Manchukuo, which in this article he had characterised as the first step towards the doctrine, and was warning them not to continue on the same course. Thus Yoshino remained to the end true to the most important message he had given his people on its foreign policy throughout the last fifteen years: no matter what and how hard Japan tried it would always be predominantly dependent upon the good-will of China and hence it was of the utmost priority that it refrained from any actions that would impair the establishment of friendly relations between the two neighbouring countries.⁶²³

622 Ibid.: p.1.

623 Although I do not know the details of its origin, the text of a scroll written by Yoshino in the late summer of 1932 - nowadays preserved in the Yoshino Sakuzō Memorial Museum in Furukawa - also suggests his unaltered belief in the importance of the conscious choice of one’s means to attain one’s goal. It reads: “If one does not travel the road, one will not arrive. If one does not act, nothing will come about.” (*Michi yukazareba itarazu, koto nasazareba narazu*). My interpretation of this short ‘precept’ (*kyōkun*) is that one has the moral duty to act, but that the cause does not justify the means. The ‘road’ one takes is of equal importance to the ‘act’ itself.

6.2 Summary: Isolated Figurehead of the Taishō Generation

As I mentioned at the outset of this chapter, Mitani Taichirō in 1995 put special emphasis on the central role Yoshino played during the so-called Taishō Democracy by inserting the subtitle ‘*Yoshino Sakuzō no jidai*’ (The Age of Yoshino Sakuzō) to the revised edition of his 1974 ‘classic’ *Taishō demokurashii-ron*. In the epilogue Mitani goes even further by posing that Yoshino was not merely the centre but also the apex of Taishō democracy. On the basis of the criterion of liberal democracy he argues that both for the part of ‘freedom from the state’ (liberalism) and for the part of ‘freedom towards the state’ (democracy) Yoshino scored exceptionally high marks.⁶²⁴ This high praise is anything but uncontested, though, as even now there are many for whom Yoshino’s gradualist approach is hardly satisfactory. I will refrain from involving myself too deeply in the debate on the democratic calibre of Yoshino’s ideas on the internal political system, since this work has primarily been concerned with his views of the outside world. In this sense the body of research written by Matsuo Takayoshi, although for the most part limited to Yoshino’s views of China and Korea, is a more appropriate point of reference. In the field of Japanese attitudes during the interwar period towards its neighbour China and its colony Korea, Matsuo presents us with two icons of exemplary behaviour, namely Yoshino Sakuzō and Ishibashi Tanzan. In his comparison of these two outspoken critics of their country’s China policy - Ishibashi was not sufficiently outspoken on Korea to serve as material for comparison – Matsuo provides a very insightful observation concerning their respective points of departure. Whereas the latter could just follow the ‘radical liberalist’ line of ‘small Japan-ism’ (*shō-Nihonshugi*) and ‘the abandonment of Manchuria’ (*Manshū hōkiron*) set out by his peers Miura Tetsutarō and Katayama Sen at the *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, the former started out with a considerable handicap. Yoshino was affiliated to Todai’s law faculty, the home of all but one of the so-called ‘seven professors’ (*shichi hakase*) – including his direct peer Onotsuka Kiheiji – who had clamoured for war against Russia. Moreover, his spiritual home, the Hongō Unitarian Church, happened to be the headquarters of Japan’s conversion campaign aimed at the assimilation of Korea.⁶²⁵ It is thus hardly surprising that for most of the 1910s Ishibashi’s views were evidently more ‘enlightened’ than Yoshino’s. Although it is not altogether clear whether Matsuo really subscribes to the idea that the differing developments of the duo during the 1920s can be fully explained by the juxtaposition of Ishibashi’s attachment as an economic commentator to the free tradist tradition of ‘small Japan-ism’ against Yoshino’s emphasis as a

624 Mitani Taichirō, *Taishō demokurashii-ron – Yoshino Sakuzō no jidai*, revised and expanded edition, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1995: p.330.

625 Matsuo Takayoshi, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō to Ishibashi Tanzan no Chūgokuron – danshō’. *Chikaki ni arite*, no.32 (November 1997):, p.87. For other comparisons of Yoshino’s and Ishibashi’s views on China policy, see Inoue Hisashi, ‘Nihonjin no Chūka Minkoku ni tsuite no ninshiki – Yoshino Sakuzō to Ishibashi Tanzan no taihiteki kentō wo chūshin to shite’ and Hang Keshi, ‘Yoshino Sakuzō no jinkakushugi to Ishibashi Tanzan no puragumatizumu’, both in *Chikaki ni arite*, respectively no.29 (May 1996): pp.34-41 and no.31 (May 1997): pp.63-68. However, Matsuo probably is the only one who has conducted the in-depth research on both men necessary to make a solid comparison. I myself have passed Ishibashi by for the simple reason that he does not write for a wide general audience during the interwar period and thus do not consider him part of the group of *Kulturkritiker*.

political scientist on ‘the reality of international relations’, he nonetheless concludes that in his reaction to Chinese nationalist demands Yoshino by 1928 had overtaken Ishibashi.⁶²⁶

In the above I have also analysed and described the long and difficult road the former imperialist Yoshino had to travel. In doing so I have seen myself forced to come up with a rather frustrating storyline, both for the reader and the writer, that is probably best characterised as ‘three steps forward, two steps backward’. There are clearly two Yoshino’s: one who flies high on the perception of the arrival of a more just world order of ‘international democracy’ and the belief in the fulfilment of Kant’s prophecy of everlasting peace, and one who constantly has to face the fact that progress can be very gradual indeed or, even worse, has to acknowledge that regress is anything but excluded. Accordingly Yoshino is not someone whom one can fathom easily by scanning a few articles. One needs the bigger picture, not merely in the sense of chronology but also in the sense of proportion and representativeness. Although he did not spell it out like Ishibashi did, Yoshino also believed that claims to justice had to be backed up by force, a thing which is clear from the fact that Yoshino only gives in to the Chinese demands in content until after the success of the Northern Expedition has become obvious. Still, judging by this bigger picture, an imperative direction stands out and certain ‘quirky’ elements constantly recur, both of which are impossible to ignore and probably best explained by the term ‘idealism’.

I am not the first to pay attention to the struggle between the elements of ‘pragmatism’ and ‘idealism’ in the thought of Yoshino Sakuzō.⁶²⁷ Moreover, the man himself was quite aware of this struggle, although he was self-confident that he had been able to harmonize the two elements and blend them into what he termed ‘scientific idealism’. Still, it was no co-incidence that ‘idealism’ was the central noun that to a certain extent was described by the adjective ‘scientific’ and the order of the two elements was not the other way around. Thus, of the two ‘idealism’ was clearly the stronger, a thing which is also evident from the fact that he evaluated the imperfect ‘utopistic idealism’ still supreme to ‘unscientific realism’.⁶²⁸ To give one last example of Yoshino’s idealist inclination, the following is from a January 1922 article aptly entitled ‘Now the Time is Truly Ripe for Perfecting Pacifist Thinking’ (*Heiwa shisō tettei no ki masa ni jukuseri*):

The question whether peace thinking will be perfected or not eventually depends on how we regard mankind. (...) If we look upon man as a somewhat evolved animal that when all is said and done is primarily driven by its barbaric combative instinct, it will ultimately be impossible to perfect the idea of peace. This aim is only compatible with a view of humanity which looks for man’s real nature in an idealist direction. We cannot hope for a future of true peace if we do not consider man as a creature which develops without limit and tends to mutual trust and aid. This is why in order to perfect peace thinking we ultimately have to dedicate ourselves to philosophical research into the nature of mankind and, one step further, the cultivation of religious sentiments (*shūkyōteki jōsō*). All peace theories which are not founded in such, are in the end nothing more than castles in

626 Ibid.: p.89.

627 See for instance and Iida Taizō, *Hihan seishin no kōseki*, Chikuma Shobō, 1997, pp.155-221 and the recent work of Fujimura Ichirō (see bibliography).

628 ‘Taigai seiron no shoha’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.12, pp.95-98.

the air.⁶²⁹

In my opinion it is this conspicuous idealist strand in his thinking, which makes that Yoshino, who is usually treated as uniquely representative of the intellectual trend of his day, actually often took a very exceptional stand and especially so when it came to international affairs. Many of his contemporaries gradually came to share his conclusions concerning foreign policy to a great extent. However, the problem with Yoshino was that he tended to phrase his support for internationalism not so much by means of rational strategic and economic arguments but more often – like in the above citation - by moral or even religious ones, which presented an uncommon idealistic view of mankind and human civilization. For instance, in sharp contrast to the general trend, he from the very outset enthusiastically supported the Allied side during World War One, a support which became almost uncritical when the United States joined in. He was also unusual in his advocacy of Esperanto and his unwavering support and high praise for the League of Nations, which in the eyes of many Japanese was hardly more than an assembly of quarrelsome white, European nations. Another unique feature is that he was much more impressed by the rhetoric of the Charter of the League of Nations and the Four Power Treaty than the substantial and more pragmatic Five and Nine Power Treaties of the Washington Conference. Moreover, it is impossible to ignore Yoshino's strong tendency to deify the British and Americans by uncritically presenting England and America as the ideal in the respective fields of social justice and international justice. Pre-war Japan had its fair share of Anglophiles, which makes his attitude towards the United States most remarkable. The latter may even be termed extreme in the case of Yoshino's support of the country in such humiliating matters as the issues of Japanese immigrants and the island of Yap. This, together with his description of Japan itself as "an ideological pariah on the world stage", can hardly have gone down well with most Japanese of his day. Let alone the 'absurd' idea that a country as backward as China might soon leap ahead of its big brother.

As far as Japan's direct neighbours was concerned, his attitude towards Russia was in general rather aloof and not unusual. However, this neutral treatment of the new communist regime contributed the last piece to his idealistic portrayal of a world in which Japan had no enemies to fear and even the existence of a potential enemy seemed to be denied. The main enemies Yoshino perceived of were located within Japan's borders and were represented by the army, the bureaucracy and Seiyūkai politicians. Within the circle of intellectuals endeavouring to bring about political and social reforms in interwar Japan it was anything but uncommon to depict these three power factions as the root of all evil. In Yoshino's case, though, this critical attitude to a large extent developed into a rather uncommon direction, namely that of an alliance with Chinese and Koreans who were equally disgruntled with Japan's military and political leadership. Whereas the vast majority of the Japanese could not but look down upon their Asian neighbours and treat their expressions of dissatisfaction as mere 'anti-Japanese uproar', Yoshino showed an exceptional degree of understanding, sympathy and active support for what he regarded to be justified movements on behalf of the universal right to ethnic national self-determination. On the basis of his vast network of Christian and Korean friends and acquaintances he gradually developed a strong notion of equality. In the case of the colonial

629 'Heiwa shisō tettei no ki masa ni jukuseri'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.1, reprinted in YSS, vol.6: pp.230-31.

setting of Korea this was, at least outwardly, limited to a demand for equal rights and autonomy for the Korean ethnic nation within the framework of the Japanese empire, a proposition which nonetheless was miles ahead of the official policy of assimilation. In terms of Sino-Japanese relations, however, it was characterised by an extraordinary emphasis on China's status as an equal, sovereign state. Especially after the successful completion of the Guomindang's Northern Expedition, this was reflected in a balanced view of Japanese and Chinese interests, which would inevitably lead to the vanishing of all forms of Japanese empire from the Chinese mainland.

Accordingly, rather than their leader or their representative Yoshino more or less functioned as the moral conscience of his fellow-countrymen. His tragedy was that after his glorious rise in the 1910s to the centre of the so-called *Kulturkritik*, in the 1920s he had to cope with an age that was marked by an alternation of generations. Whereas Yoshino was somewhat too progressive for many of his own generation, he was rejected as far too conservative by a new radical generation, whom he to a considerable extent had reared himself. Still, although his influence as 'the conscience of the nation' was decreasing, all through the 1920s it remained considerable even if it was only for the simple fact that he was so prominent in the pages of the *Chūō Kōron*. While most of his generation turned their heads Yoshino could not refrain from drawing their attention to abuses at home and, something even more exceptional for his day, misdeeds in Japan's colonies and informal empire. And whereas many of the reform generation in their zeal and despair tended to resort to exclusionist forms of nationalism that were completely blind to the interests of other nations, Yoshino gradually progressed to a mature internationalism which enabled him to put Japan's needs into the perspective of the rights and needs of others. His isolation was partly the price he had to pay for the role of pioneer he had set for himself and very admirably attained.

CHAPTER 4

SUGIMORI KŌJIRŌ

HOW TO HARMONIZE NATIONALISM AND
COSMOPOLITANISM

INTRODUCTION

In sharp contrast to Yoshino Sakuzō, an overview of previous research into the life and work of Sugimori Kōjirō can be brief. Apart from a few articles and lemmata in encyclopaedia dealing with this highly productive and influential interwar and wartime opinion leader, invariably written by scholars affiliated to Waseda University - Sugimori's alma mater - and invariably in a favourable or glorifying tone, there is nothing but an all pervasive silence.¹ This somewhat contradictory situation - why is there no 'independent' research or a full-length biography of a 'brilliant and original philosopher' like Sugimori - is easily explained by two factors. The first one is the undeniable fact of Sugimori's 'war responsibility'. His books and articles during the so-called 'Fifteen Year War' period reek of fascism and totalitarianism and were clearly in full support of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, thus making him a somewhat awkward object of research better left untouched. On the other hand, he was of course not the only opinion leader who was clearly 'on the wrong side' during the war. Many of his contemporaries could be and sometimes actually were accused on the same grounds, and some of them have nonetheless enjoyed scholarly attention, extensive media coverage and popularity until this very day. However, the second problem with Sugimori is that, in contrast to Kita Ikki, Ishiwara Kanji, Ōkawa Shūmei, or even his close friend Nakano Seigō, he was not a very enigmatic personality and, moreover, he conveyed his ideas, although serving the cause of war with China, England and the United States, in a vocabulary that was far too unorthodox and unfathomable to serve any nationalist, populist, socialist or Asianist cause in the postwar days.

Considering the lack of attention for Sugimori in his native Japan, it will hardly come as a surprise that he is almost completely unknown in the rest of the world. When his name does appear in Western scholarship on modern Japan, this is usually in relation to the three famous men with whom he was befriended: his instructor in pragmatism Tanaka Ōdō (1867-1932), his fellow philosophy student Ishibashi Tanzan (1884-1973), and his political friend Nakano Seigō (1886-1943).² Accordingly, although one is sometimes treated to very different attempts at a brief characterisation of Sugimori - derisive in the case of Gino K. Piovesana, who sarcastically

1 The few postwar articles on Sugimori I have been able to trace are Uchida Shigetaka, 'Sugimori Kōjirō - kinōshugi seiji genri no tenkai' and Takeda Ryōzō, 'Sugimori Kōjirō - gendai shakai no kyoshiteki bunseki', both in Waseda Daigaku Nanajūgo-shunen Kinen Shuppan Shakai Kagaku Bumon Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Kindai Nihon no shakai kagaku to Waseda Daigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shakai Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1957: pp.94-98 and pp.395-400; Ii Gentarō, 'Sugimori Kōjirō no Nihon bunka no kindai he no kōken', in *Waseda Seiji Keizaigaku Zasshi*, no.177 (1963): pp.161-80; Imada Takechiyo, 'Sugimori Kōjirō no tetsugaku', in *Waseda Daigakushi Kiyō*, vol.2, no.3 (1969): pp.27-45; Hanzawa Hiroshi, 'Tanzan to tomo ni ayunda jiyūshugisha (2) - Sugimori Kōjirō', in *Jiyū Shisō*, no.20 (1981): pp.50-57. Sugimori is also ranked among the hundred most prestigious Waseda men in *Bessatsu Taiyō - Waseda hyakunin* (winter 1979). Apart from this he features prominently in Rōyama Masamichi's postwar overview of the introduction and development of the academic discipline of political science in modern Japan. In this work Sugimori is discussed, together with Hasegawa Nyozeikan and Ōyama Ikuo, as an exponent of the positivist school (*jishhō gakuha*), in contrast to the school of state learning (*kokka gakuha*). Rōyama, *Nihon ni okeru kindai seijigaku no hattatsu*, Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, 1949: pp.130-37.

2 See respectively Gino K. Piovesana, S.J., *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1962: A Survey*, Enderle Bookstore, Tokyo, 1963; Sharon H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan: Ishibashi Tanzan and His Teachers, 1905-1960*, University of California Press, 1987; and Leslie Russell Oates, *Populist Nationalism in Prewar Japan: A biography of Nakano Seigō*, George Allen & Unwin, 1985.

remarks that Sugimori's ultra-pragmatism did not prevent him from assuming various dubious honorary posts in wartime, neutral (but mistaken) in the case of Kevin M. Doak who includes him in a group of 'such influential legal scholars as Sugimori Kōjirō, Horie Kiichi, and Yoshino Sakuzō', and laudatory in the case of Sharon H. Nolte who makes mention of 'ground-breaking thinkers such as Sugimori Kōjirō in sociology'³ - for lack of any background information one is at a complete loss whether to agree or to disagree with these assertions. I do not have the qualifications to judge Sugimori's role as an innovator in the field of sociology, but having read many articles by his hand I cannot but have serious doubts whether he made any substantial and lasting contribution to any of the many scholarly disciplines he devoted himself to, ranging from sociology, philosophy, ethics, psychology, theology and pedagogy to political science. One thing that is clear is that he did not raise a strong following of disciples. As I will elaborate later, neither do I think of Sugimori as a hypocrite, who opportunistically abandoned or adjusted his principles to the wartime situation. Instead, I find that his 'blend of pragmatic nationalism' is evident from his very first writings, that it was not his fault that his contemporaries associated cosmopolitanism with pacifism and democracy, and that his support of the war against China and the ensuing war against America and England was nothing but the logical consequence of his non-egalitarian ideas.

However, be that as it may, the best way to describe Sugimori is probably to say that he was a very influential journalist, and the reason I chose to do a case-study has nothing to do with originality or political correctness, let alone the assertion that it was Sugimori who enriched the Japanese language with the term '*gensoku*' (principle)⁴, but all with the plain fact that he was a highly visible opinion leader. Although he started out as a commentator on philosophy and education in the influential literary journal *Waseda Bungaku* and established his name through the foreign acclaim of his English book on philosophy, his true fame came as a so-called '*Kulturkritiker*' (*bunmei hihyōka*) in the interwar period. Through his many articles for Nakano Seigō's *Tōhō Jiron*, the major all-round magazines *Chūō Kōron*, *Kaizō* and *Taiyō*, and various newspapers, and his regular appearances in round-table discussions such as those organised and published by the *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, Sugimori's voice was hard to ignore and, as there was a consistent demand from the publishers for his services, must have been a popular voice. Notwithstanding the fact that contemporary commentators invariably mentioned Sugimori's obscure and unintelligible (*kaijū nankai*) literary style, adorned with many self-coined words, they also had to admit that this did not seem to infringe at all upon his popularity and that his

3 Gino K. Piovesana, S.J., *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1962: A Survey*, Enderle Bookstore, Tokyo, 1963: p.69; Kevin M. Doak, 'Culture, Ethnicity, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Japan', in Sharon A. Minichiello, *Japan's Competing Modernities - Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1998: p.194; Sharon H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan: Ishibashi Tanzan and His Teachers, 1905-1960*, University of California Press, 1987: p.21.

4 This assertion can be found in the memoirs of one of Sugimori's disciples, namely Itō Yasuji, *Shakai shinrigaku nōto*, Kyōdō Shuppan, 1971: p.233. A quick search by means of the Webcat search engine tells us that this assertion is not true, the first references to '*gensoku*' popping up in the late 1890s in the case of books on economics, philosophy and military science. One has to admit though that the word fades away from view in the early 1900s, reappears in the late 1910s but only gets a new lease of life in the mid-1920s, after Sugimori published three books with this word in the title.

books and articles were widely read.⁵ Sugimori himself, to whom any form of modesty was completely unknown, was also keenly aware of his status as a selling name and is said to have haughtily refused to write for any journal that would not print his contribution as a leading article.⁶ And, finally, although this assertion is not thoroughly documented, Sugimori probably also wielded political influence through Nakano Seigō, the eloquent and very popular ‘populist nationalist’ politician, to whom he is said to have served as chief adviser on ideological matters.⁷

5 Tsuchida Kyōson, ‘Junshin shisōka Sugimori-kun’ and Shirayanagi Shūko, ‘Gakusei jidai no Sugimori-kun’. Both in *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.100-01, 107.

6 Ii Gentarō, ‘Sugimori Kōjirō no Nihon bunka no kindaika he no kōken’, in *Waseda Seiji Keizaigaku Zasshi*, no.177 (1963): p.163.

7 Leslie Russell Oates, *Populist Nationalism in Prewar Japan: A biography of Nakano Seigō*, George Allen & Unwin, 1985: p.54.

1 THE LIFE OF SUGIMORI KŌJIRŌ⁸

Sugimori Kōjirō was born on 9 April 1881 in the village of Kawahigashi, Jōtō county, in the district Tōtōmi of Shizuoka Prefecture.⁹ He was the second son in a peasant family, who apart from tilling their rice fields and tea plantation also ran a little bookshop. Raised in an environment where books were omnipresent and where he was forced by his father to read from the Confucianist classic text the *Xiaojing* (Classic of filial piety), Sugimori showed great promise at primary school. As a result he was recommended by his teacher to be adopted into the family of Shiramatsu Rokujirō, a doctor in the nearby village of Kamo who was both successful and wealthy and thus, in contrast to Sugimori's parents, able to pay for his further education. Upon his graduation from primary school in 1892 Sugimori's family name was changed in Shiramatsu and he became an apprentice in his adoptive father's pharmacy. In these new surroundings he became familiar with hagiographies of the loyalists of the Bakumatsu period and the writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi, although his education, conducted by his adoptive father himself, was somewhat more classical. The latter ordered him to recite from Rai Sanyō's *Nihon Gaishi* and the *Jūhasshiryaku*, start a diary, and hand in a composition every week.¹⁰ Accordingly it was no surprise that the boy was more than pleased when he was sent to the freedom of Tokyo to continue his studies in the summer of 1894. For an heir in a family of doctors, these studies of course were medical studies. However, in those days the major precondition to be enrolled in a medical school was a good command - at least passive- of the German language, and thus in his first years in Tokyo Shiramatsu mainly attended several private schools specialised in German (*Doitsugo juku*). Although stubbornly insisting on his own learning method, which consisted of using only reference books in the German language and not caring too much about the correct pronunciation, he nonetheless succeeded in being admitted into the final year of one of the very rare middle schools which had German instead of English on their curriculum. The next step was a medical college in Chiba, but this soon proved to be the last step in his medical career. According to his memoirs, he had since his early childhood been somewhat of a maverick, always daydreaming, considering 'thought' (*shisō*) the most important thing in life, and not being able to sleep for pondering over the question whether there was a start and an end to the universe.

8 The few articles that have been written on Sugimori merely deal with his scholarly work and give no information on the period before he entered Waseda at the age of twenty-one. The source on which I had to rely entirely for this early period, and partially for later periods, is Sugimori Kōjirō, *Jijōden zairyō*, which consists of unpublished fragmentary reminiscences of his philosophical and publishing career, dictated to his friend Ii Gentarō in March and April 1947. This manuscript, which unfortunately is a far cry from the intended well-structured autobiography, is in the possession of Sugimori's relatives, who kindly permitted me to copy and use these memoirs.

9 The village of Kawahigashi was later annexed into the village Nanzan, from which Sugimori took his pen name. Jōtō county (*gun*) is present-day Ogasa town (*chō*), close to the tip of the Omaezaki peninsula and only separated by a few miles from the Pacific Ocean.

10 The *Jūhasshiryaku* was a compilation of Chinese historical works that was used in premodern Japan to study classical Chinese, after one had mastered the *shisho* (the four Confucianist classics). The compulsory keeping of a diary during his two years at the pharmacy unfortunately caused Sugimori never to consider doing so afterwards. The magazine he consulted in order to prepare his weekly composition was *Gakusei Hissenjō* (Student's battlefield of prose), to which Yoshino in these same years contributed his first compositions and poems.

This inclination continued into his *juku* days, when he was not so much concerned about the curriculum and preferred visiting the Ueno library to read whatever he could lay his hands on, or locking himself up in his rooms with as sole companion the collected works of Wang Yangming and the *Ri Shi* parts of Sima Qian's *Shiki retsuden*. It was also probably around this time that Shiramatsu became infatuated with Takayama Chogyū, Shimamura Hōgetsu and Tsunashima Ryōsen, the three up-and-coming writers of the late 1890s who helped the journals *Taiyō* and *Waseda Bungaku* to an unprecedented popularity. Far more important for him than his enrolment in medical school was the fact that he had succeeded in getting his maiden work, the article 'Shizensei jinsei' (Natural life) - which had nothing to do with medics but with religion and philosophy - published in Takahashi Gorō's magazine *Tenchijin*.¹¹ Shiramatsu also mentions a lecture on the evolution theory and his admiration for 'the chivalrous spirit' (*gikyōshin*) of the students from Shizuoka studying at Waseda University as direct incentives for him to abort his medical career, but these seem somewhat shallow reasons for a far-fetching and traumatic decision that inevitably implied his eviction from his new family. Be that as it may, he carefully omitted this painful period from his memoirs and also left his later acquaintances completely in the dark about his family background.¹²

This period ended when Shiramatsu - despite the rupture with his adoptive family he only changed his name back to Sugimori in 1912 - embarked upon the road to become a professional philosopher by means of his enrolment in April 1902 into the preparatory course of Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō, the high-standing private college which in the same year restyled itself into Waseda University.¹³ This institution, although very elite, was a far cry from the Imperial University of Tokyo, the preparatory school for the bureaucracy, or Keiō University, the business men's private university, or the other private law schools established in the middle Meiji period and needs a few words of explanation. Established by Ōkuma Shigenobu in 1882 in the wake of his expulsion from the Meiji government and manned by many of his political allies, Waseda was not merely a private university but also one with a strong oppositional colouring and high academic and social ambitions from the very start. And although in normal circumstances this anti-government stand may have gradually declined, the fact that the highly self-confident Waseda graduates were usually debarred from government scholarships and positions in the government bureaucracy contributed to the fact that this independent critical spirit was still very much alive at the time Shiramatsu enrolled. The so-called 'Waseda spirit' and a considerable freedom of thought and expression, which earned it the reputation of the 'Campus of Freedom',

11 Takahashi Gorō (1856-1935) was a critic, linguist, and translator who is best known for the counterattack he made in 1893 against Inoue Tetsujirō, who accused Christianity of being anti-nationalistic. Nihon Kindai Bungakkan, ed., *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten*, vol.2, Kōdansha, 1977: pp.279-80.

12 Shirayanagi Shūko, 'Gakusei jidai no Sugimori-kun', *Kaizō*, 1924.11: p.104.

13 For an overview of the constantly changing structure and naming of the various institutions of the Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō/Waseda Daigaku during its first 25 years, see Satō Yoshimaru, *Kindai Nihon to Waseda Daigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1991: pp.206-211. The 'higher preparatory course' (*kōtō yoka*) was established not long before Waseda was named a university in 1902 and implied a far better connection between the middle school and the university than the normal higher school offered. Waseda's preparatory course started in April and merely lasted one and a half years, thus amounting to a reduction in the length of education by a full two years (including the half year wait for the entrance examinations of the higher schools). See Ishibashi Tanzan, *Tanzan Kaisō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1985: pp.48-50.

meant that American pragmatist philosophy, the naturalist movement in literature, and feminism flourished at the university. It was this consistent spirit of ‘outsider elitism’ which turned Waseda into the only private university before the war to play a dominant role in the radical student movement. However, it was also this same spirit which trained the students well for more moderate positions in politics and the printed media - also positions of relatively high social standing - where no barricades were erected against Waseda alumni and they were accordingly very strongly represented.¹⁴

In September 1903 Shiramatsu advanced to the newly established Department of Letters of the brand new university, thus becoming one of the first to join under the new system. The Department of Letters of Waseda at the time consisted of nothing more than the two divisions of English literature and - although not officially so but in practice overwhelmingly German - philosophy, of which the former had a special attraction for students because of the prominence of its literary periodical *Waseda Bungaku*. Yet contrary to the many disciples of Tsubouchi Shōyō, the famous writer, literary critic, playwright, Shakespeare translator, and editor of the periodical from 1891 to 1898, Shiramatsu was not so much attracted to pure literature, and surely not to English literature considering his predominantly German education. His interests were focused on philosophy and even extended to such practical issues as parliamentary politics and the social system, making him into a somewhat isolated figure compared to the many ‘little Hamlets’ in his department.¹⁵ In the division of philosophy, which became a department in its own right in 1905, Shiramatsu’s direct supervisor was Kaneko Umaji, who had studied under the famous German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt and had obtained the title of Doctor of Philosophy from Leipzig University. However, Shiramatsu was attracted more by the courses in American pragmatist philosophy of William James, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead taught by Tanaka Ōdō than by Kaneko’s classes on the mainstream German Philosophy of the day. Tanaka had studied in the United States for eight years, of which the last six at the University of Chicago under the guidance of John Dewey. Through Tanaka, the first and foremost proponent of instrumentalism in Japan, Shiramatsu was in his turn profoundly influenced by the teachings of ‘the Chicago school of pragmatism’, although he would adjust these considerably, just as his mentor had done, to the needs of the time and place with which he was confronted.¹⁶

Shiramatsu graduated in 1906 from the Faculty of Letters and was immediately engaged by Shimamura Hōgetsu to help him out with the editing of the revived *Waseda Bungaku*. However, in spite of the dislike of established educational institutions and the advocacy of self-instruction repeated over and over in his memoirs, in April 1907 he rejoined his alma mater.

14 Sharon H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan: Ishibashi Tanzan and His Teachers, 1905-1960*, University of California Press, 1987: pp.9-12; Henry Dewitt Smith II, *Japan’s First Student Radicals*, Harvard University Press, 1972: pp.11-15.

15 Shirayanagi Shūko, ‘Gakusei jidai no Sugimori-kun’, *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.105-06; Waseda Daigaku Daigakushi Hensanjo, *Waseda Daigaku hyakunenshi*, vol.2, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1981: pp.19-20.

16 On the instrumentalism of Tanaka Ōdō and John Dewey, see Gino K. Piovesana, S.J., *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1962: A Survey*, Enderle Bookstore, Tokyo, 1963: pp.62-69 and Sharon H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1987: pp.39-62. The recently most acclaimed introductions to pragmatism are both by Louis Menand, namely *Pragmatism – A Reader*, Vintage Books, 1997 and *The Metaphysical Club – A Story of Ideas in America*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.

At first he was merely teaching German but within a few years he had considerably expanded his teaching load by taking on classes in English, Ethics, Philosophy, Lipps' ethics, Nietzsche's philosophy, Politics, Epistemology, and Theology.¹⁷ It was in the years at Waseda after his graduation that he became intimate with Ishibashi Tanzan, his junior by one year and also a prominent disciple of Tanaka Ōdō. Together with two other graduates, Seki Yosaburō and Kosugi Junsaku, they regularly visited Tanaka and organised weekly readings of Hegel's works, often under guidance of Hatano Seiichi.¹⁸ Shiramatsu and Ishibashi also collaborated for a few years on the column *Kyōgaku hyōron* (Educational review) in *Waseda Bungaku*, establishing a friendship which was to continue the remainder of their lives.¹⁹ But Shiramatsu was in his own right also a prominent contributor to *Waseda Bungaku*, which under the editorship of Shimamura had developed into the stronghold of naturalist literature in the late Meiji period. From 1907 until 1912 Shiramatsu wrote many articles on philosophy in which he, somewhat similar to his peer Tanaka, applied pragmatist theory to such various fields as literature, religion and education. These articles, which stood out not merely for his new ideas but also for his unusual literary style, brought him considerable acclaim and resulted in the publication of his first two major works, entitled *Lectures On Pragmatism* and *Pride and Shame*.²⁰

However, by the time these books came out in 1914 under the name of Sugimori, to which he had at last officially returned, he had already left for Europe. On the basis of his articles for *Waseda Bungaku* Sugimori was seen as a new hope in the field of philosophy and he found a protectionist in Fujii Kenjirō, a teacher of ethics at Waseda who as a condition for his move to the national university of Kyoto demanded that Sugimori should get a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education to study abroad. Thus he became the first (and last?) graduate from a private university ever to get this prestigious Monbushō scholarship in prewar years.²¹ In October 1913 he embarked for Germany, England and the United States, leaving behind his wife and their two months old daughter.²² Judged by the strong influence the thought of Tanaka Ōdō

17 Waseda Daigaku Daigakushi Hensanjo, *Waseda Daigaku kōshi 1902-1920*; Waseda Daigaku Daigakushi Hensanjo, *Waseda Daigaku hyakunenshi*, vol.2, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1981: pp.19-20. The former is an unpublished list of the careers and courses taught by all Waseda lecturers in the period 1902-1920, compiled by the university history office on the basis of the university journal, the curricula, the yearly reports by the lecturers, and other internal documents. It is very detailed and seems trustworthy, although I am not sure what to make of the 'additional entry' (*tsuika kisai*) that Sugimori was already teaching at Waseda in September 1906, half a year before his official employment.

18 Ishibashi Tanzan, *Tanzan kaisō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1985: pp.78, 81.

19 Sugimori was one of the habitués of the many *zadankai* (round table discussions) convened by the *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō* under the editorship of Ishibashi and the two of them, together with Hasegawa Nyozeikan, edited a selection of Tanaka Ōdō's works in 1948.

20 Sugimori Nanzan, *Puragumatizumu kōwa*, published as the second part of *Waseda Bungakusha Bungaku Fukyūkai kōwa sōsho*, vol.5, Bungaku Fukyūkai, 1914; Sugimori Nanzan, *Shutorutsu to shiyāmu*, Nihon Tosho Shinpōsha, 1914.

21 Ishibashi Tanzan, *Tanzan kaisō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1985: p.81; *Ishibashi Tanzan zenshū*, vol.1, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1970: p.263.

22 Sugimori's family line already being somewhat complicated because of his temporary adoption, it is also extraordinary in the sense that in 1939 they skipped one generation and Sugimori found himself a father once again. In this year his only daughter Nobu died shortly after having given birth, and her husband who had been adopted into the Sugimori family was sent home again. Sugimori and his wife adopted their

had upon Sugimori, one would have expected him to go first of all to the United States. In fact, it was the country where he most wanted to go and had intended to stay longest; because of the fact that it was a republican, multi-ethnic and comparatively young state he thought it more different from Japan than England and Germany and thus a more interesting experience. However, the obligation he felt towards a friend who was tormented by the idea of traveling on the Trans-Siberian Express without a fellow countryman in command of the German language, made him decide to reverse his initial route. The result was that he was not to reach the United States, his primary destination, but if he had followed his original plan he would not have reached Europe.²³

Sugimori arrived in Berlin on 25 October 1913. On the principle that 'Learning is part of life and should stand in the middle of (ordinary) life' he did not enrol at a university but instead pursued his studies in philosophy, ethics and sociology by means of newspapers and personal contacts. In July of the next year he moved to Jena, where he had established a good relation with Rudolf Eucken - although he professed to be not terribly impressed by the man's idealist philosophy - and where he thought life at least quite comfortable even if not terribly stimulating.²⁴ It was in Jena that he heard of the coming of war. Although he at first thought that there was no reason why this should hinder him, a scholar, from staying on in Germany somewhat longer and subsequently visiting France, the Japanese embassy soon made him face reality and pack his bags as soon as possible. On 22 August 1914 he arrived in England, the safe allied territory where he was to stay until the end of the war. In London Sugimori first sought out W. Tudor-Jones, a disciple of Eucken to whom he had been introduced in Jena and who stationed Sugimori close to his home to function as his discussion partner in philosophic matters. In the winter of 1915-1916 he was invited to Oxford by Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller, the leading pragmatist in England, but apart from that he once again kept his distance from university and stuck to his newspapers, magazines and the friends he had been introduced to by Tudor-Jones. Amongst these was an executive of the University of London Press who, according to the victim himself, continuously pleaded to let his company publish a book on Sugimori's views of Japan, Asia or Christianity. Sugimori, who had previously taken up the idea of presenting to the world 'the thought I had already established before coming to the West' in German - the true lingua franca of philosophy - did not need much time to adjust to his new environment. He soon gave up the idea of writing in the language of the common enemy and accepted the offer, on the precondition that the book would not deal with either of the requested subjects but would solely be an introduction to his own philosophy.²⁵ Early in 1916 Sugimori followed Tudor-Jones on his new assignment to Bristol and started writing *The Principles of the Moral Empire* in Bristol, which was published in October of the following year. I will discuss the content of the international debut by this 'self-convinced poet and thinker' later on but, merely by stringing the chapter titles together, it amounts to a call for the establishment of 'a new religion' that by means of 'synthetic creation' will sublimate the dualism between 'conscience and utility (the two factors in

grandson Sōkichi as their son and took charge of the upbringing of the family heir by themselves.

23 Sugimori Kōjirō, *Jijōden zairyō*, pp.6-8.

24 Rudolf Christoph Eucken (1846-1926) was a philosopher who advocated a new idealistic philosophy that opposed the materialist and naturalist currents of his day. In 1908 he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

25 Sugimori Kōjirō, *Jijōden zairyō*, pp.13-20.

practical judgment), ‘the inner and the outer world (the two dimensions of life)’, ‘pride and love (the two fundamental impulses of life)’ and ‘personal worth and the social order (the part and the whole)’.²⁶ Although the present-day reader will probably be taken aback by the pompous vocabulary and the ruthlessly idealistic content of the work, in its day it seems to have had a favourable reception. And, if we are to believe Sugimori’s own words, upon reading it the professors of London University spontaneously arranged to award him the highest academic degree of Doctor of Laws, an offer which he gallantly refused.²⁷

Another important event during his stay was that he became closely acquainted with Nakano Seigō, who was in London during the summer and autumn of 1915 on a study trip sponsored by his employer, the Asahi Shinbun. Not long after Nakano’s arrival the two met at a gathering of Waseda graduates at the Japan Club. Nakano, not so confident about his English, was greatly stimulated by Sugimori who, notwithstanding his extremely unorthodox pronunciation and phraseology, was not at all afraid to intrude and enter into discussion with eminent English professors. In the following months Sugimori guided Nakano around, introduced him to his English friends and connections, and they even went on a few short trips to the countryside.²⁸ They would remain intimate friends, Sugimori writing for Nakano related periodicals and actively supporting the latter’s election campaigns, until Nakano’s suicide in October 1943.

In March 1919, when with the ending of the war there were no more fears of submarine attacks, Sugimori at last made an end to his stay in England, which had overrun its initial schedule by four years, and set off for home. Incidentally, once again he found himself in the company of Nakano. The latter had come to France to report on the Peace Conference for his magazine the *Tōhō Jiron* but, enraged by the arrogance of the Western powers and the inactivity of the Japanese delegates and, moreover, keenly aware of how to capitalize on events for the benefit of his political ambitions, was one of the first to leave Paris in order to inform the Japanese people as soon as possible in person about this national outcry.²⁹ On board Nakano requested Sugimori to become one of the main contributors to his journal, to which the latter agreed. Once in Japan it became clear that Nakano had been just in time to tie Sugimori to the *Tōhō Jiron* on a regular basis. As was usual for those returning from study abroad in those days, Sugimori was welcomed home at his university by means of a promotion, in his case to the position of Professor of Philosophy. However, apart from this academic recognition, he also found his services in strong demand by the major magazines of the day. Although he had hardly published a word in his native country during the time he was abroad, Sugimori had nonetheless gained a good reputation merely by the positive reviews his *The Principles of the Moral Empire* had received in the major London newspapers and in the leading philosophic journal *Mind* (by

26 Kojiro Sugimori, *The Principles of the Moral Empire*, University of London Press, 1917: pp.5-8, 10. On the title page Sugimori was introduced as ‘Professor of Philosophy in the University of Waseda, Tokyo’, a position he had not yet attained.

27 Ii Gentarō, ‘Sugimori Kōjirō no Nihon bunka no kindaika he no kōken’, in *Waseda Seiji Keizaigaku Zasshi*, no.177 (1963): p.163.

28 Nakano Yasuo, *Seijka Nakano Seigō*, vol.1, Shinkōkaku Shoten, 1971: pp.190, 195-96.

29 *Ibid.*: p.271. A collection of his articles for the Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun and the Tōhō Jiron and his speeches during the nation-wide lecture tour Nakano embarked upon immediately after his return can be found in Nakano Seigō, *Kōwa kaigi wo mokugeki shite*, Tōhō Jironsha, 1919, which came out in July and was reprinted five times within two months.

F.C.S. Schiller).³⁰ It was even said that it was used as a textbook in American universities.³¹ A philosopher praised in the West had to be introduced to Japan as well, especially if the man in question was Japanese himself, and shortly after his return to his homeland long articles by his hand adorned the pages of the prestigious *Chūō Kōron* and the new and noteworthy *Kaizō*.³²

However, although definitely not one of the major magazines of its day, it was Nakano's *Tōhō Jiron* which gave him the opportunity to express his opinions on a permanent basis, in the form of his monthly 'Comments on Current Events'. Apart from Nakano himself, Sugimori was the most prominent contributor, his articles immediately following Nakano's opening article and he sometimes even stood in for Nakano when the latter was too busy campaigning. The publishing house connected to the journal also made sure not to miss out on the novelty value of Sugimori and published a Japanese translation of *The Principles of the Moral Empire* and a selection of his articles in the year of his homecoming. Nonetheless, Sugimori's name was not familiar enough to carry the enterprise on his own; as Nakano wrote less and less after his election to the Diet in May 1920 and the number of competing magazines steadily increased the *Tōhō Jiron* did not fare well. The Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 eventually helped it out of its lingering existence, although it was formally continued under the name of *Gakan*. In its new form the journal was a combination of the forces of Nakano Seigō and his father-in-law Miyake Setsurei (1860-1945), a well-known journalist since Meiji days and one of the founding members of the Seikyōsha, who had become tired of compromising with the reactionary traditionalist faction in his *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*.³³ However, as the change in July 1924 of the English title of the *Gakan* from 'our views' to 'my views' reflects, it became the mouthpiece of Miyake only,

30 Kuwaki Genyoku, 'Sugimori-shi no [Dōtoku teikoku no genri] wo yomite', in *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.2: p.54.

31 Idei Moriyuki, 'Sōzōteki shisakka', in *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.109-10; Hanzawa Hiroshi, 'Sugimori Kōjirō - Tanzan to tomo ni ayunda jiyūshugisha (2)', in *Jiyū Shisō*, no.20 (1981): p.54.

32 Sugimori made his debut in *Kaizō* with an article on 'the peace conference and reform of the world by means of 'character-ism' (*jinkakushugi*) and meritocracy (*nōryokushugi*)' written for the June 1919 issue. Afterwards he remained a regular contributor, supplying on average seven articles per year until 1926. Yokoyama Shunichi, ed., *Kaizō mokuji sōran - shippitsusha sakuin*, Shinyaku Shobō, 1972: pp.186-87. His debut for *Chūō Kōron* was one month later but not so eye-catching since it was one of the many contributions to a special number on 'the labour issue', but before long his articles were promoted to a more prominent place and he also became one of the regular members to write on a common socio-political theme. Chūō Kōronsha, comp., *Chūō Kōron sōmokuji*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1970.

33 The Seikyōsha (Society for Political Education) was founded in 1888, together with Miyatake's journal *Nihonjin*, in order to promote informed criticism of Westernisation along with the clarification and preservation of the 'national essence' (*kokusui*). *Nihonjin* and *Nihon*, established by Kuga Katsunan in 1889, were the two representative journals of the movement later termed '*kokusuishugi*' (national essentialism) and merged in 1907 to become *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*. Unlike more reactionary traditionalists, the Seikyōsha was not indiscriminately critical of the West and its members were, for the most part, eager to be associated with progressives. They were distinguished by the fact that although they generally came from well-to-do backgrounds and studied at Tokyo University, they did not have the connections with the Satsuma or Chōshū oligarchy to gain a foothold in the establishment. Accordingly, their natural recourse was to journalism. The best monograph on Miyake and the Seikyōsha is Nakanome Tōru's *Seikyōsha no kenkyū* (Shibunkaku, 1993). Other useful works are Kenneth Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan, 1885-1895*, Stanford University Press, 1969; Matsumoto Sannosuke, *Meiji seishin no kōzō*, Iwanami Shoten, 1993 and Satō Yoshimaru, *Meiji nashonarizumu no kenkyū*, Fuyō Shobō, 1998. Miyake is also known for his six-volume *Dōjidaishi* (Iwanami Shoten, 1949-1954), a contemporary history which exactly covers the period of his life.

hardly listing any articles by Nakano or Sugimori until 1928.

Although Sugimori in the early 1920s thus gradually lost his most consistent mouthpiece, throughout the decade he remained sufficiently popular to have ample opportunity to publish in most of the major magazines, and in a considerable number of minor, more specialised journals and women's magazines.³⁴ Apart from the already mentioned fact that he was in the luxurious position of demanding that his articles be printed in the most prominent and prestigious part of a magazine, his popularity was also proven by the fact that, together with such established writers as Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Maita Minoru and Horie Kiichi, he was one of the members of the team of main contributors to *Chūō Kōron* during Yoshino Sakuzō's absence in 1924-25, even writing some of the opening editorials. It was further endorsed by the fact that *Kaizō* honoured him with a special feature on his thought in its issue of November 1924.

Soon after his return from Europe Sugimori was also active on the political front. He joined some of the reformist societies that, riding on the immediate postwar wave of new political and social ideas flooding into Japan, were established in rapid succession. His name can be found on the membership list of the Bunka Gakkai, the Kaizō Dōmei, and the Tōhōkai. The Bunka Gakkai (Academic Society of Culture) was a rather elite lecture society centred around the social activist Shimanaka Yūzō and Shimonaka Yasaburō, the labour activist and later founder of the publishing house Heibonsha, but also included publicists and activists such as Miura Tetsutarō, Abe Isoo, Washio Shōgorō and Mitsukawa Kametarō. Despite its neutral and high-brow name, in its inaugural proclamation it listed anti-capitalist social and economic reform as its main aim and thus was the object of police scrutiny.³⁵ The Kaizō Dōmei (Reform Alliance) was a political society with a much stronger public appeal since its ranks consisted of politicians from all three major parties, young diplomats, and journalists, who had met at the Paris Peace Conference. Amongst its members were such selling names as Uehara Etsujirō, Kojima Kazuo, Nagai Ryūtarō, Nagashima Ryūji, Nakano Seigō, Baba Tsunego, and Asada Kōson. Moreover, its program was also a lot more concrete than that of most other societies, not just repeating the word 'reform' ad nauseam but clearly mentioning the implementation of (male) universal suffrage, the abolition of discrimination between commoners on the one hand and the ex-samurai class and the new nobility on the other, the overthrow of bureaucracy-led diplomacy, the establishment of a true democratic political structure, the official recognition of labour unions, the introduction of a more social tax system, and even somewhat more 'extreme' demands such as the innovation of the colonial rule policy and a clean-up of the Imperial Household Ministry.³⁶ The Tōhōkai (Eastern Society) was of a somewhat earlier date than the other societies. It was founded in 1917 in order to support the young new editor of the *Tōhō Jiron*, Nakano Seigō, and

34 The full scope of Sugimori's non-academic output has only recently become clear through the good offices of Matsuda Yoshio, who works at the Waseda University archives and has been so kind as to make a 71 page list of Sugimori's books and articles. He has also made available catalogues of the writings of another twenty-five interwar opinion leaders, predominantly Waseda affiliates, on his website <http://www1.cts.ne.jp/~ymatsuda>. Regrettably I was not able to make use of Matsuda's list when I was doing my research on Sugimori, but I am nonetheless confident that I have consulted the most important part of Sugimori's writings, namely the part he published in the major general magazines and the Nakano related magazines or compiled in one of his books.

35 Itō Takashi, *Taishō-ki [Kakushin]-ha no seiritsu*, Hanawa Shobō, 1978: pp.223-24.

36 *Ibid.*: pp.173-94;

should not be confused with his political organisation of the 1930s which was given the same name. The first incarnation of the Tōhōkai was more an informal study group which held monthly meetings on the premises of Tōhō Jironsha to discuss current affairs over Chinese meals. The fact that ‘Eastern’ was hardly anything more than a nice euphemism for ‘Chinese’ is not only clear from the contents of the magazine (and the meals) but also from the membership of the Tōhōkai, which included Mori Kaku and Takagi Rikurō of Mitsui interests in China, military men like Hayashi Senjūrō and Araki Sadao, Sinologists like Naitō Konan, foreign ministry bureaucrats like the China expert Honda Kumatarō and more personal associates of Nakano like Miyake Setsurei, Kazami Akira and Sugimori himself.³⁷

However, despite Sugimori’s often repeated belief that in one’s life one had to combine ‘thought’ and ‘action’, it is hard to ignore that he himself never became an active and prominent member of the above-mentioned societies. And judging by the fact that his name is not to be found on the membership list of any political society of the 1920s, we may conclude that his interest in political activism was rather short-lived. He did indeed function as an adviser on political theory to Nakano Seigō - introducing him to the work of the Fabian socialist G.D.H. Cole and providing him with the term ‘social nationalism’ (*shakai kokuminshugi*) - and as such was a formal member of the 1933 reincarnation of the Tōhōkai, but it is evident that he even tried to avoid becoming too actively involved in the political societies and parties of the 1930s and 1940s led by his close friend.³⁸ Instead, Sugimori stuck to academic life and built himself a solid position at Waseda University, resulting in his appointment as head of the preliminary course (*daini kōtō gakuin*) in 1934 and member of the board of directors in 1940. Within his university he functioned as an academic jack-of-all-trades: he taught Western Philosophy, Ethics, Epistemology, Theology, Sociology, Political Science, Political Philosophy and State Theory for the various faculties of politics and economy, law, commerce, letters and the preparatory course. He also regularly toured the country as a prominent member of the Waseda entourage, and in 1935 he finally went to the United States, on behalf of the Japan-America Student Conference.³⁹

37 Nihon kingendaishi jiten henshū iinkai, comp., *Nihon kingendaishi jiten*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1978: p.459; Leslie Russell Oates, *Populist Nationalism in Prewar Japan: A biography of Nakano Seigō*, George Allen & Unwin, 1985: pp.21-22. Yoshino Sakuzō was also a member of the Tōhōkai and wrote a fair amount of articles for the *Tōhō Jiron* on the current political situation in China during the years 1916-1920, but he was probably no longer an active member of the Tōhōkai when Sugimori joined in the summer of 1919.

38 Leslie Russell Oates, *Populist Nationalism in Prewar Japan: A biography of Nakano Seigō*, George Allen & Unwin, 1985: pp.42, 54. The term ‘social nationalism’ was introduced in a speech by Nakano Seigō in January 1932, in which he made special mention of the fact that this was Sugimori’s characterisation of Nakano’s policy. The term was obviously created to emphasize a distinction with ‘state socialism’ (*kokka shakaishugi*), in the sense that it featured the nation (*kokumin*) instead of the state (*kokka*) as the main actor and that it suggested that the stage for the activities of the nation was not limited within the borders of the Japanese state. Nakano Yasuo, *Seijika Nakano Seigō*, vol.1, Shinkōkaku Shoten, 1971: pp.641-42. Oates mentions that although this social nationalism “would still engage in parliamentary politics, it would not be narrowly committed to majority rule but rather conceived in terms of an elite capable of giving a dynamic lead” and later on, somewhat more critically, characterises it as having “democracy as end and dictatorship as means”. Oates: pp. 54, 120. From my analysis of Sugimori’s thought it will be clear that he most likely did not merely supply the name but also a part of the content of Nakano’s program.

39 Waseda Daigaku Daigakushi Hensanjo, *Waseda Daigaku hyakunenshi*, vols.2-4, Waseda Daigaku

In 1937 he took the initiative for the Japan-Philippines Student Conference, in the framework of which he visited the Philippines.⁴⁰

In the midst of his busy academic career he continued to publish his views in the printed media. Whereas many representatives of the Taishō generation of opinion leaders were gradually silenced during the 1930s, Sugimori was as prolific as at the start of his career as opinion leader and was a regular participant in *zadankai* (round-table talks organized by newspapers and magazines) on social, political, philosophical, educational and literary issues. No longer the hot new intellectual who had made it in the West but just another professor from Waseda, his popularity had waned somewhat during the latter half of the 1920s. However, he knew how to compensate for the loss of the novelty effect by a keen awareness of the changing spirit of the times, and during the mid-1930s and early 1940s he produced more than one hundred articles a year.⁴¹ In the process he troubling to provide his contributions with a democratic or internationalist layer of varnish and instead gave his elitism, heroism, ethnic nationalism and statism full sway, a fact which resulted in him being labeled as a fascist writer.⁴² He also implicated himself extensively in the wartime regime by serving as president of the Nihon Hyōronka Kyōkai (Japan Publicists Association) and a member of the Dai-Nihon Genron Hōkokukai (Greater Japanese Media Patriotic Society) and the Dai Tō-A Bunka Kyōkai (Greater East Asian Cultural Council) and undertaking a long lecture tour in Manchuria.⁴³ The same tendency is evident in his work at Waseda, where in 1943 and 1944 he introduced courses on ‘A view of the world with Japan as its centre’ and ‘A policy for East Asia’ and he resided over the Kokubōgaku Kenkyūkai (National Defence Research Society) and the Sekai Seiji Kenkyūkai (World Politics Research Society).⁴⁴ Amply fulfilling the criteria of political correctness in his

Shuppanbu, 1981, 1987, 1992.

- 40 Shibasaki Atsushi, ‘Senzenki no Nichi-Bei Gakusei Kaigi’. Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Kokusai seiji*, no.122: *Ryō-taisen kanki no kokusai kankeishi*, Yūhikaku, 1999: pp.126-27.
- 41 Whereas Sugimori contributed more than fifty articles a year at the beginning of the 1920s, the years 1926, 1927 and 1928 clearly formed a period of slump, with only eleven, ten and twenty articles respectively. The exceptionally high numbers for the years 1934-1936 and 1940-42 are partly due to his regular contributions to *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Hōchi Shinbun* respectively. For an overview of Sugimori’s prolific output during the years 1937-1945, see also Fukushima Jūrō & Ōkubo Hisao, eds, *Senjika no genron* (one volume reprint edition), *Nichi-gai Asoshieetsu*, 1995: pp.414-15. A list of 89 *zadankai* in which Sugimori participated can be found in Matsuda Yoshio’s catalogue, pp.57-62.
- 42 Murobuse Kōshin, ‘Sugimori Kōjirō to Kawai Eijirō’. *Risō*, no.52 (1935): pp.57-58.
- 43 Akazawa Shirō, ‘Dai-Nihon Genron Hōkokukai – hyōronkai to shisōsen’. In Akazawa Shirō & Kitagawa Kenzō, eds, *Bunka to fashizumu – Senjiki Nihon ni okeru bunka no kōbō*, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 1993, p.164. Gino K. Piovesana, S.J., *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1962: A Survey*, Enderle Bookstore, Tokyo, 1963: p.69; Itō Yasuji, *Shakai shinrigaku nōto*, Kyōdō Shuppan, 1971: p.284. Whereas the Nihon Hyōronka Kyōkai was still a relatively autonomous and ambivalent association which also included more liberal intellectuals such as Kiyosawa Kiyoshi and Baba Tsunego, the Dai-Nihon Genron Hōkokukai had an outspoken nationalist program and functioned as an instrument of government control. The Dai Tō-A Bunka Kyōkai was part and parcel of the government policy to bring Asia under Japanese control and leadership.
- 44 Waseda Daigaku Daigakushi Hensanjo, *Waseda Daigaku kōshi 1920-1949* and Satō Yoshimaru, *Kindai Nihon to Waseda Daigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1991: pp.361-409. The Sekai Seiji Kenkyūkai published two books, *Sekai seiji kenkyū* and *Dai Tō-A sensō to sekai*, both from Chūō Kōronsha, in respectively 1942 and 1944, but to a considerable it seems to have functioned as a lobby organ to make Sugimori into the next president of Waseda University.

day, being the most senior member of the board of directors, and self-confident as ever, Sugimori was given to believe that he was first in line to become the next president of Waseda. The shock when in September 1944 he was passed over in favour of the bedridden Nakano Tomio was such that he resolutely handed in his resignation and did not lend an ear to various attempts at reconciliation.⁴⁵ Thus, at the age of 64 and not long before an expected honourable retirement, Sugimori in his rage suddenly cut off his connections with the university to which he had been affiliated for 42 years, and soon afterwards the non-degree course in ethics (*rinrigaku senkō*) disappeared from Waseda's Department of Philosophy as well.⁴⁶

Sugimori's postwar life was a lot less flamboyant than that to which he had been accustomed. His services were still sought after, and he was a member of the Nihon Bunkajin Renmei (League of Japanese Men of Culture) and the Kenpō Kenkyūkai (Constitutional Research Association).⁴⁷ However, it is hard to suppress the feeling that it was his knowledge of the English language that was most in demand.⁴⁸ Before long he was tagged predominantly a fascist writer and was largely ignored by the media, who after 1948 seemed unwilling to publish his articles any longer.⁴⁹ Sugimori tried to break out of this unofficial purge by calling out directly to the reading public. However, the books he wrote in the immediate postwar period were published by rather small and unknown publishing companies. And whereas he at first had tried to stick to his wartime dominant criterion of 'superior culture' (*yūshū bunka*) and regionalist predilections, albeit with a quite different content, soon Sugimori also tuned in to the postwar

45 Itō Yasuji, *Shakai shinrigaku nōto*, Kyōdō Shuppan, 1971: pp.250-51.

46 It seems though that after the war Sugimori served respectively as a councilor (*hyōgiin*) and a trustee (*shōgiin*) of Waseda.

47 Both organisations were instigated by Takano Iwasaburō, founding member and director of the Ōhara Institute for Social Research and a man with strong links with the Japanese Socialist Party. The Kenpō Kenkyūkai was headed by Suzuki Yasuzō and also included Murobuse Kōshin, Morito Tatsuo, Iwabuchi Tatsuo and Baba Tsunego. It produced a draft for a new constitution that enjoyed the keen interest of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). See Koseki Shōichi, *Shinkenpō no tanjō*, Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1995; pp.46-53 (or the English translation *The Birth of Japan's Postwar Constitution*, Westview Press, 1998; pp.27-31) and Takemae Eiji, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, Continuum, New York, 2002; pp.273-74. According to Koseki, Sugimori even functioned as chairman of the Nihon Bunkajin Renmei (p.239).

48 Accordingly, it was Sugimori who was assigned the task of taking the draft prepared by the Kenpō Kenkyūkai to the General Headquarters of SCAP. He also successfully negotiated with the occupation forces, on behalf of Miyake Setsurei and Nakano Seigō's two sons, to obtain permission to publish *Shinzenbi*, a magazine that was intended as a sequel to *Gakan* but was stopped short in its existence by Miyake's death. Interview with Nakano Yasuo, 28 August 1996. After Sugimori's return from Europe in 1919 the language spoken in his household was changed to English. Although his wife Hana was from a family in which the female line consisted of university teachers in English, it seems to have been Sugimori himself who insisted on forcing his daughter and grandson to speak English at home. Sugimori Sōkichi Tsuitō Bunshū Henshū Inkaï, *Bishō to jōnetsu – Sugimori Sōkichi tsuitō bunshū*, published privately, 1980: pp.44-47. Moreover, the Webster dictionary seems to have been Sugimori's bedside aid for many decades. Interview with Sugimori Kazue (Kōjirō's granddaughter-in-law) and Sugimori Shinkichi (Kōjirō's grand-grandson) on 25 January 1998.

49 According to Matsuda Yoshio's list, Sugimori's postwar annual output of articles is as follows: 1946: 19, 1947: 21, 1948: 15, 1949: 5, 1950: 2, 1951: 4, 1952: 0, 1953: 1, 1954-56: 0, 1957: 1. I have not come upon any references that Sugimori was officially purged, but the fact that he only took up teaching again in 1952, after the Allied occupation, reinforces the impression that he was practically purged.

discourse and accordingly his writings became rife with more timely vocabulary such as ‘universal rights’, ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’.⁵⁰ No matter whether Sugimori was serious or merely opportunistic, this volte-face was too much of a good thing and definitely could not lend him the credibility necessary for building a new career as a democratic publicist. In his seventies he once again obtained an active place within academia, teaching at Komazawa and Chūō universities, but up until his death on 8 December 1968 he was no longer able to attract public attention.

50 In many of his wartime articles ‘superior culture’ was defined as ‘Japanese culture’ and accordingly functioned as the justification of Japanese rule over, at least, Asia. Immediately after the war he still advocated ‘superior culture’, but now, all of a sudden it was described as something the Japanese fundamentally lacked and needed in order to build ‘a new Japan’. ‘Honshitsuteki yūshū bunkashugi’. *Gendai*, 1945.10: pp.2-9. Sugimori’s postwar catalogue consists of *Sekai kyōwasei e no hitsuzen oyobi hitsuyō* (The inevitability and necessity of creating a world republic), Bunmei Kyōkai, 1946; *Sekai jinken no gensoku* (The principle of universal human rights), Kenshinsha, 1947; *Ningen no jiyū* (Human freedom), Yūai Kenkyūkai, 1948, and (in English) *The Religion Universally Needed: The First Requisite for World Citizenship*, private publishing, 1948. Like many other social scientists who were branded by their wartime publications and activities, he also contributed to the four-volume *Minshushugi dai-kōza* (Great lectures on democracy), Nihon Shōgakukan, 1946-47.

2 THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUGIMORI KŌJIRŌ

Before discussing Sugimori's views on international relations during the period 1919-1932 I think it will be helpful to give an introduction to some of the elements of his thought that remained more or less unchanged and which form the backbone of his stated views during this period. The topics dealt with below are human nature, the relation between the individual, society, and the state, and morality. This analysis is based mainly on Sugimori's first major work, the philosophical treatise *The Principles of the Moral Empire*, which he wrote in English during the years 1916-1917, and the articles he produced in the first year after his homecoming from England in April 1919.

2.1 Human Nature

Man, as defined by Sugimori, is an emotional being driven along by pride. He thus rejects the voluntarist and rationalist view of man, although he stresses the importance of will-power and intellect as respectively the instrument and the guiding mechanism of human emotions. Pride, the central human emotion, is evident in man's yearning for respect, which in its turn leads to a constant urge to create, an urge to compete in the improvement of the imperfect world man perceives around him. Individual creativity is thus characterized by Sugimori as the decisive quality through which man can accumulate material wealth and magnitude in order to satisfy his inner stimuli. Yet he warned that this stage was not so easy to reach. Man could only attain creativity by successfully passing the preceding stages of autonomy and responsibility.⁵¹ Summarizing, a picture is formed of man as a being that is constantly striving to create in order to earn the respect he lives on, and who in order to create is trying to obtain more and more freedom.

2.2 The Individual and Society

As a matter of fact the creative man as described in the preceding paragraph was not living in a vacuum. On the contrary, each individual was an inseparable part of society:

Notwithstanding the infinite diversity of ideas, sentiments, tastes, interests, capabilities, and practices, we shall find, after study and reflection, that there is living, moving, and growing only one big mind on the whole earth, or perhaps in the whole universe. We as individuals and groups are no more than the cells of an organism. Since, however we are not merely natural but mainly self-conscious and self-determining agents of the whole, we realise the purpose and meaning of the whole within ourselves, and thus in quality we become the masters of the whole though in quantity we remain merely parts of the whole.⁵²

51 Sugimori Kōjirō, *The Principles of the Moral Empire*, University of London Press, 1917: pp.108-14, 120-21, 124-25, 242-43.

52 Ibid.: pp.237-38.

Nevertheless, Sugimori noticed that there was a problem because man, due to lack of study and reflection, was more prone to think of himself as a qualitative master than a quantitative part. Just like the adherents to the so-called *kyōyōshugi* ('*Bildung*' or 'cultivation-ism') movement of the early Taishō-period, Sugimori embraced the ideal of the *jinkakusha* ('man of character' or 'man of cultivation'), who would be an example of outward civilisation and, most important, inner culture. But he strongly rejected the elitist social seclusion this 'character-ist' ideal of his predecessors had in some cases led to, and emphasised the constant communication between the individual and society. Therefore, he stressed, if man was in search of self-respect, self-preservation, and self-perfection, there was no other way but to knock on the door of society.⁵³

Sugimori defined society as the scene of cooperation and competition. As one can observe so often in his thinking, both elements were considered indispensable but were also related to each other in a hierarchical manner. In this case cooperation was the fundamental condition, competition being sanctioned only to the extent that cooperation was not sacrificed.⁵⁴ He indicated that it was the will of the individual members of society that had naturally led to the creation of institutions designed to promote cooperation and to restrain competition, such as a central authority, jurisdiction, police and education. He thus ranked the internal will, rather than some external authority, as the driving force in the process of maintaining social order. The social system was nothing more than the product of a rational and economic evaluation of interests and needs by the individual.⁵⁵ Yet apart from such a rational, economic need for society, rooted in the fact that the collective offered the best opportunities for the individual to compete successfully in the process of creation, there was also a more direct emotional reason. According to Sugimori man is not satisfied with the respect he can give himself; he needs respect from the other members of society to be able to uphold his self-respect. Social order thus emanates spontaneously from the reciprocal relation that every man needs his fellow-men to be respected.⁵⁶

The problem with Sugimori is that, in his usual urge to dialectically unify and reduce all dualistic elements of human life to one common denominator (termed 'Religion' by him), he places so much emphasis on the reciprocal relation between the individual and society that his statements on the subject often seem contradictory and it not seldom remains unclear which element is of most importance in his eyes. We have for instance already seen that his conviction that by means of its creativity the individual was to become the master of the whole in quality was accompanied by the admission that in quantity the individual would always be no more than

53 Ibid.: p.242.

54 'Shakai kaizō no gensoku', *Tetsugaku Zasshi*, 1919.7. Reprinted in Sugimori Kōjirō, *Jinrui no saisei*, Tōhō Jironsha, 1919: p.25.

55 Ibid.: p.29; 'Shakaishugi no chōtan', *Kaizō*, 1919.7: p.81.

56 Throughout his writing career Sugimori constantly emphasises the human need for respect or pride. In his early articles for *Waseda Bungaku* it is already given a central role in human behaviour, although here it is rendered by the German term 'stolz'. In his first major work pride, together with love but more prominent than the latter, is presented as one of 'the two fundamental impulses of life' and is allotted a chapter that is significantly longer than the other chapters. *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp.91-173. This emotional and egoistic explanation of social relations is also conspicuous in the ideas of Fukuzawa Yukichi.

a part of the whole, thus leaving unclear whether one had to compromise on quality or on quantity in case things came to a head. Another fine example from his *The Principles of the Moral Empire* is:

In the case of man the part, as an individual, is decidedly the purpose of the Whole as an institution. But then we must not take the individual as an isolated being, which is a very imperfect possibility. We must take the individual as a centre of the Whole. (...) An individual in the true sense is a moral unit of an encircling, larger reality which we might term Society.⁵⁷

It goes without saying that the assertion that the individual simultaneously functions as *the* purpose, *a* centre, and *a* unit of society, in practice left Sugimori ample room to manoeuvre. And the fact that the relation between the individual and the state did not receive much attention and remained abstract provided even more room. Nevertheless, when compared to Yoshino it is obvious that Sugimori was rather short on feelings of humility or service towards society. Another indication as to which side carried more weight is his advice that if man wanted to perfect himself, there was no alternative open to him except to perfect society, or in Sugimori's words, "to bring all the portions of reality into harmony with the central self".⁵⁸ When compared to the saying 'if you want to change the world, start with yourself', it will be clear that Sugimori took exactly the opposite stand by stressing the need for external change instead of internal change and completely lacked the humility of this cynical saying. Moreover, especially in his early articles he resisted in most cases any measures by the institutions of society that implied a restriction of the freedoms of the individual.⁵⁹ In this sense it is probably correct to rank Sugimori as an adherent – at least in name - to the 'thorough individualism' of his mentor Tanaka Ōdō. And we might summarize Sugimori's somewhat ambiguous stand by saying that although the individual, exactly because of his yearning for respect, could not help being judged on the basis of his contribution to society, it was of the utmost importance that the individual remained autonomous, again for the sake of the progress of society.

2.3 The Evolutionary Progress of Man and Society

Progress as Modernity

Sugimori was a social evolutionist in many senses – especially in a social Darwinist sense - as exemplified for instance in his strong belief in the progress of man, morality, and society by means of gradual evolution. His view of human history was optimistic, linear progressive and he was not afraid to use sweeping phrases like "...the movement of humanity towards its proper goal".⁶⁰ Although Sugimori did not give an exact definition of this 'proper goal', it seems safe to

57 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.174.

58 *Ibid.*: p.176.

59 See for instance 'Kaizō no tetsugaku', Tōho Jiron, 1919.9. Reprinted in Sugimori Kōjirō, *Jinrui no saisei*, Tōhō Jironsha, 1919: pp.20-21.

60 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.60. Social evolutionism and social Darwinism, including their

conclude from his writings that what he had in mind was a state of complete freedom of the individual, attained by self-perfection as the result of the creative process of the perfection of society. It would take until the end of the 1920s for Sugimori to specify in detail which stages he perceived on the road of ‘humanity in its evolution’, but as early as 1917 he at least indicated that there was a clear starting point in time, when ‘mankind obtained its first insight into the nature of life as it is and as it ought to be’, and accordingly ‘stepped into the spirit and meaning of the modern age’. Thus human progress and the modern age were inextricably bound up with each other.⁶¹

In *The Principles of the Moral Empire* ‘modernity’ was characterized by respectively ‘the confidence of man in himself’, ‘the stress upon the subjective will’, and ‘the notion of man as the improving agency of the world’.⁶² The philosopher Sugimori, who did not hesitate to admit that modernity was mainly a Western affair,⁶³ could not trace the above-mentioned qualities any further back than seventeenth or eighteenth century Europe. Although very critical of them on many other points, he nonetheless accredited Baruch de Spinoza and Immanuel Kant with the honour of being the founding fathers of modern thought, since the former had rejected the existence of a God transcendent to this world and the latter had claimed the world to be the object of the human will. Subsequent generations of philosophers, in particular the pragmatists, had elaborated on these points of departure, brought them more into line with human nature and had thus contributed to ‘the rapid advance of mankind in the realisation of the truth of improving upon the world as well as upon itself’.⁶⁴ Still, as a result of unconditionally linking human progress to modernity, Sugimori thus acknowledged only a very small and short part of human history as being of any importance - to be precise, a Western modern age which when taken from Spinoza would span two and a half centuries but when taken from Kant only one century and a bit.

varied interpretations in the West, had been introduced to Japan since the 1870s and were of predominant influence on the political debate of the middle and late Meiji period. Regrettably there is not yet a comprehensive monograph on this important topic. In Japanese there are a few articles in the journal *Surugadai hōgaku* by Matsumoto Sannosuke under the common title of ‘Kindai Nihon ni okeru shakai shinka shisō’ and Matsuda Kōichirō, ‘Kindai Nihon ni okeru kokusai shakaikan to shakai Dāwinizumu no eikyō ni kansuru seiji shisōteki kenkyū’. *Monbu Kagakushō kagaku kenkyū hojōkin kenkyū seika hōkokusho*, Rikkyō Daigaku, 2005 and ‘Jugaku to shakai Dāwinizumu – Nihon no keesu wo chūshin ni’. In Pak Chunseok & Watanabe Hiroshi, eds, *[Bunmei][Kaika][Heiwa] – Nihon to Kankoku*, Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006: pp.325-53. In Western languages there is Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity – Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology*, University of California Press, 2001. Two studies focusing on the influence of Herbert Spencer are Yamashita Shigekazu, *Supensā to Nihon kindai*, Ochanomizu Shobō, 1983 and Alistair Swale, *The Political Thought of Mori Arinori – A Study in Meiji Conservatism*, Japan Library, Richmond, 2001.

61 Ibid.: pp.61, 63.

62 Ibid.: pp.99, 106, 114.

63 ‘Idai naru Nihon, sekai wo sōsaku suru ketsui’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.1: p.1.

64 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp.100-02, 109.

Progress as Growing Cooperation: The Present Stage of the Nation, the State, and Nationalism

Sugimori regarded cooperation and individual autonomy as the two principal values of modernity. An increase in these values was an indication of human progress and the extent to which these values had developed determined which stage of evolution a society had reached.⁶⁵ Below I will first treat the modern value of cooperation.

In Sugimori's opinion one of the characteristics of the modern age was growing social cooperation and an everincreasing scope of society. The awakening of man to his real nature at the start of the modern age and his subsequent quest for autonomy had naturally resulted in a stunning development of science and technology. This in turn had given man increased means of transport and communication, which enabled him to look at a greater range of opportunities to exert his creativity – which in the case of Sugimori nonetheless should be foremost understood as intellectual or philosophical creativity. The scope of society had extended accordingly to suit the growing needs of the individual, and had undergone a development from regional (in the sense of 'provincial') cooperation to national cooperation. However, the formal structure to encompass this new, national society had not yet been put in place.

This, Sugimori opted, was accomplished at the end of the eighteenth century when nationalism, and with it the modern state, made its international debut in France, as a result of foreign interference in this country after the revolution. In turn the French 'exported' their nationalism, in the sense that the beginning of the nineteenth century saw the spread of nationalism to the neighbouring countries as a reaction to Napoleon's campaigns.⁶⁶ It will be evident that Sugimori considered external factors, that is foreign threat, as an essential impetus to the rise of nationalism and, accordingly, the modern state. Yet he emphasized that what kept the present nation-states together was mainly the element of shared history. The nation-state was thus characterized as a historical phenomenon, which had first become possible in the eighteenth century as the growing scale of society established a sufficient basis for a shared, national history.⁶⁷

Although he thought nationalism and patriotism 'a wonderful development of a union in the most natural, and thus efficient, way with the aim of protection and promotion of moral persons', Sugimori was quick to note that state and nationality (and by extension race) were no more than accidental values.⁶⁸ These categories only had full justification for their existence as long as they ministered to the need of the personal, moral value: "We must not think that we are justified in sacrificing our personal, moral standard for the benefit of our country". The state was only a national means to which the personal end should never be yielded: "Our citizenship or our statesmanship is never a final or primary task to fulfil". The individuals had to concentrate on the perfection of the self and the world. The moral and philosophical principles that were the result of their quest would always transcend and direct the state.⁶⁹

The important task of governing and controlling all the secondary and tertiary

65 'Seiji no shinjōshiki'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.4: pp.42-46.

66 'Shin-kokuminshugi'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10: p.57.

67 'Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.158.

68 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp.139, 129.

69 *Ibid.*: pp.130, 146, 215, 206.

applications of these principles remained with the state: “The State should undertake the quantitative side of life, the qualitative side remains for ever the high privilege of individuals.”⁷⁰ Although Sugimori constantly emphasized the autonomy of the creative individual from the state, this did not result in anarchist inclinations. He rejected anarchism precisely because it did not appreciate these less spiritual, mechanical parts of life, which in his opinion could be most successfully dealt with by means of the law and the state.⁷¹

Sugimori thus approved of the nation-state; at the current level of science and technology it was the rational form of society as dictated by the individual interests. Yet he was convinced that the continuous evolution of man and society, which had brought the nation and the state into being, would in its turn make nationalism obsolete and society would proceed to a higher stage of social cooperation than the present nation.⁷² Shared history, which Sugimori ranked as the most important unifying element of a nation, had over the last fifty years progressed to an extent far beyond expectations. He observed that nowadays it was quite common to be dependent on foreigners for one’s physical and mental well-being. Man had irreversibly become indebted to the international cultural and economic community. So why, Sugimori wondered, should one remain more devoted to those who live near us though they might very well be our enemies in any intelligent moral meaning?⁷³

Thus in Sugimori’s view the highest stage of society would be global. The world had to become one village, yet in the immediate postwar period he remained rather vague on the point how and in what form this was to come about. However, there was one thing about which he was quite clear. While the importance of the present nation would inevitably wither away, central authority would definitely not. As discussed above, anarchism was not the direction of the social evolution Sugimori had in mind. It would make progress impossible because it sacrificed the stability of society essential for the protection and development of the individual. Instead he foresaw that as the social and economic process of specialisation proceeded, in the form of complex autonomous bodies, more organisation by some sort of state would become necessary.⁷⁴ He warned though that extreme state socialism (*kokka shakaishugi*) or bureaucracy (*kanryōshugi*) was not the solution either. It would make the stability of society meaningless, and in the end impossible, by sacrificing the freedom of the individual essential for the progress of the whole of society.⁷⁵ For the time being we can conclude that Sugimori was aiming at a society, based on cooperating autonomous bodies, in which particularistic entities like nation and race were rejected and universal entities like the autonomous region and the world were affirmed.

70 Ibid.: p. 216.

71 Ibid.: pp. 207-08.

72 ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.158.

73 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp. 229-31.

74 ‘Seiji no shinjōshiki’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.4: p. 46.

75 ‘Shakai kaizō no gensoku’. *Tetsugaku Zasshi*, 1919.7. ‘Demokurashii no hongī’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.7. Both reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, Tōhō Jironsha, 1919: pp.33-37, 192.

Progress as Growing Individual Autonomy: Competition and Superiority

The progress of human society was also marked by an increase in the other value of modernity, the autonomy of the individual. This was a matter of course to Sugimori, who was of the opinion that individual autonomy was the most fundamental precondition for all progress, whether individual or social. Without autonomy there could be no creativity whatsoever. Thus man, defined by Sugimori as a being constantly striving to create, was naturally inclined to establish a situation of equal opportunities. This would do away with all accidental values such as birth, property, and race, which might restrict his freedom to employ his real, personal value.

Yet although Sugimori advocated complete equality of opportunities between men, he did not advocate the equality of men. In the first place one had to take into account man's instinct to compete, that is, to become bigger than the other. Sugimori thought it was only natural for modern man 'to live under the conditions of equal opportunity and try to excel others by his personal, creative activity' and was convinced that by doing so man would benefit himself and others. He encouraged man to aim for the supreme; man should try to become a god himself and try to monopolize the world himself. Anything less would not do.⁷⁶ Secondly, even if man did not have such a competitive goal, there were still fundamental individual differences in capacity and character, which, Sugimori emphasized, could not be ignored and which determined one's superiority or inferiority, in other words, whether one was 'a true master' or 'a true servant'.⁷⁷ Again, as we see so often in Sugimori's thinking, there is a combination of two elements, both indispensable but one of the two carrying more weight. In the case of 'human capacity' and 'moral character', Sugimori regarded the latter element as more important when it came to deciding which individual was most fit to survive. In his opinion almost everyone shares the human emotion of discontent with the world's imperfection and has the willpower to improve his situation. Yet what 'the common people' lacked was a third element, namely the intelligence which could be their guiding light. Therefore, it was the task of the philosopher to solve the problem of how to make the best use of these primary capacities of man. Only philosophers, Sugimori pointed out, "can be affected in their formation of concepts by their own positive observation and experiment rather than by traditional authority. It is even harmful for the common man to make concepts". Thus he divided mankind into the ignorant masses on the one hand and 'a few awakened individuals' on the other.⁷⁸ Not surprisingly Sugimori, a philosopher by profession who portrayed himself as 'a self-convinced poet and thinker', placed himself on the right side of the line, as will be clear from his remark in 1917 that "When our moral and theological views have been even so much enlightened as I personally am, I sincerely doubt whether a war such as the present one will still certainly be possible".⁷⁹

Luckily for the rest of society, Sugimori was of the opinion that the above-mentioned rare 'choice individuals' with their special capability were committed to the perfection of society as a

76 'Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi nōryokushugi ni yoru sekai no kaizō'. *Kaizō*, 1919.6: p.22; *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.131; 'Kojinsaku oyobi kokusaku to shite no seiyūshugi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.10: pp.163-65.

77 'Demokurashii no hongī'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.7. In *Jinrui no saisei*: p.185; *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp.182-85.

78 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp.15-16, 92, 154.

79 *Ibid.*: p.17.

whole. ‘To excel others in public service’ was ‘a most important aspect of moral life’. Accordingly, the ‘superior portion of mankind’ was making a continuous effort ‘to communicate itself to the inferior portion for the perfect conversion of the latter to the former’.⁸⁰ To do full justice to his pride, the superior individual was inclined to share his supremely valuable concepts with the lesser members of society. Thus he was able to dominate the world by culture instead of force, not by destroying his neighbours but by converting them. In this ‘moral empire’ or ‘moral kingdom’ the common people would be provoked to develop their abilities under the sheer necessity of competition or of adaptation for the sake of pride and existence.⁸¹ Nevertheless, Sugimori considered it a matter of course that ‘it is those superiors to whom society at large and average individuals owe at all times their own real progress of every kind’. Social merit was thus ranked as the prerogative of a ‘moral minority’ and, according to Sugimori, had to be rewarded proportionally. Wealth and rank were to be the reward for character and ability used for the sake of the community, and on behalf of the future progress of society superior individuals ought to be given as much freedom as possible.⁸²

Sugimori’s conception of a distinct minority with a special capability and accorded special privileges was clearly at loggerheads with the democratic trend in the media of the day, although he was never selected as a target for attack. This might have been due to the fact that he regularly paid lip service to the cause of democracy and was overall considered to be a member of the reform movement. Still his support of democracy was rather equivocal and Sugimori did not try to conceal this either. On the one hand he admitted that the demand for democracy was a result of man’s pride and creativity. Moreover he thought it a clear improvement on aristocracy, as it supplanted accidental values with essential personal value.⁸³ On the other hand Sugimori warned of the egalitarian character of democracy. In his opinion it lacked full appreciation of the cause of personal value, namely the fundamental individual differences in capacity and character, and he pointed out that the demand for complete equality would also be the end of democracy. For instance, in the interest of taking care of the commoners, who are largest in number, law in an absolute democratic society was apt to prove a destructive force to the superiors, who are smaller in number but excel in quality and ought to be given as much freedom and help as possible on behalf of both.⁸⁴ There had to be equality between the individual need and the social

80 Ibid.: p.185, 155.

81 Ibid.: pp.82-85, 132-35, 48-49. I am not sure about the lineage of Sugimori’s ‘moral empire’. The one thing that springs to mind is Ukita Kazutami’s ‘ethical imperialism’ (*rinriteki teikokushugi*), as introduced in the book of the same name (Ryūbunkan, 1909). However, Sugimori does not refer to it and had his ‘moral empire’ translated into ‘*dōtokuteki teikoku*’. For Ukita’s brand of ‘ethical imperialism’, see Jiang Keshi, *Ukita Kazutami no shisōteki kenkyū – Rinriteki teikokushugi no keisei*, Fuji Shuppan, 2003 and Takeda Kiyoko, ‘Ukita Kazutami no [teikokushugi]-ron to kyōiku – Meiji jiyūshugi no keifu’. *Kyōiku kenkyū*, no.21 (1978): pp.1-27.

82 Ibid.: pp.155, 206-08.

83 Ibid.: pp.124, 208.

84 Ibid.: pp.124, 185, 206. As one of ‘the superiors’ Sugimori’s evaluation of the social merit of law was indeed not all praise. Law was the abstraction of “...the moral person common to all natural persons in one community (...) and therefore capable of playing the role of corrector. (...) But ... law can hardly ever be a sufficient manifestation of the best conscience of few choice individuals of the age and society that law obtains. (...) We cannot impose a law upon the people who are not able to understand it, or at least to believe in it. (...) The majority never possesses the ability to share in full measure what the minority possesses as the common worth or property of all persons and of humanity.” Ibid.: pp.198-200.

supply, between the individual capacity and the social opportunity, but not between man and man. More capacity and merit justified more opportunity and reward. “I am not a believer in democracy and egalitarianism”, Sugimori spoke forthrightly. Instead he advocated meritocracy (*nōryokushugi*) and heroism (*eiūshugi*).⁸⁵ In an identical way Sugimori rejected “a socialism which aims at the mere material welfare of the most members of the community, and neglects the excellence of quality which is bound to be always rare”.⁸⁶ In his opinion the only way to obtain individual freedom, and by extension to survive, was to establish moral superiority. As I will discuss further on, Sugimori extended this social Darwinist view of interhuman relations to the field of international relations.

2.4 Morality

The Pyramid of Moral Values

Although Sugimori considered competition to be the basic instinct of human beings, he did not believe that the sum of all individual acts based on personal interest would on its own lead to a desirable social order, let alone social progress. He stressed that human action, including politics, had to be guided by morality as the precondition for competition to be beneficial to mankind. Sugimori thus defined morality as ‘the essence and the central authority of life’ and argued that morality had to be the leading principle of the individual as well as the state.⁸⁷ Yet what was the exact meaning of ‘to act morally’? Many opinion leaders in the 1920s used this phrase every now and then, usually without exerting themselves too much to explain what were the contents of this ‘morality’. In the case of Sugimori this tendency is conspicuous as well, although his conception of ‘morality’ can hardly be called mainstream or easy to understand.

In his opinion ‘to act morally’ in its ultimate form was to produce, to create, and as a result to contribute to society. Yet creation was perceived as only one part of morality; it occupied the top level of a three-storied pyramid of moral behaviour. The remaining parts consisted of a basic level of autonomy (‘specialisation’) and a social middle level of responsibility (‘cooperation’, ‘distribution’). Thus ‘being autonomous’ and ‘cooperating’ were also characterized as ‘acting morally’. The individual top level of creation was again subdivided, with the creation of new moral values as the ultimate form of creation.⁸⁸

Sugimori considered autonomy as the most fundamental prerequisite for creation. Without autonomy any form of creative production was out of the question. Yet the relation was reciprocal; autonomy which was not aimed at creation was meaningless and eventually self-destructive. He treated the ‘modern principle of autonomy’ as the logical outcome of the

85 ‘Shakai kaizō no gensoku’. 1919.7; ‘Demokurashii no hongī’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.7. Both in *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.37-39, 185.

86 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.131.

87 ‘Kaizeru shobatsu mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.8: p.64; ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: pp.163-64.

88 ‘Sei oyobi zen no gensoku wo ronjite shakaishugi to Kokusai Renmei ni kibō su’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.9: pp.8-11.

emphasis on the individual since the eighteenth century. According to Sugimori, individualism had set off two processes which at first hand seemed contradictory but in fact were intertwined; the specialisation and the organisation of functions. Individual autonomy was ranked as the ethical form of functional specialisation, the ethical form of functional organisation being the next level of responsibility.⁸⁹

Where autonomy might be characterized as the individual level, responsibility can be seen as the social level, the level of cooperation and distribution ensuring the stability and justice of society that are indispensable for creation. As mentioned before Sugimori approved of or, rather, passionately endorsed the competition between autonomous individuals. Yet he warned that this competition had to be conditioned by ‘the most important responsibility’, namely to firmly hold on to one’s conscience.⁹⁰ Again Sugimori’s interpretation of the term ‘conscience’ needs some explanation, for this was definitely not marked by some sort of altruistic sentiment that one might expect. Society, he maintained, could not be held together by the abstract imperative of ‘love thy neighbour’. Love could never be the answer to national or international problems because he considered man to be incapable of loving on such a scale. ‘Love may suffice within one’s own family’ but ‘It ceases to be a predominant power as soon as you enter a drawing-room or go out into the street’.⁹¹ He even accused the mistaken belief in love as the main cause of the low level of morality of his day. In Sugimori’s view it was only pride, the pride as an individual, that could make man simultaneously strive for his own autonomy *and* respect the autonomy of others as well. He predicted that if only everybody became aware of their pride as an individual and acted accordingly, which in Sugimori’s terms would be identical to ‘acting conscientiously’ or ‘acting responsibly’, all international and national questions could be solved and a just society would come about.⁹²

Yet, and this is where we come to the top level of the moral pyramid, although specialisation, competition, cooperation and distribution were characterized as essential conditions for creation, they were ranked as secondary elements within a reciprocal relation. To Sugimori they were merely instruments on behalf of creation and he slighted them as meaningless if not backed up by sufficient production.⁹³ The main reason why Sugimori rejected both egoism and altruism was identical; these would only result in a redivision of and not an addition to the total property of society. According to Sugimori “morality is economics”. The moral values of autonomy, responsibility, and justice did not transcend the category of passive economy. Production was the real thing, and was the only moral value to which Sugimori attributed the quality mark of ‘virtuous’ (*zen*). Virtue was defined, from ‘the *Pragmatic* point of view’, as production by which individual desires were being fulfilled: “A man is good when he creates a good thing in the system of the real world, which good thing replaces some lower state of existence. A mere motive or sentiment does not suffice at all.”⁹⁴ Accordingly he

89 Ibid.: p.8; ‘Seiji no shinjōshiki’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.4: p. 44.

90 ‘Sei oyobi zen’: p.11.

91 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.125.

92 ‘Shinjidai no risōteki gensoku josetsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.12: pp.8, 11-12. The moral value of justice (*sei*) was defined by Sugimori as the ideal state of distribution at which the universal social demands as well as the unique individual demands were being fulfilled.

93 ‘Sei oyobi zen’: pp.4,9.

94 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.52.

acknowledged the modern age as virtuous as it had seen a surge in the production of wealth. And the Industrial Revolution was ranked as far more virtuous than any religion because of the degree to which it had contributed to the wealth of mankind.⁹⁵

Pragmatic and Utilitarian Morality

It will be clear from the above that Sugimori rejected all idealistic conceptions which presupposed a centre of gravity of values outside the self such as the Christian concept of compassion or the Kantian concept of duty. There could be no centre except for man himself, and there was no reason why things should be different in the case of morality. Still he noticed that man was plagued by the contradiction that “We are in practice keenly anxious for the betterment of the material conditions of our existence, whilst we are woefully weak in our moral convictions touching such desires and actions”. On the basis of this lack of a solid moral stronghold Sugimori sensed ‘a demand for a modern religion which is in line with our own interests’ and he gallantly took upon himself the heavy task to bring this about.⁹⁶ In comparison to other philosophers the moral concepts he proposed were indeed all rather down-to-earth: autonomy, responsibility, justice, and virtue (which defined in a more economic way were equivalent to respectively specialisation, cooperation, distribution, and production). Although all of these were eventually justified by their social merit, Sugimori stressed that they nonetheless emanated directly from human nature. Therefore these moral concepts could not be abstract. On the contrary, they had to have a clear cultural, economic, and even strategic content. To live an ideal moral life was a practical business, he remarked, since man was a pragmatic and utilitarian being. This implied that to be good one had to create; simply having good motives was not enough. This was another reason for Sugimori to reject practically all religions the world had known. His ideal was that of ‘the saint-hero’ (*seiyū*); man had to have a moral standing as high as a saint but at the same time had to be as able as a hero.⁹⁷

His preoccupation with functionalism led Sugimori to state that “There is no single rule or principle which we are bound to observe save the rule and principle that our actions should be followed by the best possible consequences”. In his opinion this implied that at the present stage of modernity man had the moral obligation to look permanently for opportunities all around the world and to create.⁹⁸ International competition had until then only too often led to the uneconomic, and thus implicitly immoral, restriction of opportunities, the loss of life due to warfare being its most extreme manifestation. Yet if man would only act morally, that is to be aware of the content and direction of the above mentioned moral values, future competition would become creative instead of thievish and would lead to revolutionary progress.⁹⁹ Sugimori

95 ‘Sei oyobi zen’: pp.2-3, 11.

96 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp.64-65.

97 Ibid.: pp.51-56, 60-63, 79-81. An expansive explanation of Sugimori’s *seiyūshugi* (sage/hero-ism) can be found in ‘Kojinsaku oyobi kokusaku to shite no seiyūshugi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.10, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.97-165.

98 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.34; ‘Shinkokuminshugi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, p.68.

99 ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: pp.160-61; ‘Kokusaiteki shakai wo chokushi seyo’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.5: p.10.

was convinced that morality was also to become international and universal, just as science and art already had, and that man was on the road to one international moral society. He foresaw an international competition for the public good on all facets of life. Thus the development of the individual and the progress of the world would be attained simultaneously in a natural way. Obviously thrilled by this prospect, he exclaimed: “We will compete in our service to the world, thus fulfilling our real nature in a moral way”.¹⁰⁰

Reform as Gradual Moral Progress through Education

The direction in which modern society was proceeding - increasing autonomy and cooperation - and the method by which to stimulate progress - acting moral - being clear to Sugimori, he was merely waiting for the rest of the world to reach the same awareness.¹⁰¹ ‘Reform’ (*kaizō*), the catchword of the immediate postwar period, was advocated by most opinion leaders as being essential in all spheres of society. Sugimori did subscribe to this opinion as well, but he warned of superficial reforms of industry, politics and education. In his opinion these would be nothing more than stopgap measures when not preceded by and based on a reform of human psychology (or ‘philosophy’, ‘morality’, ‘ideology’, ‘religion’, as he used to call it as well, although his view of religion had nothing to do with the belief in a divine being). After all, the institutions of society were determined by the average moral and wisdom of society. He thus considered thought reform to be ‘the most important element of world reform’.¹⁰²

Since Sugimori maintained that national and international ethics were nothing but ‘interpersonal ethics’ and thus placed the moral centre of the world within the individual, there was no other way to apply social reform than by improving ‘the individual reason’.¹⁰³ His emphasis on individual morality as the decisive force in society intrinsically prescribed the instrument to stimulate reform of society. Although he had no high opinion of institutionalised education and mainly advocated self-study, Sugimori regarded education – ‘the first and foremost means to reach individual autonomy and responsibility’ – as the only tool to reform individual and subsequently social morality that was in line with human nature.¹⁰⁴

Revolution was also characterized by Sugimori as progress, and thus as a legitimate goal, but he rejected it as an instrument. Revolution, he noted, came down to change through force instead of education. Although coercion and education might have the same object, education was the fundamental instrument, coercion a temporary instrument only to be used in case of

100 ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.160; ‘Ei-Bei ryōkoku no shinchihō’. *Chūgai Shinron*, 1919.6, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, p.376; ‘Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi nōryokushugi ni yoru sekai no kaizō’. *Kaizō*, 1919.6: p.17.

101 ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.160.

102 ‘Kaizō no tetsugaku’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.9; ‘Shakai kaizō no gensoku’. *Tetsugaku Zasshi*, 1919.7; ‘Rinriyō yori mitaru sekai kaizō’. *Taikan*, 1919.10. All reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, Tōhō Jironsha, 1919: pp.18, 33, 46.

103 ‘Kojinsaku oyobi kokusaku to shite no seiyūshugi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.10, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.163-65; ‘Sei oyobi zen no gensoku wo ronjite shakaishugi to Kokusai Renmei ni kibō su’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.9: p.9.

104 For an overview of Sugimori’s ideas on the relation between the individual and society and education as the principal means of individual and social reform, see ‘Demokurashii no hongī’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.7. In *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.169-84.

emergency. In Sugimori's opinion the instrument of revolution was even a sign of weakness. He maintained that revolutions could only occur in places where education was not diffused sufficiently and/or in the situation that the distribution of opportunities was not based on capacity.¹⁰⁵ Accordingly he condoned the Russian Revolution, considering it the logical outcome of the extreme autocratic Tsarist regime, but he nevertheless considered it a bloody tragedy and definitely not an example to be emulated.¹⁰⁶ Instead he advocated the promotion of free education and research in order to stimulate moderate yet fundamental evolutionary inner progress on the one hand and avoid extreme temporary outward mutations on the other. In the light of the fact that the progress of society had the individual as its medium it was destined to be a slow evolutionary process. Therefore, Sugimori emphasized, what was needed was not radicalism but rather 'sound progressivism and sound conservatism, the right combination of idealism and realism', the personification of which he discovered not in the founder of his own university but in Fukuzawa Yukichi, the founder of the rival Keiō University.¹⁰⁷

2.5 Summary: The Unacknowledged Roots of the Creative Philosopher

As is the case with Yoshino Sakuzō and with many other Japanese 'men of thought' (*shisōka*), Sugimori was highly eclectic in his thinking and it is not easy to trace direct lineages to his intellectual forebears. A look in the index of *The Principles of the Moral Empire* gives an overview of most of the major names, from Aristotle to Wilhelm Wundt, that one will quite commonly come across in general histories of philosophy. However, in this work and in most of Sugimori's later books and articles he seldom praises or even mentions someone without finding fault with him at the same time. Apart from a 'critical dissection' and a few reviews of works by Bertrand Russell, arguably the most popular Western contemporary philosopher in Japan at the beginning of the 1920s, one article each on Kropotkin and G.D.H. Cole, and an article (partly) on his teacher Tanaka Ōdō, Sugimori hardly spent time on the analysis of the thought of others.¹⁰⁸ In Sugimori's opinion creation was what man was here for in this world, and accordingly he considered it his main task as a philosopher to create new thought, without bothering too much

105 'Shinkokuminshugi'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10: p.68; 'Ei-Bei ryōkoku no shinchihō'. *Chūgai Shinron*, 1919.6, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, pp.376-7; 'Kakumei no yūtō daiyōka'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.7: pp. 34-37.

106 'Saikin sekai no kakumeiteki keikō'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.3: pp.59-61.

107 'Doitsu no yurikaeshi wa nani wo keikoku suru ka'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.4: p.32; 'Idai naru Nihon, sekai wo sōsaku suru ketsui'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.1: p.1.

108 For the period that is the object of this study, 1918-1932, I have only come across the following articles: 'Rasseru to sono shuchō no hihanteki kaibō'. *Taiyō*, 1920.1: pp.2-10 and 1920.2: pp.33-41; 'Tetsugaku tōronkai no yūsha [Rasseru-shi no inshō]. *Yūben*, 1921.5; 'Rasseru-shi no kincho [Kyōiku wo shudai to shite]'. *Keizai Ōrai*, 1928.9; 'Kuropotokin no tetsugaku rinri'. *Kaizō*, 1920.5; 'Jidai no haikai to shincho – Kōru-shi no shakairon sono ta'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.9; 'Gendai no bunmei hiyōka oyobi tetsugakusha no shikaku wo ronjite Tanaka Ōdō-shi wo hyōka su'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.7: pp.2-20. In 1931 and 1932 he also wrote two small articles each on his mentors Fujii Kenjirō and Tanaka Ōdō at the time of their death. In his *Waseda Bungaka* days he wrote reviews of works by William James, F.C.S. Schiller, Ōnishi Hajime (Sosan), Rudolf Eucken, and Fujii and Tanaka. As for Bertrand Russell's popularity, he and Kropotkin were the only living philosophers included in Ikuta Kōji & Honma Hisao's *Shakai kaizō no hachi dai-shisōka* (The Eight Great Thinkers of Social Reform), published by Tōkyōdō Shoten in 1920.

about comparing it with the ideas of others or suggesting possible influences.

Nonetheless, Sugimori is nowadays most often classified as one of the (few) Japanese pragmatists, directly indebted to Tanaka Ōdō and indirectly to the American school of pragmatism. This is definitely not the way he would have liked to be remembered by posterity. Although he used the term ‘pragmatism’ in his first publications, characterizing it as ‘the latest offspring of utilitarianism’ ‘from the New World’,¹⁰⁹ afterwards he showed a strong predilection for ‘functionalism’ and, even more, the many isms he invented himself, and accordingly ‘pragmatism’ was no longer heard of. As far as Tanaka was concerned, Sugimori did not include him in the long list of antique, medieval and modern philosophers of the world in his above-mentioned major philosophic treatise and, apart from that one article in which Tanaka is even mentioned in the title, I have not once come across his name in the many books and articles by Sugimori I have read.

Judging by Sharon Nolte’s analysis of the writings of Tanaka Odō, however, it is evident – and hardly surprising to see – that there are indeed ample unmentioned influences on Sugimori by his mentor. Key phrases like, for instance, ‘a monistic method that will comprehend all human activity’, ‘the constant reconstruction of society’, ‘society and culture contain the heritage of earlier successful adaptation’, ‘the accelerated change of modern societies’, ‘ethical formulas have to be in line with the development of complementary forms of politics, education, ethics, art and culture’, ‘the state aims have to be based in everchanging individual interests’, ‘to remedy the defects of previous individualisms and develop individualism to its ultimate meaning’, ‘autonomous creation’, ‘the denial of any fundamental or inherent contradiction between the individual and society’,¹¹⁰ pop up every now and then, sometimes verbatim, in Sugimori’s writings. As regards the general purport of the ideas of the two men, one can also discern many similarities between Tanaka and Sugimori. They both emphasised the strong reciprocal ties between the individual and society and rejected the asocial concept of self-cultivation as advocated by the adherents of *jinkakushugi* (‘character-ism’).¹¹¹ They were both clearly influenced by social Darwinist thought, but were not eager to stress its effects as far as national society was concerned, Tanaka opting for social democracy, Sugimori for something we might term social technocracy. They declared war on all manifestations of feudalism, formalism and legalism, which were not in line with the modern trend of individualism - a trend which Tanaka tried to develop to its ultimate meaning by introducing the term ‘thorough individualism’ (*tettei kojishugi*).¹¹² And they both very strongly emphasised the demands and fundamentally different character of the industrialised modern age. Apart from the numerous analogies, the main difference between the two pragmatists seemed to be situated in the fact that Tanaka had set for himself the task of creating a new Japanese philosophy, ethic, even a new Japanese personality, while Sugimori at first was far less concerned with questions involving the Japanese nation. However, the fact that Sugimori, who was fourteen years younger than Tanaka, rather focussed on the cosmopolitan nature of modern man (especially the modern intellectual) and the

109 Sugimori Kōjirō, *The Principles of the Moral Empire*, University of London Press, 1917: pp.28, 110.

110 Sharon H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1987: pp.39-62.

111 For this difficult-to-translate ism, see chapter 3, 2.2, the section *The Individual and Society*.

112 Nolte gives ‘radical individualism’ but, leaving open the possibility that Tanaka himself may have used this translation, it seems that ‘radical’ is somewhat too strong and, moreover, adds a negative connotation that is not present in the original Japanese.

transnational destiny of the nation-state and national society, can easily be explained by the new age he was facing at the outset of his career. The postwar setting of anti-imperialism and pro-internationalism was fundamentally different from the still abundantly imperialist late 1890s, when Tanaka was forming his philosophy.

Nonetheless, as often happens in the case of like-minded men, the two philosophers clashed over subtle differences in interpretation and accused each other of not being fully sound in the faith. In 1920 Tanaka wrote a review of Sugimori's *Jinrui no saisei* (The Rebirth of Mankind) in which he started out by making clear the obvious influence he had on Sugimori and subsequently harshly attacked most of the deviations from his thought, especially what he called Sugimori's 'dualist tendencies' and his propagation of 'religious heroism'.¹¹³ Notwithstanding the fact that both men strongly endorsed the freedom of opinion, when one considers that Tanaka had written the review on the request of Sugimori himself and that it was printed in the *Tōhō Jiron*, the flagship of the company that had published the book under review, one seriously wonders what was left of their friendship after this article. Especially the charge by his mentor that he was too unphilosophical must have been a considerable blow for the up-and-coming philosopher.

When in July 1929 it was Sugimori's turn to evaluate the ideas of his former teacher he was, as a pupil should, somewhat more courteous. He first of all criticised the current Japanese philosophers and *bunmei hihyōka*, whom he radically divided into followers of either Kant or Marx, for being too unphilosophical. In the light of the low level of 'the competitors', Sugimori expressed his hopes for a revival of Tanaka as an outstanding philosopher who could be instrumental in synthesizing philosophy. On the other hand Sugimori was not mild on Tanaka, implying that his then somewhat unprominent position was due to his neglect to grasp the implications of the industrial revolution and the advent of the machine age. In strong contradiction to Sugimori's expressed hopes, his final verdict that Tanaka's failure to make a clear distinction between the pre-modern age and the modern age amounted to "a fatal neglect" was at least as harsh as the one by Tanaka a decade earlier.¹¹⁴

Following on Sharon Nolte's conclusion that Tanaka in his entire writing career bore the imprint of the pragmatist school, it is clear that the same is true for Sugimori's writings during the period discussed here. James' and Pierce's functionalism, Holmes' concept of the free market of ideas, Mead's notion of the social mirror, Dewey's instrumentalism and his rejection of the disunion of the individual and society were all essential elements of Sugimori's thought. Other influences can be traced back to R.M. MacIver, G.D.H. Cole and the British liberal thinkers of the postwar period.¹¹⁵ However, bearing in mind the aim of this study and the fact that the

113 Tanaka Ōdō, 'Sugimori Kōjirō no [*Jinrui no Saisei*] wo hyōsu'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.3: pp.161-70.

114 'Gendai no bunmei hihyōka oyobi tetsugakusha no shikaku wo ronjite Tanaka Ōdō-shi wo hyōka su'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.7: pp.15-20. Sugimori was not insincere in expressing his hopes for a revival of Tanaka. In 1932 he and Ishibashi Tanzan persuaded Heibonsha to publish the collected works of Tanaka, but the author himself, already fatally ill, declined the offer. Ishibashi Tanzan, *Ishibashi Tanzan zenshū*, vol.1, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1970: pp.49,79.

115 For MacIver, see Ii Gentarō, 'Sugimori Kōjirō no Nihon bunka no kindaika he no kōken', in *Waseda Seiji Keizai gaku Zasshi*, no.177 (1963): p.173. Sugimori had MacIver's *Community: A Sociological Study* (MacMillan, London, 1917) translated into Japanese (*Shakaigaku*, Inoue Kichijirō yaku, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1923). For Cole and other English liberal thinkers such as Russell, McDougal, Wallace, and

several previous attempts at distilling Sugimori's exact philosophical roots have hardly resulted in persuasive proof, I do not think it wise to make another, probably fruitless attempt. Let it suffice to say that Sugimori, true to Japanese tradition, was quite eclectic – and sometimes plainly opportunistic - in the way he dealt with the mass of the Western philosophical legacy. On the basis of the analysis of his philosophy in this section one can conclude that he was strongly indebted to such varied philosophers and philosophic schools as Kant (individual autonomy), Hegel (dialectics), utilitarianism and pragmatism (utility), socialism (social property), evolutionism (gradual nonviolent change) and social Darwinism (hierarchy).

Webb, see Itō Yasuji, *Shakai shinrigaku nōto*, Kyōdō Shuppan, 1971: p.232. Sugimori was evidently quite taken with Cole, bringing him to the attention of Nakano Seigō and describing him as “the brave general in the campaign to exterminate capitalism”. ‘Shakai no hakken’, *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.7. Reprinted in Sugimori Kōjirō, *Kokka no asu to shin-seiji gensoku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1923: p.99.

3 SUGIMORI AND THE POSTWAR WORLD; 1919-1921

3.1 The European War

What we now commonly label as the First World War was not seen as such by most contemporary Japanese spectators. Although their own country was fighting on the side of the Allied Powers, to them it was a European War (*Ōshū sensō*) and remained so even after the United States joined the fighting. Sugimori, who was in Europe until the end of the war, was no exception to the rule and hardly had an eye for the Japanese role in the war.

Although Sugimori had been forced to leave Germany at the outbreak of hostilities and was based in England for the duration of the war, there is hardly a trace of partiality to be found in his writings. It is true that he was taken aback by the arrogance and undiplomatic behaviour of the Kaiser and was rather impressed by Lloyd George, whose ‘coup d’etat’ of 1916 he described as heroic, yet in the end he did not make any difference of quality between the two groups of nations at war. In his eyes all main participants had a shared responsibility for the war, were equally inspired by nationalism, and accordingly had imperialist aims. Sugimori contended that even the participation by the United States in the last phase of the war was mainly caused by its fear of missing out on the postwar redivision of the world.¹¹⁶

Sugimori pointed out nationalism¹¹⁷ out as the main culprit for the war. As I discussed earlier, Sugimori was not opposed to nationalism in general. Still he was not content with the level of the nationalism of his day. He maintained that national policy, political morality, and national education in most countries were circumscribed by a Hegelian veneration of the state. This had resulted in a nationalism which was founded neither on individualism nor on internationalism and which had given rise to an absurd system of national states, each of which assumed the moral as well as legal paramount authority.¹¹⁸ In such a situation of international anarchy, Sugimori observed, unchanging belief in the balance of power system would inevitably culminate into another world war. To avoid such a disaster mankind had to make more progress in the field of the simultaneous modern trends Sugimori perceived: individual autonomy and cooperation. On the one hand the state had to cast off its autocracy in national relations in order to relocate the centre of morality within the individual. On the other hand the state had to cast off its armed imperialism and had to accept some sort of supranational institution in international relations in order to put a brake on international competition and attain a higher level of cooperation.¹¹⁹ One world society, which he often called ‘the world village’ (*chijō ichison* or *sekaison*), remained as Sugimori’s ideal. He was convinced that when progress in ‘the modern trends’ was accomplished the state organism would gradually grow into a world organism, but at the same time he was aware that it was still too early to leave the steppingstone of the

116 ‘Shinkokuminshugi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10; ‘Kokuminshugi to sekaishugi’. *Taikan*, 1919.6, both reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, pp.63, 71, 86; ‘Kaizeru shobatsu mondai’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1919.8; p.67.

117 In the greater part of Sugimori’s early articles he intermingles *kokuminshugi* with *minzokushugi*, and sometimes with *kokkashugi* and *aikokushugi*, so in most cases I will not try to make any distinction between the terms and just use ‘nationalism’.

118 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.201; ‘Shinkokuminshugi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, p.63.

119 ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: pp.163-64.

nation-state behind. The forces of patriotism and nationalism had not withered during the war and were now stronger than ever, precisely because they were directly connected to the aim of the safety and the development of the individual. Thus Sugimori decided it would not be wise to disband nationalism and opted to enlarge the scope of social cooperation through the purification of the nationalism of his day by cosmopolitanism.¹²⁰ To this end he advocated a new state philosophy, ‘a nationalism based on universal moral values’, in order to foster ‘the international citizen’ (*kokusaimin*).¹²¹

3.2 Cosmopolitanism as the Inevitable Goal of Collectivism

Sugimori pinned all his hopes on cosmopolitanism (*sekaishugi*), which he perceived as the inevitable direction social evolution was taking. In his opinion it was the only way to fulfil the aim of providing individual capacity with maximum opportunity and thus it had to be the basic component of world reform.¹²² Of course, he admitted, there had been cosmopolitanism in the past as well, to be precise in eighteenth century Europe. Yet this had been of a very different nature, Sugimori indicated, for it had not been rooted in individualism. It had not been a historical necessity but merely a form of utopism, which was not able to put up any resistance against the waves of nationalism in the wake of Napoleon’s conquests. Yet after the Industrial Revolution things looked different. As a result of the advance of technology and the means of transport the world had become increasingly smaller. Culture and economy were already working on an international scale and Sugimori was sure the other fields of human life could not but follow in their steps.¹²³

Although in 1917 his inclination towards cosmopolitanism was already evident as an extension of his other ideas, Sugimori himself did not use the word ‘cosmopolitanism’ at this stage. Instead he said that the sole concern of nations and governments must be to create ‘a moral empire’:

The whole Earth should be governed by one central authority whose principle is thoroughly moral and whose methods are to give, under the most fair and liberal conditions, the fullest possible development to every human capacity inhabiting it.¹²⁴

Sugimori was looking for an alliance, based on reciprocal personal dignity, of moral persons, who would function as the units of a common humanity, and no longer of their different nationalities. Yet the first and foremost precondition for such a new international nation, he emphasised, was the creation of a common history. It was on this point that Sugimori was very

120 ‘Kokuminshugi to sekaishugi’. *Taikan*, 1919.6, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, pp.94-95; ‘Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi nōryokushugi ni yoru sekai no kaizō’. *Kaizō*, 1919.6: p.17.

121 ‘Seiji no shinjōshiki’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.4, p.45; ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: pp.162-64.

122 ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.160.

123 ‘Shinkokuminshugi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, pp.57, 63-71.

124 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.136.

optimistic, even at the height of the fighting. Although the war had been inspired by very different motives, he predicted that it “will hardly fail to bring the nations to a greater unity than was theirs before”. In his opinion “the world should be congratulated for its having procured such few opposing parties – roughly speaking, only two” and he spoke of the approaching ‘one comprehensive and paramount unity of Europe’.¹²⁵ With hindsight he attached special importance to the year 1917, as the point in time when the first signs of political supra-nationalism (*chō-kokuminshugi*) became apparent in the form of the Russian revolution of March 1917 and the participation of the United States in the European War a month later. The communist internationalist ideology, the American abandonment of ‘the Monroe doctrine’ (‘isolationism’ seems more correct) by its participation in the war, and the Great War itself seemed to Sugimori to be the preparations for a common history.¹²⁶

Postwar developments convinced Sugimori that cosmopolitanism was growing more and more important. He perceived a new era in which all countries, being no more than partial organisations of society, had to bear responsibility towards the whole of international society. In return for their autonomy, which only existed by the grace of the cooperation of other countries, they had the moral duty to increase the virtue and decrease the evil of international society. However, the ‘new external conditions’ also had their implications for the internal make-up of the state. In Sugimori’s opinion the state could no longer ignore the rest of the world and it would gradually become impossible to uphold persons or methods that were harmful to the world. To this end the near future would see the establishment of a ‘government based upon common humanity’ and the thorough implementation of international law.¹²⁷ International institutions also had the task of upholding the principles of free trade and free naturalisation in order to stimulate the international economic process of diversification. Sugimori insisted that ever increasing specialisation was required to reach a higher level of cooperation. Differences in natural gifts and human capabilities meant that the various nations could only do full justice to themselves, and serve their neighbours in the meantime, by means of exchange. Thus Sugimori strongly rejected all forms of autarky and protectionism; self-subsistency meant uniformity and was not only apt to lead to aggressive militarism but also reduced the creativity to compete in a people:

Economic protectionism will do us more harm than good ... To defeat our enemies by some external and artificial means rather than by genuine worth prevents us from obtaining the best success ... Fair competition is what saves us. (...) We must love our enemies because they give us opportunities to develop ourselves so as to cope with them. The stronger the enemies the greater our need of exerting creative facilities.¹²⁸

125 Ibid.: pp.137-38, 221.

126 ‘Shinkokuminshugi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*, p.67; ‘Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi nōryokushugi ni yoru sekai no kaizō’. *Kaizō*, 1919.6: p.20; ‘Minzoku jiketsu no shingensoku hihyō’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.4: pp.16-17.

127 ‘Shinjidai no risōteki gensoku josetsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.12: p.7; ‘Shingenshō to shinjinbutsu’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: pp.70-72, 76; ‘Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.159.

128 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.224-25.

In line with his advocacy of the individual's freedom to choose his own nationality, all countries from now on had to compete for the favour of all individuals of the human race. Of course Sugimori was aware of certain preconditions for this competition to have its beneficiary effects, such as equal access to natural resources, equal opportunities and fair distribution of wealth. But once these had been accomplished, the process of specialisation would lead to the complete organisation of the world.¹²⁹ To make sure that nobody would lump him together with the many other adherents to a cosmopolitanist policy of his day, he emphasised that his cosmopolitanism was not inspired by pacifism or humanism but strictly by utilitarianism:

We plan the organisation of nations not because we must never again have war at all, but because individuals in the world can realise their own individualities far better under the organised system of nations than under the present unorganised one. ... War is disreputable not because it is war but when it is the result of our moral and intellectual weakness.¹³⁰

3.3 The League of Nations

The form of cosmopolitanism Sugimori championed was not abstract; he was adamant that a tangible system, consisting of an international law and the corresponding institutions to uphold and enforce it, had to be applied to international relations for a cosmopolitanism beneficial to the individual to come into being.¹³¹ Since the establishment of the League of Nations was clearly the first serious attempt to bring about such an international order, one would expect Sugimori to be supportive of the League. However, in practice his attitude was rather ambivalent.

Sugimori did indeed value the League as an endeavour to internationally distribute political rights, but in his eyes it was incomplete. He regarded the 'severe lack of new ideals' as the weakest point of the League. At first glance, he pointed out, the League was a rather contradictory amalgam of the internationalist policy to prevent war by arms reduction and the nationalist principle of ethnic national self-determination. In Sugimori's eyes the principle of ethnic national self-determination was in practice hardly any different from imperialism, since it had only been applied to the territory of the losers of the war and there was no sign that the victors were willing to apply it to their own territory. He was not surprised by this attitude of the major powers: sincere application of the universal principle of ethnic national self-determination was hardly to be expected in the situation where the average individual morality condoned the suppression of the (weak) other for the expansion of one's own power. In Sugimori's terms, man had not yet reached 'the stage of personal individualism that would make him break through the wall of the nation and confront the whole human race'. The world was still ruled by conservatism, protectionism, nationalism, and imperialism and the charter of the League of Nations was

129 'Buryokushugi to tatakau bunkashugi no tate no sunshin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.2: pp.50-51.

130 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.227-28.

131 'Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi nōryokushugi ni yoru sekai no kaizō'. *Kaizō*, 1919.6: p.17; 'Kokka tetsugaku no kōshin'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.1: p.159.

nothing but a reflection of this.¹³² There were many ‘internationalists’ who, out of deception with the results of the Paris Peace Conference, severely attacked the major powers and the League on these grounds. In contrast Sugimori noted that there was no reason to be indignant; the League too was just a depiction of reality and reality was that justice is very rare in international relations. He pointed out that in the end a country’s foreign policy is determined by the average level of conscience of its people. This implied that as long as national society itself was not democratic its foreign policy could not be but autocratic and based on selfish interest. Based on his rather pessimistic evaluation of the democratic calibre of the various modern societies Sugimori accordingly harboured little hope in the new slogan of ‘people’s diplomacy’ (*kokumin gaikō*). At the present level of civilisation the diplomacy of the people would be just as aggressive as the elite diplomacy (*kizoku gaikō*) or bureaucrat diplomacy (*kanryō gaikō*) of yore.¹³³ Notwithstanding (or maybe because of) this pessimism, he retained a sympathetic attitude towards the League of Nations by saying that “even if it is based on a lie we still should be glad with the progress, although very small, it implies in culture and morality”. From now onwards it was the task of mankind to give substance to the framework that had now been created.¹³⁴

3.4 National Character, National Superiority, Newcomer Nations and International Progress

Although he did not voice his critique very loudly at this stage, there was another deficiency Sugimori perceived in the principles of the League of Nations, which I think was much more profound - and as such more decisive in his eventual complete rejection of the League - than the idealistic argument that the world and thus the League lacked supra-national individualist cosmopolitans. This is his nationalist argument.

In an article in the *Tōhō Jiron* edition of July 1919 Sugimori said that he was a proponent of ‘a league of nations’, but he added that in the case of such a league the balance between international competition and international cooperation was of vital importance. What he implied was that although he was aware of the need to come to a form of international organisation between sovereign states he could not fully support the present League of Nations, which in his opinion would inevitably circumscribe the natural development of newcomer nations (*shinshinkoku*) on the international scene.¹³⁵ He also considered the League aim of avoiding war, and accordingly of preserving the status quo, too narrow. The main aim of mankind was to create and to make progress, and thus to bring world culture to a higher level and, although Sugimori preferred and advocated a more harmonious model of human progress, if in exceptional cases this overriding goal called for the instrument of war he approved of it. Sugimori thought society had to be cosmopolitanist and man had to be idealist, but the idealism as preached by Wilson did not go down well with him. Wilson’s ideas on international unification, he explained, ignored

132 ‘Sei oyobi zen no gensoku wo ronjite shakaishugi to Kokusai Renmei ni kibō su’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.9: p.8; ‘Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi’: pp.21-22; ‘Minzoku jiketsu no shingensoku hihyō’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.4: pp.14-15.

133 ‘Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi’: p.20; ‘Kokusai kankei ni okeru kanjō, rigai, seiji no chikara’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.8: p.83.

134 ‘Buryokushugi to tatakau bunkashugi no tate no sunshin’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.2: pp.49-50.

135 ‘Demokurashii no hongī’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.7. In *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.195-97.

‘the basic principles of life’ and would when implemented suffocate the nation. And there can be no doubt that he was also addressing Yoshino, when he accused the Japanese intelligentsia of ‘lacking intellectual insight’ because of their support of Wilson’s ‘hollow ideas’.¹³⁶

We have already seen that according to Sugimori life was mainly about progress and the progress of society was dependent on the creativity of the individual, the central element in the production process of new techniques, thought and values. Yet when we come to the level of the world society, Sugimori seems to imply that progress is rather dependent on the creativity of the nation, as a natural extension of the individuals, and therefore all forms of cosmopolitanism should be firmly rooted in nationalism - or in supra-national regionalism, (*chihōshugi*), a term he alternatively used because one of his publicly stated aims was to do away with the nation and the nation-state in the end. Sugimori’s argument is based on the fact that he conceived a national character or national personality (*kokuminsei*), distinguished by a national essence (*kokusui*), which stood between the individual and world society. Although international cooperation had to result in the demise of the restricting institution of the nation-state, this was not supposed to be a negation but an affirmation, an extension of the distinct national character and essence.¹³⁷ Therefore Sugimori’s support of the League rather resembles his support for the state. The conditions for his support of the former were that the League, in order to protect and stimulate the national character, would on the one hand promote cooperation and on the other hand suppress competition to some extent. But not completely: Sugimori emphasized that in its suppression of competition ‘a harmful form of international socialism’ was not called for. International order was needed, but not at all costs; the creativity present in the national society was not to be sacrificed. Internationalism had to be based on what we might term ‘national individualism’ (*koseishugi no tame no kōkusaishugi*) to succeed.¹³⁸

This construction of a national personality seems over-complicated, yet Sugimori needed it to get where he wanted in an acceptable, internationalist way. If one looked upon all nations as equals, who would simultaneously melt together into a unity of a higher degree, there would be no reason to cling to the argument of national personality. Yet, identical to his view of interpersonal relations, this was not the way Sugimori saw things. Again, citing R.M. MacIver with great approval and slightly ‘improving’ his words, he saw a hierarchy: “the international society is nowhere but in all its members [countries], yet it is most in the greatest of them”.¹³⁹ There were superior nations and inferior nations, ranked according to their level of creativity in international competition. The former would lead the latter, by dominating and encompassing

136 ‘Rinrijō yori mitaru sekai kaizō’. *Taikan*, 1919.10. In *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.47-48; ‘Shingenshō to shinjinbutsu’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: pp.72-73; ‘Tai-Bei chifun no hōhō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.8: p.81.

137 ‘Shingenshō to shinjinbutsu’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: pp.72, 77.

138 ‘Shakaishugi no chōtan’. *Kaizō*, 1919.7: p.81; ‘Yukinayamu kōkusaishugi no kōshinkyoku’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.11. Reprinted in *Shinshakai no gensoku*, Tenyūsha, 1921: pp.2-3.

139 ‘Shinjidai no risōteki gensoku josetsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.12: p.9. Robert Morrison MacIver (1882-1970) was a Scottish-American sociologist who had graduated from the universities of Edinburgh and Oxford. He taught political science and sociology in Scotland and Canada before becoming a professor of political philosophy and sociology at Columbia University in 1929 (until 1950). In his research he sought to define an integrated social science that could understand people in their economic, political, and social aspects simultaneously. His major prewar works are *Community: A Sociological Study* (MacMillan, London, 1917) and *Society: Its Structure and Changes* (Ray Long, New York, 1931). The citation is most likely from the former work, which Sugimori had translated into Japanese.

them, to the one and only world society. Thus ‘the confinements’ of all nations would be broken. It was in this sense that Sugimori advocated the demise of the nation-state. Yet this process of amalgamation demanded the obliteration of most nations and the magnification of only a few superior nations or, ideally, of one superior nation that would encompass the whole world and thus bring about the projected world society. In short, Sugimori’s emphasis on the need to preserve and nurture the national personality should be seen in terms of ‘the promotion of the superior national personality of the superior nation(s)’. The following citation, although somewhat ambiguous, also gives an insight into this radical social Darwinist view of international relations:

As a nation, no less than as an individual, we must be able, so able indeed as to excel any other nation or individual. This is good for the development of human ability itself. By developing our own abilities we naturally provoke the development of the abilities of our neighbours, even under the sheer necessity of competition or of adaptation for the sake of pride and of existence.¹⁴⁰

Survival prescribed competition, but in case one (here defined in terms of ‘the other’, namely the neighbouring nations) lost out in this competition, ‘adaptation’ to the victorious nation seemed the only option left in order at the very least to give one’s existence another lease of life.

Sugimori’s advocacy of the domination and assimilation of less fit nations by the fittest nation was unmistakably at loggerheads with the postwar trend of anti-imperialism and ethnic national self-determination, which was also predominant in the Japanese media of the day. Still Sugimori was an accepted and respected member of the ‘*bunmei hihyōka*’ and wrote prolifically for most of the major magazines. How was this possible?

In the first place the subjugation of one nation by another formed only an aspect - and a rather underemphasized one - of Sugimori’s broader theme of ‘internationalism’, a very politically correct topic in those days. And within this theme Sugimori laid far more stress on the gradual renunciation of all nations, a reason why his brand of ‘internationalism’ is best termed ‘cosmopolitanism’.

Secondly, Sugimori portrayed the subjugation of a nation as a spontaneous and harmonious process of assimilation. He thought it was by culture and not by force that a nation or an individual might most successfully dominate the world. The imperialism of yore, with its instrument of war, was prone to result in the rule by force, which he considered irrational and definitely not the best way to systematically protect and develop the value of life of mankind. A nation had to be militarily and economically superior to sustain its rule, Sugimori acknowledged, yet when lacking morality and culture the empire would nonetheless fall. Therefore Sugimori rejected aggressive imperialism and proposed the alternative of subjugation by means of cultural and moral power: moral imperialism. Those countries that aimed at establishing a ‘moral empire’ should not unnecessarily and counter-productively oppress other nations; all they had to do was to take care that they were superiorly useful to the world. As already mentioned, since man was considered to be inclined to share what is supremely valuable, inferior nations and individuals

¹⁴⁰ *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: pp.48-49.

would for reasons of pride and of bare existence adapt themselves spontaneously to the superior nation. In Sugimori's ideal model everybody would thus cooperate in supporting and creating a moral empire in order to give themselves the most opportunities to create and develop.¹⁴¹

Thirdly, the direct implications for Japan in case internationalisation proceeded in the way Sugimori predicted were not that dramatic compared to other countries. He was convinced Japan was one of the nations that should, and would, rank amongst the group of superior nations and even had high hopes of his own country becoming the world leader in the end. This line of thought is already obvious in the late spring of 1919 when he stated:

Japan must have the heroic resolution (...) to become the leader of the world village (...) In our present age, the improvement of the whole world should be one's goal in order to further the fortunes of one's country. In that sense the rule of the world and the rule of one state are identical. Those who only exert themselves in the interest of their own country or their own family will not retain their position of leader for long. Thus altruism is in one's own interest.¹⁴²

Sugimori's functionalist approach is also strongly evident in this quotation. Although the cause commonly stated was all-encompassing, such as the progress of the whole of mankind, the emotions to which Sugimori appealed were usually of a very different and much more limited kind. Since he did not believe in abstract, altruistic feelings for the other it is not very surprising to see that his cosmopolitanism is underpinned by egoistic individualist arguments. Yet arguments that we can hardly term anything different than nationalist are also evident. The most conspicuous, and remarkably explicit, example is from October 1919:

We have to preserve the Japanese Empire for the sake of the protection and development of the individual character of the Yamato nation (*minzoku*).¹⁴³

Although such arguments of an inviolable Japanese ethnic national personality do not fit well into Sugimori's grander and idealistic theories on internationalism and cosmopolitanism, they are hard to ignore. He supported the individual personality, which he maintained was best served by the ungoing process of internationalisation, yet he did not want to sacrifice the national personality in this process. The subsistence and development of the Japanese nation had to be secured in the world society in the making.

Sugimori could only think of one solution to bring his contradictory ideas into harmony: Japan had to become the leader of the world society. Accordingly he pointed out that it could no longer afford to follow suit, modelling itself on the Western powers. In his opinion it was Japan's status of a cultural parasite on the West that had caused a threat to the nation in the form of the

141 Ibid.: pp.133-35; 'Shingenshō to shinjinbutsu'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: pp.75-78; 'Minzoku jiketsu no shingensoku hihyō'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.4: p.15.

142 'Ei-Bei ryōkoku no shinchihō'. *Chūgai Shinron*, 1919.6, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.378-79.

143 'Shinkokuminshugi'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.10: p.68. The use of the term '*Yamato minzoku*', most popular in rightist ethnocentric circles, is very exceptional here and can hardly be found in any other of Sugimori's writings of the 1910s and 1920s.

anti-Japanese mood of the day.¹⁴⁴ In order to reverse this tide the philosopher Sugimori urged his country, not very surprisingly, to concentrate on the creation of thought:

The modelling of Japan on the West was in general good except for the import of state interference on the freedom of thought. Competition in thought is essential for a rising nation. We must create a superior thought out of traditional and new Eastern and Western thought and thus contribute to the world. With our pirate (*wakō*) history we should have the divine will to culturally rule the world.¹⁴⁵

We should first of all arm ourselves for the war of thought (*shisōsen*). There can be no doubt whatsoever (...) that public virtue and public values exist that we should defend for the sake of the whole of mankind. Then the rest of the world inevitably will model itself on us, because we will be more holy and heroic than Lenin and Mohammed. (...) After the Russo-Japanese War the Japanese should have concentrated on morality, culture and economy and should have made arms a secondary and auxiliary instrument, thus developing a great character that would have made us the fittest in the field of international cooperation. Now the critical moment has arrived that if we do not act swiftly the existence of our country will be at stake.¹⁴⁶

Sugimori wanted his country to surpass the West by means of superior international thought that would invite the admiration of all other nations, and he was of course more than willing to help in the process. He had often-recurring dreams of Japan as an international ideal and unifying example, contributing highly to the progress of mankind.¹⁴⁷ Yet one should not forget that these dreams were inspired foremost by his conviction that the cultural rule over the world was the only guarantee for Japan's national security.

Thus Sugimori walked a thin line between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. He paid tribute to the cause of internationalism, not solely because it was the song of the day but also because he sincerely thought it was a sign of the times and it was in line with his ideas of an earlier date on human nature and society. Still at the same time he could not let go of his attachment to the Japanese nation, and this clearly gave direction to Sugimori's interpretation of 'internationalism'. This 'internationalism', which is better termed 'cosmopolitanism', was dependent on the stimulation of 'national personality' or 'national individuality', which by means of his predilection for hierarchical thinking came down to the stimulation of international inequality. His contradictory ideas, which combined a utilitarian and optimistic view of

144 Ibid.: pp.69-70; 'Kokusaiteki shakai wo chokushi seyo'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.5: pp.8-10.

145 'Saikin sekai no kakumeiteki keikō'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.3: pp.60-61.

146 'Kyōhei ijō no kokusaku'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.3: p.1. Sugimori had a love-hate relation with Lenin, on the one hand stressing time and again the man's Marxist limitations yet on the other hand portraying him as a hero and moral ruler and even boasting (mistakenly) that they were born on the same day. 'Shingenshō to shinjinbutsu'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.1: pp.66-67; Itō Yasuji, *Shakai shinrigaku nōto*, Kyōdō Shuppan, 1971: p.283.

147 For another example see 'Kakumei no yūtō daiyōka'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.7: p.37.

international relations with a strong sense of national interest, nevertheless must have struck a note of recognition within the hearts of the Japanese public. It was a reflection of their own struggle with the outside world in the postwar days, when they had acquired a distaste for rabid nationalism but also found themselves hesitant to adhere to the idealistic internationalism of Wilson.

3.5 The 'Real World'

When reading Sugimori's observations on the new international trends of the postwar world, one could almost forget that there was also a more concrete world out there than this global entity on its way to becoming one village. Although individual countries were seldom the object of his writings in this period, it is nonetheless essential to get a more detailed picture of Sugimori's view of the world in order to understand his rather abstract cosmopolitanist argument. What countries made up the world he saw and how did he characterise them? Exceptionally for Sugimori, the information he provides us on these questions is far from abundant, but scraping together the bits and pieces dispersed in his articles the following general picture emerges.

Sugimori is very representative of the Japanese of the postwar era in the sense that the world he perceived consisted of only a handful of countries. These were England, France, Germany, Russia, America and Japan, of which France and Germany had to a considerable extent faded from view by the beginning of the new decade. In the immediate postwar period Sugimori conveniently divided this 'world' up in two, respectively the traditional imperialist camp and the new cosmopolitanist camp. The main criterion of this division was capitalism, which in Sugimori's thought seemed to inevitably express itself through imperialism. Observing that capitalism had been consolidated in England and France during the war or in its aftermath, he grouped these two countries in the imperialist camp, in contrast to Russia and Germany which because of their overthrow of capitalism were positioned in the cosmopolitanist camp. Leaving aside the question of where to position the United States and Japan itself in all this, Sugimori proceeded to predict a postwar world that would be dominated by competition between England and the joint forces of Germany and Russia.¹⁴⁸

However, this competition was hardly allowed to develop, because with the start of a new decade Sugimori became aware of a somewhat different dichotomy in world society. The traditional or fundamental imperialist camp had not changed, but the rival camp was now characterised by 'international liberalism' and manned by the odd bedfellows of the United States and 'the New Russia'.¹⁴⁹ Sugimori would not be the first to predict Anglo-American rivalry in the postwar era (although he would probably be the first to predict a Soviet-American alliance), but he took another approach. The two powers representing the old world were disqualified, as Germany already had been, as lacking in power, and accordingly the element of imperialism did not seem to matter any longer.¹⁵⁰ What remained were the two champions of the international liberalist camp, whom Sugimori heralded as 'the two powers of the present age', and he went on to predict

148 'Ei-Bei ryōkoku no shinchihō'. *Chūgai Shinron*, 1919.6, reprinted in *Jinrui no saisei*: pp.366-67; 'Futsu sōsenkyō no kekka wo rikai seyo'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1919.12: p.12.

149 'Minzoku jiketsu no shingensoku hihyō'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.4: p.14.

150 Ibid.: pp.12-17; 'Shiberia chūhei zehi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1920.2: p.75.

that it was the rivalry within this camp that would determine the postwar order. As if he was able to foresee the Cold War of a later era, he set forth that the struggle between the two fundamentally different views of society, the one founded on the despotism of capital and the other on the despotism of labour, would continue for the time being and in the process the merits and the demerits of both systems would gradually become evident (and, inevitably, the two systems would eventually sublimate in true Hegelian fashion into a new system of a higher level).¹⁵¹

However, once again, Japan's position within this scheme of capitalism versus socialism was left rather vague and, moreover, the framework seemed to be of hardly any importance when Sugimori got down to the more practical business of Japan's bilateral relations with the few countries of this world worthy of specific mention: the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. At those (sporadic) times the world seemed as ever to be predominantly the same imperialist world, in which Japan was mainly occupied in a struggle with the traditional imperialist England over economic rights in China and with the economic imperialist America over the supremacy in the Pacific.¹⁵² From an awareness of the economic and military weakness of his motherland in the face of 'the common Anglo-American hostile stand against Japan', this is also where China and Siberia came into the picture. China was not regarded as an autonomous actor on the international stage and its government was often depicted as a mere puppet of the British and/or the Americans. Nevertheless, China and, to a lesser extent, Siberia occupied an extremely large part of Japanese views of the outside world as the major stage of Japan's foreign policy and the sole region where Japan could find refuge (*katsuro*) from the national fate of oblivion that the social Darwinist international struggle for life seemed to have in store for the country.¹⁵³

The above-mentioned line of argument definitely did not form the most significant part of Sugimori's analysis of the immediate postwar world, which was predominantly inspired by more rose-coloured ideas of international integration and peaceful cosmopolitanism. However, it is nonetheless interesting to see that amidst his prophecies of the advent of a moral world order he simultaneously referred to 'an extreme crisis of Japan's foreign policy', characterized the foreign policy of the American Republican Party as aimed at 'freedom of aggression' and 'world domination (*hadō*)', predicted that 'the second act of the world war will probably be set in the Pacific', stated that 'a major qualification for a new cabinet ... is that it will make Japan reach towards [the natural resources of] China and Siberia', and within this latter framework was advising his country, in spite of the ideological differences, to start making advances to the new Communist government in Moscow.¹⁵⁴

151 'Amerika tai sekai mondai-kan' *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.6: pp.82-83.

152 'Ei-Bei ryōkoku no shinchihō': p.368.

153 Ibid.371; 'Shiberia chūhei zehi': pp.72-74.

154 See respectively 'Ei-Bei ryōkoku no shinchihō': p.371; 'Futsu sōsenkyō no kekka wo rikai seyo': p.12; 'Amerika tai sekai mondai-kan'; 'Gen-naikaku no zento'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1920.5: p.13; and 'Shiberia chūhei zehi': pp.72-74.

3.6 Summary: A Power Vacuum in East Asia as the Precondition for Sugimori's Idealistic Conception of the Postwar World Order

In order to be able to present a future image of a world ruled by means of superior morality instead of superior force and such rule being carried out by a country that was, even by many of its own citizens, still considered a second rate nation, two factors were essential: the gift of wishful thinking and an environment that allowed for this. At no stage in his life did Sugimori lack the former quality. The latter condition, however, was more difficult to fulfil. The 1930s and the ensuing war years of course were very contributive to Sugimori's writings on a Japanese superior moral order, but during most of the preceding decade when Japan had not yet officially chosen to ignore 'the rest of the world' and to go its own way, the country seriously had to take into account the magnitude and direction of the other forces on the international spectrum. Nevertheless, in the period from the end of World War One until the middle of 1921 this was not yet fully the case. Although the unprecedented economic, military, and political predominance Japan had enjoyed in Asia since the outbreak of the war was being challenged again, Japan was still feeling relatively safe within its strengthened position. The Korean uprising had been suppressed, Chinese nationalist and anti-Japanese movements were not taken very seriously, and the new League of Nations, hardly taken into account by any nation, was not considered to be of any influence on the political order in East Asia.

Of course there were new forces on the horizon, like the communist Russia on the Asian continent at whose hands the Japanese army had tasted its first defeat, and the newly acclaimed great power of the United States which was expected to expand its prominence to the Western shores of the Pacific. Nevertheless theirs was a threat that had not yet taken any tangible form and thus the vacuum was sustained which enabled Sugimori to expose his grand designs without much restriction. During this period Sugimori did mention the 'white man's racial instinct to rule the whole world' and a pending 'international crisis' every once in a while, but especially this latter term is used so often by so many authors, by some even continuously, that one has to make some differentiation.¹⁵⁵ Yoshino Sakuzō at the beginning of the year 1921 could not detect any enemy in Japan's vicinity and accordingly threw himself headlong into the disarmament movement. Sugimori, for his part, was neither aware of any concrete threat and also advocated drastic arms retrenchments, especially of the army. He moreover concluded that Japan's internal situation was far more threatening than 'the international crisis' and therefore it should first and foremost take on its philosophical deficit in order to prepare itself for a far more fundamental 'war of thought'.¹⁵⁶ However, not long afterwards the margin to leisurely concentrate on this task was largely diminished by the arrival of the United States on the central stage of the East Asian theatre by means of the Washington Conference.

155 For an analysis of Japanese (almost constant) perceptions of international crisis, see Hata Ikuhiko, *Taihei'yō kokusai kankeishi – Nichi-Bei oyobi Nichi-Ro kiki no keifu, 1900-1935*, Fukumura Shuppan, 1972 and Kindai Nihon Kenkyūkai, ed., *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyū 7: Nihon gaikō no kiki ninshiki*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1985.

156 'Kyōhei ijō no kokusaku'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.3: p.1; 'Kakumei no yūtō daiyōka'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.7: pp.38-39. Somewhat later, in March 1922, Sugimori specifically mentioned that Russia could no longer function as Japan's hypothetical enemy and called for a drastic reduction of the size of Japan's ground forces. 'Kyōhei no yūtō daiyōryoku ga hitsuyō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: pp.92-93.

4 SUGIMORI AND THE WASHINGTON IMPACT; 1921-1923

4.1 The Washington Conference

Sugimori had mixed feelings about the Washington Conference. Since the conference dealt with the three issues of naval disarmament, peacekeeping in the Pacific, and harmonization of the various interests in 'the Far East' (read: China) - the distinction being emphasized by three separate treaties each of which had a different number of participants - Sugimori's ambivalence was nothing but the logical result of the fact that he supported the Five Power Treaty on naval disarmament but harboured strong reservations about the Nine Power Treaty on China.

When the news of the American invitation to Japan to participate in the conference became known, Sugimori was not one of those who spoke of a national disaster. He was generally optimistic, saying that his country had nothing to fear and that it should preferably consider the conference as an opportunity to revive itself.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, a multilateral endeavour to bring about disarmament fitted smoothly into Sugimori's cosmopolitanist scheme towards a better world where there would only be competition for moral, cultural and economic power. Although he was somewhat disappointed by the fact that the proposal for arms reduction had been motivated mainly by economic necessity, he hoped that at a later stage the process would be reinforced by conceptions of cultural and moral necessity in order to attain a total abolition of arms. For the moment, in the imperfect situation that a country could not yet do completely without military power, he advocated that one should show the intention to diminish armaments below the necessary minimum and accordingly opted to halve the number of Japan's army divisions.¹⁵⁸ Sugimori did not mind either that the United States had taken the initiative towards disarmament away from the League of Nations. This also proves that, although he used to emphasize the need for a multilateral body of government in the next, international stage of society, he still held no strong sympathy for the League. Besides, he thought it irrational to expect a Republican-led United States to join the League of Nations, so if arms reduction talks organized by the League did not make progress because of American absence, there was nothing else to be done than to find another form.¹⁵⁹

As a matter of fact, Sugimori was quite favourably impressed by the American disarmament initiative which he considered proof of its peaceful intentions. Therefore, he was inclined to accept the ratio of 6:10:10 of Japanese naval power versus the United States and England as an objective evaluation of Japan's economic power at the time. This, however, did not imply that he considered the ratio sufficient to procure Japan's safety. He was aware that national defence would only be secure with complete international disarmament and that the Five Power Treaty on naval arms reduction was absolutely no guarantee that the United States and England would not jointly turn against Japan.¹⁶⁰ Nonetheless, he was willing to endure this state of insecurity because the United States, the only serious threat to Japan, had shown itself to be

157 'Peruri sairai ka'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.8: p.1; 'Waga kuni no ichi'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.8: p.29.

158 'Kokusai haitō no zenya'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.10: p.1; 'Kyōhei no yūtō daiyōryoku ga hitsuyō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.3: pp.92-94.

159 'Kafukaigi shuppatsu no kōka'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.10: p.18.

160 *Ibid.*: pp.18-19; 'Kokusai mugunbi to seisan rikkoku e'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.2: pp.86-87; 'Shukyakukan no Nihon to kokusai gensei'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.3: pp.14-15.

different from all preceding great strong powers. Although Sugimori agreed with Lenin and Russell that the country under the Republican Party was fundamentally imperialist, he acknowledged the need to specify American imperialism. Since it bore no grudge against a former oppressor, he maintained, American nationalism was comparatively idealist and internationalist in character, which was evident from the fact that, although it was the strongest power, the United States had not chosen to use this against other countries but had instead proposed arms reductions at the Washington Conference. This convinced Sugimori that the country had no territorial ambitions in Africa and Asia and would merely use its economic hegemony to carry out economic imperialism.¹⁶¹

On the other hand, he noticed, it was precisely this economic imperialism which had directed the United States to China and which had put the latter country, under the veil of ‘The Far East Issue’, on the agenda of the Washington Conference. Sugimori was furious. He was strongly opposed to the discussion of affairs concerning the Far East as a condition for an agreement on arms reduction and even insinuated that the Hara Cabinet should not have accepted the invitation to this dual conference.¹⁶² The Far East, he defined, “consists of China, Siberia and Japan. Yet it is mainly made up of the latter, because Japan is the sole possessor of a national personality (*kokuminsei*) in the Far East”. The fact that the United States, an outsider, had dared to convene a conference on the Far East amounted to an act of humiliation towards Japan. Sugimori even called it a ‘breach of international justice’, although he regrettably did not bother to explain how he interpreted the concept of ‘international justice’.¹⁶³ However, what he made clear was that he could not give his consent to a situation in which the United States would play a leading role in matters concerning China. For it was this region he had branded as Japan’s lifeline on its road to international superiority, the only means to secure national survival. The following remark from November 1921 is illuminating:

We must call for international attention to the fact that the autonomy of Asia and Japan’s right to live are essential preconditions for the reduction of arms.¹⁶⁴

It is not difficult to see that Sugimori treated ‘the autonomy of Asia’, or less euphemistically, a non-Western dominated China, and ‘Japan’s right to live’ as an inextricably bonded pair. Therefore, just as he accused the United States of having made the settlement of ‘the Far Eastern question’ into a precondition for a treaty on disarmament, Sugimori made Japan’s hegemony in the Far East into a precondition for his support of the Washington Treaties.

161 ‘Kokuminshugi no Shina, Indo oyobi Amerika’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.6: pp.16-18.

162 ‘Kafukaigi shuppatsu no kōka’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.10: pp.17-18; ‘Haku-ō- kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku’. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: p.17; ‘Kokusai mugunbi to seisan rikokoku e’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.2: pp.85-86.

163 ‘Kafukaigi shuppatsu no kōka’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.10: pp.17-18; ‘Haku-ō- kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku’. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: p.24. In the light of Sugimori’s definition of the Far East, it is interesting to see that he did not pay any attention to the positions of China and Russia towards the Washington Conference, the former more of an issue to be discussed than a participant itself and the latter not even invited.

164 ‘Waga shisetsu no ichiyōken’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.11: p.1.

4.2 The Way Out: The East Asian Large Autonomous Region

In the eyes of many Japanese commentators the problem the Far East faced at the beginning of the 1920s, symbolised by ‘the outrage’ that the region had become an issue to be discussed and decided upon at a conference organised at a place so far west as the American capital of Washington, was clear: the United States was more and more expanding its influence in the region and was obviously reaching out towards China, the central stage of Japanese economic and military expansionist ambitions ever since ‘the settlement of the Korean issue’ in 1905. Moreover, China was hardly autonomous, even to the extent that there were continuous calls for the international management of the country, and it completely lacked the power to withstand outside pressure. However, from the point of view of Sugimori (and the majority of Japanese commentators), it was not so much China itself but rather Japan that would be most affected by this situation. He considered Chinese autonomy essential for Japan’s survival and thus emphasised that the United States had to stay out of China and, on the contrary (and quite contradictory to the notion of Chinese autonomy), Japan had to increase both its involvement and presence on the Chinese mainland.¹⁶⁵ Yet it is obvious that this unadorned *honno* (true intention) line of argument did not contain many elements to convince those outside Japan’s borders. Of course Sugimori was aware of this problem as well and he admonished that “Our particularistic national objectives should firmly stand on international universalist goals”.¹⁶⁶ The need to keep the United States out of China and Japan in China had to be positioned within an acceptable universal framework. The solution Sugimori came up with was the concept of a ‘regional bloc’, situated at an intermediate stage within the universal trend towards increasing international cooperation.

Although Sugimori had briefly touched upon the subject before,¹⁶⁷ it was the invitation to the Washington Conference that formed the impetus to elaborate on it seriously and bring it to fruition. Regrettably, he explained, world unification was at present still unfeasible, but this did not mean that man inevitably had to come to a halt within the confinement of the nation-state. Man could proceed and thus, since a possibility in Sugimori’s vocabulary automatically implied an obligation, man had to proceed to a higher level of cooperation, namely the large autonomous region (*dai-jichiku*), which he characterised as a pragmatic compromise between the still strong forces of nationalism and the long-term goal of cosmopolitanism. As already discussed Sugimori regarded man as the essence, and the state as nothing but an instrument, a historical phase which in the case of Japan had come into being with the abolition of feudal domains and the establishment of the centrally ruled prefectures (*haihan chiken*) of 1871. Now, in the late summer of 1921, the time had come for the next logical step, the abolishment of the nation-state: “The present age demands that we create the three large autonomous entities of Greater America, Greater Europe and Greater Asia”. This division, Sugimori explained, was based on rational considerations of race, geography and history.¹⁶⁸ Greater America would consist of the United

165 ‘Waga kuni no ichi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.9: pp.27-28; ‘Shina no kokusaikanri-ron’. *Kaizō*, 1921.10: pp.254-55; ‘Nihonjin no seizonken’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.93S.

166 ‘Peruri sairai ka’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.8: p.1.

167 ‘Kōwa kaigi to jinkakushugi nōryokushugi ni yoru sekai no kaizō’. *Kaizō*, 1919.6: pp.22-23.

168 ‘Kokunaiteki oyobi kokusaiteki jichiku kaisei no junbi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.9: p.1; ‘Amerika tai sekai mondai-kan’ *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.6: p.83. Although a tripartite division of the world was not uncommon in

States, Canada, and the Middle and South American countries. Greater Europe did not only encompass the various European countries but also included the whole African continent, although Sugimori more often than not forgot to mention this ‘appendix’ altogether. Greater Asia would comprise Japan, China, Siberia, and “some South Asian regions” (*tashō no Nan-A chihō*).¹⁶⁹ According to Sugimori, most progress in the field of regional unification had been made on the American continent. He maintained that the United States and the various Latin American republics shared a grand political ideal and had already succeeded in creating an organisational and operational framework by means of the Pan-American Union and the Pan-American Conferences. In contrast the Pan-European movement was still premature since the various nations could not overcome their minor differences. Nevertheless Sugimori perceived a glimpse of an endeavour towards a united Europe in the form of the Genoa Conference in the spring of 1922, despite the fact that the conference turned out to be a complete failure.¹⁷⁰ Yet the most problematic region was Asia, where a Pan-Asian movement was still ‘all but non-existent, mainly because of Sino-Japanese friction’. He admonished his country that it should give everything for the good regionalist cause. He even urged it to turn itself around, away from the United States towards the Chinese continent so that the Japan Sea coast would become the front of Japan (*omote Nihon*), in the hope that the Japanese could form ‘an international autonomous region’ with China by 1950.¹⁷¹

When we consider Sugimori’s previous ideas on internationalisation it should come as no surprise that the admonitions to establish a form of regional cooperation were invariably aimed at his own country. A social Darwinist in heart and soul, he always thought in terms of hierarchy and therefore it was a matter of course to him that the large autonomous region be led by one superior, ruling nation, which shouldered the heavy responsibility of bringing the whole thing about. Identical to Japanese previous concepts like ‘*Tō-A Monrō-shugi*’ (a Monroe Doctrine for East Asia) or ‘*Kyoku-Tō Monrō-shugi*’ (a Monroe Doctrine for the Far East) and later concepts like ‘*gozoku kyōwa*’ (Harmony between the five ethnic groups), the ‘*Tō-A kyōdōtai*’ (East Asian Community) and the ‘*Dai Tō-A kyōeiken*’ (Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere), harmony within the ‘large autonomous region’ did not imply equality amongst the various Asian nations.¹⁷² In the case of Greater America it was obvious that the United States had already

those days, it seems that Sugimori borrowed these ‘rational considerations’ specifically from the writings – most likely the work *The International Mind* dating from 1913 - by Nicholas Murray Butler (1862-1947). Butler was a former professor of philosophy at Columbia University, who at the time functioned as this university’s president (1902-45), later served as the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (1925-45), and was to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 for his work on behalf of disarmament and international peace.

169 ‘Nihonjin no seizonken’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.94. Whether Russia belonged to Europe or not was not always clear from Sugimori’s somewhat inconsistent writings, yet most of all one wonders what was to happen to such ignored entities like the Middle East, India, and Australia as a result of his classification. Probably he did not want to undermine his argument, which after all was not anti-colonialist and was aimed merely at a Sino-Japanese alliance, by directing too much attention to the contradictory nature of European rule over Asian territory.

170 ‘Bei shinkō! Ō saikō!! Sore kara?’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.3: p.1; ‘Kokuminshugi no Shina, Indo oyobi Amerika’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.6: p.19; ‘Pan Amerikan Yunyan wo kotohogu’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1923.4: p.1.

171 ‘Uragerubeki Nihon’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.8: p.1; ‘Nichi-Ro kankei no tōrai’. *Taiyō*, 1923.4: p.64.

172 ‘Nihonjin no seizonken’.: p.94. For the ethnic hierarchy, with the Japanese of course on top, built into the concept of *gozoku kyōwa* in Manchukuo, see Louise Young, ‘Imagined Empire: The Cultural

assumed the role of leader and unificator of the region. Many contemporary political commentators protested vehemently against the ‘large political and economic autonomous entity’ the country was developing on the American continent under the Monroe doctrine, on the grounds that it was going against the universalist trend of the day. Conversely, Sugimori considered ‘*monrō-shugi*’ a reflection of that same universalist trend. Greater America, he explained, was a sphere of substantial common interests created by the culturally superior nation of the region, the United States, and he urged Europe and Asia to take the healthy ambition of the leader of the Americas as an example.¹⁷³ Whereas Sugimori was not sure who to assign the honourable task of the unification of Europe, designating successively Germany, England, and the Soviet Union apparently according to his mood of the day,¹⁷⁴ this problem did not arise in the case of Asia. Sugimori’s ‘Greater Asia’ was not much more than an euphemism for a working alliance between the Japanese empire and China. He did not leave any doubt that of the two countries “Japan is the only Asian nation with the power of autonomy. China is half-dependent in outlook, thanks to the good services of Japan, yet dependent in substance and will fall under white hegemony once Japan falls away.”¹⁷⁵ Thus there could not be any doubt that it was Japan that had to take the heavy responsibility of unifying Asia.

In fact, he explained, Japan had already enjoyed the opportunity to do so ever since its victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Yet whereas it should have cooperated with the neighbouring Korean, Chinese and Siberian nations and should have formed a large-scale political and economic autonomous entity, after 1905 Japan had instead become overly imperialistic and expansionistic. According to Sugimori mankind’s *raison d’être* was the development of individuality and, moreover, culture. On the basis of this culturalist theory he pointed out that the *faits accomplis* created by Japan’s imperialism did not have sufficient value to create the nucleus for a new Asiatic society. It was in the fields of culture and morality where Japan had proven lacking and where the country still had to exert itself in order to attain the credentials, in the sense of cultural and moral superiority, to realise friendly cooperation with its neighbours, and with the other regions.¹⁷⁶ In this context, he added elaborately, the Japanese should try to use their militaristic gains from the past to a good end, as a basis upon which to build the new large autonomous region of Greater Asia. Therefore he did not acknowledge any need for giving up Japanese rights and interests in South Manchuria and Inner Mongolia on behalf of the powers assembled at the Washington Conference. On the contrary, such an act could only be counter-productive when judged by the criterion of the universal trend of internationalisation,

Construction of Manchukuo’, in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds, *The Japanese Wartime Empire*, Princeton University Press, 1996: pp.92-3. The discriminatory content of the seemingly egalitarian ideology of the *Dai Tō-A kyōeiken* is sorely illustrated by the bitter practice of the so-called ‘comfort women’ in China, where the price for a Japanese girl was 2 yen, for a Korean 1,5 yen and for a Chinese 1 yen. See George Hicks, ‘The “Comfort Women”’ in *The Japanese Wartime Empire*: p.318.

173 ‘Waga kuni no ichi’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.9: p.28; ‘Shukyakukan no Nihon to kokusai gensei’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.3: pp.16-17.

174 ‘Kokuryoku to kokui’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.2: p.14; ‘Bei shinkō! Ō saikō!! Sore kara?’ : p.1; ‘Shukyakukan no Nihon to kokusai gensei’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.3: pp.16-17; ‘Pan Amerikan Yunyan wo kotohogu’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1923.4: p.1.

175 ‘Nihonjin no seizonken’: p.92.

176 *Ibid.*: pp.91, 95; ‘Jinkō mondai no shinjōshiki’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.8: p.24.

and he demanded that the other powers recognised this as well.¹⁷⁷

4.3 Asian Inferiority

Sugimori's conception of a world divided into three large autonomous regions, on the basis of the factors race, geographical location and common history, functioned as an argument to keep the United States out of China, to establish Japanese leadership over the country instead, and to retain Japan's possessions, rights and interests in Manchuria. Like many contemporaries, he used 'race' as one of the excuses to disqualify the United States and to qualify Japan as the dominant power in East Asia. However, his particularist argument was not based on Asian superiority. The 'inferiority of the yellow race' was too obvious for Sugimori to enable him to take up the Asianist line of argument of the superiority of Oriental civilisation, culture and morality, which otherwise would have fitted best in his social Darwinist theories on human competition and progress. First of all, he completely rejected the notion of a separate Eastern civilisation. He thought the idea of separate Eastern and Western civilisations (*Tōzai bunmeiron*) complete nonsense; there was but one universal civilisation. Accordingly the difference between Eastern and Western civilisation was not one of sort but of degree. To be more precise, it was nothing but the contrast between the superior (*yūnō*) Western man and the inferior (*retsunō*) Eastern man.¹⁷⁸ Sugimori went even further by saying that the cultures of the yellow and the black man were not worth the name of culture because they were cultures of non-beings. They only existed in a biological sense; from the point of view of culturalism (*bunkashugi*) and its two components of production and creation they were non-existent. He maintained that Eastern civilisation or culture as reflected in Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Hinduism and Mohammedism lacked any scientific basis and thus had not led to freedom but to paralysis. As a result the Asian nations now no longer were in command of even the most basic condition to achieve 'progress through creation'; they had lost their autonomy and their right to live had been annexed within the right to live of the white nations.¹⁷⁹

So much for Asia, how about Japan. Since it was the only non-white nation which had upheld its autonomy, Sugimori designated Japan as the champion and natural leader of Asia. However, this could not hide the fact that, when compared to Europe and the United States, he considered it 'very weak and primitive'. At the time of the Washington Conference he warned his countrymen not to place any belief in the slogan that Japan had become the third nation in the world. Instead, the fact that Japan had been summoned all the way to Washington to talk on matters concerning the Far East was in his eyes a truer reflection of Japan's international position. Sugimori emphasised that in the new international society (*kokusaiteki shakai*) the only thing that

177 'Kokunaiteki oyobi kokusaiteki jichiku kansei no junbi'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.9: p.1; 'Kafu kaigi shuppatsu no kōka'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.10: pp.20-21.

178 'Kafu kaigi shuppatsu no kōka'.: pp.19-20; 'Hakujin igai no jinrui no jijo wo nozomu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.5: pp.19-20. The title of an article in the January 1931 issue of the journal *Sokoku*, 'Tōzai bunmeiron igi ari' (I object to the idea of separate Eastern and Western civilisations), is equally telling.

179 Sugimori Kōjirō, *The Principles of the Moral Empire*, University of London Press, 1917: p.56; 'Bunkashugi no kokusaiteki senden'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.1: p.1; 'Hakujin igai no jinrui no jijo wo nozomu'.: pp.10-11, 15; 'Nihonjin no seizonken'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.93.

counted was a nation's productive power. In this sense Japan's ranking was extremely insecure since it not only lacked 'substance' like oil, coal, iron and cotton, but also 'qualities' like scientific knowledge, technological know-how and management skills.¹⁸⁰ The only solution, he pointed out, was for Japan to strive to become 'a scientific producer', yet things did not look very hopeful as Japan had only just partly acquired the status of a scientific consumer. Therefore it was only natural for Sugimori to suggest that whereas the large autonomous regions of Greater America and Greater Europe would compete with each other, the Japan-led Greater Asia would merely be able to cooperate with them.¹⁸¹

However, there were quite a few discrepancies between Sugimori's radical Darwinist theories and his idea of an Asian large-scale autonomous region. If one considered it perfectly acceptable that the East Asian nations vanish before the superior Japan for the sake of human progress, the logical conclusion of the recognition of Western superiority would ultimately be that one also had to accept the obliteration of Asia as a specific, autonomous entity before Europe and America for the same reason. Sugimori was not blind to this deduction:

The more men the better. This is true in the case of an ethnic nation, as it is in the case of one country and in the case of global society. However, one essential precondition is that these 'men' are men in a moral and civilisational sense. (...) Only those men who are fit for cooperation by means of division of labour are considered men. (...) At present, and even more so in the future, the total society in terms of the scope of this cooperation is not national but international. Therefore, if the population of a certain country is only fit for cooperation within its limited national borders but does not possess the character and wisdom to the extent that it is fit for the wide and free cooperation on an international level, or rather on a global level, than this population from the viewpoint of global human society has no reason to exist.¹⁸²

In Sugimori's opinion the principle of the survival of the fittest in his day was all about production, and without productive power (and the accompanying high moral standard) in order to cooperate (read: compete) on an international level Japan lacked any right to exist.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, Sugimori was not a prophet of doom but a '*Kulturkritiker*'. His task was not to predict the imminent demise of the Japanese nation, and, accordingly, it would be better to interpret sporadic remarks like the citation above as exhortations to his countrymen to be alert. Instead it was his task to come up with a hopeful not-too-distant future on this planet, and so he did. What he presented were fundamental universal arguments why Asia should be granted respite of execution with the prospect of cancellation.

His first argument was the problem of feeding mankind. He analysed that the approach to

180 'Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku'. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: p.18; 'Hakujin igai no jinrui no jijo wo nozomu': p.10.

181 'Nihonjin no seizonken'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.94; 'Hakujin igai no jinrui no jijo wo nozomu': pp.10-11.

182 'Jinkō mondai no shinjōshiki'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.8: pp.25-26.

183 'Kokuryoku to kokui'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.2: pp.15-18; 'Hakujin igai no jinrui no jijo wo nozomu': p.10.

this problem had to be twofold, from both the supply side and the demand side. Not only should all territory of the world be opened to the economic process of division of labour, the growth of the world population had to be stopped as well. According to Sugimori, the birth rate in the white countries was considerably lower than in the non-white countries. In this sense, he pointed out, non-cultural nations were a burden to the whole of humanity. If only these nations would become human in a culturalist sense the birth rate would automatically decrease.¹⁸⁴

Secondly, Sugimori turned to his favourite argument of the progress of human culture and morality. He argued that although there was no way to deny that the white race was ruling this world morally, culturally, economically, politically and militarily, like many preceding civilisations the white nations were gradually sinking away in their vain dream of being the chosen people. In order to prevent the decay of the white race, the yellow and the black races had to be uplifted and had to partake in the competition in creation. Since such a development would be beneficial not merely to Europe and America but also to the whole of mankind, it was the moral obligation of modern man to strive to bring the non-white to the same level as the white.¹⁸⁵

These two arguments tell us why Asia had to be developed instead of obliterated, but they do not yet tell us why the superior white should not undertake this moral task. When one considers that Sugimori thought the European invasion of Asia not evil but inevitable in the light of Asia's shameless moral deficit and approved of the Western hegemony over Asia as legitimate, this question urges itself upon us more and more.¹⁸⁶ Although Sugimori sporadically referred to the fact that white oppression of the non-white was no longer morally acceptable in the postwar era, his main argument was of a different nature. He started out by expressing his gratitude to the superior white for their cultural achievements and their involvement in Asia, but went on to say that in the light of the aforementioned global problems, it had become imperative that the non-white nations should also rise (again) as noble human beings (*takaki jinrui*).¹⁸⁷ Now, in Sugimori's pyramid of moral behaviour - consisting of a basis of autonomy, a middle level of responsibility, and a top of creativity - to achieve such progress meant that first and foremost attention had to be directed to the basic condition of autonomy:

Nations that do not have political autonomy ultimately lose the power to contribute to world culture. (...) Political independence is a precondition to the universal human goal to stop the growth of the world population.¹⁸⁸

However, and here we come to the crux of Sugimori's argument, he emphasised that real autonomy could only be realised by means of self-help. The subsequent moral stages of responsibility and creativity, the latter being the supreme level on which one for the first time

184 'Nihonjin no seizonken'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: pp.92-93; 'Jinkō mondai no shinjōshiki'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.8: p.26.

185 'Nihonjin no seizonken'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: pp.92-93; 'Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku'. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: p.19.

186 'Waga kuni no ichi'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.9: p.26; 'Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku'. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: pp.20-21; 'Bei shinkō! Ō saikō!! Sore kara?'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.3: p.1; 'Shukyakukan no Nihon to kokusai gensei'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.3: p.15.

187 'Nihonjin no seizonken'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: pp.92-93; 'Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku'. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: pp.20-21.

188 'Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku'. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: p.26.

could actively contribute to human culture, could only be passed successfully if one could stand on a stable, self-realised, indigenous basis of autonomy. He thus did not regard Asia as the ‘white man’s burden’. On the contrary, “the Asian people themselves have the responsibility towards the white to increase their power of autonomy”.¹⁸⁹ The liberation of the Asian nations, Sugimori concluded, would be beneficial to the white so there were no grounds for them to object, and for the autonomy to be genuine they were not to interfere, not even in a positive sense. All they had to do was to create the framework for the Asian autonomy to come into being, that is, to acquiesce in a temporary pause in the international struggle for survival on the Asian front. Some form of protectionism had to be applied to the yellow man and the black man so they could cultivate their power of autonomy to the level at which they would be able to compete with the white man and contribute to the progress of human culture.¹⁹⁰

Self-help, the keyword in our present development aid policies, was thus used by Sugimori in the 1920s to keep the United States out of Asia. Yet the same did not apply to Japan. Sugimori was adamant that the Asian race had to practise self-help, using such slogans as ‘self-help of the non-white’ (*hakujin igai no jinrui no jijo*) and ‘Asian self-rule’ (*Ajia jichi*), but he did not say that each Asian country had to take care of itself. In short, it came down to the proposition that, in sharp contrast to the Western powers, Japan as a non-white Asian nation was fully entitled to help its ailing neighbours. Moreover, since the country was the only non-white nation that upheld its international autonomy and responsibility, it was even morally obliged to do so:

Japan stands between the developed and the underdeveloped and must be determined to advance on both sides.¹⁹¹

Whereas further expansion of Western influence in Asia was rejected on the grounds that it ran contrary to the principle of self-help, Sugimori argued that “the expansion of Japan’s influence amongst the yellow and the black is synonymous with the creation of international autonomy and responsibility amongst them”. He thus saw a justified reason why Japan should resist Western criticism and endeavours to cut pieces off its position:

Our expansion into China and Siberia should be seen in the light of universal humanity (*sekai jindō*), not solely through the eyes of the white man.¹⁹²

189 ‘Nihonjin no seizonken’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.9: p.93; ‘Kafu kaigi shuppatsu no kōka’. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.10: p.20.

190 ‘Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku’. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: p.21.

191 ‘Ajia jichi no sekaiteki hitsuyō’. *Tōyō*, 1922.3: p.1.

192 ‘Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku’. *Kaizō*, 1921.11: p.22.

4.4 Summary: A Sino-Japanese Alliance under the Guise of Asian Autonomy

The social Darwinist ceasefire was characterised by Sugimori as Asia's last opportunity to attain autonomy through self-help. However, as touched upon before and as will be clear from the following rhetoric, his main aim was to establish a Sino-Japanese alliance.

China and Japan must become independent nations with international character and must work together for the realisation of Asian autonomy. If China stands on its own feet and Japan backs China up, they can purify and beautify with a moral filter the American and European forces that penetrate Asia. It is essential for the independence of Asia that China and Japan join and become one organised social body (*shakaitai*), so as to increase the efficiency with which the Asians can serve the world (*kokusai hōkō*).¹⁹³

In fact, at the time of Sugimori's admonition Sino-Japanese negotiations were being conducted behind the scenes of the Washington Conference, resulting in the Treaty on the Solution of the Pending Issue of Shantung of February 1922. By the beginning of the following year all Japanese troops had been withdrawn and the Shantung Railway had been restored to the Chinese, thus after eight years ending the Japanese occupation of the peninsula. Although a major obstacle to the establishment of cordial Sino-Japanese relations had been taken out of the way, Sugimori had to admit that 'non-white self-help' was not making any headway in Asia. As he had complained on previous occasions, "racial awareness seems to work for the white man but not for the Asian nations", and the results of the Washington Conference did not seem to make any significant change in this situation. Although he thought there were ample grounds for a racist movement, he invariably had to admit that Asianism as such still did not seem feasible because of the lack of solidarity between the various non-white nations.¹⁹⁴

One cannot help noticing that Sugimori did not mention the fact that the China he called upon was anything but a unified country at the time and thus ignored that, even if the Chinese had been willing to join his schemes, the continuing internal turmoil forced them to keep all their attention within the national borders. Nonetheless, in 1923 Sugimori, at his wits' end how to reach out to the Chinese, turned to the newly established Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the request to function as a go-between on behalf of the rather estranged Asian wedding partners.¹⁹⁵ Although one cannot deny that Russia's qualifications as an Asian nation were rather ambiguous, at the time the country had considerable influence on the nationalist forces in the

193 Ibid: pp.27-28.

194 'Waga kuni no ichi'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1921.9: p.28; 'Hakujin igai no jinrui no jijo wo nozomu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1922.5: pp.17-18.

195 The first example of Sugimori paying serious attention to Russia as a potential ally seems to be 'Mosukuwa oyobi zen-Ro no ekiyū to natte keizaiteki kyōryoku wo kaishi seyo'. *Kaizō*, 1922.10: pp.187-88. Up until 1925 he did not lose the country out of sight, probably partly as a result of the negotiations concerning the restoration of Russo-Japanese relations. However, after the Soviet-Japanese agreement of January 1925 his attention quickly fades and by the end of the 1920s the country mainly functions as a negative example of stagnation and lack of creativity.

South of China, the side in the Chinese civil war most Japanese intellectuals supported. Sugimori joined the chorus in favour of the restoration of official diplomatic relations between Japan and the now communist Russia, which was especially strong in the pages of his major outlet, the *Tōhō Jiron* of Nakano Seigō. However, in contrast to his friend and other fervent supporters of a Russo-Japanese alliance such as Gotō Shinpei, Sugimori was not so much interested in the Russians as a counterbalance against the Anglo-Saxons. He admitted openly that his support was prompted by the awareness that Russo-Japanese cooperation was an inevitable precondition for a Sino-Japanese alliance.¹⁹⁶ In his eyes Soviet Russia was no more than an instrument to this end.

196 'Nichi-Ro kankei no tōrai'. *Taiyō*, 1923.4: p.64; 'Kokusai yūrenshugi no ichi-chakushu'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1923.6: p.22. The latter article and a contribution by Ōyama Ikuo, both originally from *Tōhō Jiron*'s special issue on 'the Russo-Japanese question', were the same month published together as a separate leaflet by the Tōhō Jironsha under the title of *Roshia shōnin-ron* (Recognize the Soviet Union).

5 CRISIS; 1924-1932

5.1 The American Challenge

Although the unmistakably anti-Japanese exclusion clause of the Immigration Act that was enacted in the United States Congress in May 1924 was not considered to be of direct consequence to American-Japanese diplomatic relations by the Japanese authorities and was accordingly ignored as far as possible, it nonetheless had a very direct psychological influence on the Japanese nation. In the media the practical consequences of the legislation did not receive much attention, but it was made very clear that there was but one interpretation: the legislation amounted to nothing less than a humiliation of the Japanese nation by the hostile United States. Sugimori was no exception. Although he could not refrain from pointing out that there was no future in the emigration of Japanese towards ‘the Greater American large autonomous region’, thus including the emigration to Central and South America, his interpretation of the Immigration Act was not very different. On the one hand he blamed the Hara and Takahashi cabinets with the argument that the current anti-Japanese immigration law was nothing but the logical outcome of Japan’s weak-minded, humiliating unconditional participation in the Washington Conference. Yet, more importantly, he also placed it within a development on the international scene he had perceived since the American participation in the First World War: the American design to dominate the Pacific Rim. With hindsight he was now more inclined to characterise the Five Power Treaty on Naval Arms Limitation as ‘a compulsory enactment of a 20 to 6 ratio’. All the United States had done this time was to reap the profits of earlier successes. They had merely seized the first opportunity to abrogate the gentleman’s agreement on Japanese immigration of a former era, at a moment when Japan no longer possessed a strong navy, had no foreign ally to rely upon anymore, and was ailing from the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake.¹⁹⁷

I will not go into a discussion whether Sugimori was very realistic in lumping together the American internal debate on foreign immigrants with strategic issues.¹⁹⁸ Suffice it to say that as a result of the unfriendly American measure, Sugimori, like many other Japanese, for the first time came to hold a feeling of imminent international crisis in combination with a strong sense of international isolation.¹⁹⁹ Once again he saw himself forced to adjust his theories on nationalism, internationalism and regionalism. The argument that a comparatively weak Asian large autonomous region could nonetheless endure because of Western considerations towards the long-term goal of the development of the whole of mankind seemed no longer valid. Inevitably his tone became less idealistic. The future contribution of Asia to the world was no longer mentioned and all emphasis now came to lie with the pressing issue of Japan’s subsistence.

Japan on the Defence: Looking for a Sino-Japanese Alliance

197 ‘Nishi, Roshia, higashi, Beikoku to no kokkōzengosaku – Daini hōkensei kara no shinkateki yakudatsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.6: pp.60-61.

198 For recent studies on the enactment and the movement to modify the 1924 Immigration Act, see Minohara Toshihiro, *Hai-Nichi iminhō to Nichi-Bei kankei*, Iwanami Shoten, 2002 and Izumi Horibe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice - Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act*, Stanford University Press, 2001.

199 ‘Katō naikaku ni taisuru hihan to kibō’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.7: pp.77-78.

Sugimori would probably have preferred to sever all ties with the United States after its humiliation of his country. However, he did not support the call for a total boycott of American products, a measure that would have brought about an immediate severance of the bilateral relations. It would be self-destructive not to cooperate with the United States as long as Japan was still dependent on the country.²⁰⁰ Yet Sugimori no longer opted for a long-term policy of international competition and cooperation with the West; his aim now was to become completely economically independent from both the United States and the British colonies, and in this sense he had distinctly turned anti-Western.

Like many other commentators who were anxious about the future of their motherland, Sugimori emphasised the element of self-sufficiency in the field of natural resources as most important to fulfil Japan's self-protection and self-development:

The labouring, technological, scientific, managing, capital, and political powers of a nation that is not capable of independence in the field of natural resources add up to nothing but national powerlessness. That is because such a nation contains the weakness that it is impotent internationally and might starve to death. As long as the existence of multiple autonomous states and international peace are necessary, the ability to be independent in the field of natural resources is an element that each country should be endowed with. Therefore, Japan must build such relations with China and Russia so that it to a certain level can obtain and use Chinese and Siberian natural resources.²⁰¹

The fact remains however that an increase of independence from the United States would automatically lead to a proportional increase in dependence on China (and Russia). Sugimori acknowledged as much when he said that "it is an economic fact that Japan is, and in the future always will be, dependent on Chinese raw materials" and that "a Japan estranged and isolated from China is powerless".²⁰² Nonetheless, these statements were rather matter-of-fact and were seldom accompanied by a strong feeling of crisis. One gets the impression that Sugimori, in spite of his many references to the American encroachment upon East Asia, did not yet consider the whole matter too problematic at the time, probably because Japanese dominance in the region was still more or less in its place. Thus he merely justified a Sino-Japanese alliance by means of his usual argument of the universal trend towards large autonomous regions, making no mention of an emergency situation. However, all the accompanying rhetorical decoration of yore had been stripped down to the bone, even Sugimori's favourite elements of culture and morality were ignored, leaving not much more than the down-to-earth element of geographical proximity:

Mingling with the distant and oppressing the near go against the international

200 'Tai-Bei chifun no hōhō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.8: p.81; 'Nichi-Ro kaikō no keizaiteki, gaikōteki, shisōteki igi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.4: p.120.

201 'Nichi-Ro kaikō no keizaiteki, gaikōteki, shisōteki igi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.4: p.117.

202 'Nishi, Roshia, higashi, Beikoku to no kokkōzengosaku – Daini hōkensei kara no shinkateki yakudatsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.6: pp.61-62; 'Nihon no jiko hozon ga hitsuyō to suru gensokuteki hōhō'. *Kaizō*, 1924.6: pp.18-20.

needs of the modern age, which proscribe the economic and political union (*danketsu*) of plural adjacent countries.²⁰³

That was the very simple reason why the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had gone through a process of natural decay, ultimately leading to its abolition, and a new alliance with China (and Russia) would come into effect.

Appeasement of the Chinese

Although Sugimori still considered Japan's position in East Asia relatively secure within its hierarchical relation with its neighbours, something had changed in the sense that he had become aware of the need to appease the Chinese. This was probably the logical outcome of his stronger emphasis on a direct Sino-Japanese alliance, in which Japan in spite of its superiority was the dependent party. Moreover, although boycotts directed against Japan had died down in the wake of the Great Kanto Earthquake, the rigorous and protracted actions against British products as a result of the May 30th Incident of 1925 showed that in case the wrath of the Chinese would turn against Japan once more, the damage would be distinctively more severe than at the time of the 1923 boycott.²⁰⁴ Sino-Japanese friction was no longer slighted as mainly a Chinese problem, which could be settled through the good offices of the Soviet Union. Because of its dependence Japan was the party that had to act. It had to wake up to the fact that it needed China as a friend in order to obtain the necessary natural resources.²⁰⁵ It is also interesting to see, now that he perceived the United States more and more as Japan's enemy, how Sugimori's rhetoric had become rather particularist and anti-Western:

It is true that Japan up to now has blindly followed Europe and the United States, has been used by them and has imitated them in the partition of China. It even seems as if the Japanese strive for the vain glory of being the white among the yellow race. We, who put our hopes in Japan's future, have to reflect upon our past and present mistakes. Japan has too closely imitated European and American imperialism, and has too easily echoed European and American anti-imperialist criticism. It has lacked a distinct character of its own. From now on Japan has to open its eyes completely to the needs and objectives it shares with China.²⁰⁶

203 'Nichi-Ro kaikō no keizaiteki, gaikōteki, shisōteki igi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.4: p.118.

204 For the anti-Japanese boycotts in China during the 1920s, see Banno Junji, 'Japanese Industrialists and Merchants and the Anti-Japanese Boycotts in China, 1919-1928'. In Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers & Mark R. Peattie, eds, *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, Princeton University Press, 1989, pp.314-29.

205 *Ibid.*: pp.116-17; 'Nishi, Roshia, higashi, Beikoku to no kokkō zengosaku – Daini hōkensei kara no shinkateki yakudatsu'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.6: pp.61-62;

206 'Gendai Nihon no hitori ga erabu Shina-kan to sore no aru kankei ishiki'. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.73-74. By the way, this citation is a good example of Sugimori's tendency to phrase his argument in such a way that one can still proceed in two completely different directions, in this instance pro-imperialist and anti-imperialist. Another striking example is the following line from 'Haku, ō, kokujin no honshitsuteki shakai gassaku' in the November 1921 issue of *Kaizō*: "Our ideal of comprehensive individualism or, in other words, comprehensive socialism, constantly teaches us the urgent need on the one hand to recognize

What did Sugimori see as the distinct Sino-Japanese ‘needs and objectives’ which Japan had hitherto neglected? The thing that was probably most on his mind was to make China a strong and unified nation so it could withstand the pressure from the West. In this context he sanctioned both the complete restoration of Chinese jurisdictional, administrative, financial, industrial and military sovereignty and the encouragement of Chinese nationalism, even if the latter was accompanied by a certain degree of violence.²⁰⁷ It was on these two points that he saw opportunities for Japan to show its friendly face to its neighbour. According to Sugimori, the first thing China needed in order to become a unified nation was an extensive railway network that would link all provinces. The present lines had to be expanded and the railways and subsidiary mines in foreign possession had to be nationalised. This was an instance, Sugimori mentioned, where Japan could indirectly help by means of investments in China, but he did not make clear whether the Japanese-owned South Manchurian Railway would also be part of this nationalisation scenario. Moreover, he presented the Japanese success story of a swift recovery of national sovereignty as a blueprint for China. Still, whereas this would seem to imply the restoration of China’s tariff autonomy, Sugimori at the same time mentioned that Sino-Japanese economic cooperation had to be based on a no-tariff treaty, an arrangement that seemed a lot more profitable for Japan than for China.²⁰⁸ Thus, while Sugimori probably considered himself to be showing his best intentions towards China, he was merely showing how blind he was to the issues that were of most direct interest to the Chinese.

5.2 China Crisis and the Utilisationist Solution

During the remainder of 1925 and the whole of 1926 Sugimori hardly wrote about international issues. In the same way as most of his fellow countrymen, it seems that his indignation towards the United States had somehow evaporated, as there were no further significant American challenges to Japan, and his attention was mainly caught by the issue of internal social, political, and industrial reforms. However, when at the beginning of 1927 it

the present existence of strong man-made class distinctions and natural ethnic national and racial distinctions yet on the other hand to strive to reform these.” It will be clear that with such an ambiguous proposition there is no problem in justifying Japan’s dominance over Asia and rejecting Western or American dominance over Asia.

207 ‘Shina mondai ga waga kokumin ni atauru shiren’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.8: p.1. This is the first opening page editorial (*kantōgen*) Sugimori wrote for the *Chūō Kōron*, a situation which originated from the temporary absence of Yoshino Sakuzō for most of 1925 due to illness but which nevertheless is a clear sign of Sugimori’s continued prominence amongst the Taishō ‘*Kulturkritiker*’.

208 ‘Nishi, Roshia, higashi, Beikoku to no kokkōzengosaku – Daini hōkensei kara no shinkateki yakudatsu’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1924.6: pp.61-62; ‘Gendai Nihon no hitori ga erabu Shina-kan to sore no aru kankei ishiki’. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.65-70. Within Sugimori’s new strategy to bring about a Sino-Japanese Alliance there was no longer a need for a go-between. This development is obvious from the change in the treatment of Russia in his writings of 1924-25. The country did not disappear from his view, but from a potential actor on the Asian scene it increasingly seemed to consist of not much more than Siberia and was accordingly treated as a passive entity, a region only capable of supplying Japan with additional natural resources. See for instance Sugimori’s ‘Nichi-Ro kaikō no keizaiteki, gaikōteki, sōteki igi’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.4: p.118.

looked as if the Nationalist Southern forces were going to unify the whole of China and they were seriously going to take up themselves the task of restoring sovereignty and nationalising foreign property, Sugimori returned to the stage. His reactions to the Chinese initiative were not altogether enthusiastic though. His first concern was to make clear that there was no question that Japan would support the unification of China by sacrificing its position in Manchuria. He referred to a talk he had with Dai Jitao, a Guomindang representative introduced to him by Nakano Seigō, who had admitted that China was the party that had profited most from the Russian and Japanese development of Manchuria. This, Sugimori added, was manifest from the fact that the increase in Russian and Japanese residents was in no proportion to the explosive growth of the Chinese population in the area. The point Sugimori tried to make was that Japan was doing a good job in Manchuria and therefore had the credentials to stay. Not merely in the interest of the parties directly involved but also in the interest of the progress of the whole of mankind, Japan even seemed to have the moral duty to continue with its development of Manchuria.²⁰⁹

It goes without saying that this line of argument was neither new nor uncommon. In the case of Sugimori it was also in line with a few casual remarks he had made on previous occasions, to the effect that foreign powers were not to be criticised for the exploitation of natural resources on Chinese and Siberian territory since these resources would otherwise merely rot away.²¹⁰ However, there were two fundamental differences. This time the issue was not so much about the use of natural resources on foreign territory but had extended to the even more fundamental question of the rights to the possession of the territory itself. Moreover, this question had become part - even the important international segment - of Sugimori's theory of 'functionalist utilisationism' (*kinōshugiteki shiyōshugi*), which was no longer based upon spontaneous cooperation between adjacent nations but tended to speak of 'evolutionary inevitability' and 'human, social, and cultural necessity'.²¹¹ China had for the first time since the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 'succeeded' in being thought of as the main, or at least as the direct, enemy of the Japanese nation, and accordingly Sugimori adjusted his argument. From particularist (regionalist) it once again became universalist.

The Universalist Argument of Utilisationism

The dilemma of the semi-machine age

During the late 1920s Sugimori came to see the stage the world had arrived at as that of the 'semi-machine age' (*hankikai jidai*). He explained:

Since the industrial revolution all civilised countries have taken up mechanical production and are at a certain evolutionary phase of machine culture. ... Thus the

209 'Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e no henka no fuhenteki kakuritsu'. In Sugimori Kōjirō, *Shakaigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1927: p.243.

210 'Kokuminshugi no Shina, Indo oyobi Amerika'. *Tōhō Jiron*, 1922.6: pp.18-19; 'Gendai Nihon no hitori ga erabu Shina-kan to sore no aru kankei ishiki'. *Kaizō*, 1924.11: pp.74-75; 'Nichi-Ro kaikō no keizaiteki, gaikōteki, shisōteki igi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.4: pp.116-17.

211 'Nichi-Ro kaikō no keizaiteki, gaikōteki, shisōteki igi'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1925.4: p.119.

common denominator of the modern age is the machine. Even extremes like the communist Russia and the capitalist United States, in spite of their differences in methods of management, are both based on mechanical production.²¹²

However, since production and distribution were still restricted by the pre-machine age social order, he ventured to characterise his time as an incomplete machine age: the semi-machine age. Sugimori, as always emphasising the necessity and inevitability of progress, could not regard this state of things as just unsatisfactory; in his eyes it was fatal. Dramatically he warned that the continuation of the old ways of management, administration and legislation would not only lead to the destruction of industry itself but to the destruction of the whole of civilisation: “Just as the industrial revolution is a global reality, its political amendment is a global need as well”.²¹³

The principle of utilisationism

Yet there was no reason for the world to despair; Sugimori was not the type of man to come up with a problem if he did not already have the solution at hand. He distilled the problematic ‘pre-machine age social order’ down to the fundamental issue of the system of proprietary rights, and advocated its reform. The main problem he discerned was the fact that the rights to property were unrelated to the question of who was using or who was capable of using it. In Sugimori’s words, it all came down to the situation that ‘possessionism’ (*shoyūshugi*) was in many cases not supported by ‘utilisationism’ (*shiyōshugi*). He pointed out that in this sense the economic relations in society were lagging behind the political relations, where hereditary transfer of privileges had been almost completely eradicated. The common sense - or, in Sugimori’s terms, the philosophy, the religion - of the new era dictated that possession would from now on be determined by utilisation (*shiyō*).²¹⁴

This line of thought was of course not very different from what Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had said about the use and possession of the means of production. As a matter of fact, socialist influences upon Sugimori were obvious. For example, in his *The Principles of the Moral Empire* of 1917 he had already argued:

Just as labour is immediately a property of the community, so likewise capital is never private but rather public. Neither of them ought to be wasted for the mere sake of selfish interest.²¹⁵

It is also clear from his ‘Minimum-Critique of Capitalism’ in 1925:

212 ‘Gendai bunmei hihiyōka oyobi tetsugakusha no shikaku wo ronjite, Tanaka Ōdō-shi wo hyōka su’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.7: pp.3-4. For Sugimori’s periodisation of the history of mankind on the basis of the methods of production, see page 14 of this same article and ‘Demokurashii no shiyō’. *Gakan*, 1930.1: pp.112-16.

213 ‘Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite’. *Gakan*, 1930.6: pp.27-28. For Sugimori’s periodisation of the history of mankind on the basis of produktiewijzen, see page 14 of this same article.

214 ‘Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e no henka no fuhenteki kakuritsu’. In Sugimori Kōjirō, *Shakaigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1927: p.251.

215 *The Principles of the Moral Empire*: p.218.

Capitalism is a system of private property and collective production. The rights of property, distribution and consumption are in the hands of a small minority who hardly participate in the production process directly. (...) Capitalism inevitably leads to the moral and spiritual humiliation of the large majority. The latter are being used, and they do not possess what they produce. It would be most just if the right of property was confined to the direct producer. (...) The system of private property under capitalism has to be limited properly through public management by society or the self-management by the (direct) producers of the means of production.²¹⁶

Nonetheless, Sugimori never joined the socialist movement and this was probably anything but coincidence. If there was one thing that was incompatible with his convictions it was egalitarianism. Accordingly, the form of socialism he advocated, ‘functionalist socialism’ (*kinō shakaishugi*), was clearly circumscribed by the adverb ‘functionalist’, which was strongly inspired by his belief that individual qualities that resulted in social merit had to be rewarded in the form of privileges.²¹⁷

Internal implications of utilisationism

On the issue of national reform the friction with other opinion leaders, most of whom were also influenced by socialist ideas, was comparatively inarticulate. The reason for this was that Sugimori singled out ‘the possession of the machine’ as the aspect to concentrate on at the national level. As mentioned above, Sugimori in his analysis of the history of human society tended to emphasise the fact that the development of science and the industrial revolution had resulted in the situation that man was now living in a machine age. In his opinion the advance of the machine was only to be welcomed. However, he also had to observe that at present the machine age was overwhelmingly marked by the excesses of ‘imperialist ethnic nationalism’ and ‘capitalist industrialism’ and that the two ‘collectivist phenomena’ of imperialism and capitalism were both undeniably results of the introduction of the machine. He did not think that the machine was to blame, but man: the problem lay in the fact that the owner of the machine was not completely social. As a result of egoism the capitalist production system had limited the efficiency of production and thus the welfare of the consumers.²¹⁸

216 ‘Shihonshugi ni taisuru saiteigen hihan’. *Gakan*, 1925.5: pp.54-57.

217 For the details of Sugimori’s concept of ‘functionalist socialism’, see his *Shakaigaku*: pp.98-110 and ‘Shinseiji no kyūmu to kinō shakaishugi’. *Gakan*, 1928.1, pp.193-94.

218 ‘Demokurashii no shiyō’. *Gakan*, 1930.1: pp.112-16; ‘Kojinshugi dōtoku no seisan’. *Teiyū Rinri*, 1930.9: pp.464-66. As for the collectivist nature of imperialism and capitalism, Sugimori once mentioned that just like Christianity, nationalism, and democracy these were religions, which he defined as ‘human excitement based on collectivism’. On other occasions he elaborated a little more and defined imperialism as ‘nothing but the ethnic national egoist extension of individualism’ and capitalism as ‘the corporate egoist version’. According to Sugimori nothing was wrong with ‘abstract, universalist ethnic nationalism’ and ‘pure capitalism’, but both had been contaminated by ‘the unlimited will to control and monopolise’. Whereas imperialism and capitalism thus in essence were extensions of individualism, Sugimori was adamant that especially in their external relations they should be regarded as products of the collectivist

According to Sugimori, to avoid future violent reforms – he chose the neutral term *henkaku* instead of the revolutionary term *kakumei* - like in Russia, ‘morality’ could not remain in its archaic individualist form. Man was to be more and more defined in a social rather than in an individual meaning. In fact, he observed, in the field of politics the exponents democracy and liberalism of the individualist age of manufacture had already lost the battle against collectivism in its various manifestations such as capitalism, imperialism, bolshevism and fascism. Even in England and the United States, but also in Japan itself, he diagnosed in June 1929, liberal forces (respectively the Liberal Party, the Democratic Party and the Minseitō) had waned and were now out of power. Although he predicted that the spirit of democracy would evolve, the political system of democracy itself was doomed to oblivion in the collectivist machine age. In the same way the despotic possession of the machine by means of individualist capitalism had to end.²¹⁹

In its stead Sugimori called for a bold adoption of cooperativism (*kyōdōshugi*). In order to combat such side-effects of capitalism as poverty and unemployment, the machine had to be in the possession of society. This accomplished, society would then lease the means of production to those who had superior qualities and who supported the common cause. They would be allowed to apply a relatively autonomous management and on grounds of their capability were entitled to privileges. By means of this reform of the capitalist production structure from a merchant-based system to a technician-based system, Sugimori predicted, the detrimental pre-modern class society would wither away and the most economic form of society, namely the technocratic functionalist society, would come about.²²⁰

In Sugimori’s opinion the ‘universal process of the socialisation of capitalist despotism’ was already well on its way, even in Japan. He came to this conclusion on the basis of several observations. For instance, he acknowledged a decisive shift in the nucleus of production to the proletariat, and a conspicuous growth of the proletariat party movement, which he characterised as the ‘progressive social force’ most fit to act as the trailblazer of the socialising process. He also mentioned that ever since the Russian Revolution there had been an obvious trend towards the liquidation of individualist ‘bourgeois morality’ and the adoption of socialist ‘proletariat morality’.²²¹ This does not imply that Sugimori endorsed the Russian example. In his articles he never forgot to mention that the Soviet model should merely function as reference material for research in fundamental reform. He emphasised:

In Russia, as a result of peculiar historical and social circumstances, Marxism has proven

machine age. See also ‘Kyōsanshugi no hihan’. *Sokoku*, 1929.9 and ‘Teikokushugi wo shihonshugi kara shikibetsu seshimeru mono’. Waseda Seiji Keizaigaku Zasshi, 1929.12, both reprinted in Sugimori, *Kyōiku kaizō to shakai kaizō*, Nittō Shoin, 1931: pp.345-47 and 351-54, 372-74.

219 ‘Gendai bunmei hiyōka oyobi tetsugakusha no shikaku wo ronjite, Tanaka Ōdō-shi wo hyōka su’. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.7: pp.5-7.

220 ‘Shihonshugi ni taisuru saiteigen hihan’. *Gakan*, 1925.5: pp.54-57; ‘Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e’. *Taiyō*, 1927.5: pp.5-9; ‘Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite’. *Gakan*, 1930.6: pp.27-28. Sugimori was probably somewhat naïve or over-optimistic about this technocratic functionalist society, judging by his remark that ‘Technicians do not care much for profit and authority’.

221 ‘Demokurashii no shiyō’. *Gakan*, 1930.1: pp.112-16; ‘Dai-57 gikai no seijiteki igi’. *Gakan*, 1930.2: pp.23-25; ‘Dokusai seiji’. *Gakan*, 1930.4: pp.26-27; ‘Kojinshugi dōtoku no seisan’. *Teiyū Rinri*, 1930.9, reprinted in Sugimori Kōjirō, *Kyōiku kaizō to shakai kaizō*,: pp.467-69.

to be the only effective instrument. However, we have to carry out the political digestion of the industrial revolution in our own distinctive way.²²²

In an endeavour to give a name to this particularist programme while avoiding being tucked in with either the nationalist or the socialist camp, he came up with the terms ‘puroretaria demokurashi’ (proletarian democracy) and ‘puroretaria riberarizumu’ (proletarian liberalism).²²³ He thus supported gradual reform by parliamentary means through the medium of the Japanese proletariat parties, but could not refrain from regularly venting his frustrations over their discord and weakness. In this sense he kept neatly in line with the general attitude of most opinion leaders of the day.

External implications of utilisationism

The new self-crafted ism of *shoyūshugi*, which was never bestowed with a wider use than by Sugimori himself, more or less came down to the Marxist rule that only those who were directly involved in the production process were allowed to own the means of production. In the case of national society it implied support for the workers and the tenant farmers against the capitalists and absent landlords, but when applied to international society it added up to anything but support for ‘the international propertyless class’ or ‘international proletariat’, as the coloured nations were often characterised.

While Sugimori alleged that under the influence of the new utilisationist awareness a national and international evolutionary process had been set in motion towards the denial of private property of land, he hardly had eye for this aspect in the context of internal reform. He did refer to the phenomenon of (absentee) landlordism every once in a while, since it was clearly a form of *shoyūshugi* without *shiyōshugi*, but he seemed too immersed in the issue of property of the machine to have much attention left for the issue of property of the land.

However, in his arguments for international reform it was exactly the other way round; the only form of property he dealt with was the non-utilisationist possession of land. On the one hand he joined the socialist critique of colonialism, characterising the possession of colonies as the international form of absentee landlordism established by militarist and capitalist imperialism. However, his critique was not so much fundamental as pragmatic. He thus did not argue that militarist imperialism was not acceptable but merely no longer feasible, since the international social acceptance of military force had drastically decreased as a result of the carnage of World War One.²²⁴ In the case of economic imperialism his argument was also predominantly pragmatic. His main point of critique was that economic imperialism would be counter-productive in the end, as the monopolistic use of natural resources impeded the natural growth of the world economy and all its members. Thus he pointed at the British colonial empire, and especially at the vast and largely unexploited Australian continent, as an example of extreme anti-sociality towards the Japanese, Italian and German have-nots. Imperialists, he concluded, were too narrow-minded.²²⁵

222 ‘Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite’. *Gakan*, 1930.6: pp.27-28.

223 ‘Demokurashii no shiyō’. *Gakan*, 1930.1: pp.115.

224 ‘Gunshuku no shakaiteki igi’. *Gakan*, 1929.12: p.23.

225 ‘Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e’. *Taiyō*, 1927.5: pp.4-5; ‘Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite’. *Gakan*, 1930.6:

But this did not imply that the socialist critics of imperialism had a reason to congratulate themselves. Socialists, he said, were just as bigoted. Both parties were limited in their views, the former by their conception of national borders and the latter by their conception of class.²²⁶ As broad-minded as a cosmopolitan utilitarian can be, Sugimori led the way:

Imperialism and capitalism should be criticised to the extent that they are merely aimed at possession. In other words, to the extent that they are anti-social. Yet the denouncement as mere exploitation and aggression of the entrepreneurial expansion of foreign countries into the territory of ethnic nations that cannot develop their land by themselves and sometimes cannot even settle there, is nothing but irresponsible sentimentalism. (...) If we do not recognise the conquest and hereditary possession of territory in the present and future [i.e. colonialism and imperialism], why should we recognise territory that is the result of exactly the same deeds [i.e. all national territory based on national historic claims]? (...) The established laws and customs that justify such possession should be reformed in the light of fundamental morality and true socialism.²²⁷

In Sugimori's court of utilitarian morality and functionalist socialism traditional imperialist claims to territory were judged critically, but still extremely considerately when compared to territorial claims based on heredity and self-determination by '(ethnic) nations without industrial power' (*sangyōryoku naki kokumin ya minzoku*). "The non-use possession of territory is no longer in line with the machine age", was the cool verdict of judge Sugimori.²²⁸ What was also very revealing is his lament that the social need to eradicate this external form of non-utilitarian possession of land was being overlooked because of the socialist emphasis on the adjustment of the internal form of non-utilitarian possession of land and other means of production.

One would expect that judged on the basis of the very same principles by which [the socialists] do not tolerate landlordism they cannot simply uphold the territorial rights of uncivilised nations. The profit and welfare of society should be the aims of socialism. It is therefore anti-socialist to neglect natural resources that could be made use of.²²⁹

Even more, he also pointed out that the crime against national society of the absentee landlord in a civilised country was light compared to the crime against international society of the (ethnic) nations without industrial power, since in the former case the land was at least put to use on behalf of society.²³⁰ In contrast to 'the socialists', Sugimori's emphasis was on the external or

pp.24-25.

226 'Eiyūron'. *Kaizō*, 1929.1: pp.22-24.

227 'Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e'. *Taiyō*, 1927.5: p.2.

228 *Ibid.*, p.2.

229 *Ibid.*, p.3. See also 'Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite'. *Gakan*, 1930.6: pp.24-25.

230 'Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e no henka no fuhenteki kakuritsu'. In Sugimori Kōjirō, *Shakaigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1927: p.241.

international form of non-utilisationist possession of land, which in his opinion was the summum of anti-sociality because of the total absence of utilisation (*shiyō*). His utilisationism was thus first and foremost aimed at the territory in the possession of underdeveloped nations. The national absentee landlordist and the international capitalist and imperialist evils were comparatively utilisationist and were awarded a lower priority on his list of evils that the universal crusade army had to quell.

In conclusion it can be said that Sugimori took great pains to give Japan's particularist claims in Manchuria a respectful universal framework by means of his invention of a comprehensive 'utilisationist' world trend. However, it remained difficult to obscure the original objective. First of all, it is hard to ignore the fact that in the two articles about the universal principle of utilisationism he only mentions Manchuria very specifically as a historical instance of the successful international implementation of this principle.²³¹ Moreover, whereas the idea of the international management of railways in China seems perfectly in line with his cosmopolitan utilisationism and functionalism (those capable manage and because of their social merit earn privileges), Sugimori was strongly opposed. His argument was extremely direct and down-to-earth when compared to his abstract utilisationist theories: "The loss of [a part of] China's national freedom implies the loss of freedom in Japan's vicinity".²³² Thus the debate had not proceeded since the Meiji-period and was no more sophisticated than the 'lips and teeth'-argument of yore, which was void of any universal aspirations and instead completely based on reasons of national interest.

Japan's Place in a Utilisationist World

One may deduce from the above that Sugimori was clearing the way for direct military intervention and the permanent occupation of Chinese territory by Japan. However, this was not what headvocateed at the time. Japan's immediate situation in Manchuria did not change much as a result of the unification of China under the Guomindang, since its military Northern Expedition came to a halt at the southern side of the Chinese Wall. And although the Fengtian-faction of Zhang Xueliang joined the Nationalist camp at the end of 1928, the first object of their attention was the Chinese Eastern Railway in the possession of Russia, which was considered an easier game than the extensive Japanese stronghold in the area. Since the endeavour in the summer of 1929 to reclaim this railway by force failed dramatically, the Chinese nationalist threat to the Japanese position entrenched around the South Manchurian Railway was considered even less likely than before. Thus there was still no need for Sugimori to advocate the most extreme implication of his utilisationism, i.e., affirmative action by means of military force. As a matter of fact, he continued to emphasise his preference for gradual reform and his ultimate aim of harmonious 'utilisationist' amalgamation.

The utilisationist world order

231 'Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e'. *Taiyō*, 1927.5: p.2; 'Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e no henka no fuhenteki kakuritsu'. In Sugimori Kōjirō, *Shakaigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1927: p.243.

232 'Ro-Shi funsō no inshō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.9: p.67.

Just like most people in his day, Sugimori ranked the various national states on the basis of their economic and military power. Accordingly he made a clear division between a few 'civilised countries' on the one side and the bulk of '(ethnic) nations without productive power' on the other. The latter were ignored and the former were further divided, the United States at the top, the Soviet Union and Italy at the bottom, and England, France, Germany, and Japan somewhere in between.²³³

However, besides such a realistic and materialist assessment of the international pecking order, Sugimori also gave the civilised countries a ranking dependent on the degree to which they had realised - or in the near future promised to realise - utilitarian reform of their society. On the basis of this criterion, Sugimori considered the general outlook of the world to be rather dark. He appreciated the fact that various experiments were being undertaken to digest the implications of the introduction of 'the new and most important stimulus to life', i.e., the machine, but all were the object of his criticism. However, there were gradations. Of capitalism, socialism, and fascism, the three collectivist isms that aimed to form a substitute to 'the setting sun of European individualism', Sugimori almost completely rejected the last ism. He slighted the Italian experiment as a 'revolutionary non-revolution'. Fascism, he claimed, was strictly conservative and too shallow to be of any use to countries more industrialised and educated than Italy.²³⁴ In comparison he valued the Fordist experiment in collectivist capitalism somewhat higher. Nevertheless, it was not counted as a fundamental answer to the effects of the industrial revolution either. He argued that the American version of collectivism, 'collective wealth', was too standardist. The Americans had offered their individuality in return for wealth, thus discarding the possibility of creative development.²³⁵ As for England, Sugimori commented that the old empire was internationally of special value to the extent that it from time to time came up with 'progressive wisdom', but in general it was condoning 'the natural and blind advance of the industrial revolution' and had not gone beyond criticising its side-effects. Germany was once credited by Sugimori as 'a society based on the evolutionary improvement of a moral political system. However, just like France, the country hardly received any sustained attention from Sugimori during the 1920s.²³⁶ In spite of its 'collective poverty' and its position at the bottom of the list of civilised countries, it was Russia that Sugimori ranked as the country that had come furthest in grasping the spirit of the industrial revolution. He characterised communism as an improvement upon the fading 'bourgeois religions' of nationalism, imperialism, democracy, and capitalism and argued that in its cooperativism, collectivism, and adaptation to the machine communism presented the present highest level of social organisation. Its experiment in materialist socialism made the Soviet Union the harbinger of the universal process of socialising capitalism and thus the rising sun of the 'semi machine-age'.²³⁷ However, being a harbinger and the rising sun seemed to be an ungrateful task, as Sugimori more often than not cited the Soviet

233 'Eiyūron'. *Kaizō*, 1929.1: p.33; 'Kako ni oite kojinchugi no hattatsu wo kaita Nihon no shōrai'. *Gakan*, 1929.7: pp.65-68; 'Ro-Shi funsō no inshō'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.9: pp.67-68.

234 'Eiyūron'. *Kaizō*, 1929.1: p.21; 'Fashizumu wo ubau mono'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1931.6: p.132.

235 'Sekaiteki naru mittsu no kasen to chōryū'. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1929.10, reprinted in *Kyōiku kaizō to shakai kaizō*: pp.449-53.

236 'Eiyūron'. *Kaizō*, 1929.1: pp.21-22; 'Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite'. *Gakan*, 1930.6: pp.26-27.

237 *Ibid.*: pp.449-53; 'Kyōsanshugi no hihan'. *Sokoku*, 1929.9, reprinted in *Kyōiku kaizō to shakai kaizō*: pp.345-47; 'Dokusai seiji'. *Gakan*, 1930.4: pp.26-27.

Union as an example of what mistakes could be made along the road towards social capitalism and even characterised the Russian socialist experiment as a tragi-comedy.²³⁸ Thus one may conclude that in Sugimori's opinion Japan was living in a world in a transitory stage, with abundant material for reference but not one clear example to follow.

Dialectics and Japan

The main defect Sugimori discerned with Russia was that it had been too extreme in doing away with the complete heritage of the pre-revolutionary age, losing sight of humanity and treating man like a machine. This 'failure of communism' was treated by him as the inevitable result of the fact that Russia had skipped the stage of individualist liberalism and had gone straight from feudalism to machine-age collectivism: "Socialism that has not received the baptism of individualism is bound to end up in a tragi-comedy like in Russia".²³⁹ All social thought, Sugimori emphasised, should have the individual as its nucleus and he ranked individualist liberalism as the most fundamental prerequisite for the healthy development of the individual, society and culture.²⁴⁰

It seems rather odd to accuse an ideology of not being individualist, when one has first lauded it as a reaction to the same individualism. However, in Sugimori's eyes there was no discrepancy at all. Being influenced by a whole range of philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, he was also strongly indebted to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and he borrowed the Hegelian term '*aufheben*' (sublation, in Japanese *shiyō*) to explain his own views. '*Aufheben*', he pointed out, was a process consisting of the three steps of rejection, upgrading and conservation. The superior elements of the lower stadium that had been rejected were not discarded but remained as an essential part of the newly attained higher stadium. Sugimori's preference for evolutionary reform, albeit through a gradual dialectic process, was evident. In his aim to upgrade democracy this meant that the foundations of individualist morality had to be protected and preserved within the higher stage of proletariat democracy. As a result, utilisationism had to be individualist and socialist at the same time.²⁴¹ The gist of Sugimori's argument was that one had to discriminately appreciate both at first sight contradictory elements and strive for the ultimate comprehensive form, which he alternatively labelled 'new individualism' (*shin-kojinshugi*), 'social individualism' (*shakaiteki kojinsugi*), or 'new character-ism' (*shin-jinkakushugi*). This new ideology had to be superior to communism, the hitherto most thorough but extremely unsatisfactory endeavour, and could be nothing less than a grand synthesis of liberalism (capitalism) and socialism, of individualism and collectivism, of communism and anarchism.²⁴² Sugimori prophesied that when individualism thus revived in its

238 'Kyakkan Nihon'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.2: pp.93-94; 'Kyōsanshugi no hihan': pp.348-50; 'Dokusai seiji'. *Gakan*, 1930.4: pp.26-27.

239 'Kyakkan Nihon': pp.93-94; 'Kako ni oite kojinsugi no hattatsu wo kaita Nihon no shōrai': p.66; 'Kyōsanshugi no hihan': pp.348-50.

240 'Kako ni oite kojinsugi no hattatsu wo kaita Nihon no shōrai': pp.66-68; 'Kojinsugi dōtoku no seisan'. *Teiyū Rinri*, 1930.9, reprinted in *Kyōiku kaizō to shakai kaizō*: pp.470-71.

241 'Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e'. *Taiyō*, 1927.5: p.5; 'Demokurashii no shiyō'. *Gakan*, 1930.1: pp.114-15.

242 'Kyōsanshugi no hihan': pp.348-50; 'Kojinsugi dōtoku no seisan': pp. 470-71.

new form of social individualism, the sun would once again shine brightly upon this world.²⁴³

However, as Sugimori had already mentioned, at the moment the world was still dark. There was not one country yet which could boast of having established utilisationism within its own borders. This situation also had its implications for countries that harboured ambitions on an international scale. For example, Sugimori thought that a common call upon world opinion by the ‘have-not nations’ Japan, Germany, and Italy was the appropriate way to bring about the abolition of the monopolist possession of natural resources by the colonial powers. However, he emphasised that such an endeavour to do away with ‘international absentee landlordism’ would be feasible only if these countries themselves had reformed their internal social and industrial structure in such a way that absentee landlordism and other feudalist and capitalist forms of non-utilisationist possession of the means of production were no longer existent. Otherwise their call upon world opinion would be considered insincere and their attempt at international justice would merely be contra-productive. Only those countries that had succeeded in bringing about the grand synthesis mentioned above were morally justified and practically able to take up the task of reform of international society.²⁴⁴

What did this mean in the case of Japan, which Sugimori had not yet given a ranking according to his utilisationist criteria since it was neither communist, Fordist nor fascist? It goes without saying that, just like all other nations, Japan was still lacking the universal, idealistic and progressive ideology Sugimori called for, but how did he assess Japan’s future potential? On the one hand he hinted that it stood a better chance than Russia and Italy, countries which precisely because of their drastic endeavours towards reform had reached a dead end. The Japanese society had experienced the industrial revolution and become specialised and interdependent to such an extent that there was no fear for ‘simple yet disastrous dialectic action’ such as a communist revolution or a fascist coup d’état.²⁴⁵ However, according to Sugimori there was one common feature which seriously hindered Japan’s utilisationist development: just like Russia and Italy, his country had skipped the stage of individualist liberalism and gone straight from feudalism to the machine age. Because of its geographical and political isolation, he analysed, Japan in the pre-modern period had lacked the international contacts to stimulate progress. People had concentrated on perfecting the traditional model and as a result society was ruled by conservatism, patriarchy and favouritism. The forced opening of Japan by the West in the latter half of the nineteenth century had at last offered hopes for individual freedom, and thus for creation and progress, but these were immediately reduced in the process of ethnic national collectivist unification that was part of Japan’s war efforts at the turn of the century. Ever since the military victories against respectively Qing China and Tsarist Russia the country had mainly

243 ‘Sekaiteki naru mittsu no kasen to chōryū’. *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 1929.10, reprinted in *Kyōiku kaizō to shakai kaizō*: pp.451-52. It is of course easy to ridicule all this and put it aside without much ado, especially because of Sugimori’s pompous phraseology, but even in these days rife with talk of the absolute victory of liberalism and capitalism – and the American ‘empire’ – one should not forget that in fact most national systems are hybrid.

244 ‘Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e’. *Taiyō*, 1927.5: p.4; ‘Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e no henka no fuhenteki kakuritsu’. In *Shakaigaku*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1927: pp.244-45; ‘Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite’. *Gakan*, 1930.6: pp.24-25.

245 ‘Eiyūron’. *Kaizō*, 1929.1: pp.21-22; ‘Sekai kokka e no ishiki ni oite’.: pp.26-27.

fixed its attention on the field of economy. Although Japan had accordingly made gradual headway on the path of industrialisation, an individualist liberal tradition had not been given time to take root, and the lack of it was now seriously hampering Japan's rise to world status.²⁴⁶

On the grounds of Sugimori's utilisationist theories, we can only conclude that Japan still had a long way to go before it would be entitled to put into practice the new designs outside its territory – read: China - which so many of its citizens held. This inference seems to contradict what Sugimori had brought forward on earlier occasions regarding the application of utilisationism to Manchuria. While at that time morality was tantamount to productivity, this time morality was so multi-faceted that nobody seemed to be able to satisfy its conditions. Nonetheless, we should be aware of the very different dimensions of preserving the status quo and toppling it. Sugimori's theory of utilisationism was originally instigated by the former, in the sense of the preservation of Japanese 'special rights and interests in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia', and was consequently expanded because it needed a universal justification and because Sugimori thought he could use it as well for the reforms he advocated on the national level. He had not come up with it to promote an expansion of Japanese interests in China. This objective would inevitably involve the use of violence - a far more drastic measure and seemingly inimical to Sugimori's theory of utilisationism, which was predominantly based on gradual and harmonious reform. Moreover, there was another drawback in the sense that his universal utilisationist argument could not give a fundamental excuse why it should be left to Japan to 'help China out'. If all Japan had to offer was slightly more utility (higher economic productivity) than the Guomindang government could give China, it would seem a much better idea to hire the United States in order to give China the most complete form of utility available at the time.

5.3 In Defence of the Manchurian Incident

Approval of the Implementation of External Reform without Internal Reform

However, when in 1931 things came to a head and the Japanese were faced with the fait accompli of the occupation of Manchuria by the Kwantung Army, Sugimori decided not to be too petty-minded and he adjusted himself to the direction his theories had been pointing at all the time. He now proclaimed: "The action in Manchuria is brave and backed up by historically justified needs".²⁴⁷ Nonetheless, somehow Sugimori seemed to feel rather awkward. Very unlike him, he felt compelled to defend this most recent evolution in his thought by stating that he had already vented his stance towards Manchuria in 'Shoyūshugi kara shiyōshugi e no henka no fuhenteki kakuritsu' (in his bestseller *Shakaigaku*, first published in May 1927) and that his doubts about the League of Nations had not changed since 'Sei oyobi zen no gensoku wo ronjite

246 'Kako ni oite kojinchugi no hattatsu wo kaita Nihon no shōrai'. *Gakan*, 1929.7: p.66; 'Kyakkan Nihon'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1929.2: pp92-93. Sugimori thus joined the side of the so-called *Kōza-ha* (Kōza faction) in the lively contemporary marxist debate on the nature of Japanese capitalism. This faction did not regard the Meiji Restoration as a bourgeois revolution and emphasised the semi-feudal character of Japanese society.

247 'Nihon wa ika ni subeki ka'. *Kaizō*, 1932.4: p.36.

shakaishugi to Kokusai Renmei ni kibō su' (in the September 1920 issue of *Chūō Kōron*).²⁴⁸ His utilisationist argument in the case of Manchuria was indeed still present and it is a fact that most Japanese had harboured strong doubts about the League of Nations ever since its establishment. However, something had drastically changed; Sugimori no longer emphasised the need of gradual reform nor the conditions to be fulfilled before one could set out on the utilisationist reform of the international order.

As a matter of fact, a few months before the Manchurian Incident Sugimori had already condoned the use of violence on the national level:

If the new political force, whether it calls itself fascist or not, is founded on just principles (...) we should not absolutely reject the temporary use of force when this is deemed necessary for the sake of these principles.²⁴⁹

In the wake of the Manchurian Incident he also abandoned his objections on the international level. Very interestingly, he cited Karl Marx to justify his stand:

Marx opted that the propertied class would definitely not let go of their property voluntarily out of a sense of justice or reason; they had to be forced by means of violence. In the international setting one sadly has to admit that the same is true of the large territory nations.²⁵⁰

There seems to be ample room to speculate whether Marx would have categorised China as a 'propertied nation' or not, but this was of no concern to Sugimori. His new position was that as long as the Japanese had made his utilisationist conception of territory their own they were sufficiently entitled 'to make the rest of the world understand also as straightforward as possible', whether by words or by action.²⁵¹

Concomitant to his approval of the use of force Sugimori had also watered down his moral preconditions. Morality once again seemed to come down to nothing more than the prerogative of the most productive. Sugimori's utilisationist conception of territory had not changed fundamentally. He recapitulated that it was unethical to uphold the political borders of the time before the industrial revolution. Industrial power (technology, science, organisation, but not labour or capital) and political power were the new ethical preconditions for territory. Therefore, he thought it unjust if a high development of industrial power was nipped in the bud due to a lack of natural resources. It was equally unjust to leave great reserves of natural resources unexploited.²⁵² What had changed was that Sugimori no longer highlighted Japan's weakness and the contradictions in its internal structure. His country's fundamental industrial

248 'Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai – Kokusai Renmei no kisoteki seigen'. *Teiyū Rinri*, 1931.12, reprinted in Ukita Kazutami, ed., *Manshūkoku dokuritsu to Kokusai Renmei*, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1932: p.135.

249 'Fashizumu wo ubau mono'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1931.6: p.134.

250 'Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai': p.128.

251 'Nihon wa ika ni subeki ka'. *Kaizō*, 1932.4: p.36.

252 'Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai': pp.124-25.

power, he now stated, was close to the world's highest level. When he assessed such data on the basis of his ethical criterion, he came to the conclusion that Japan's territory was far too small and that of others was far too large. What was more, it would even be a moral sin for Japan to be satisfied with its present territory. Therefore, it should no longer shun the term 'territorial ambition' (*ryōdo-yoku*) and had to expand into China.²⁵³

Besides this general justification why Japan had to invade China, Sugimori also introduced some new arguments why there had been no time to lose. Japan, he said, could not remain silent any longer while Outer-Mongolia was becoming more and more a part of the Soviet Union and the old Russian expansionist instinct was aimed at the recapture of Manchuria.²⁵⁴ Apart from this Soviet threat, he added, China had also been invaded by England in Tibet, and 'the Monroe-ist United States who previously claimed to have no interest in Europe and Asia' had even moved into action. The Western powers were aiming to partition China, yet Japan would once again play its role as saviour of the Chinese directly, and of its own interests indirectly.²⁵⁵ It will be evident that these excuses, which go back to the 'lips and teeth'-argument especially popular during the early Meiji period, lack the necessary substance and merely tried to conceal the fact that Japan was not helping but fighting China, its direct enemy.

Japanese Monroe-ism as Justified Neo-Imperialism

Sugimori was also in need of an argument that could add a particularist aspect to his universalist utilisationism. Although he claimed that Japan now belonged to the elite of the industrialised countries, it was obvious that American industrial power was still far superior, and therefore the great power would be more qualified than Japan to seize Chinese territory. His previous argument of the ever-increasing trend of internationalisation and the ensuing formation of large autonomous regions was no longer workable, since Chinese protest and resistance against Japan's actions in Manchuria made clear that this was definitely not an instance of gradual and harmonious unification. The most suitable ism Sugimori could find that combined a particularist justification of Japan's arbitrary intervention with an air of universal compatibility, was 'Monroe-ism' (*Monrō-shugi*), an expanded adaptation of the early nineteenth century Monroe Doctrine promulgated by the United States to keep the European powers away from South America. It is true that Sugimori had never been opposed to the American instigated Monroe Doctrine. However, whereas he had used to characterise 'Monroe-ism' as a rational elaboration of his own peaceful idea of the formation of large autonomous regions, it now assumed a different function. It became a basis upon which to justify the use of force against neighbouring countries.

In Sugimori's opinion, there could be no doubt that Manchuria lay within Japan's sphere of 'Monroe-ism' and thus 'within its right of self-defence' (*jieiken no han'i-nai*). It is of course

253 'Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai': pp.132-34. See also Sugimori's contribution to a round-table debate on fascism organized by Ishibashi Tanzan's *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 'Fashizumu hihan zadankai'. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1932.3.26: p.30. Other members included such prominent men as Nakano Seigō (who rather rudely declined to partake in the discussion), Murobuse Kōshin, Shimonaka Yasaburō, Kita Reikichi, Matsuoka Komakichi, Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Akamatsu Katsumaro and Ishibashi Tanzan.

254 'Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai': p.131; 'Nihon wa ika ni subeki ka': p.30.

255 'Shina bunkatsu no mondai'. *Kaizō*, 1932.11: p.80.

hard not to associate this concept of a ‘line of self-defence’ (*jieisen*) with Yamagata Aritomo’s ‘line of interest’ (*riekisen*), but it is equally hard to suppress the feeling that here we have again come full circle from the *tatemaie* (public principle) ‘lips and teeth’-argument of the early Meiji period to the *honno* (true intention) ‘line of interest’-argument of the middle Meiji period. It will not be surprising that within the post-1905 setting these lines, together with Matsuoka Yōsuke’s ‘lifeline’ (*seimeisen*), all had Manchuria as their geographical object, but it is interesting to see that in contrast to many army officers, diplomats and politicians who thought in terms of absolutely safeguarding either of these lines, Sugimori was not so much aware of a Russian threat as a combined American-West European obstacle. From his point of view the major constraining force to Japan’s rightful expansion into the Chinese continent consisted of, in chronological order, the League of Nations, the Nine Power Treaty on China, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.²⁵⁶ Sugimori’s solution was simple. He observed that while the ‘American instigated Nine Power Treaty’, a legacy of the Washington Conference, was in its nature a denial of ‘Monroe-ism’, the Covenant of the League of Nations and the General Treaty for Renunciation of War explicitly approved of ‘Monroe-ism’ by the United States and Great Britain. Since Japan as a member of the League and as a signatory of the latter treaty implicitly recognised American and British ‘Monroe-ism’, in return these powers should recognise Japanese ‘Monroe-ism’ as well. Sugimori pointed out that in actual practice this would imply that they had to acknowledge Japan’s rights in Manchuria and revoke the Nine Power Treaty. In case the Western powers declined to do so, Japan should go its own way and secede from the League of Nations and most of the multilateral treaties of the 1920s.²⁵⁷

Sugimori, never a fervent supporter of the multilateral treaties, thus made clear that he was willing to opportunistically stick to the treaties as long as Japan got its way, but no more than that. The problem with the Nine Power Treaty and the General Treaty for the Renunciation of War was that ‘these tried to prevent future wars without taking notice of the main cause of wars in the near future, namely the present incomplete distribution of territory’. As for the League, he did not consider it more than an instrument to protect the established interests of the United States and the British Empire. Thus, the multilateral treaties he had occasionally described as the institutionalisation of an international progressive trend towards pacifism and increasing cooperation, were now merely slighted as the root of international inequality, with Japan as its greatest victim.²⁵⁸ The true nature of the international world order, Sugimori noted, had become particularly clear by the Western criticism of the Manchurian Incident, which he characterised as ‘a white racist reaction to Japan’s development (...) backed up by the Christian religion’.²⁵⁹ Japan’s critical situation, in the sense that an isolated and small territory nation was confronted with a hostile and racist international environment, necessitated methods that might be simply categorised as ‘imperialistic’ by short-sighted observers. He confessed that his argument had nothing to do with ‘shallow pacifism’ and he was even willing to advocate an international policy of ‘imperialism’ (*teikokushugi*), a term which had been generally branded as evil and subsequently discarded after World War One. However, he emphasised, although

256 ‘Fashizumu hihan zadankai’. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1932.3.26: p.30.

257 ‘Nihon wa ika ni subeki ka’: pp.30-32.

258 ‘Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai’: pp.126-28; ‘Fashizumu hihan zadankai’. *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*, 1932.3.26: p.30.

259 ‘Nihon wa ika ni subeki ka’: pp.33-34.

Japan's new imperialism might at first sound identical to the egoistic imperialism of yore, through its actions it would prove itself different and justified, for the simple reason that "Japan's aim is social".²⁶⁰

'Uchi wa shakaishugi, soto wa teikokushugi'

With Sugimori's praise of Japanese military action against the Chinese he completely abandoned every notion of an Asianist form of regional cooperation and instead embraced the contaminated concept of imperialism. He no longer mentions his former ideal of the large autonomous entity and now advocates 'social imperialism', a form of imperialism which is beneficial for the whole of mankind. Japan's expansion into the Asian continent was social in the sense that, by means of its utilisationist character, it would naturally contribute to the development of world society and, by the creation of new opportunities, would also directly contribute to the development of the Japanese proletariat.²⁶¹ Summarising, we could indeed describe Sugimori's stance as 'socialism at home, imperialism abroad' (*uchi wa shakaishugi, soto wa teikokushugi*),²⁶² although we should not overlook the fact that Sugimori's functionalist socialism was definitely not mainstream (egalitarian) socialism. In any case, this was a long way from 'social democracy at home, non-imperialism abroad' (*uchi wa shakai minshushugi, soto wa datsu-teikokushugi*), the conclusion which a senior generation of Japanese opinion leaders had reached. Sugimori was willing to acknowledge the rights of developed 'have' countries like the present great power the United States and the former great power Great Britain, he was also very sympathetic towards the ambitions of the other up-and-coming 'have-not' countries Germany and Italy, but unlike Mizuno, Horie and Yoshino he could not regard China as a country with equal rights. This was also his main argument in face of Western protest against Japan's intervention in Manchuria. The United States and the various League members, he explained, were making the fundamental mistake of treating Japan and China as equals; they neglected the difference in position of one that gives protection and one that receives it. Within this context it is not strange to see that Sugimori advocated a re-evaluation of the Twenty-One Demands of January 1915, which the other three by now considered the point in time where Japan had decisively gone astray.²⁶³

In his defence of the Manchurian Incident Sugimori could clearly use as many arguments as possible – the inherent logical inconsistencies were as a rule ignored by this strong believer in the dialectical synthesis of all apparent antitheses – because this is also the moment when he for the first time mentioned the concept of autarky. As someone who had often warned against the dangers of national self-sufficiency in the field of ideology and psychology, it is somewhat strange to see him raise the banner of its economic variant, but it is even stranger when one considers that he all of a sudden starts doing so more than a decade after this concept had taken the centre of debate. His observations in April 1932, such as 'one of the preconditions for

260 'Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai': pp.132-35.

261 'Nihon wa ika ni subeki ka': pp.33-34.

262 This is a characterisation Sugimori makes himself in his 'Ryōdo no rinrisei to Manshū mondai' article (*Teiyū Rinri*, December 1931: p.134). It of course is reminiscent of the 'uchi ni wa rikkenshugi, soto ni wa teikokushugi' dichotomy Matsuo Takayoshi introduced in his *Taishō demokurashii* (Iwanami Shoten, 1974).

263 'Nihon wa ika ni subeki ka': pp.30, 36.

national subsistence in the present age clearly is self-sufficiency in natural resources', 'countries that are not self-sufficient can be brought down to their knees by countries that are, no matter on whose side justice is, through the methods of economic boycott and protracted warfare' and 'Japan shoulders the need and the duty to resolutely overcome the present state of economic self-insufficiency that it is in',²⁶⁴ were exact copies of the general conclusions that started popping up already at the end of World War One in the analyses of the first total war experience. They thus completely lacked the novelty value one would expect from a self-professed creative thinker, who was more prone to add yet another new term to the Japanese vocabulary than to fall back on his philosophic predecessors or contemporaries (especially if these were Japanese).

His extraordinary behaviour is a clear sign that Sugimori by this time was willing to use every ism that could help him defend the actions of his country on Chinese soil, whether it was the universalist argument of utilisationism, the regionalist argument of Monroe-ism, or the nationalist argument of autarky. In his enthusiasm for Japan's new 'affirmative action' policy on the Asian continent, Sugimori came up with increasingly inventive justifications. The following is a striking example dating from the end of 1932:

There is no nation with a stronger personal will to survive than the Chinese. [...] Therefore the existence of the Chinese without a state and a national territory of their own is very well conceivable. One can imagine the Chinese becoming a second sort of Jews. [...] They will do anything just to survive as individuals. [...] The future of the ethnic nation-state is not eternal. [...] It will gradually and progressively dissolve. The advent of the world state, the human state, the supra-ethnic national state, the supra-racial state, the Civitas maxima is both a materialistic inevitability as well as a spiritual necessity. With the advent of such an era the day of the Chinese will also have arrived. Because in a sense it will mean that the Chinese, who have lost their national territory, will even enjoy the honour of being the forerunners of this world state.²⁶⁵

This is where we will leave Sugimori. Not because, like various opinion leaders of a senior generation, he was no longer allowed by the authorities to vent his views on international affairs after the Manchurian Incident and the establishment and Japanese official recognition of Manchukuo. His output during the remainder of the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s, dealing with both national and international society, was prolific to say the least. The reason to stop at this moment in time, apart from the (hotly debated) 'fact' that the period 1931-32 marks a watershed in modern Japanese history, is simply that what one still could say in public after 1932 on questions dealing with the international relations of Japan, most of all in the case of Japan's China policy, was severely restricted and did not leave much room for distinct personal opinions. Sugimori kept on writing in his very personal style and gave his utilisationist and functionalist theories free range, but it nevertheless cannot be denied that his books and articles more and more became part of the uniform propaganda churned out during the 'China Incident' and 'Greater East Asian War' years. But this was probably the inevitable fate of someone who strongly believed in the synthesis of all things. Maybe it is even more appropriate to say that his

264 Ibid.: p.33.

265 'Shina bunkatsu no mondai'. *Kaizō*, 1932.11: pp.75-76.

cosmopolitanist and regionalist ‘utilisationist functionalism’, which made him the odd man out within the internationalist discourse of the 1920s, was during the 1930s gradually overtaken by and incorporated into a new discourse in which the elements anti-establishment, anti-status quo and anti-ethnic national self-determination were instead very much appraised.

5.4 Summary: Utilisationism Out of Line with Pragmatism

Sugimori’s thought was centred on ‘production’ (*seisan*) or, the word he probably loved most, ‘creation’ (*sōzō*) - including its derivative ‘creativity’ (*sōzōryoku*). All other concepts and isms he professed to stand for, and in this chapter we have come across at least a few dozen of these, were mere partial representations or supporting systems of the absolute value of creation and thus secondary. This pyramid of values also led to the situation that he was perfectly able to support two contradictory isms, by saying that the ideal form was in their future synthesis, or to simultaneously support and reject one and the same concept or ism, in one case stating that in the present imperfect world it was still essential and in another case arguing that it was not in line with the ideal content of the future perfect world.

Despite this constant elusiveness Sugimori was accepted as one of the proponents of the Taishō reform movement because of his emphasis on cosmopolitanism over nationalism and on individualism and socialism over statism. However, just as his individualism and socialism were strongly circumscribed by the adjective ‘functionalist’ and thus were actually out of line with the more egalitarian political and social currents of the 1920s, so was his cosmopolitanism indeed a world apart from the internationalism that held sway in his day. All of Sugimori’s isms were clearly informed by the social Darwinism of an earlier age, in which there was a strong division between superior and inferior beings. As far as national society (read: Japan) was concerned, Sugimori proposed a harmonious classless society guided by a somewhat privileged elite (not a class) of technocrats. However, in Sugimori’s world society matters were harsher and there was an insurmountable distinction between those nations fit to survive on the one hand and the losers in the struggle for national survival on the other. Whereas China, a nation without productive power ranked firmly within the latter group, had to be sacrificed on the altar of utilisationist cosmopolitanism, Japan itself, although clearly not regarded as an equal of the fit countries of the West, seemed to be only on the receiving side of this merciless world trend. In the case of his ‘mediocre’ but not ‘inferior’ motherland, there were all sorts of regionalist, nationalist and individualist mitigating circumstances that could be opportunistically used to evade the ‘natural laws’ of social Darwinism.

In short, his emphasis on cosmopolitanism over (ethnic) nationalism was mainly implemented in order to reject the freedom and rights of ‘inferior’ nations and thus in the end predominantly functioned as an excuse to subjugate entire nations. Especially by the beginning of the 1930s Sugimori became so much fixated on the stimulation of inequality that his cosmopolitanism lost all its soul. In defence of the Manchurian Incident his universal trend of utilisationist cosmopolitanism reaches its absurd climax when the whole of the Chinese nation is lifted off the ground while the Japanese nation becomes more and more tied to the Manchurian soil. With hindsight one may conclude that Sugimori with his set consisting of the discriminately dosed elements utilisationism and Monroe-ism had merely ended up concocting a variant of the well-known civilisation-race (*bunmei-jinshu*) mixture, in which the former universal element was

used vis-à-vis China in order to put Japan in a superior position and the latter particularist element was used vis-à-vis the West in order to give Japan special prerogatives in East Asia.²⁶⁶

This said, it should not be forgotten that by this time Sugimori was definitely not on his own. His utilitarian line of argument was in line with a discourse introduced by representatives of what I term ‘the early Shōwa generation of opinion leaders’, in the sense that the ethnic national right of self-determination of Japan’s Asian neighbours was incorporated, or rather ‘sublimated’, into a larger entity in which it was eventually put on a secondary plan or completely negated. One of the most conspicuous examples of this trend is Rōyama Masamichi (1895-1980), a professor of political science at Tokyo University but more known as a member of the Shōwa Kenkyūkai and the man who provided Konoe Fumimaro’s *Tō-A shin-chitsujo* (New order in East Asia) after its proclamation with a sorely needed intellectual foundation in the form of the *Tō-A kyōdōtai* (East Asian Community). A former pupil of Yoshino Sakuzō, he ended up taking a position that was quite distant from his mentor. In his regionalist theories he showed himself to be critical of such concepts as the state, the political nation, and the ethnic nation on the grounds that these were obstacles on the road toward his ideal of ‘the total society’ (*zentai shakai*). Within the context of ‘the China question’ that so much occupied the minds of his generation, he especially emphasized that the rational demands of geographical and economic unification needed to be given priority over the ethnic national right to self-determination.²⁶⁷ It will be evident from the above that apart from coining the Japanese equivalent for the English term ‘regionalism’ Rōyama was not that innovative and owed much to senior members of the Early Shōwa Generation such as Sugimori.²⁶⁸ One cannot help noticing the basic similarities of their regionalist schemes. They both ignored or downplayed the Chinese ethnic national right of self-determination, rejected the corollary Chinese nationalist demands, and in the end saw no other solution but to completely deny the Chinese a national state of their own. In doing so they stressed the priority of the regional common good, which in sharp contrast did not demand substantial sacrifices from Japan. Although Sugimori preferred the criteria of production and

266 For the civilisation-race mixture, see the part ‘The civilisationist discourse of the prewar imperialist international order’ of chapter 1.

267 Recent articles concentrating on Rōyama’s ideas concerning foreign policy, a topic hardly gaining any interest before the mid-1990s, are Kobayashi Hiroharu, ‘Senkanki no kokusai chitsujo ninshiki to Tō-A kyōdōtairon no keisei’. *Nihonshi Kenkyū*, no.424 (Dec.1997), pp.30-54; Sakai Tetsuya, ‘[Tō-A kyōdōtai-ron] kara [kindaika-ron] e: Rōyama Masamichi ni okeru chiiki, kaihatsu, nashonarizumu-ron no isō’. In Nihon Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nenpō seijigaku 1998 – Nihon gaikō ni okeru Ajiashugi*, Iwanami Shoten, 1999, pp.109-28; Fujioka Kentarō, ‘Senkanki Nihon chishikijin no Higashi Ajia kokusai chitsujo ninshiki no kōzō’, *Kyūshū Shigaku*, no.125 (May 2000), pp.27-51; and Yamaguchi Hiroshi, ‘Shoki Rōyama Masamichi no gaikōron’, parts 1 & 2, *Seiji Keizai Shigaku*, no.443 (July 2003), pp.1-22 & no. 444 (August 2003), pp.16-33. A revised English version of the article by Kobayashi is included in Dick Stegewerns, ed., *Nationalism and Internationalism in Imperial Japan*, London, Routledge Curzon, 2003, pp.135-67.

268 It is clear from Rōyama’s *Nihon ni okeru kindai seijigaku no hattatsu* (Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, 1949) that he was well aware of the writings of Sugimori. In this work (pp. 136-37) he discussed Sugimori’s qualification of the state in favour of society as a ‘dazzling and brilliant contribution to the world of political science’ (*seiji gakkai ni hanatta rikuri taru kōsai*) through the perspective of social ethics. Moreover, he did not forget to mention Sugimori’s reflections on the trend in international relations towards federalism (*renpōshugi*).

utilisation and Rōyama consumption and (national) livelihood, this was hardly more than a different choice of wording dictated by the dominant discourses of their day, Marxism and cooperativism respectively. Both Sugimori and Rōyama were very much in tune with the trend of their time and considered themselves harbingers of modernity, but this can hardly rescue them from the accusation that their modern ideas of regional integration came down to ‘developmental dictatorship’.²⁶⁹ There is no harm in calling for regional awareness and encouraging the envisioned partner to join an ‘Asian autonomous region’ (Sugimori’s *dai-jichiku*) or an ‘East-Asian community with a common destiny’ (Rōyama’s *unmei kyōdōtai*), but consenting to having this forced down the other’s throat is of course a completely different matter. The lack of intellectual courage to consider things also from the Chinese point of view and to seriously confront the incontestable fact that Japan and China had become enemies at war in the late summer of 1931 (or, for those who do not subscribe to the concept of a Fifteen Year War, in the early summer of 1937) resulted in the creation of frail constructions of coerced community, which were not merely bound to implode at the earliest opportunity but also to form an obstacle (‘the curse of the *kyōdōtai*’) to all Japanese postwar attempts to become part of and play a leading role in Asia up to this very day. In this sense Sugimori, Rōyama and many other prominent opinion leader of the late 1920s and 1930s were part of a generation very clearly distinct from the Taishō generation of opinion leaders, who by the end of the 1920s had been able to cope with the difficult yet inevitable task of giving the irrefutable fact of Chinese nationalism a rightful place within the political order of East Asia.²⁷⁰

In conclusion, as regards the general characterisation of Sugimori Kōjirō as an exponent of the pragmatist school of thought, it should be noted that he went his own way which, despite the numerous differences and contradictions between the various representatives of this school, had probably better not be qualified by the label of ‘pragmatism’. Whereas his American and Japanese mentors through their ponderings ultimately arrived at the advocacy of pluralism and democracy and, emphasizing future potential, had an optimistic look at present deficiencies,²⁷¹ Sugimori was predominantly led by his concerns over the facts and problems of the present. These concerns made it impossible for him to let superior individuals be absorbed into an egalitarian mass-society. And in the case of international society, he even strongly propounded determinism, social Darwinism and national interest, of which at least the first two modes of thought were inimical to pragmatism. Sugimori in his intellectual development indeed more and more turned his back on the school he started out from and by the mid-1920s completely abandoned the use of the term ‘pragmatism’. Instead of this ism, which condoned present inutilisation (of territory, for instance) in the light of the future potential to utilise, he created his

269 For a discussion of Rōyama’s regionalist concepts within the framework of ‘developmental dictatorship’ (*kaihatsu dokusai*), see Sakai, ‘[Tō-A kyōdōtai-ron] kara [kindaika-ron] e’, pp.119-20.

270 The military and (reformist) bureaucratic representatives of this early Shōwa generation have sometimes been defined as the ‘total war generation’ (see for instance Aochi Shin, ed., *Jinbutsu Shōwa-shi - Sōryokusen no hitobito*, Chikuma Shobō, 1978), but I find the vocational restriction of this ‘generation’ too limited and also think that the element of total war-thinking of this generation does not set them apart from the Taishō generation. See my ‘The End of World War One as a Turning Point in Modern Japanese History’. In Bert Edström, ed., *Turning Points in Japanese History*, London, Japan Library, 2002: pp.152-57.

271 Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001: pp.439-41.

own ism, ‘utilisationism’, which allotted rights of possession on the basis of present utilisation or the present potential to utilise. His mentor Tanaka Ōdō by this time stressed the “irreparable cultural loss to the entire world that accompanied the political subjugation of any nation” and pointed out that “Universal trends have to be filtered through the particular history and culture of each people. The development of every nation, no matter how belated and confused, must be autonomous and voluntary”.²⁷² In sharp contrast, within Sugimori’s coercive cosmopolitanist – which should not be confused with internationalist – trend of ‘utilisationism’ there was no mercy or respite whatsoever for underdeveloped (ethnic) nations that had not yet caught up with the modern industrial age. Although Yoshino Sakuzō had a clear idealistic Kantian strain and did not make use of pragmatist jargon, in the sense that he strongly emphasised the future potential of the underdeveloped and accordingly subscribed to tolerance and equality in both national and international society, he was in the end probably more of a pragmatist than Sugimori.

272 Sharon H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1987: pp.144, 146.

CHAPTER 5

COMPARISON AND CONCLUSION

THE GAP IN ATTITUDE BETWEEN THE TAISHŌ GENERATION AND THE EARLY SHŌWA GENERATION

INTRODUCTION

In the article ‘Senkanki Nihon chishikijin no Higashi Ajia kokusai chitsujo ninshiki no kōzō’, which in its English translation of ‘The Structure of Japanese Interwar Intellectuals’ Perceptions of International Order in East Asia’ could very well have been the title of this book, Fujioka Kentarō scrutinizes the perception of the outside world of Suehiro Shigeo and Rōyama Masamichi. In his analysis of the two he comes upon huge fundamental differences in their attitudes towards the League of Nations, Chinese nationalism, and the Manchurian Incident, which in the case of Suehiro are not unlike Horie’s and in the case of Rōyama are extremely close to those of Sugimori.¹ Accordingly, I cannot but find it very implausible to explain these differences on the sole basis of the different academic trades of international law and diplomatic history (Suehiro) and political science, public administration and international relations (Rōyama), and find it almost incomprehensible how one can completely ignore the obvious fact that there was a generation gap of more than twenty years between Suehiro (1874) and Rōyama (1895). In the above I have often touched upon the need, when dealing with the opinion leaders of the interwar period, to make a distinction between at least two generations and accordingly I have introduced the concepts of a ‘Taishō generation’ and an ‘Early Shōwa generation’. This comparative chapter will also emphasise fundamental differences in attitude between the two generations, but before doing so I would first like to summarise the elements in their outlook upon the world which these generations shared and which were anything but few.

1 Fujioka Kentarō, ‘Senkanki Nihon chishikijin no Higashi Ajia kokusai chitsujo ninshiki no kōzō – Rōyama Masamichi to Suehiro Shigeo no baai’, *Kyūshū Shigaku*, no.125 (May 2000): pp.29-46.

1 SHARED PERCEPTIONS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD

On the basis of my research on Horie, Yoshino, Sugimori and Mizuno and readings of secondary literature on other opinion leaders, I find that the following elements of perception are most conspicuous and together give a good insight into the general view of the national self and the outside world of the 1920s intelligentsia:

Faith in progress

Although some are more influenced by (social) evolutionism and some are more influenced by enlightenment thought and even Christianity, the opinion leaders shared an optimistic faith in the evolutionary development of the world and tended to think of history in terms of a linear process of progress. There was a general consensus that man, national society, and international society would gradually improve and, accordingly, human morality, human culture, and world civilisation would attain an ever higher level. They thus were in line with their predecessors of ‘the new generation in Meiji Japan’ who, growing up in a period of extraordinary receptivity to reform and change, had confidence in the future and believed they could completely reform society.² Many of this generation turned to frustration and despair by the turn of the century, when the political and social order seemed immutable and orthodox nationalism became oppressive. However, in the 1910s a dark veil seemed to have been lifted from Japanese society, and there were ample signs of social and political change. This restored the faith amongst succeeding generations of opinion leaders that history and the trend of the times were on their side and especially after the international watershed of the First World War the optimistic belief in progress, most often expressed in the keyword ‘reform’ (*kaizō*), became all-pervasive in many fields of national life.

Universal civilisation

In the opinion leaders’ perceptions of the outside world there seems to be but one universal pattern of civilisation and thus no place for a strong, particularist Asian identity. Asianist arguments are hardly used and on the whole the concept of a specific Asian civilisation is rejected. Accordingly ‘differences in civilisation’ are treated not as qualitative differences but as quantitative differences, in the sense of differences in the stage of civilisational development attained. Although most commentators are painfully aware that there can be no doubt that the universal civilisation to which they subscribe is essentially Western in character, they often have a faint hope that either Japan or an often not very well-defined ‘Asia’, albeit not immediately, will ultimately make its contribution to ‘world civilisation’, or such manifestations as ‘world culture’ and ‘world economy’.

2 Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan – Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*, Stanford University Press, 1969: p.200.

Absence of Nihonjinron

In the debate on foreign policy there is little mention of Japanese particularist qualities and institutions, or a distinct Japanese mission in this world. Especially such a central institute as the emperor and such a central concept as the national polity (*kokutai*) stand out by their absence. Although at the highest political level these two 'holy entities' were invariably invoked and not seldom used to paralyse political opponents, the position of the emperor does not seem to be of any importance in the theories of the contemporary *Kulturkritiker*. Particularly during the 1910s they of course made sure not to offend against official taboos and thus risk punishment for themselves and their publishers, but instead of giving their country or their sovereign a distinct positive role they rather chose to remain silent. In sharp contrast to the official discourse aimed at the common people, the opinion leaders stood above and often completely ignored the imperial ideology. In an identical fashion, their international policies are seldom justified on the basis of a particularist quality or mission of the Japanese state or ethnic nation. Instead, the most common criteria are such universal stock phrases as the strategic need for national security, the economic need for competitive power, or the basic human right to live.

Socialist terminology

The opinion leaders shared a discourse, which in the immediate postwar period was democratic and anti-imperialist and during the 1920s became increasingly socialist and anti-capitalist. From 1925 onwards the discussion is clearly dominated by socialist vocabulary. Although the gist of their argument often does not change significantly, the way the *Kulturkritiker* phrase it does. We can now find opinion leaders who supported the cause of nationalist China suddenly characterise China as a distinct member of 'the international proletariat', that is, the group of coloured nations. And even those who opposed Chinese nationalist demands were often not loath to use the same sort of vocabulary. Sugimori, for instance, called upon the aid of Marx in order to defend the Japanese seizure of parts of the Asian continent, arguing that the right of property should be confined to the direct user. Apart from the fact that the Japanese discourse was naturally part of an international discourse that was influenced by such important events as World War One and the Russian Revolution, it was also facilitated by the relatively lenient implementation of censure during the period covered in this work when compared to the 1900s and the 1930s. Especially the more academic and highbrow magazines, which were less likely to inspire mass agitation, were allowed a considerably wide range of debate.³ Although socialist influences continued well into the 1930s and informed many cooperativist and reformist ideologies, these could often no longer be presented as such and had to be hidden behind other isms and incorporated within a lofty, national cause.

3 See Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945*, University of California Press, 1988: pp.28-44. Kasza characterises the years 1918-1932 as a period of 'democracy and liberty under party governments' and stresses the 'new respectability of the press', 'the modest impact of administrative controls' and 'the range of acceptable criticism'.

Expanding economic world

Most opinion leaders perceived the postwar world as an economic age. This did not merely mean, as discussed at the outset of this book, that they agreed on the point of view that in the new era economic power instead of military power was decisive. It also implied an awareness that the economic process of differentiation would increasingly stimulate internationalisation and inevitably result in the partial or complete breaking down of national borders. It was to a large extent this awareness that “modern economy demands a large economic zone (*dai-keizai chiiki*)”,⁴ which inspired the wide range of regionalist, internationalist and cosmopolitanist schemes so characteristic of this age. Although the terms ‘total war’ (*sōryokusen*) and ‘the total war generation’ (*sōryokusen no sedai*) are often linked to a select group of army officers,⁵ I want to stress that total war thinking was not restricted to army officers but was rather an extremely widespread phenomenon in the days after World War One which for the most part included civilians, amongst whom many of the most influential opinion leaders of the day. The majority of these mouthed the internationalist rhetoric of closer multilateral relations and increased economic interdependency, eventually leading to the impossibility of international warfare. However, in respect to their country’s China or Manchuria-Mongolia policy they were often not loath to admit that their most urgent aim was to establish a Sino-Japanese economic alliance and to attain Japanese self-sufficiency (of course there was hardly a word about Chinese self-sufficiency). This ambition was in most cases to a large extent inspired by the need to hold out in a modern, protracted, total war, no matter whether that was fought by economic or military means, or whether Japan was one of the countries at war or merely one of the nations suffering the economic damage brought about by war.

Disregard of the League of Nations

The League of Nations was not very popular amongst the opinion leaders. It was not taken very seriously and not many expected it to play a role of importance on the international scene, let alone in the Asian theater. The lack of enthusiasm for the League was not merely due to its perceived weakness, to a large extent because of the non-attendance of the new world leader, but also directly connected to what many felt to be the complete deception of the Paris Peace Conference. Although the Hara Cabinet was more than pleased in attaining its top priority of the unconditional cession of the former German rights and interests on the Shandong peninsula, many outside the government were appalled by the ‘business as usual’ proceedings at the conference, which were in sharp contrast to the ideals outlined in Wilson’s fourteen points. The four power meetings behind closed doors and the official sessions from which the press was barred did not live up to the slogans of ‘open diplomacy’ and ‘people’s diplomacy’. Moreover, the preservation of the colonial status quo, the rejection of the proposal to abolish racial discrimination, and the high war-indemnity levied upon Germany hardly seemed to spell that the

4 Yanaihara Tadao, *Shokumin oyobi shokumin seisaku*, Yūhikaku, 1926. In *Yanaihara Tadao zenshū*, vol.1, Iwanami Shoten, 1963: p.483.

5 See Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War - The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941*, Cornell University Press, 1987; Aochi Shin, ed., *Jinbutsu Shōwa-shi - Sōryokusen no hitobito*, Chikuma Shobō, 1978.

proclaimed new world order, apart from some shifts within the ranks of power, would be inherently different. Those who had held high hopes were seriously let down and those who had doubted the possibility of substantial reform were affirmed in their scepticism.

It is hardly surprising that a League born under the unlucky star of this controversial conference and because of its strong European character sometimes referred to as the 'British Empire Preservation League', did not attract much prolonged attention or sympathy. This does not mean that the Japanese government was not sincere in its support of the League. Nitobe Inazō and his entourage made ample and genuine efforts at conflict management and international cooperation, with which they gathered a considerable amount of international goodwill for their country. It is sometimes pointed out that this accumulation of trust and goodwill, in the light of a potential Sino-Japanese conflict in the near future, was a principal motivation of these efforts,⁶ but most problematic in my opinion is the fact that these internationalist efforts were made within the luscious but isolated environment of Geneva. More than ten years of participation in the League and the existence of the Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai (League of Nations Association of Japan), an indigenous association to promote the League in Japan, could not prevent its failure to raise a realization of affiliation, let alone feelings of affinity. The general public probably could not fathom the complex machinations of institutionalized multilateral cooperation and most likely skipped the media attention there was for the League as way above their heads, an inclination that was only enhanced by the situation that most issues dealt with were of no direct relation to Japan. Yet even the informed minority of diplomats and *Kulturkritiker* who made up the membership of the Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai more often than not forgot to mention the League altogether in the many articles they wrote for publications other than the periodical of their association.⁷ For instance, the enlightened scholar of colonial policy Yanaihara Tadao, faced by the need to bring the Japanese empire in line with the demands and constraints of the postwar world order, was rather attracted to the concept of a commonwealth, as an autonomous, spontaneous, basically equal and, most important, much more solid form of international alliance than the League of Nations.⁸

Although it must be said that the Charter of the League did not fall into the same category as the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which notwithstanding (or due to?) its high ideal of the renunciation of war almost everybody seemed to have forgotten from the very moment it came into being, it is hard to overlook the fact that attention for the League in Japan was relatively scarce all through the 1920s.⁹ In the end it mainly seemed to function as an easy target for those discontent with the international order and it was also within this framework that in 1931, after the Manchurian Incident, the League all of a sudden found itself the focus of Japanese attention as an unsolicited court of international arbitration in which for the the first time in the

6 Inoue Toshikazu, *Nihon gaikōshi kōgi*, Iwanami Shoten, 2003: pp.56-57.

7 The organs of the Kokusai Renmei Kyōkai (and its successor the Nihon Kokusai Kyōkai, the subtle name change the inevitable result of Japan's secession from the League) were respectively *Kokusai Renmei* (1920-22), *Kokusai Chishiki* (1922-37), *Kokusai Chishiki Oyobi Hyōron* (1937-41), *Gaikō Hyōron* (1942-47) and *Kokusai Rengō* (1948).

8 Sakai Tetsuya, 'Senkanki Nihon no kokusai chitsujoron', *Rekishigaku Kenkyū*, no.794 (October 2004): pp.85-86.

9 This statement is based on my research of contemporary general magazines. I have not checked the coverage of the League in the major newspapers during the 1920s.

League's history Japan was directly involved.

Strong impact of the Washington Conference as the first undeniable sign of the new world order

In contrast to the Paris Peace Conference most opinion leaders applauded the results of the Washington Conference, yet this was predominantly based on their support for the Five Power Treaty on naval arms reduction, which had been more drastic than anyone had expected. On the other hand, the Nine Power Treaty concerning China and the Four Power Treaty on the maintenance of order in the Pacific region were not given as much attention. Some considered them relatively unimportant, others chose to ignore them. Thus in general there was no strong awareness of a coherent 'Washington System' amongst the opinion leaders. One of the reasons that hindered the awareness of the postwar world order as a 'Washington (Treaty) System' of course was that the term did not yet exist.¹⁰ This was also evident in 1926, as the Northern Expedition was coming into full swing, when voices were raised in a rather carefree manner to do away with the Nine Power Treaty on China, either to help the Chinese nationalist movement or to crush it, without even considering that this might undermine a whole system. On the other hand, the support for the disarmament part of the Washington Treaties remained unchanged and the majority of the opinion leaders were in favour of its extension in the form of the London Naval Treaty of 1930.

There of course is an extensive academic debate ever since the 1960s, including almost all of the authorities on prewar Japanese foreign policy such as Akira Iriye, Hosoya Chihiro, Usui Katsumi, Ian Nish, Asada Sadao, Satō Seizaburō, Mitani Taichirō, Kitaoka Shinichi, and, more recently, Sakai Tetsuya and Hattori Ryūji, whether the Washington (Treaty) System was indeed 'a system' and, in case it was, how it should be defined and periodised.¹¹ In Western academia (with the conspicuous exception of England) this debate seems to have come to an undecided end together with the all but extinction of the trade of diplomatic history. In Japan, considering the fact that the term made it into the authoritative *Nihon gaikōshi jiten* (Dictionary of Japanese Diplomatic History),¹² there seems to have developed a consensus that there indeed existed something that could be called a 'Washington System' and the debate now seems to concentrate

10 Although I am not sure about its creator and exact date of origin, the term seems to arise at the time of Akira Iriye's *After Imperialism - The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Harvard University Press, 1965) and it also seems to be Iriye who introduced its equivalent 'Washington taisei' to Japan more or less at the same time. See Irie, 'Shidehara Kijūrō to Washington taisei'. *Chūō Kōron*, 1965.4: pp.370-76.

11 This debate is documented in Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism*, Harvard University Press, 1965; 'Washington Taisei no keisei katei – kinchō kanwa no shiteki bunseki'. In Nihon Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nenpō seijigaku 1969 - Kokusai kinchō kanwa no seiji katei*, Iwanami Shoten, 1970: pp.1-143; Usui Katsumi, *Nitchū gaikōshi – Hokubatsu no jidai*, Hanawa Shobō, 1971 and *Nihon to Chūgoku – Taishō jidai*, Hara Shobō, 1972; Hosoya Chihiro & Saitō Makoto, eds, *Washington Taisei to Nichi-Bei kankei*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978; Hosoya Chihiro, ed., *Nichi-Ei kankeishi 1917-1949*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982: pp.1-80; Kitaoka Shinichi, 'Washington Taisei to [kokusai kyōchō] no seishin', *Rikkyō Hōgaku*, no.23 (1984): pp.68-113; Sakai Tetsuya, *Taishō demokurashii taisei no hōkai*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992; Asada Sadao, *Ryō-taisenkan no Nichi-Bei kankei*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1993; Hattori Ryūji, *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō 1918-1931*, Yūhikaku, 2001.

12 Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan Nihon Gaikōshi Jiten Hensan Inkai, ed., *Shinpan Nihon gaikōshi jiten*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1992: pp.1098-1102.

on the question of the date of its (informal) demise. My findings above, though, may at first sight seem to be very close to those of Ian Nish who has often pointed out that he “cannot find in British sources any great evidence that Britain was conscious of the existence of a ‘Washington System’”.¹³ Sakai Tetsuya in his case study of Yoshida Shigeru has proven that in Japan there indeed also was a class of diplomats, albeit a minority, who did not think that anything had intrinsically changed in diplomacy from the prewar days.¹⁴

Nonetheless, my research on the opinion leaders of the day has led me to believe that there was a very strong notion of a new, American led world order which, although not conceptualised in terms of a ‘Washington System’, was for the first time strongly and undeniably brought home to the Japanese in the form of the Washington Conference. And how could this have been any different? To start with, the psychological impact of the symbolical fact that a Japanese delegation had to go all the way to the Atlantic to arrange matters mostly pertaining to the (West) Pacific, their own backyard, was anything but negligible. And there can be no doubt that the very concrete impact of the Washington Treaties, in the sense of the unprecedented naval retrenchments, the Japanese inferiority spelled out in the 3:5 capital warship ratio, the torpedoing of the good old Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the complete circumscription of Japanese expansion in China, and the expulsion from the Shandong peninsula (although this formally was not apart of the Washington Treaties), was immense. And especially the spectacular and symbolic (moving) pictures of capital warships being blown up at full sea must very directly have made the point that something fundamentally was changing.¹⁵ In strong contrast to the Paris Peace Conference, from which the Japanese delegation had returned unloved but victorious, with the German rights to Shandong safely in its bags, this time Japan had to bow before American economic superiority and the country had to swallow an obvious defeat. It is of course true that the Washington Treaties did not materialize in a tangible institution, such as the League of Nations. This was a fundamental weakness that also left the Japanese with nothing much concrete to hold on to in return for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. However, no matter how the British were digesting the American challenge, for Japan the comparative lack of institutionalization and systematization did not make any difference in that there was no denying that the Pax Britannica of yore was no longer in place and instead a new world order had come about, in which it had to commence beating a retreat from China in the face of a largely invisible, economic opponent. Thus it was the Washington Conference, and not the Paris Peace Conference nor the establishment of the League of Nations, that confronted the former Japanese imperialists with the fact that the time had come to take or leave the new world order and, accordingly, set the division between two generations of opinion leaders in motion.

13 Ian Nish, ed., *Anglo-Japanese Alienation, 1919-1952*, Cambridge University Press, 1982: p.31; *Japanese Foreign Policy, 1869-1942*, Routledge, London, 1977: pp.141-42.

14 Sakai Tetsuya, ‘[Ei-Bei kyōchō] to [Nitchū teikei]’. In *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyū: Kyōchō seisaku no genkai – Nichi-Bei kankeishi 1905-1960*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1989: pp.61-92.

15 In line with the Five Power Treaty on naval disarmament Japan disposed of fourteen capital ships, cancelled the building of six others, and turned two into aircraft carriers.

The break with Europe

Up to the First World War Europe was the model civilization on which Japan was trying to pattern itself. The period following the opening-up of Japan springs to mind, with the short-lived *Rokumeikan* as the most conspicuous example of Europeanization. Nationalist reactions against the excessive Westernization of Japanese society ensued but, even in the first two decades of the twentieth century, Europe remained the guiding light for the Japanese intelligentsia in ideological, philosophical, cultural, scientific, military, political and economic matters. In the case of the Japanese intellectuals - and obviously at a single glance in the case of the *Kulturkritiker* - Europe was the cradle of their modern professions and their frame of reference; it was the destination of their travels and the place of sojourn for their research. However, the term 'Europe' must be specified, since after a brief period of popularity of France immediately following the Meiji Restoration, Europe in the eyes of the Japanese elite consisted mainly of the great power England and its upcoming economic rival Germany. All other European entities, including the Netherlands that had almost solely represented the West during most of the Tokugawa period, were absent from Japan's view of the outside world. To many, England was the political, economic and naval ideal and, of course, the country which reinforced Japan's international position by means of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Germany, on the other hand, was the philosophical, scientific and military model. Most students going abroad for study and those sent abroad for research or training by their employer, whether government, private university, army or navy, went to either of these two countries, and the scholarly elite accordingly could be roughly divided into an English-speaking and a German-speaking part, depending on their subject of study.¹⁶

Whereas in prewar days Europe was thus associated with progressivism and most Japanese intellectuals were predominantly focussed on European developments, during and after 'The Great European War' it was exposed as being conservative and imperialist by American Wilsonism, Soviet communism, and the carnage the continent had brought upon itself. It now veritably became 'the old world'. As a result of the war and the ensuing reshuffle of international power relations, Japanese views of the outside world changed considerably. Inevitably, the share which Europe occupied in the outside world as perceived by the Japanese was to diminish, if only for the mere fact that Germany, which represented one half of Europe in their minds, for the time being no longer occupied a place in the international pecking order. A vacuum ensued, during which many opinion leaders gave free rein to their idealistic fantasies, which had at least one common aspect in the fact that these either ignored or rejected the newly established and European dominated League of Nations. Yet there was no way to ignore the United States when in 1921 the great power of the new economic era took the main stage in the East Asian theatre by means of the Washington Conference. From this moment onwards, Europe's share in the world view of the Japanese intellectual dwindled. He was almost completely preoccupied by *Nichi-Bei mondai* (the Japan-America question) and *Nisshi mondai* (the Japan-China question), and in this context Europe, or more precisely England, was often no longer regarded as a dominant force to consider in East Asia, neither as a potential enemy nor as a useful ally.

In the years 1924 and 1925 indignation over the anti-Japanese legislation in the American

16 Watanabe Minoru, *Kindai Nihon kaigai ryūgakusei-shi*, vol.1, Kōdansha, 1977: appendix, chart 2.

Senate, a feeling of international isolation, and socialist influences resulted in a tendency for renewed interest in Europe. However, to the dismay of the *Kulturkritiker* the first British and French social-democratic cabinets did not last long, and the Italian fascist experiment was generally slighted as an act of irrationality by a second-rate nation,¹⁷ thus making that the dominant trend during the 1920s of an ever decreasing European share within Japanese views of the outside world continued without notable rupture. As Japan's society increasingly developed into an urbanised mass society, the general populace gradually tuned into the various expressions of mass culture, a considerable amount of which emanated from the United States. In contrast, the upper classes held on to their more elitist cultural and academic lives, which as before the war were permeated by an overwhelming and distinct European influence, but this could hardly prevent the continent seeming to become more and more a historical frame of reference, a living museum of cultural heritage.

Sympathy for the Soviet experiment

In comparison with the Italian fascist experiment the opinion leaders had far more sympathy for the 'rational and idealistic' dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union. Although most expressed their horror over the violence which occurred in the aftermath of the October Revolution there was a general recognition of the historical necessity for the revolution. Hardly anybody supported the government and the army in their intervention in Siberia and most did not consider the different political and economic systems as an argument to oppose the re-establishment of official relations with Russia.¹⁸ In fact, there was a considerable amount of benevolent interest amongst the *Taishō bunmei hihyōka* for the communist experiment at social and economic reform. In the first half of the 1920s there even arose the curious situation that both those on the left and those on the right side of the political spectrum focused on the Soviet Union, the former in the sense of an ideological alternative to the capitalist United States and the latter in the sense of an economic and military ally against the same country. Partly on the basis of these inclinations there was a widespread call by the opinion leaders upon the government to officially recognise the Soviet Union and enter into diplomatic relations, but by the time this finally happened in 1925 most had already lost their interest. In the end the country was probably considered too heterogeneous to receive continuous attention as a potential ally to Japan.

Ambivalence towards the new world leader

While some members of the Japanese intelligentsia had been to the United States, usually to study at universities connected to the Protestant mission in Japan, there were not many who looked up to the country as an ideal in a particular field. Most of the academic, cultural,

17 This contempt for Italy in general and fascism in particular is evident in almost all case studies of opinion leaders of the Taishō period. Itō Yukio's research on the reactions in Japan to the establishment of the fascist regime in Italy, as seen in the major newspapers of the day, presents an identical view. Itō, *Taishō demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987: pp.141-56.

18 For the widespread criticism of the Siberian Intervention in the major Japanese newspapers, see Paul E. Duscomb, ' "A Great Disobedience Against the People": Popular Press Criticism of Japan's Siberian Intervention, 1918-22'. *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.32, no.1 (Winter 2006): pp.53-81.

political and military elite rushed through the country on their way to Europe, where true knowledge and civilisation were to be found. In the popular imagination the country was also mainly characterised as an outlet for Japanese manual labourers and emigrants, an image which inspired less and less positive feelings with the incessant problems between the two countries as a result of the strong anti-Japanese sentiments on America's West Coast. Except for a small minority, who already before the war had adopted a predominantly economic outlook of the world and accordingly were somewhat in awe of the potential of the United States, the larger part of the intelligentsia could not conceive of the country as the great power-to-be in the near future.

Even when the United States participated decisively in the war, took upon itself a very prominent role in the peace negotiations, and finally took over the international stage by means of the Washington Conference, a strong feeling of ambivalence remained amongst the Japanese opinion leaders. They did not seem to know how to characterise the country and whether to like or dislike it. Some admired the country as the symbol of democracy, the champion of disarmament, and the economic superpower to emulate, but others rejected it as the symbol of capitalism, the headquarters of economic imperialism, a threat to the Japanese economy, and the only serious potential enemy to Japan's position in China and the Pacific. Yet, for the majority the country was most likely a contradictory and hard to fathom combination of these two extremes. And, indeed, how were the Japanese to harmonise the idealistic commitment of the Wilson administration, the generosity and aloofness of the Harding administration and, last but not least, the insensitivity and arrogance of the Coolidge administration?

Tsutsui Kiyotada has pointed out that Japanese nationalism of the 1920s and 1930s should mainly be understood as a reaction against foreign pressure and within this framework has stressed 'the trauma amongst the masses' caused by the American Immigration Act of 1924, which coincided with a feeling of isolation, frustration, humiliation and defeat amongst various members of the Early Shōwa generation such as Matsuoka Yōsuke (1880-1946) and Amō Eiji (1887-1968).¹⁹ Nitobe Inazō (1862-1933), a member of a Meiji generation, is also well-known for his vow never to set foot again on American soil until the discriminatory act was repealed (although he ended up going there on a mission to justify his country's actions in Manchuria).²⁰ In my case studies of members of the Taishō and Early Shōwa generations, though, I have not been able to find much evidence for a widespread feeling of indignation over the anti-Japanese legislation.²¹ Still, such uncivilised behaviour on the part of the United States was nonetheless

19 Tsutsui Kiyotada, 'Nashonarizumu to Ajiashugi ni okeru nijūsei'. In Aoki Tamotsu et al. eds, *Kindai Nihon bunkaron 2 – Nihonjin no jikoninshiki*, Iwanami Shoten, 1999: pp.8-10. In some cases the impact of this trauma was only aggravated by the direct foreign experience of frustration and inequality in the United States, a country where in sharp contrast to Europe most Japanese visitors were not members of the elite but refugees and adventurers from the lowest strata of Japanese society. A vivid description of the rough experience that America could be, although dating from the turn of the century, is Nagai Kafū's *Amerika monogatari*, Hakubunkan, 1908.

20 Thomas W. Burkman, 'Nationalist Actors in the Internationalist Theatre – Nitobe Inazō and Ishii Kikujirō and the League of Nations'. In Dick Stegewerns, ed., *Nationalism and Internationalism in Imperial Japan*, Routledge, London, 2003: pp.97-100.

21 Itō Yukio in his research on the Seiyūkai similarly observes that within this party the discriminatory legislation did not cause a significant reaction either, most probably because it did not have any direct or concrete consequences for Japan. Itō, 'Dai-ichiji taisen to sengo Nihon no keisei – Rikken Seiyūkai no dōkō', *Kyōto Daigaku Hōgaku Ronsō*, vol. 140, no.3/4 (January 1997): pp.178-79.

considered most unseemly for a world leader, and without any doubt strongly contributed to the fact that the country did not become the exemplary symbol of civilisation prewar Europe had been to the Japanese intelligentsia. Therefore, in spite of Mitani Taichirō's analysis that Taishō Democracy should also be understood as Americanisation, symbolised by the way the people became familiar with the United States through the moving pictures, and that postwar American political influence thus cannot be seen apart from its overwhelming cultural influence, I cannot but conclude that at least as far as the intelligentsia was concerned culture and academia were unchangingly and overwhelmingly European.²² In synchronicity with their European peers, Japanese intellectuals continued to look down upon the United States and the mass culture associated with it, and as before England and Germany remained their favourite destinations for study and travel.

China as the panacea for Japan's economic vulnerability

In the postwar period there was a general awareness of Japanese weakness, in the sense of civilisational backwardness, cultural inferiority, military weakness but most of all economic vulnerability. In many cases the solution to the latter problem was sought in strategies to become less dependent on the United States. Having dismissed Europe as outdated and undependable and the Soviet Union as weak and alien, out of the few countries that constituted the Japanese outside world there remained only one, namely China, to function as an ally to withstand the American pressure.

Although calls for a Sino-Japanese alliance were not new, up until the end of the First World War China had not been treated as a serious partner and was merely seen as Japan's main field of operation. On the one hand there of course was the Asianist slogan '*dōbun dōshu*' (same script, same race),²³ which heralded a common East Asian identity vis-à-vis the Western

22 Mitani Taichirō, 'Taishō demokurashii to Amerika'. In Mitani, *Taishō demokurashii-ron*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1974: pp.130-33. This conclusion is also backed up by the practice in the Japanese recording industry during the 1920s of producing records with red labels for the elite and middle class, mainly featuring European classical music and Japanese classically trained voices, and records with a black label, featuring Western and Japanese untrained voices performing recent pop music compositions aimed at the ordinary people. The prestigious red label releases were four times the price of a black label. Even in the case of popular music the American influence was still limited, judging by the fact that the majority of the releases consisted of European or European influenced songs. There was a strong consciousness of American pop music, but the record companies tended to control and "tame" American influences, and make it more like what they were used to selling and wanted to continue selling. Therefore, the many songs by the 'boulevardier' Futamura Teiichi from the late 1920s that were advertised as '*jazzu songu*' sounded more like French cabaret than American jazz. The same is true for the so-called Honmoku '*jazzu ryūkōka*' of the early 1930s. For the Honmoku repertory, see Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon – Authenticating Jazz in Japan*, Duke University Press, 2001: pp.71-72. Moreover, foreign places referred to in songs were mostly West European – 'Mon Pari' (My Paris), the best-selling song popularised by the Takarazuka Girls Revue at the end of the decade, arguably the most well-known example – until the mid-1930s, when concomitant with Japan's expansionist endeavours on the Asian continent the focus of exotic yearning shifted increasingly (and to a considerable extent coercively) to China. I gained a lot of this knowledge from the annual lectures on prewar popular music by David Hopkins for the Kansai Modern Japan Group and his impressive 78 rpm record collection.

23 Other translations of the first compound of this slogan are 'common culture' or 'common civilisation'.

imperialist powers, although its proponents tended to forget that there was East Asian human life on the Korean peninsula and were often merely interested in a pact between Japan and China. Even more conspicuous was the earlier mentioned argument of ‘the lips and the teeth’ (*hosha shinshi*). This latter phrase by which a Sino-Japanese alliance against the West was invariably advocated up until the Taishō period did not so much stress common identity as it did common interests or, more correctly, a common enemy. It is therefore not so strange that by the 1880s, when the majority of the Japanese intellectual elite more and more identified itself with the West and almost without exception had taken to looking down upon China, this argument all but vanished from the main discourse on international relations. Instead the central stage was taken over by Fukuzawa Yukichi’s famous adage of ‘*datsu-A nyū-Ō*’ (Stepping out of Asia, entering Europe), in which all forms of alliance with neighbour China were fundamentally rejected. It is hard to deny that this new concept was to a large extent inspired by the strong frustration that notwithstanding its modern accomplishments Westerners still lumped Japan and China together in the same category and by the accompanying ambition to create the necessary distance between the two countries. And it of course also did not help that China was Japan’s most manifest enemy, in the sense that it formed a direct obstacle to Japan’s short-term aim to increase its influence on the Korean peninsula. It thus partially overshadowed the Western powers, who constituted the enemy to Japan’s long-term policy to revise the unequal treaties and to eradicate Western dominance over the whole of East Asia.

Once the Chinese were overwhelmingly crushed by the Japanese army and navy in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and disappeared from view as a potential enemy, the time seemed right again for calls upon China to stand together in the common struggle against the West (or the somewhat less Western enemy that was tsarist Russia). However, as the Chinese disappeared from the Japanese view as a hostile entity they simultaneously faded from their view altogether as a living entity that could be communicated with. China, in the same vein as Korea a few decades earlier, was simply rendered into an empty stage for others to occupy. The Xinhai Revolution of 1911 did not do much to change Japanese views in a positive direction. Those who held high hopes for a new and republican ‘Young China’ were almost without exception completely let down by its seemingly endemic internal division in the wake of the revolution and its aftershocks and many political and military leaders instead took a serious liking to the continued weakness of their neighbour. However, this attitude changed fundamentally in the immediate postwar period. Amongst the *Kulturkritiker* there were some who looked benignly upon the May Fourth Movement as a sign of the birth of a likeminded democratic brother. However, the principal looking-glass with which to observe the developments in China was not that of democracy but that of economy, to be more precise, the total war concept of economic self-sufficiency. Within this framework all eyes were suddenly turned towards Japan’s neighbour

Since most Japanese who actually used this slogan hardly ever elaborated on the exact elements of the common identity it is hard to say which translation is correct, so I have chosen the safe option of sticking to the interpretation given by the *Kōjien*. According to Douglas Howland the concept was first publicly promoted as *tongwen tongzhong* in 1898 by Zhang Zhidong, a leading Qing dynastic official known for his work in education, to refer to Chinese affinities with Japan. He used it specifically to encourage Chinese students to go to Japan to study. The erudite classical scholar Zhang Binglin (Taiyan) had already used *tongzhong* in the meaning of ‘same race’ in 1897. D. R Howland, *Borders of Chinese Civilization: Geography and History at Empire’s End*, Duke University Press, 1996: pp.261-62.

under the general consensus that the country was of vital importance to the Japanese economy. Various scenarios for the formation of an 'East Asian regional unit' were written, which nonetheless shared the common feature that they were predominantly economic in nature and almost without exception concentrated solely upon China.²⁴ Most of these scenarios accordingly needed to be rewritten when China, by unifying itself and by starting to rid itself of the foreign encroachment upon the country, in the latter half of the 1920s instead of merely providing the main stage for Japan's foreign policy finally developed into a leading actor on its own stage. Although the adjusted scenarios differed fundamentally over the question whether nationalist China was the long-awaited ally or rather the newly to be feared enemy, nothing much changed in the situation that the country remained the principal object of Japanese views of the outside world until the end of the Second World War.

The attraction of regionalism

If in Meiji Japan's race to catch up with Western civilisation the existence of ideas on an alliance of Asian nations had seemed snowed under by Fukuzawa Yukichi's call in favour of 'stepping out of Asia' (*datsu-A*), by the Shōwa period such ideas had become so adopted within rightist rhetoric and government propaganda that in hindsight they were looked upon as part and parcel of the notorious Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and thus considered suspicious and dangerous. These factors have led to the situation that even as such ideas were discovered to have existed amongst 'respectable' actors on the prewar modern Japanese scene they tend to be ignored or downplayed. The extreme cases that could not be ignored were swept upon a heap with the name of 'Asianism', a tag which because of its prewar often dubious content has strong negative connotations. Still, it is hard to deny that, however subdued for short-term political, economic or strategic reasons, ideas on Asian integration were a constant element in the intellectual make-up of Japanese political, economic, military and opinion leaders and there was hardly any Japanese who did not share the long-term policy of kicking the Western nations out of Asia.

There is a substantial amount of literature on modern Japanese views of Asia and concepts of (East) Asian integration, to which the most recent contributions include prominent names such as Kevin Doak, Prasenjit Duara, Hatano Sumio, Hazama Naoki, Kang Sang-jung, J. Victor Koschmann, Koyasu Nobukuni, Mitani Taichirō, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Oguma Eiji, Sakai Tetsuya, Stefan Tanaka, Yamamuro Shinichi and Yonetani Masafumi.²⁵ It would go too far to

24 Even in the present discourse on the establishment of some form of cooperation in the East Asian region, almost all Japanese attention is focused on the question of how to accommodate the rapid rise in prominence of China and accordingly the existence of the two Korea's is often forgotten.

25 Kevin Doak, 'Narrating China, Ordering East Asia'. In Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak & Poshek Fu, eds, *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, University of Michigan Press, 2001 & 'Building National Identity through Ethnicity'. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.27, no.1 (2001); Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003; Hatano Sumio, *Taiheiyō sensō to Ajia gaikō*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1996; Hazama Naoki 'Shoki Ajia-shugi ni tsuite no shiteki kōsatsu'. *Tōa*, no.410-17 (August 2001-March 2002); Kang Sang-jung, *Orientalizumu no kanata e*, Iwanami Shoten, 1996; J. Victor Koschmann, 'Asianism's Ambivalent Legacy'. In Peter J. Katzenstein & Shiraishi Takashi, eds, *Network Power. Japan and Asia*, Cornell University Press, 1997; Koyasu Nobukuni, *Ajia wa dō katararete kita ka*, Fujiwara Shoten, 2003; Mitani

discuss this body of research here in detail, but no matter whether the drive towards regional integration is caught by the term Asianism (*Ajiashugi*) or regionalism (either *chiikishugi* or *rījonarizumu*), one common aspect is that the focus has been almost without exception on the time spans from the start of the Meiji Period to the end of World War One and from the Manchurian Incident until the end of World War Two (the latter time span often being labeled ‘the Fifteen Years War’). Although many authors do not even so much as attempt to justify this leap in time, it does tend to make the interwar years of 1918-1931 stand out as an exceptional time frame, namely a period of international cooperation (*kokusai kyōchō*) with the West, symbolised by the post-World War Two concepts of ‘Taishō Democracy’ and ‘the Washington (Treaty) System’. In this way the impression is created of an ‘internationalist’ age, if not in true intention at least in public principle, in which attempts at the regional integration of East Asia were either absent, inopportune, or impossible. However, in my opinion, ideas on Asian integration were both a constant and a crucial element in the mindset of Japanese intellectuals for the whole of the imperial era (1868-1945) and accordingly in this work I have dealt with like ideas of opinion leaders of the 1910s and 1920s in order to fill the interwar gap.

Voices in favour of an Asian form of regional unification, in the sense of a common front against the Western imperialist powers, could be heard every once in a while at the centre of debate on foreign policy in Japan during the Bakumatsu and early Meiji periods. More often than not these voices sounded rather alike, as they tended to be variations on the themes of ‘same script, same race’ and ‘lips and teeth’, and together with these two themes the regionalist voices died down in the face of the ‘stepping out of Asia’ discourse from the mid-1880s onwards. And although the period 1895-1904, which was predominantly characterised by the preparations for a war against Russia, even saw a revival of Asianist publications, these were usually written by political outsiders such as Okakura Tenshin or the ‘continental adventurers’ (*tairiku rōnin*) of the Genyōsha and the Kokuryūkai.²⁶ Those in the government and bureaucracy with real political influence made sure not to be openly associated with ideas of East Asian integration aimed against the West. At the turn of the century Japan was finally making headway with the revision of the unequal treaties with the Western powers and it definitely did not want to do anything that

Taichirō, *Kindai Nihon no sensō to seiji*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan - Time, Space, Nation*, M.E. Sharpe, 1998; Oguma Eiji, *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen*, Shinyōsha, 1995 and *[Nihonjin] no kyōkai*, Shinyōsha, 1998; Sakai Tetsuya, ‘[Tō-A kyōdōtai-ron] kara [kindaikaron] e’. In Nihon Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nenpō seijigaku 1998 – Nihon gaikō ni okeru Ajiashugi*, Iwanami shoten, 1999, and ‘Senkanki Nihon no kokusai chitsujo-ron’. *Rekishigaku kenkyū*, no.794 (October 2004); Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient - Rendering Pasts into History*, University of California Press, 1993; Yamamuro Shinichi & Furuya Tetsuo, eds, *Kindai Nihon ni okeru Higashi-Ajia mondai*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001; Yamamuro, *Shisō kadai to shite no Ajia*, Iwanami Shoten, 2001; Yonetani Masafumi, *Ajia/Nihon*, Iwanami Shoten, 2006.

26 For Okakura see F.G. Notehelfer, ‘On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin’. *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.16, no.2 (1990), pp.309-55. Joshua Fogel in his *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China* (Stanford University Press, 1996: pp.85-86, 90) also shows how Okakura’s experiences in China were dominated by his idealistic preconceptions and were completely out of line with other travellers to China. There still is a lack of research outside Japan into the Genyōsha and the Kokuryūkai. The two studies I know of, E.H. Norman, ‘The Genyōsha: A Study in the Origins of Japanese Imperialism’. *Pacific Affairs*, XVIII (1944): pp.261-84 and Marius B. Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen*, Stanford University Press, 1954, are both over fifty years old.

might reinforce the European proclaimed fear of a ‘yellow peril’. Therefore Asianism was anything but opportune and all vocabulary hinting at common Asian goals was meticulously excluded from official statements during the remainder of the Meiji period.²⁷ Even Okakura Tenshin, who in 1902 in his enthusiasm for the independence movement in India had loudly proclaimed ‘the awakening of the East’ to the West, on the outburst of the Russo-Japanese War no longer insisted that ‘Asia is one’ and instead did his utmost to deny the rising notion of a ‘yellow peril’.²⁸ It was only under the exceptional circumstance of a power vacuum in the Far East at the time of World War One that regionalist ideas were once again widely propagated and the concept of a Monroe Doctrine for East Asia was at the centre of debate. However, such open calls in support of the Asian regionalist cause did not outlive the end of the war. In the face of American superiority Japan had to be more humble than it had been during the war years and had to swing along with the internationalist tune of the immediate postwar years. As I mentioned before, under the new world order Japan was on the defensive and was forced to do more than merely mimic the American vocabulary of the open door, equal opportunities and sovereignty of Chinese territory. In these changed circumstances calls for a superior position of Japan in East Asia legitimised by means of a Monroe Doctrine for Asia were not timely anymore and accordingly the word ‘Monroe-ism’ was no longer heard of until the 1930s.

It is also within the framework of the resurrection of this Monroe Doctrine for Asia that most specialists see the true advent of regionalism in Japan. In this sense the introduction to the Japanese language of the concept of (transnational) regionalism by Rōyama Masamichi in early 1933 is generally considered an important benchmark.²⁹ However, if this indeed is a turning point in the history of regionalism in modern Japan, what is one to make of the fact that the ideas Rōyama propounded were scarcely different from those Sugimori had developed ever since the beginning of the 1920s? Moreover, when one considers that Rōyama’s ‘regionalism’ in fact did not comprise much more than a Sino-Japanese working relationship of some sorts, it becomes increasingly difficult to find a clear dividing line with the regionalist stance - in the sense of a Sino-Japanese economic alliance - that was shared by the Taishō generation all through the interwar period. Therefore I find that Mitani Taichirō’s thesis that “the 1920s formed the heyday of Japanese globalism” and “regionalism until 1931 had never been more than a tributary or undercurrent” should be considerably toned down.³⁰

Although the majority of the opinion leaders of the interwar period was definitely not very keen to flock under the banner of the Asianist movement because of its rightist and ultra-nationalist connotations, there were few who did not feel sympathy for its central policy of driving the white

27 Yamamuro Shinichi, ‘Nihon gaikō to Ajiashugi no kōsaku’. In Nihon Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nenpō Seijigaku 1998 - Nihon gaikō ni okeru Ajiashugi*, Iwanami Shoten, 1999: pp.3-32. Konoe Atsumaro in his private but very energetic efforts to bring about Sino-Japanese cooperation exerted considerable self-censure when expressing his Asianist ideas in print. See, Marius B. Jansen, ‘Konoe Atsumaro’. In Akira Iriye, ed., *The Chinese and the Japanese*, Princeton University Press, 1980; p.114.

28 Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, Princeton University Press, 1985: p.215.

29 Rōyama Masamichi, ‘Sekai no sainshiki to chihōteki (rījonaru) kokusai renmei’, *Kokusai Chishiki*, 1933.1: pp.22-30. The term ‘*chihōshugi*’ he used in this article was changed into ‘*chiikishugi*’ when it was included in Rōyama’s *Sekai no henkyoku to Nihon no sekai seisaku*, Ganshōdō, 1938: pp.91-103.

30 Mitani Taichirō, *Nihon ni okeru [chiikishugi] no gainen* (keynote speech from 1994). In Mitani Taichirō, *Kindai Nihon no sensō to seiji*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997: pp.94-95.

from the Asian continent. However, in line with the generally shared awareness of Japanese and Asian weakness, regionalist ambitions for the larger part took the more passive and humble form of a Sino-Japanese economic alliance. Moreover, its proponents were always very careful to point out that they were not aiming at the creation of an exclusionist economic bloc. What they were attempting to do was to reduce the degree of Japan's dependency on the West, but they were keenly aware that their country could not entirely dispense with the other 'regional units' of the world. Regardless of the limited scope and character of this alliance, this cannot make any difference to the fact that in answer to what was mainly felt to be an American economic threat to Japan's position in the world and on the basis of the economic and strategic arguments of total war thinking, regional integration was considered desirable or even essential. In contrast to the image of an internationalist, regionalism-free interlude, the late 1910s and the 1920s thus constitute a period in which ideas on the regional integration of East Asia flourished profusely. Even the rather idealistic Yoshino Sakuzō, the figurehead of Taishō Democracy, was no exception to this trend as he consecutively propagated a Japan-led Monroe Doctrine for East Asia and a Sino-Japanese economic alliance. He functions without problem as a good case in point of how, after the eclipse of the wartime dream of an Asian Monroe Doctrine, regionalism did live on as a compromise between, or as an alternative to, the idealist but as yet undependable new current of internationalism and the heavily criticised but still prevalent nationalism of yore. Although there can be no doubt that the regionalist schemes of the interwar period were seldom well outlined, were often based on vague and unrealistic hopes, and hardly ever featured a regional unit comprising more than the Japanese empire and (parts of) China, regionalism continued to be an attractive solution out of the crisis many perceived Japan to be in and it accordingly occupied a prominent position within the debate on Japan's foreign policy all through the 1920s.

Disinterest for the colonies

Despite the continuous attention for regionalist solutions to the problems Japan was faced with in the new postwar world order, Japan's colonies hardly ever featured prominently within the debate on foreign policy in the media. It may seem somewhat odd, but the regionalist and colonialist debates were most of the time completely separate. The colonial debate was mainly centred on Korea and Taiwan, which were considered undisputed Japanese territory, and accordingly was predominantly conducted within the confinement of bureaucratic and academic circles and specialised publications. Many important opinion leaders did not deal with Korea or Taiwan at all during the whole of their writing careers. And even in the case of Yoshino Sakuzō, a man who was exceptionally devoted to the Korean question, it is hard to deny that he seemed to have lost interest by the early 1920s. In contrast, the regionalist debate in Japan focused on China, which was still 'unfinished business', and thus was part of the lively, nationwide debate on the 'China question' that involved almost all popular media.

The inferiority of Asia

The fact that most of the opinion leaders of the 1920s adopted some form of East Asian regionalism did not make them into 'Asianists'. The main reason for this situation should not be traced to the elements of opportunism or propriety mentioned above. It was the inevitable

outcome of the simple fact that the overwhelming majority of the Japanese did not consider themselves Asians, had trouble to conceive of a united Asia and a common Asian identity. And in the few cases that they did mention and elaborated on an Asian identity, its content often was anything but flattering. Mizuno Hironori, who rather exceptionally for an opinion leader of his day had no academic background, is because of his somewhat crude writings a very striking but nonetheless representative example. For instance, he was so kind as to point out that the most conspicuous Eastern tradition he could think of was autocratic rule. Confucianism, ‘the constitution of Eastern morality’, showed a strong tendency to keep the people ignorant, and thus was incompatible with constitutional government and detrimental to progress. He had no hesitation whatsoever to openly declare that Western civilisation was of a higher level than Eastern civilisation, which he said could easily be proven by the simple fact that “Most of the present civilisation in the East is Western import. The East has only Indian philosophy and handicraft art to boast of”.³¹ Although regional integration was considered desirable or even essential on the basis of economic and strategic arguments informed by total war thinking, a common (East) Asian identity, whether cultural, racial, political or ideological, was rejected as hollow or base.

Stefan Tanaka has described the process how academics in the latter half of the Meiji period gave their country a past distinct from the West by making China into Japan’s own private Orient and, moreover, by means of the academic discipline of the historical study of this Orient in the form of *Tōyōshi* created a discourse of difference by which to substantiate Japanese superiority over a backward *Shina*. More recently, Iwabuchi Kōichi on a related note also mentions the “historically constituted ambivalence of the Japanese conception of ‘Asia’, a cultural geography that offers Japan at once a shared identity with other parts of Asia and is also the source of Japanese feelings of superiority”.³² Although it goes without saying that a regionalist agenda is better served with feelings of commonality and equivalence than those of difference and superiority, it is hard to deny that in the interwar discourse on Asia the stress was overwhelmingly on the latter set. Commonality could scarcely be found in the basic awareness that Japan was geographically located within Asia and in the notion that the Asian nations had to take some form of common action in the face of Western oppression (and thus for the sake of convenience often forgetting that the Chinese, Koreans and Taiwanese were increasingly thinking in terms of Japanese oppression). However, this was far from sufficient to prevent most Japanese from not being able to detect any cultural, political or ‘civilisational’ similarities, not including themselves when using the term ‘Asia’, and thus having no qualms in making pejorative remarks about the region and its inhabitants. In the case of Korea, which was in the dismal position of being part of both ‘Asia’ and the Japanese colonial empire, doctor Kirihara and his colleagues of Keijō Imperial University had no problems whatsoever in using their research budget to measure biological line co-efficients, facial hair distribution and mouth muscle activity in order to prove that the Korean natives were biologically and physically inferior

31 Mizuno Hironori, ‘Shina no fukkō to waga kokumin no kakugo’. *Kōmin Kōza*, 1927.7, reprinted in Awaya Kentarō et al., eds, *Mizuno Hironori chosakushū*, volume 5, Yūzankaku, 1995: pp.242-43.

32 Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient – Rendering Pasts into History*, University of California Press, 1993; Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentring Globalization – Popular Culture and Japanese transnationalism*, Duke University Press, 2002; p.66

to their Japanese colonizers and, moreover, in getting their findings published.³³ As for China, the country that was almost synonymous to ‘Asia’ in Japanese mental maps, the legacy of the judgement by Japan’s many China experts that the country did not constitute a modern state (*kokka*) but merely a culture (*bunka*) proved suffocating for many.³⁴ Although an important development particular to the Taishō generation of opinion leaders was that they started to conceive of China as a *kokka* of some sorts, this did not change a thing to the fact that it never became a true ‘civilised country’ (*bunmeikoku*) worthy of Japan’s respect, admiration or interest, let alone emulation. And whereas Sinologists like Naitō Konan had magnanimously conceded that the Chinese at least had a distinct and venerable culture to boast of, this was exactly the one element that created the least enthusiasm amongst the advocates of the various regionalist creeds.³⁵ Even in the latter half of the 1930s, when the discourse on both internal and external matters was completely dominated by the terms unification (*tōgō*), community (*kyōdōtai*), culture (*bunka*) and region (*chiiki*, *ken*, or *burokku*), in sharp contrast to incessant calls for the political, military and economic unification of (East) Asia the concept of the cultural unification of this region remained conspicuously underrepresented.³⁶ Whatever the Japanese needed from ‘the continent’, it was definitely not Chinese or Asian culture, but it will be evident that without a certain amount of cultural affinity regionalist endeavours will not go far.

The lack of a clear and strong object thus formed the most fundamental obstacle to the rise of a substantial Asianist movement.³⁷ However, it was not merely the inferiority of the Asian ‘other’ that prevented the regionalist discourse of the 1920s from turning into an Asianist movement. A movement only first becomes a movement when it acquires a leader. This precondition proved extremely problematic in a situation where most of the *Taishō Kulturkritiker* could not detect any Asian power outside of Japan’s borders worthy or capable of leading the movement, but also slighted their own country’s credentials. Whereas Sugimori when confronted with the fait accompli of the Manchurian Incident was willing to water down the wine a bit, within the unprecedented freedom of press and opinion of the interwar years all of my case studies made no attempt to disguise that their country could not live up to the high standards of the European *bunmeikoku* in their various academic disciplines and non-academic predilections. Even doctor Kirihara did not contemplate ranking the Japanese at a par with the ‘biologically and

33 Kirihara Shinichi, ‘Nitchōjin-kan ni okeru ketsueki shokubetsu hyakubunritsu no sai oyobi ketsueki shokubetsu tokuyūsei no den ni tsuite’, *Chōsen Igakkai Zasshi* (November 1922): pp.273-294; Kubō Takeshi, ‘Mōhatsu no kenkyū’, *Chōsen Igakkai Zasshi* (April 1918): pp.81-130 and ‘Chōsenjin no jinshu kaibōgakuteki kenkyū’, *Chōsen Igakkai Zasshi* (July 1918): pp.147-152. This information was gathered from Mark E. Caprio, ‘*Chōsen Igakkai Zasshi*: Searching for Biological Definitions of the Korean Race’, unpublished presentation at the Association for Asian Studies Conference, San Diego, March 2004.

34 See Joshua A. Fogel, *Politics and Sinology – The Case of Naitō Konan (1866-1934)*, Harvard University Press: pp.182-84, 208-10 and Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient*.

35 Fogel: pp.182-84, 208-10.

36 Mitani, *Nihon ni okeru [chiikishugi] no gainen*: pp.99-100.

37 This fundamental problem is also overly clear from Takeuchi Yoshimi’s strenuous but abortive effort to come to a definition of Asianism in his groundbreaking study of 1963. In the end he does not get any further than observing that ‘Asianism is not an ideology with a concrete content one can define objectively but rather a certain inclination (*keikōsei*). (...) It does not contain any values, cannot stand on its own and thus has to depend on some other ideology’. Takeuchi Yoshimi, ‘Nihon no Ajiashugi’. In Matsumoto Kenichi, *Takeuchi Yoshimi [Nihon no Ajiashugi] seidoku*, Iwanami Shoten, 2000: pp.8-10.

physically superior Westerners', although this of course did not imply that he left his fellow-countrymen in the denigrating position of having to mingle with the lowest group in which Japan's Asian neighbours resided. The Japanese were neatly provided with the quasi-scientific status of membership of a middle group in between the Western and the Asian nations.³⁸ Nevertheless, in the sense that the country was still highly unlike the Western model Japan was quite 'Asian' after all - although hardly any of the opinion leaders of the day put it in these terms. This intricate mixture of feelings of superiority towards Asia and an inferiority complex towards the West did clearly not contribute to the country's regionalist aspirations, and in this sense it probably is not such a great surprise that it even was evident at the height of its self-proclaimed but unsuccessful war in order to establish a Greater East Asian co-prosperity sphere.³⁹ Whereas unifying a region in a strong awareness of its inferiority is not easy to start with, it can only become infeasible when the leader of the unifying process is accredited with not merely a comparative and derivative superiority but also a very slight amount of it.

38 Kiriwara, 'Nitchōjin-kan ni okeru ketsueki shokubetsu hyakubunritsu no sai oyobi ketsueki shokubetsu tokuyūsei no den ni tsuite'. In Mark E. Caprio, AAS, March 2004.

39 In the vast amount of wartime diaries and recollections there is an unending number of instances in which the Japanese were expressing admiration for (the accomplishments of) the enemy they were supposed to destroy, while showing disdain or indifference towards those with whom they were supposed to collectively prosper. Let me here just point to the situation in the occupied territories that the services of white 'comfort women' were the exclusive prerogative of high-ranking officers, while lower ranked officers and the rank-and-file had to make-do with Japanese prostitutes and other women of Asian descent. See Mariska Heymans – van Bruggen & Jeroen Kemperman, comp., *De Japanse Bezetting in Dagboeken*, 6 vols, NIOD, Amsterdam, 2003.

2 DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDE

In spite of the many elements in outlook the majority of the opinion leaders of the interwar period shared, there were even more fundamental differences, which eventually resulted in a parting of the ways. In the immediate postwar years, differences in attitudes towards the outside world and in opinions on foreign policy were already present but they had remained understated because of the common effort in the general suffrage movement, the anti-imperialist vocabulary, and the shared lukewarm attitude towards the League of Nations. Yet the Washington Conference set the process of differentiation in motion. In sharp contrast to the League, the Washington Treaties had a strong impact on the Japanese opinion leaders. On the one hand the Five Power Treaty was the first serious and unexpectedly large-scale attempt towards disarmament and many who had visions of a future world of peaceful international cooperation were given the feeling that their idealistic dreams might come true after all. On the other hand, the Four Power Treaty and the Nine Power Treaty were the embodiment of the new international order America envisioned. Especially the restriction of Japanese actions on the Chinese continent as symbolised by the forced retreat from Shandong brought home a message that in its impact was in a category completely different from the ambiguous one that had emanated from the Paris Peace Conference. The Washington Treaties thus implied the official recognition by the other treaty powers of the supremacy of the United States on the East Asian scene.

To many Japanese who considered the expansion of Japan's position in China an essential precondition for the survival of the Japanese nation, this was the sign that the threat that American economic penetration into China might cut off Japan's lifeline was for the first time becoming concrete. Solutions were sought but the former proud imperialists differed fundamentally on the point whether to adjust to the new world order and abide to the accompanying new 'framework of diplomacy'. In the case of China, Japan's main stage of foreign policy, this framework prescribed that there were to be no large-scale armed interventions, no formation of new colonies, and a certain degree of respect for the Chinese ethnic national right to self-determination. There was no misunderstanding amongst the Japanese intellectuals about this new set of rules and all of them were aware that their ambition to attain economic self-sufficiency within the East Asian region would from now on be circumscribed by these conditions. However, being aware of the rules of the game does not yet imply that one is also willing to play by these rules. It is exactly on this point that we can find a division - and in my view, to a considerable extent a generational division - within the large group of politicians, bureaucrats, military, and opinion leaders who tried to combine the goal of economic self-sufficiency with the restricted legitimate means provided to attain this goal. These differences were becoming even clearer as the awareness of Japanese weakness increased with the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 and as the American 'oppression' of Japan took a more tangible form by means of the anti-Japanese immigration act of 1924. But in the end it was only during the years 1926-27, due to the decisive input by the Chinese themselves in the form of the nationalist Northern Expedition, when everyone had to nail his colours to the mast and the process of differentiation saw its full and public completion.

Previous research has in some cases also stressed the time of the Northern Expedition as an important 'divisive moment' in Japanese ruling society, although there usually is no mention of any generational aspects. Takeuchi Yoshimi, in a rather broad sweep has described the

mid-Taishō period until the early Shōwa period as a time of polarization between left and right, in which the former turned to proletarian internationalism and the latter came to monopolise Asianism.⁴⁰ Itō Yukio in his more detailed research on the Seiyūkai has also analysed that, although feelings of economic crisis resulting in criticism of the Washington Treaties and the party leadership's non-intervention policy towards China had popped up off and on since 1923, it was only in the spring of 1926 that the new president Tanaka Giichi succeeded to rail the party behind a fundamental reform of its China policy.⁴¹ Kobayashi Michihiko in his research on the Imperial Army of the 1920s points out autumn 1926 as the point in time when the opinions on Japan's China policy in the army decisively fell into disarray. He observes that until 1925 the army was more concerned about the possibility of the installment of an American orchestrated international management over China than the danger of China turning 'red', and accordingly supported 'the spirit of the Washington Conference' at least outwardly in order to restrain the United States. However, when with the upsurge in turmoil in China fears concerning the turning 'red' of China became more imminent, the consensus fell apart to give way to a situation in which opinions in the army took opposite directions. Kobayashi also pinpoints late 1926 as the time when the Kantōgun changed its China policy from one in support of Zhang Zuolin to one aimed at getting rid of the man.⁴² Finally, Sakai Tetsuya in his research on Japanese diplomats of the same period has made the case that with the start of the Northern Expedition in July 1926 the bottom fell from under the alliance between the various factions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was based on the idea of a stable, pro-Japanese regime by Duan Qirui, and from this moment onwards continuity in Japan's China policy became problematic as the mutually exclusive policy preferences represented by Shidehara Kijūrō, Shigemitsu Mamoru and Yoshida Shigeru competed for the favour of the public and those in power.⁴³

Needless to say, the division amongst Japan's intellectual, political, economic and military leaders that came out into the open in 1926 was mainly caused by the fact that the idea of absolute economic self-sufficiency in a region not completely part of one's own empire is a *contradictio in terminis*. In such circumstances a country is anything but self-sufficient. It remains dependent. And the more so if the object of 'the completion of Japan's self-sufficiency' is China - because that of course was what the 'East Asian region' was all about - where since the end of the war ethnic and popular nationalism had become forces not to be lightly dismissed. The two ways out of this problem were simple, yet antagonistic.

40 Takeuchi Yoshimi, 'Nihon no Ajiashugi': pp.64-68.

41 Itō Yukio, 'Dai-ichiji taisen to sengo Nihon no keisei – Rikken Seiyūkai no dōkō', *Kyōto Daigaku Hōgaku Ronsō*, vol. 140, no.3/4 (January 1997): pp.155-211.

42 Kobayashi Michihiko, 'Yamagata botsugo rikugun 1918-28', unpublished presentation at Nijūseiki to Nihon Kenkyūkai, Kyoto, December 2004.

43 Sakai Tetsuya, '[Ei-Bei kyōchō] to [Nitchū teikei]'. In *Nenpō Kindai Nihon kenkyū – Kyōchō seisaku no genkai*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1989: pp.61-92.

2.1 The Taishō Generation

One way was to stick to the rules of the game and, by doing so, to compromise the goal of self-sufficiency somewhat and thus make it less absolute. This method is best represented by the concept of a Sino-Japanese economic alliance (*Nisshi keizai dōmei*). One of the most conspicuous and early proponents of such an alliance was Takahashi Korekiyo, consecutively Finance Minister in the Seiyūkai Cabinets led by Hara Takashi and himself. He called for a fundamental reform of Japan's China policy in the sense of an emphasis on economic coexistence between the two countries, aimed at the establishment of an East Asian economic force that would be able to compete with the two other economic forces in the world: England and America.⁴⁴ Takahashi's notion that Japan could not make it on its own, his awareness of Chinese nationalist sentiments, and his accordingly constant and strong emphasis on a Sino-Japanese alliance were shared by many contemporary commentators, even such influential anti-Seiyūkai figures as Yoshino Sakuzō, Horie Kiichi and Mizuno Hironori. Especially in the case of these opinion leaders of what I have termed 'the Taishō generation', these ideas were based on a far more equal relation between Japan and China than was the case in the erstwhile concept of a Japan-led Monroe Doctrine for East Asia, which had been propagated by many of these same commentators during the latter half of World War One.

The Taishō generation of opinion leaders shared an element which made them look for a solution to problems through cooperation on an equal basis, even with a weaker party. This tendency can partly be ascribed to the identity problems they were increasingly confronted with in postwar Japanese society. As members of an intellectual elite which in socialist theory was destined to cease to exist, they started to align and identify themselves with 'the national proletariat' and eventually were not loath to entrust their lot and the lot of their country with the masses. By extension, from the mid-1920s onwards they also tried to align themselves with the 'international proletariat' consisting of the coloured nations. Another feature is that in their China policy and in their calls for a Sino-Japanese economic alliance they stressed the importance of the economic element over the strategic element and accordingly of the commercial opportunities in 'China proper' over the established position in Manchuria. Confronted with the Northern Expedition they chose to compromise with Chinese nationalism. They knew at the back of their mind that this policy would eventually imply the dismantling of Japan's stronghold in Manchuria, but they preferred this above the only other option of armed intervention, which would inevitably imply the severance of economic ties with the bulk of China. Moreover, most of them were keenly aware that in any form of a Sino-Japanese economic alliance Japan would be the fundamentally weaker partner because it stood more to lose and accordingly they argued that if Japan truly wanted to have 'a special relationship' with China it naturally followed that it also had to do more for China than the other competitors.

In the years 1926-27, as China seemed to grow increasingly stronger and chances of national unification after more than fifteen years of internal strife and warfare were on the rise, many of the Taishō generation of opinion leaders distanced themselves more and more from their

44 Takahashi Korekiyo, 'Naigai kokusaku shiken' (1920) and 'Tō-A keizairyoku juritsu ni kansuru iken' (1921). Both in Ogawa Heikichi Bunsho Kenkyūkai, comp., *Ogawa Heikichi kankei bunsho*, vol.2, Misuzu Shobō, 1973: pp.137-44, 144-49.

erstwhile excessively Japan-centred forms of regional integration. From the viewpoints of China as a newly risen ethnic national and thus sovereign unit, as a representative of the international proletariat deserving Japanese support, as an ally in the movement for national and international democracy and, most of all, as an economic ally, many of them were for the first time able to consider China not merely a potentially strong neighbour but also an equal partner.

The character of the Taishō generation is meticulously expressed by the father of *manga* Okamoto Ippei in a cartoon that appeared in the January 1927 issue of *Bungei Shunjū*. In connection with the founding of the Shakai Minshūtō in the previous month, Yoshino Sakuzō, Abe Isoo and Horie Kiichi are portrayed as intellectuals dressed one half in a three-piece and one half in workers clothes. It on the one hand stresses their contradictory position, in the sense of the friction between their sympathies and their unmistakable identity, but on the other hand shows to what extent these intellectuals were willing to descend to the level of the proletariat and ‘tried to be equal’. However, if this cartoon had tried to make ‘fun’ of the international stance of this same generation, the suit might have remained in place - since it was the trademark of the Western civilised order - but the workers outfit could without any problem have been traded for Chinese clothing.

2.2 The Early Shōwa Generation

It will hardly come as a surprise that the other faction within the large group of total-war thinkers attached utmost priority to the attainment of the goal of absolute self-sufficiency and thus was more and more forced to sin against the set of legitimate means to attain this goal. This faction is probably best known by such conspicuous representatives as the middle rank officers of the Kwantung Army, the members of the Issekikai and other ‘reform-minded’ military discussion groups, and Foreign Secretary Mori Tsutomu.⁴⁵ They first chose to assassinate Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin and eventually opted for full-out military confrontation with Chinese nationalism in order to absolutely safeguard ‘the lifeline of Manchuria’, which they considered an essential pillar in the scheme to attain economic self-sufficiency. Notwithstanding the large part the military took upon themselves in the implementation of these plans, there was a whole generation of predominantly civilian opinion leaders on standby in order to sell the new hard-line policy to the Japanese people. In this book I have introduced the nowadays largely forgotten Sugimori Kōjirō who, although having no obvious military connections, was one of the most arduous defenders in his day of this line of action that precipitated the Manchurian Incident.

In contrast to their predecessors of the Taishō generation, this ‘Early Shōwa generation of opinion leaders’ seemed to cling increasingly to social Darwinist concepts such as ‘the struggle for survival’ and ‘the survival of the fittest’ which stimulated ideas of individual and national superiority. Although usually not very well argued and often in contradiction with their awareness of the weakness of their own country, the members of this younger generation

45 For Mori Tsutomu see William F. Morton, *Tanaka Giichi and Japan's China Policy*, Dawson, 1980, and Itō Yukio, *Taishō Demokurashii to seitō seiji*, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987. For a good representative of the Kwantung Army, see Mark Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West*, Princeton University Press, 1975, and for the Issekikai see Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword*, Stanford University Press, 1995: pp.34-37, 112-16, 174-76.

sometimes still had some sense of a particularist Japanese mission in this world and at least believed in Japanese future strength. When confronted with the Guomindang troops steadily approaching Japan's sphere of influence they rose to the challenge and strongly demanded the Japanese government to send in the army. In their view of the outside world, which was more based on international confrontation than international cooperation, Japan's sphere of influence in Manchuria was considered of utmost priority. The total war with a non-Asian power, which only a minority clearly foresaw in the near future but which the majority could neither ignore as completely impossible, demanded the unconditional use by Japan of Manchuria's strategic location and economic resources. Within this framework the benefits of a Manchuria completely independent from China were sometimes openly discussed by the members of this generation. Thus they clearly lacked the willingness and the ability to treat China as an equal and to recognise its (ethnic) national rights. Sugimori's utilitarian world order, in which the Chinese state had the dubious honour of being the first to be dissolved, Kwantung Army officer Ishiwara Kanji's 'harmony of the five ethnicities' (*gozoku kyōwa*), in which the majority of ethnic Chinese in Manchuria had the dubious honour of giving up their ethnic national rights in return for citizenship in a Japan dominated modern paradise on earth, and Shōwa Kenkyūkai member Rōyama Masamichi's East Asian Community (*Tō-A kyōdōtai*), in which Chinese ethnic national rights were to be sacrificed in return for the many conveniences of consumerism, all went straight against the irreversible postwar trend of ethnic national self-determination. They turned a blind eye towards or made light of the most conspicuous representative of this universal trend on the Asian continent and often showed no qualms in confronting Chinese nationalism directly.⁴⁶ Their view of Sino-Japanese relations was strictly hierarchic, in the sense of Japan as the regional leader (*meishu*) and China as either an obedient servant or merely an ignorant nuisance. Moreover, it is often reflected in a similar hierarchic view of Japan's internal socio-political relations in the form of the advocacy of special prerogatives for a superior elite of technocrats.

This generation is also a good example of what Sakai Naoki has termed 'the schema of configuration', the tendency to regard Japan as part of a universal and China as merely part of a particularist world.⁴⁷ Unlike Mizuno, Horie and Yoshino, who eventually could not but accept that China just as much as their own country deserved its righteous place within the new world order, Sugimori never succeeded in including the Asian neighbour in his cosmopolitan theories. On the basis of a spectacular and state-of-the-art scheme that refuted both ethnic nationalism and internationalism, two central elements of the new world order, he found himself retracing his steps in time and ending up at the decidedly unmodern argument of a Japanese natural right to

46 Notwithstanding their strong and direct involvement in Japan's aggression against China in the 1930s, and in sharp contrast to Sugimori's fate, both Ishiwara and Rōyama are still quite popular judging by the many publications that keep coming out on their actions or thought. The two contemporaries clearly cater to different segments of the reading public, though, considering the fact that in the case of the former these are mainly in the format of popular pocket books and *manga* (making Mark Peattie's thirty years old *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West* and its 1993 Japanese translation still the best introduction to Ishiwara) and in the latter case in the format of academic articles. Ishihara was of course somewhat of a maverick within his generation, in the sense that he ended up advocating an East Asian league (*Tō-A renmei*), which at least in theory partially upheld the notion of an equal Chinese ethnic nation.

47 Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On 'Japan' and Cultural Nationalism*, University of Minnesota Press, 1997: pp.59-63.

take and the corresponding Chinese natural duty to give. Within this context of going against the trend of world history it is also very symbolic to see Sugimori in the early 1930s advocating a re-evaluation of the Twenty-One Demands of January 1915, a benchmark of imperialist backwardness which the leaders of the Taishō generation had come to regard as exactly the point in time where Japan had decisively gone astray. In a world view so out of line with the postwar order as Sugimori's there was no room to treat China as a country with equal rights, let alone as an equal partner. Whereas there is a famous picture of Yoshino Sakuzō very solemnly posing in Chinese costume and the man is also known to have proposed that the Japanese residing in Korea wear the local dress, there was no way that the prominent leader of the Early Shōwa generation Sugimori was going to dress up in the costume of 'the inferior'.

3 JAPANESE INTERWAR ‘IDEALISM’ REASSESSED

Normally, when discussing the China policy of Japan in the 1920s, the juxtaposition is not between regionalist total-war thinkers who give priority to their goal and regionalist total-war thinkers who give priority to propriety, in the form of legitimate means. It is rather between the so-called non-interventionist ‘Shidehara policy’ based on economic considerations and the interventionist ‘Tanaka policy’ based on strategic considerations.⁴⁸ However, I find these two very difficult to compare in a meaningful way, since they seem to originate from entirely different worlds. The two varieties of modern, total-war thinking as discussed above are both based on the perception that times had changed, and that in the face of the force of Chinese nationalism it would be unwise or even impossible to hold on any longer to the old policy of supporting local warlords to further Japan’s regionalist aims. The ‘legitimate means-option’ comes down to military resignation and piecemeal gradual retreat from Manchuria (which is my interpretation of the ‘Shidehara policy’). The ‘absolute goal-option’, in contrast, comes down to the willingness to adopt a head-on collision course, as symbolised by the Manchurian Incident. Compared to these two options, the ‘Tanaka policy’ is in a league entirely of its own in the sense that Tanaka Giichi (and Yoshida Shigeru) in 1927 still thought that he could continue to do business as usual. However, Chinese nationalism asked for a more serious treatment and a completely different level of resolution than half-hearted support of Zhang Zuolin and limited military interventions. One could no longer linger but had to decide whether to go with the nationalist flow or to contain it by all means.

The characterisation of the opinion leaders on foreign policy during the 1920s as a group of total-war thinkers who share the aim of regional integration in the form of economic cooperation with China but in the end fall apart into two camps who disagree on the question if their Asian neighbour China should be treated as an equal partner or not, also seems a lot more practical than the ‘international cooperation’ (*kokusai kyōchō*) versus ‘autonomous policy’ (*jishu gaikō*) dichotomy of yore. The latter set of terms obscures the common regionalist denominator, only characterises cooperation with the Western powers as international cooperation, and sweeps all attempts at Sino-Japanese integration – whether this integration is coerced or not – onto the

48 In note 486 in chapter 4 I already mentioned the debate over the true content of Shidehara Kijūrō’s policy of non-intervention in Chinese affairs and the evaluation of this so-called ‘Shidehara policy’ (*Shidehara gaikō*) in relation to its ‘antipode’, the so-called Tanaka Policy (*Tanaka gaikō*). It is evident that the debate has been transferred into the 21st century, considering the continuing stream of publications such as Seki Shizuo, *Taishō gaikō*, Minerva Shobō, Kyoto, 2001; Hattori Ryūji, *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō, 1918-1931*, Yūhikaku, 2001; ‘Meiji Taishō-ki no Shidehara Kijūrō’, *Chūō Daigaku ronshū*, no.25 (March 2004): pp.1-41 and *Shidehara Kijūrō to nijūseiki no Nihon – Gaikō to minshushugi*, Yūhikaku, 2006; Nishida Toshihiro, ‘Higashi Ajia no kokusai chitsujo to Shidehara gaikō, 1924-1927’, two parts, *Hōgaku ronsō*, vol.147, no.2 (May 2000) and vol.149, no.1 (April 2001): pp.51-69 and pp.99-121 respectively; Nishida, ‘Washinton taisei no henyō to Shidehara gaikō, 1921-1931’, two parts, *Hōgaku ronsō*, vol.149, no.3 (June 2001) and vol.150, no.2 (November 2001): pp.76-96 and pp.107-29 respectively; Nishida, ‘Washinton taisei to Shidehara gaikō’. In Kawada Minoru & Itō Yukio, eds, *20 seiki Nichi-Bei kankei to Higashi Ajia*, Fūbaisha, Nagoya, 2002: pp.65-94; ‘Shidehara Kijūrō no kokusai ninshiki’. In Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nihon gaikō no kokusai ninshiki to chitsujo kōsō (Kokusai Seiji)*, no.139, November 2004): pp. 91-106 and Nishida, ‘Dai-ichiji Shidehara gaikō ni okeru Manmō seisaku no tenkai’. *Nihonshi kenkyū*, no.514 (June 2005): pp.1-27.

same heap with the notorious label of ‘autonomous policy’.

And another division often made, that between internationalists and Asianists, hardly makes sense either. Most so-called internationalists were quite apt at using the politically correct vocabulary of the postwar period but this could not hide the fact that their major aim was often East Asian regionalism. This, however, did not make them into Asianists either. As mentioned above, the overwhelming majority of the Japanese did not consider themselves Asians, could not detect a united Asia, had trouble in conceiving a common Asian identity and, even if they did so, the content of this Asian identity often was anything but flattering.

On an earlier occasion, when discussing what was probably the first public debate in Japan on the merits and demerits of nationalism (*jikoku hon'ishugi*) and internationalism (*kokusai kyōdō shugi*) at the outset of the 1920s, I provisionally divided the contributors into the categories of cynic realists (predominantly nationalist, represented by the Meiji and Taishō generations), moderate idealists (internationalists, represented by the Taishō generations), radical utopianists (cosmopolitanists, represented by the Early Shōwa generation) and aloof socialists (of a wide generational diversity) and analysed that the internationalist current of the postwar period had to be borne principally by the members of the Taishō generation.⁴⁹ On the basis of the research presented in this work I come to the conclusion that the new stock of ideas was indeed safe in their hands for the remainder of the decade. Nevertheless, there can be no denying that this generation miserably failed in handing over its findings in support of “forms of sound nationalism that serve the interests of one’s own country in harmony with the principle of international coexistence” to its successor.⁵⁰ This has contributed to the situation that the opinion leaders of the Taishō generation have often been dealt with in terms of ‘failure’ and ‘misplaced idealism’, in the sense of failing both to establish true democracy in their country and to steer it away from war.⁵¹ In the latter sense the criticism is not unlike E. H. Carr’s pejorative treatment of the most prominent English commentators on international relations of the interbellum, such as Norman Angell, Alfred Zimmern and Arnold Toynbee, as ‘utopians’ or ‘idealists’.⁵² However, recently there have been some concerted efforts to rehabilitate these ‘thinkers of the twenty years’ crisis’ on account of Carr’s dichotomy of ‘utopia’ and ‘reality’ being too black-and-white especially in these post-Cold War days and his rejection of idealism in favour of realism too

49 Dick Stegewerns, ‘The Dilemma of Nationalism and Internationalism in Modern Japan’. In Stegewerns, ed., *Nationalism and Internationalism in Imperial Japan: Autonomy, Asian Brotherhood, or World Citizenship?*, RoutledgeCurzon, London, 2003: p.10.

50 This definition of ‘sound nationalism’ is by the Taishō generation representative Hayashi Kiriku (1872-1950), a prominent diplomatic historian, in his contribution ‘Kokka seikatsu to kokusai seikatsu no itchi’ to the special feature ‘Jikoku hon'ishugi tai kokusai kyōdōshugi hihan’ (A critique of nationalism versus internationalism), *Chūō Kōron*, 1921.2: pp.71-72.

51 Tatsuo Arima, *The failure of Freedom: A Portrait of Modern Japanese Intellectuals*, Harvard University Press, 1969; Tetsuo Najita, ‘Some Reflections on Idealism in the Political Thought of Yoshino Sakuzō’, Shūichi Katō, ‘Taishō Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism’, Akira Iriye, ‘The failure of Economic Expansion: 1918-1931’. In Bernard S. Silberman & H. D. Harootunian, eds, *Japan in Crisis - Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 1974: pp.29-66, pp.217-36 and pp.237-69 respectively; Peter Duus, ‘Liberal Intellectuals and Social Conflict in Taishō Japan’. In Tetsuo Najita, J. Victor Koschmann, eds, *Conflict in Modern Japanese History - The Neglected Tradition*, Princeton University Press, 1982: pp.412-40.

52 E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919-1939 - An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, Harper Collins, New York, 1981 (first published in 1939).

complete.⁵³ J.D.B Miller in his study of Norman Angell has stressed that whereas realism often addresses short-term interests idealism is more concerned with long-term goals. Moreover, the two do not have to exclude one another, and in the case of many interwar opinion leaders did not do so.⁵⁴ In line with this development, an identical reassessment of the contributions made by their Japanese equivalents seems due as well. To the extent that they shared a strong belief in reason and in the possibility of arriving at a universal moral standpoint – although there were variations in emphasis on ethic morality, political morality, and economic morality – many of the representatives of the Taishō generation can be termed ‘idealists’. However, as I have time and again stressed in the above case studies of Horie Kiichi and Yoshino Sakuzō, especially in their daily comments on contemporary matters they were most of all pragmatists who tried to combine the best of their realistic interpretations of the current world order with their idealistic hopes for a gradually improving future. And in doing so, they steered clear of the far more utopian-inclined transnational, supranational and cosmopolitan castles in the sky some of their younger colleagues erected in order to evade having to face the ethnic nationalist reality of the postwar world order. The most ‘idealistic’ stance the Taishō generation presented was not towards the European League of Nations, nor towards the American Washington Treaty System, or towards Japan’s colonial empire, but in its attitude towards China. Still, is the act of recognizing Chinese ethnic national rights equal to those of Japan within the international setting of the 1920s a form of misplaced idealism or rather a sign of a farsighted vision? The fact that this generations’ rejection of both egotist nationalism and utopianist cosmopolitanism and their corresponding call for sound, internationalist nationalism is quite similar to the liberal, tolerant and communitarian nationalism that Yael Tamir and many others prescribe for our present age should provide ample food for thought.⁵⁵

53 The most conspicuous example of these efforts to date is David Long & Peter Wilson, eds, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years’ Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995.

54 J.D.B. Miller, *Norman Angell and the Futility of War: Peace and the Public Mind*, MacMillan, London, 1986: pp.132-37. See also Ken Booth, ‘Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice’, *International Affairs*, vol.67, no.3 (1991): pp.527-45 and the various essays in Long & Wilson, eds, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years’ Crisis*.

55 Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton University Press, 1993. See also Charles W. Kegley, Jr, ‘The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities’, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol.,37, no.2 (1993): pp.131-146 and *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge*, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1995; Nakanishi Hiroshi, *Kokusai seiji to wa nani ka – Chikyū shakai ni okeru ningen to chitsujo*, Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2003.

4 HERITAGE FORSAKEN

In this connection it is extremely sad that the Early Shōwa generation declined to inherit the complementary set of realistic nationalism and moderately idealistic internationalism presented to them by their forebears and instead pushed toward over-the-edge forms of nationalism, cosmopolitanism and total-war thinking. Some present day revisionists are prone to resort to the Greater East Asian War propaganda and credit this generation with ‘the liberation of Asia from colonialism’.⁵⁶ There can be no doubt that the reckless crash against the Western colonial powers indeed accelerated the process of decolonisation. However, one should not forget that this was hardly more than a by-product of this generation’s equally reckless China policy, that this by-product was for the most part unintended, and that in the case of Japan’s own colonial empire it was considered most undesirable. Moreover, it is hard not to question if the dazzling number of an estimated 15 million war dead, of whom 12.5 million non-Japanese Asians and 12 million civilians, was worth the acceleration by some years of a process already underway.⁵⁷ And, finally, if the Japanese war effort should indeed be credited with wielding a fatal blow to Western imperialism in Asia, it should also be partially blamed for leaving the continent a continuing battlefield of national liberation and Cold War and a hotbed for military and communist dictatorship in the aftermath of its benign intervention.

Of course there are ample mitigating circumstances that one should keep in mind when passing judgement on the opinion leaders of the Early Shōwa Generation and the actions they endorsed. First of all, the interwar period in which the old imperialist world order had crumbled but the new world order was still in the making was a very difficult period to fathom and cope with. A few things were immediately clear from the outset, though, but did not make them much easier to swallow. Whereas ‘glorious Meiji’ had been a spectacular period of growth and expansion, the Paris Peace Conference and, above all, the Washington Conference drove the point home that Japan’s empire had reached its limits and from now on there was no way to expand further but merely pressure to shrink. This sudden and externally compelled turnabout caused a true postwar ‘identity crisis’, marked by feelings of crisis, frustration and humiliation, which were proportionate to the extent to which Japan’s position and status had risen during Meiji days.⁵⁸ Within Japan’s quest to become a true *bunmeikoku* (civilised country) it had continuously observed extreme cautiousness in its actions out of the awareness that due to its different racial origins it time and again had to prove to be a full member of the select group of otherwise Western ‘civilised powers’. Not for the first time in their history, the Japanese showed

56 The most influential of these is undoubtedly *manga* writer Kobayashi Yoshinori, who after the huge success of his *Sensōron* (Gentōsha, 1998) seems to have chosen to make a living out of this kind of war apologism. That his very popular message is as dangerous as it is distorted is most obvious from the maps he provides showing the outset of the Japanese war against the evil of white imperialism. Whereas the flags of the Western colonial powers are neatly plunged into the corresponding Asian colonies, there are no Japanese flags stabbed into the heart of Korea and Taiwan and the Japanese puppet regime of Manchukuo is presented as a sovereign state.

57 These numbers are of course only rough estimates, based on the data in John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1986: pp.295-300.

58 Tsutsui Kiyotada, ‘Nashonarizumu to Ajiashugi ni okeru nijūsei’. In Aoki Tamotsu et al., eds, *Kindai Nihon bunkaron 2 – Nihonjin no jiko ninshiki*, Iwanami Shoten, 1999: p.12.

themselves to be masters in the art of adaptation and assimilation of foreign instruments, techniques, institutions, systems, learning, culture, mores and behaviour, the latter this time around including such far-reaching pastimes as imperialism and colonialism. For a nation so sensitive to its world status and which at the end of the war had congratulated itself on having attained third place in the international pecking order, it was not easy to emotionally digest the message that it was as ever racially inferior, not even seventy percent worth of numbers one and two, and officially designated an unwelcome people by the world leader. Whereas many representatives of the Taishō generation, perhaps out of a stronger sense of the humble position Japan had started from, showed the tendency to adjust themselves to the new world order, the larger part of the Early Shōwa generation was merely prepared to endure it for the time being. The awareness of the modern phenomenon of total war and Japan's undeniable comparative weakness within this new scheme of things was shared, but nonetheless resulted in quite different attitudes. In sharp contrast to the older generation's feelings of gratitude for the American magnanimity shown at the Washington Conference, the younger generation could not but predominantly see this same conference in terms of humiliation and was evidently unwilling to resign itself to the American superiority that was part and parcel of the so-called 'spirit of the Washington Conference'. Whereas the former generation basically looked upon the postwar situation as a world without enemies, for the latter generation the United States loomed large as the enemy that formed the major obstacle to Japan's China policy by taking the initiative in the circumscription and subsequent decomposition of its country's empire. The step back the latecomer imperialist nation had to take was a substantial one, especially psychologically, when one considers that the wounds suffered, the rewards reaped and the ambitions embraced in its campaign of conquest were of a very recent date. The frustration over the unexpected turn of events was great and often took the form of a disproportional self-image of Japan as a have-not country.⁵⁹

The feelings of crisis of this generation overwhelmingly concentrated on what has often been designated the Japanese 'psychological territory' (*seishinteki ryōdo*) of Manchuria, which was increasingly threatened by the have-even-less country China. The dreams of 'overcoming America' and settling the account of the Washington Conference - although for some the feelings of humiliation and inferiority went as far back in time as the assault on Japan's sovereignty by Commodore Perry's 'black ships' - all accumulated on this region that was officially recognized by all powers as China's three (North-)Eastern provinces. This hopeless situation resulted in "a rigid, ideologic policy, which was filled with a strong predilection towards autonomy, disposed of all forms of Chinese nationalism as communist-inspired resistance, and did not merely impede realistic cooperation with China and the Western powers but also neglected the internal economic crisis".⁶⁰ The overemphasis on the Manchurian 'lifeline' at the very least stood in the way of a realistic and pragmatic reaction to the success of the nationalist Northern Expedition. At

59 The most well-known and probably earliest example in the interwar period of such a self-image can be found in the famous article 'Ei-Bei hon'i no heiwashugi wo haisu' by the young Konoe Fumimaro (*Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin*, 1918.12.15: pp.23-26). A recent and faultless reprint of this article - in sharp contrast to the unreliable version in Konoe's *Seidanroku* (1936) - can be found in Kitaoka Shinichi's *Sengo Nihon gaikō ronshū*, Chūō Kōronsha, 1995: pp.47-52.

60 Itō Yukio, 'Dai-ichiji taisen to sengo Nihon no keisei - Rikken Seiyūkai no dōkō', *Kyōto Daigaku Hōgaku Ronsō*, vol. 140, no.3/4 (January 1997): pp.200-201.

this crucial point in time when decisions could no longer be postponed, the lure of ruling the whole of Manchuria, located between the colony Korea, the enemy Russia, and the huge potential of ‘China proper’, was too hard to resist. Moreover, its strategic economic resources put it in a class entirely different from Korea, Taiwan or Micronesia. The popular image of Manchuria as the land of inexhaustible natural resources was linked to the utopian aim of self-sufficiency, which was directly related to the dominant postwar concept of total war. This generation’s choice to seize Manchuria was thus a choice in favour of preparing for total war instead of any longer enduring an inferior position in the so-called Washington System.

The intellectual leaders of the Early Shōwa generation were severely challenged by the fact that in the postwar discourse there was no longer an accepted argumentation with which to justify the line of action their country had taken. The justification of a national aspiration is of course ultimately most benefited by a universal argument, but it was impossible to make the grand policy which came down to ‘China for the Japanese’ into something universal, either logically or practically. This lacuna was in their minds partly covered by the socialist argument, hugely influential during the second half of the 1920s, of the permissibility - or even inevitability - of reform through direct action and the immense intellectual excitement of the overthrow of the Anglo-Saxon status quo. Publicly ‘China for the Japanese’ was simply inflated into ‘Asia for the Asians’. Regardless of the anything but positive image of Asia this generation had in common with the majority of its predecessors and successors, the emotional attraction of functioning as the kingpin (*torimatome-yaku*) of Asian nationalism in opposition to external pressure from Europe and America was never far away, and even today the ambition of being or becoming ‘the leader of Asia’ (the all but one *katakana* ‘*Ajia no riidā*’) is still present amongst the Japanese political, academic and business elite.⁶¹ However, externally such regionalist window-dressing could not make any change to the fact that the breach of international etiquette in the form of the Manchurian Incident and the resulting ‘status aparte’ of Manchukuo turned out to be a stumbling block, which crippled all serious options of international diplomacy. In the exceptionally ideological discourse of the wartime era this obstacle gradually evolved into a millstone, an inviolable sacred land from which retreat seemed to be a denial of every superior element Japan stood for - from the emperor, the *kokutai* (national polity), the Imperial Army, *Yamatodamashii* (Japanese spirit) to *Nippon danji* (Japanese masculinity) – but which it after fourteen years of war inevitably had to surrender.

Japan’s Early Showa generation of course was not on its own. In Europe there were almost simultaneous ‘modern’ experiments by contemporaries equally in search of a more just world order, though these too showed the identical tendency to start out by trampling underfoot the corpses of even less-endowed nations, such as the Ethiopians, Czechoslovakians, Albanese and Polish, in their untamable ambition of equality with the United States and Great Britain. It is on the same grounds that I find it difficult to have much respect for such contemporaries like the ringleaders of the so-called Kyoto School (*Kyōto gakuha*), such as Kōsaka Masaaki (1900-69), Kōyama Iwao (1905-93), Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990) and Suzuki Shigetaka (1907-88), who this

61 Any basic search of the internet with the keywords ‘*Ajia no riidā*’ or ‘*Ajia wo riido*’ will prove this last assessment, but let me just cite a recent statement by Okuda Hiroshi, the prominent chairman of both Toyota Motor Corporation and the Japan Business Federation: “In case Japan doesn’t become a ‘normal country’ [in the sense of a country with a constitution that allows for an army] it will not be able to lead Asia”. *Asahi Shinbun*, 23 March 2005.

last decade both in their home country and in Western academia are the object of a major reevaluation.⁶² Within our present-day discourse strongly informed by post-modernism and cultural studies, their rejection of a monistic Western modernity indeed may strike one as excitingly current and relevant in an age which outwardly seems more and more determined by the forces of corporate economic globalism and American military hegemony. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the *Sekaishiteki tachiba to Nihon* (The world historical standpoint and Japan) and *Kindai no chōkoku* (overcoming modernity) debates took place within the framework of a war that had started out more than a few years ago and in which Japan's main enemy, and accordingly the primary victim of the conclusions of these two debates, was not one of the Western powers but China.⁶³ Is it too harsh to say that by negating Chinese nationalism and national rights they completely forsook their intellectual duty? A few exceptional men like Ishiwara Kanji (1889-1949) and Ozaki Hotsumi (1901-44), on the basis of their experience and expertise in China, tried to give the Chinese nation a proper place within an East Asian League (*Tō-A Renmei*) or some other form of community, but it was exactly these endeavours which compelled them to act as outsiders or even traitors to their motherland.⁶⁴ Accordingly, the

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- 62 Ueda Shizuteru, '[Ano sensō] to [Nihon bunka no mondai]', *Shisō*, no.857 (November 1995): pp.107-33 and several contributions to this special issue in commemoration of the fiftieth year after Nishida Kitarō's death; Minamoto Ryōen, 'The Symposium on "Overcoming Modernity" and Horio Tsutomu, "The *Chūō Kōron* Discussions: Their Background and Meaning'. In James W. Heisig & John C. Maraldo, eds, *Zen, the Kyoto School & the Question of Nationalism*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1995: pp.197-229 and 289-315; Graham Parkes, 'The Putative Fascism of the Kyoto School'. *Philosophy East and West*, vol.47, no.3 (1997): pp.305-36; Ōhashi Ryōsuke, *Kyōto gakuha to Nihon kaigun*, PHP Kenkyūjo, 2001; David Williams, 'In Defence of the Kyoto School: Reflections on Philosophy, the Pacific War and the Making of a Post-White World', *Japan Forum*, vol.12, no.2 (September 2000): pp.143-56, 'Modernity, Harootunian and the Demands of Scholarship', *Japan Forum*, vol.15, no.1: pp.147-62 (March 2003) and *Defending Japan's Pacific War: The Kyoto Philosophers and the Idea of a Post-White World*, RoutledgeCurzon, 2004; Christopher S. Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School and Co-Prosperity*, RoutledgeCurzon, 2005.
- 63 The *Sekaishiteki tachiba to Nihon* debate was conducted in three sessions from November 1941 until November 1942. The proceedings were published in the *Chūō Kōron* issues of January and April 1942 and January 1943. The *Kindai no chōkoku* symposium was held in July 1942 and published in the September and October 1942 issues of the literary magazine *Bungakkai*.
- 64 For Ozaki see Chalmers Johnson, *An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring*, expanded edition, Stanford University Press, 1990 (original edition 1964). Ozaki's most important writings on China have been conveniently compiled in Yonetani Masafumi, comp., *Ozaki Hotsumi jihyōshū – Nitchū sensō-ki no Higashi Ajia*, Heibonsha (Tōyō bunko), 2004. For Ishiwara's concept of an East Asian League see Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji*: pp.320-29, 332-37 and Katsuragawa Mitsumasa, 'Tō-A renmei-ron no seiritsu to tenkai', *Shirin*, vol.65, no.5 (September 1980): pp.801-20. Recently considerable attention has arisen for Korean responses during the late 1930s to the concepts of an East Asian league and an East Asian community, but it is hard to discard the impression that these expressions of 'support' were hardly more than a soft-voiced opportunistic choice for the least repulsive alternative available. See Matsuda Toshihiko, 'Tō-A Renmei undō to Chōsen, Chōsenjin', *Sekai Jinken Mondai Kenkyū Sentā kenkyū kiyō*, no. 1 (March 1996) and no.3 (March 1998), pp.66-88 and pp. 31-64 respectively; Matsuda, 'Shokuminchi makki Chōsen ni okeru aru tenkōsha no undō – Kan Yeongsok to Nihon kokutaigaku, Tō-A Renmei undō', *Jinbun gakuho*, no.79 (March 1997): pp. 131-61; Cho Kwanja, 'Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon to [Tō-A kyōdōtai] – Jiko bōeitēki na shisō rensa no naka de [sekaishi] wo tou', *Chōsenshi Kenkyūkai ronbunshū*, no.41 (October 2003): pp.27-54; Choi Jinseok, 'Bōryokuron: Park Chiu ni okeru bōryoku no yokan – [Tō-A kyōdōtai-ron no ichi-shōsatsu] wo chūshin ni', *Gendai shisō*, vol.31, no.3

majority of the Japanese opinion leaders of the Early Shōwa generation chose rather to remain blind to the self-deceit involved in supporting pseudo-Asianism and advocating regional integration without giving up Japan's imperialist and colonialist rights and interests.⁶⁵

The 1920s, just like the 1990s, was a period of flux. The new world order had not yet been completely established and quite contradictory signals abounded. The rationally infeasible combination of the advocacy of the right of ethnic national self-determination with the continuation of the colonial status quo made many inclined to wait and see which way the wind would blow. However, the rise of new nationalist and socialist forces which had not been incorporated within the Washington Treaty System meant one could no longer watch and wait. There was no sense in taking up the 'spirit of the Washington Conference' with the Chinese revolutionary forces. Cooperation with the Western powers (*Ei-Bei kyōchō*) was no longer functioning in order to keep the Chinese threat at bay, but on the other hand Sino-Japanese alignment (*Nitchū teikei*) was neither an option if one was not willing to modify the aim of 'preserving Manchuria'. This was something the younger generation was not prepared to do. It is easy to criticize the Taishō generation in terms of weakness, failure and idealism for being unable to prevent their country from taking the route it did during the 1930s. However, in contrast to their successors they were at least able to sense the direction in which the world was progressing and tried to attract attention to the dangers of deviating from the main road into the sidetrack that led straight down into 'the valley of darkness'. They were prepared to sacrifice (part of) Japan's established position in Manchuria in order to make the Chinese participate in a true alliance between equal partners. It is to be deplored that the Early Shōwa generation discarded the rich and tolerant legacy of ideas bequeathed to them by their predecessors, instead of sacrificing was considering expanding Japan's position in Manchuria, and was willing to use force to coerce the Chinese into an alliance between unequal partners. Thus they refused to adjust themselves to the new world, stood up to both East and West, and had to keep on running in order not to face reality. It was only this generation that could lend a willing ear to Ishiwara Kanji's mind-boggling theories of Japan taking on the rest of the world and meticulously make plans for this 'war to end all wars' (*saishū sensō*) in the optimistic conviction of emerging victorious. And they were the only ones who could come up with a joyful war song like 'Hatenaki nukarumi' (Endless mud), which does not specify its goal but merely exhorts to 'march on and on and on' (*zenshin, zenshin, doko made mo*) in the name of an equally unspecified 'justice' (*seigi*).⁶⁶ The

(March 2003): pp.190-210; [Shokuminchi/kindai no chōkoku] Kenkyūkai, 'Shiryō to shōgen I – Nitchū Sensō-ki Chōsen chishikijin no Tō-A kyōdōtai-ron', *Quadrante*, no.6 (March 2004): pp.339-98.

65 Although I am definitely not a specialist in this field it seems to me that there was considerably less of this kind of self-deceit in the discourse outside the government and elite media. In any case, in the popular culture format of song (*kayōkyoku*) the sacrifices imposed by 'the Manchurian Incident', 'the China Incident' and 'the Greater East Asian War' were almost invariably sold under the cliché of '*okuni no tame ni*' (on behalf of the country), and 'Asia', first in the *Shina* setting of Shanghai, Canton and Soochow, but later also comprising such scenic spots as Palau, Batavia and the cryptic 'South', is not much more than an exotic background, often providing the excuse for an equally exotic musical backing. *Omoide no senzen senchū kayō daizenshū*, Teichiku, 1998, discs 5 - 12.

66 Ono Jun, 'Hatenaki nukarumi', Teichiku, 1938. *Omoide no senzen senchū kayō dai-zenshū*, disc 8, Teichiku, 1998. Ono, a former policeman turned singer after having been scouted in a public bath, was drafted in 1937 and recorded this song upon his return from the China front. Its huge success resulted in

image of the invincible Japanese troops in their blind superiority circling the globe time after time without even noticing they had completed yet another lap might seem ridiculous, if only the historical facts were not so devastating. In spite of the mitigating circumstances, this younger generation, which included a fair number of military but for the most part consisted of civilians, can be blamed for making Japan an increasingly uncomfortable place to live and turning large parts of Asia and the Pacific into an arena of massacre and starvation during the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Ono being called up for service time after time in order to create a whole repertoire of 'fresh from the front' songs.

5 THE POINT OF NO RETURN

In her book *Japan's Total Empire*, which within a short time seems to have attained the status of authority on Japan's relation with its puppet state of Manchukuo, Louise Young projects an image of the Manchurian Incident as a "sudden" phenomenon and of the subsequent "process of incremental imperialism" not as "a chain of inevitability" but rather a "chain of contingent decisions" which nevertheless lead to "total empire".⁶⁷ It is true that it was not a single decision of a few Kwantung Army officers which brought about what is often called the 'Fifteen Years War'. There had been earlier instances of local insubordination which failed precisely because army headquarters was very much aware that the timing was premature. But when in 1931 it gave the go-sign the army knew it could make it in terms of support from the home front and in this conviction it was not alone. During the 1920s many opinion leaders of the Taishō generation were also painfully aware that they were steadily losing out in the competition for the favour of the increasingly influential masses. The army-inspired voluntary organisations with their wide ramifications in the countryside, amongst various others, had succeeded in swaying the debate on foreign policy. In this sense the Kwantung Army was definitely not trying its luck, but was very much acting on the basis of developments which had already crystallised at home. Its resort to arms on 18 September 1931 tends to portray the picture of radical change and the concept of a 'Fifteen Years War' only enhances this, but in the above I hope to have been able to make the case that it was nothing but the result of a continuous and natural process of a shift in power and influence from a Taishō generation that was able to adjust to the new world to an Early Shōwa generation that was not and instead rose to challenge it.

Since Japan's formal colonies of Korea and Taiwan were invariably safe within the postwar world order as they had been before, the debate on foreign policy was overwhelmingly about Japan's informal sphere of influence in China. The stronger the Guomindang became in the 1920s, the more the debate centred on Japan's key position in Manchuria and whether to 'intervene' or not. In this sense the idiom and rhetoric that emerge so prominently within the various propaganda campaigns in the wake of the Manchurian Incident were definitely not new. Moreover, 'the incident' did not come as a surprise. It was a long contemplated option which in 1931, after considerable calculations, became reality. This does not imply that the Manchurian Incident was inevitable. After all, it can be characterised as the continuation of an imperialist trend which after World War One had been halted and even reversed by both internal and external pressures. In contrast, the consequences of Japan's choice for a total war in defiance of both China and the Western powers in East Asia were inevitable. Far from Young's assessment that "When all this began in 1931, no one knew that the total bill for empire would run so high", quite a few people during the 1920s, both Japanese and non-Japanese, both inside and outside the armed forces, correctly predicted the stages subsequent to 'a Manchurian incident': an all-out but inconclusive Sino-Japanese war, Pearl Harbor, Singapore, Corregidor, Midway, island-hopping, the demise of the Japanese fleet, devastating air raids on Tokyo and other urban and industrial centra, and Japanese defeat.⁶⁸ The only thing nobody could yet imagine was Nagasaki and

67 Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, University of California Press, 1998: pp.51-52, 427-30 and 435.

68 Ibid.: p.429. Mizuno Hironori of course is a good example of those who were able to predict what was waiting in the wake of the Manchurian Incident and Pearl Harbor, but his interpretations can hardly be

Hiroshima. Thus, the Manchurian Incident was the beginning of a new phase of imperialism, namely that of total-war imperialism, but even more the point of no return on the road to national self-destruction.

termed more than military common knowledge, when judged by the fact that the war pretty much evolved as had been spelled out in America's War Plan Orange. Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1991. For Mizuno's predictions see his articles from the mid 1920s and early 1930s, his war-scare novels *Tsugi no issen* (1914) and *Kōbō no kono issen* (1932), and his letters and diaries of the 1930s, all compiled in his collected works, Awaya Kentarō et al., comp., *Mizuno Hironori chosakushū*, vols.3-7, Yūsankaku, 1995.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

An important question that I have not been able to solve yet in the research for this work is how to explain the differences in view between the two generations. I am not yet completely sure which elements of their educational or historical background were decisive in making the Early Shōwa generation opinion leaders look at the world and society in a different way than their predecessors did. Did they enjoy a significantly different education? Did the Taishō generation go through a historical experience that the latter generation lacked, such as the pre-empire days before the Sino-Japanese war? Or was it significant that the two generations were confronted with important historical events and intellectual currents at a different stage in their life? Was the prewar imperialist world order ‘the status quo’ in the minds of the Taishō generation, providing them with the comparative perspective from which they could accept the postwar order as a change in the right ‘internationalist’ direction, whereas this latter order functioned as the predominant ‘status quo’ in the minds of the Early Shōwa generation which they accordingly could only see in the more absolute and outspokenly unwelcome terms of Anglo-Saxon world domination?

Another problem is that my characterisation of the Early Shōwa generation to a large degree depends on my case study of Sugimori Kōjirō and is in urgent need of reinforcement, variation and, possibly, amendment. In my next research project *Standing up to East and West: Japanese Opinion Leaders of the Early Shōwa Generation and the Outside World, 1918-1945*, which will be based on case studies of Mitsui Kōshi (1883-1953), Nakano Seigō (1886-1943), Ōkawa Shūmei (1886-1957), Murobuse Kōshin (1892-1970) and Takahashi Kamekichi (1894-1977), I want to analyse further the evolution that the latter generation went through and attempt to demonstrate the nature and order of the elements that were decisive in creating the above discussed generational division.

EPILOGUE

JAPAN'S AMBIVALENT REDISCOVERY OF ASIA

THE REGION STRIKES BACK

It is hardly necessary to mention that the postwar era of turmoil brought about by the tensions of decolonisation, national liberation and the Cold War, was anything but contributory to the goal of regional integration. This was true in most parts of the world, but especially in Asia, a continent that was set alight by the simultaneous outbursts of these three trends. And a regionalist project would have been even more problematic if an integrated Asia was envisioned including Japan, the colonizer or aggressor to which most East Asian and South East Asian nations had fallen victim in their recent history. It is therefore only since the start of the post-Cold War period that the idea of Asian integration is being focussed upon again and the institutional and economic integration of Asia is increasingly gaining headway as the sphere, scope, and influence of the ASEAN (including the ‘plus 3’ appendix of China, South Korea and Japan) are expanding and the share of inter-Asian trade and the amount of inter-Asian free trade agreements are growing.¹ Lately the movement towards regional integration even seems to have reached a new stage with the organisation of the first ‘East Asian summit’ in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur with the prospect of establishing an ‘East Asian community’ in the near future.² In the same vein, whereas nowadays ‘regionalism’ has become a pivotal term that adorns most political, economic and cultural agendas as the *deus ex machina* that might balance the forces of globalism on the one hand and nationalism on the other, before the 1990s there was little mention of the term as a concept in the analysis of international relations in the modern world. Regionalism was mainly used in terms of ‘provincial’ politics, often dealing with issues of decentralisation, autonomy or separatism, and in the few cases that it appeared in the sense of the creation of some sort of transnational or supranational union the actors were mostly European, sometimes South-East Asian, but never included the Japanese. However, even in Japan the term ‘regionalism’ (*chiikishugi*) has over the last decade assumed a predominantly transnational meaning and it has of late become a true buzz word. Old regionalist concepts such as ‘Sino-Japanese economic alignment’ (*Nitchū keizai teikei*) and even the contaminated ‘East Asian Community’ (this time around *Higashi Ajia kyōdōtai* instead of *Tō-A kyōdōtai*) have

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- 1 China’s trade with Asia in 2004 amounted to a total of more than 600 billion dollars, and thus far outflanked its trade with North America (167 billion dollar) and Europe (190 billion dollar). Another event symbolic of the ever-increasing prominence of inter-Asian economic relations is that China (including Hongkong) in the same year for the first time since the end of World War Two has overtaken the United States as the largest trading partner of Japan (20,1 percent versus 18,6 percent). *NC Network China*, 25 January 2005; *Asahi Shinbun*, evening edition, 26 January 2005.
 - 2 Although the European precedent has shown that it is extremely difficult to stop the process of formal integration once set in motion, for the moment it should not be ignored that there is a fair amount of difference in enthusiasm amongst the various Asian nations, evident in the subtle choice of formulation between ‘a summit’ and ‘the summit’ and in printing ‘summit’ and ‘community’ in lower case or upper case. Funabashi Yōichi, ‘Ajia no Ajia-ka’, *Asahi Shinbun*, 9 December 2004. The two East Asian summits up to now have resulted in the rather ambiguous message that the process of further integration towards an East Asian community will be continued, although the ASEAN + 3 format will remain the most important forum. This statement of course reflects the conflicting political agendas of the two large East Asian powers Japan and China, but it seems premature to characterize the endeavour as a complete failure, as the *Financial Times* did at the time of the first summit (editorial of 14 December 2005).

gained a new lease of life and new regionalist concepts such as ‘a Common House of North East Asia’ and ‘an East Asian free trade agreement’ have been introduced and are loudly being debated in the media.³

In academia also the term ‘regionalism’ used to be almost invisible and only popped up every once in a while in specialised discussions on provincial agricultural policies. In post-World War Two history writing on Japan the absence of this concept has been equally conspicuous. Especially in Japan itself, where the academic fields of national history (*kokushi* or *Nihonshi*) and Oriental history (*Tōyōshi*) were practiced in perfect mutual isolation, the tendency to regard Japan as an Asian entity and part of a region likely to include communist China and the divided Korean peninsula while excluding the United States was almost non-existent. Despite Sinologist Takeuchi Yoshimi’s early efforts to present China, personified by the novelist Lu Xun, as an Asian alternative to Western modernisation and the infatuation of many Japanese intellectuals with Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution, for historians of modern Japan the extra-regional entities England, Germany and the United States acted as the most suitable models of reference. The attempt to compare the Japanese and Turkish roads towards modernisation could only have sprung from a Western mind.⁴ Accordingly Hamashita Takeshi’s introduction of the concept of an Asian trade network (*Ajia kōekiken*) and Arano Yasunori’s project to reinterpret Japanese history within the framework of Asia (*Ajia no naka no Nihon* instead of the very popular slogan since Meiji days of *Sekai no naka no Nihon*) were both greeted as ground-breaking efforts in the early 1990s.⁵

It was mostly due to the curse of Japan’s awkward war record that the existent convenient term for a regionalist agenda concerning Asia, namely Asianism (*Ajiashugi*), has also been shied away from by opinion leaders and scholars alike as a tainted ism. It was of course Takeuchi Yoshimi’s famous 1963 article *Nihon no Ajiashugi* which, albeit unstructured and contradictory, tried to rehabilitate the prewar Asianist discourse.⁶ Yet this could not prevent that

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- 3 The most prominent regionalist proposal emanated from Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō himself, when he called for the establishment of an East Asian community in his policy speech of January 2002 in Singapore (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0201/speech.html>), but academia and the printed media have been very prolific as well. See for instance Morishima Michio, *Nihon ni dekiru koto wa nani ka: Higashi Ajia kyōdōtai wo teian suru*, Iwanami Shoten, 2001; Kang Sang-jung, *Tōhoku Ajia kyōdō no ie wo mezashite*, Heibonsha, 2001; Wada Haruki, *Tōhoku Ajia kyōdō no ie: shin-chiikishugi sengen*, Heibonsha, 2003. Despite the title of this latter book, Wada envisions a ‘Greater East Asian Community’ as the ultimate stage of regional cooperation in Asia, judging by his ‘From a “Common House of Northeast Asia” to a “Greater East Asian Community”’. *Social Science Japan*, no.28 (March 2004): pp.19-21. *Asahi Shinbun*’s recently created Asian Network has found its way around the problem of advocating what inconveniently sounds so much like Japanese wartime propaganda by means of the less tainted term ‘*Ajia-gata kyōdōtai*’ (an Asian-style community).
 - 4 Robert E. Ward & Dankwart A. Rustow, eds, *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, Princeton University Press, 1964.
 - 5 Hamashita Takeshi & Kawakatsu Heita, eds, *Ajia kōekiken to Nihon no kōgyōka*, Riburopōto, 1991; Hamashita Takeshi, *Chōkō shisutemu to kindai Ajia*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997; Arano Yasunori, ed., *Ajia no naka no Nihonshi*, 6 vols, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992-93.
 - 6 The article, whose less well-known original title is ‘*Ajiashugi no tenbō*’, was published as an introductory essay to Takeuchi’s compilation of prewar Asianist sources, *Gendai Nihon shisō taikai 9 – Ajiashugi*, Chikuma Shobō, 1963.

for the remainder of the Cold War Asianism was either used as a tag by the many Marxist scholars of modern Japanese history to indict historical personae or was simply ignored for the sake of convenience. However, in the early 1990s Asianism has reappeared in academia as a respectable and essential object of study in the intellectual history of Japan. This development is most evident from the publications *Kindai Nihon no Ajia ninshiki* (1994) and *Nihon gaikō ni okeru Ajiashugi* (1998) by respectively the authoritative institutions of Kyoto University's Institute for Research in Humanities (*Jinbunken*) and the Japanese Political Science Association (*Nihon Seiji Gakkai*, affiliated to Tokyo University).⁷ More or less simultaneously regionalism was introduced as a framework with which to analyze modern Japanese history by Mitani Taichirō and Inoue Toshikazu.⁸ With the increasingly stronger focus on Asia the analytical tool of 'regionalism' has firmly reestablished itself within the academic debate in Japan and at the moment the projects initiated to analyze the past, present, and future of Japan within the framework of (East) Asia are almost too numerous to count.⁹

Regionalism's new prominent place is probably best symbolised by the fact that *rījonarizumu* and *Ajia/Nihon* have been selected as two of the thirty key terms in Iwanami Shoten's state-of-the-art 'Intellectual Frontier' series.¹⁰ Analogically nowadays every self-respecting Japanese university needs its own Asia (Pacific) Centre and interdisciplinary research with a transnational focus has become such an important norm for obtaining funding that one would almost forget that these are only the very recent effects of the end of the Cold War, Japan's economic downfall, China's economic upsurge, along with the Asian and world conquest by Pikachu and his (her? its?) descendents. Having thus arrived at the immensely influential field of popular culture, one indeed can no longer ignore the fact that Japanese comics, animation and pops have made considerable inroads into East and South East Asia and conversely movies from Korea and Greater China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan) are reaching Japanese screens in unprecedented numbers. Moreover, at present Korean home dramas and idols seem even more successful than the local product, as the [*Fuyu no sonata*]-boom has developed into a true 'Korean Wave' (*Hannyu*).¹¹ And judging by the example of the Asian cinema, where intra-regional co-productions are on the rise and the phenomenon of (East) Asian border-crossing

7 Furuya Tetsuo, ed., *Kindai Nihon no Ajia ninshiki*, Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1994; Nihon Seiji Gakkai, ed., *Nenpō Seijigaku 1998 – Nihon gaikō ni okeru Ajiashugi*, Iwanami Shoten, 1999.

8 Mitani Taichirō, *Nihon ni okeru [chiikishugi] no gainen* (keynote speech from 1994). In Mitani Taichirō, *Kindai Nihon no sensō to seiji*, Iwanami Shoten, 1997, pp.85-109; Inoue Toshikazu, 'Kokusai kyōchō, chiikishugi, shinchitsujo'. In Banno Junji et al., eds, *Shirīzu Nihon kingendaishi – Kōzō to hendō 3: Gendai shakai e no tenkei*, Iwanami Shoten, 1993, pp.269-303.

9 To limit myself to one project each in the respective categories of past, present and future, I will merely mention Kagotani Naoto, *Ajia kokusai tsūshō chitsujo to kindai Nihon*, Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2000 and the related work Akita Shigeru & Kagotani, eds, *1930-nendai no Ajia kokusai chitsujo*, Keisuisha, Hiroshima, 2001; and *Gendai Higashi-Ajia to Nihon*, 6 vols, Keiō Gijyuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004; and Aoki Tamotsu, ed., *Ajia shinseiki*, 8 vols, Iwanami Shoten, 2002-03;.

10 Marukawa Tetsushi, *Rījonarizumu*, Iwanami Shoten, 2003; Yonetani Masafumi, *Ajia/Nihon*, Iwanami Shoten, 2006.

11 For a timely comparative analysis of the reception of Korean tv dramas in Japan and vice versa, see Mōri Yoshitaka, ed., *Nisshiki Hannyu – [Fuyu no sonata] to Nikkan taishū bunka no genzai*, Serika Shobō, 2004.

film stars has come into being in the varied forms of Lesley Cheung, Kaneshiro Takeshi, Bae Yongjun, Kimura Takuya, Zhang Ziyi and Oda Yūki, the pan-Asianist dream of a common Asian culture may not even be that distant.¹²

JAPAN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER

Notwithstanding these undeniable new trends I cannot suppress the feeling that things have not yet changed in a fundamental way and that there are more continuities with the past than the hustle and bustle involved in Japan's re-discovery of Asia seems to suggest. In my opinion it is especially in the field of Japanese perceptions of Asia and the wider world and of Japan's place within all this that change has been least marked and accordingly a psychological barrier still seriously hampers Japanese attempts to take the lead or merely to participate in initiatives to bring about regional integration in the Asian region. Japanese views of the outside world on the macro-level of international politics are as ever guided by the factors of economic, military, technological, cultural and media power and on the micro-level of daily life seem predominantly predetermined by the main television formats of sports, music and fashion. On both levels Japanese eyes are fixed on the United States and Western Europe, as the two entities that set the norm in most fields and disciplines and to which Japanese academics, artists and athletes flock in order to prove their supra-national qualities. In their world of perception whole continents such as Africa, South America, and Oceania are all but invisible, huge entities like neighbour Russia – notwithstanding its G8 membership – are ignored, and most of Asia is underrepresented. An analysis of commercials – that mirror of mass ambition, adoration and yearning – serves as a good eye-opener. While famous and less well-known Caucasians are recruited on a regular basis (and almost exclusively in the case of advertisements for cars and female underwear), Africans and fellow Asians are only very seldom shown (the only major exception being ads for Chinese tea).¹³

Within this intellectual map of the world Asia functions mainly as an exotic holiday destination and a heterogeneous supplier of 'ethnic' commodities, 'world' music and 'stateless'

12 There has been a deluge of books and articles on these 'trans-Asian' phenomena over the last couple of years, but probably the most thorough and insightful analysis can be found in the (edited) works by Iwabuchi Kōichi, namely *Recentring Globalization - Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*, Duke University Press, 2002; *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Dramas* (ed.), Hong Kong University Press, 2004 and *Rogue Flows: Trans-Asian Cultural Traffic* (et.al., eds), Hong Kong University Press, 2004.

13 It is still somewhat premature to judge the effects and implications of recent commercials starring Bae Yongjun and other male Korean actors as the embodiment of Japanese female desires and Zhang Ziyi as the quintessence of superior female Asian beauty ('A new form of beauty recognised by the [Western] world'). Ōtsuka Seiyaku Oronamin-C commercial 2004; Daihatsu Mira commercial 2004; KDD-au Global Passport commercial 2004; Sony Cybershot DSC-L1 commercial 2004; Asience commercials 2003-04. Especially the precarious nature of the present Korean wave (*Hannyu*), which has resulted in hitherto inconceivable phenomena as a sharp rise in tourism and language classes, the publication of various specialized magazines and the launching of a *Hannyu* satellite channel, is evident from the fact that many fans of *Yon-sama* saw themselves forced to bid farewell to their idol in the wake of his remarks on the Takeshima/Dokdo dispute.

food.¹⁴ Besides, identical to the prewar period, the term ‘Asia’ is predominantly used in the sense of ‘East Asia’, although more often than in the past it may now sometimes include a few South East Asian countries. South Asia, the Middle East, and even the Islamic parts of South East Asia, however, are clearly a bridge too far and attempts by the Japanese media at the time of the 2002 World Soccer Championship to present the Turkish eleven as an Asian team completely fell on deaf ears (and, most likely, caused Turkish indignation).¹⁵ Moreover, and this also is a constant dating from the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese have the seemingly indestructible habit of most often using ‘Asia’ in a non-inclusive, other-worldly sense, much like the English are prone to use ‘Europe’ in the meaning of ‘the continent’.¹⁶ This observation is not merely the result of my perhaps somewhat subjective scrutiny of the Japanese visual and printed media. It for instance is also evident from the huge factual divide that, despite the abovementioned intra-regional initiatives, has remained largely unchanged since the Meiji Period and continues to almost completely partition off the study of Japanese history and the study of Oriental history at Japan’s most prestigious universities.¹⁷ But most of all it is based on the confidential, written opinion poll amongst students with which I start out the course on comparative culture I teach at two private universities in the Kansai area. The question whether they consider themselves Asian has over the period 2001-2006 been met with a very straightforward negative answer by more than 85 percent of the students. A look at their reply to the query how to define Asia makes clear why. The few that have some sense of an Asian identity come up with such neutral binding elements as rice, Buddhism, Chinese characters and a yellow skin texture and some even link their identity to the optimistic hope that Asia will continue to be a region of industrial vigour and will become the centre of the world.¹⁸ However,

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- 14 The new (mid-)lifestyle magazine *Wāzuwāsu* (the Japanese transcription of Wordsworth, a rather odd name for a magazine presenting itself as ‘deeply praying for peace in Asia’) gained considerable attention with an eye-catching advertisement campaign in January 2005 calling upon the reading public ‘to be Asians rather than Japanese from now onwards’. Although it thus frankly admitted that the Japanese had not acquired this regional identity yet, the special Asia issue published in this connection did not do more than promote the usual trio of food, handicraft art and travel. Exactly the same trio make up the special features of the inaugural issue (November 2005) of *Sukkara*, a magazine focused on Korean culture, which regrettably promises to bring us nothing more profound than ‘cute (*suteki na*) things, people and lifestyle’.
- 15 The politically correct *Asahi Shinbun* clearly is not intent on resigning itself to this situation and in its new daily feature *Ajia no machikado* (streetcorners of Asia) and weekly ‘Asian newsweek’ specials endeavours to stress the Asian imagination of its readership to unprecedented borders.
- 16 Okinawa prefecture, in its campaign to promote the Okinawa Special Free Trade Zone also stresses that ‘the present time is Asia’ (*toki wa Ajia*), but nonetheless urges the Japanese entrepreneurs to locate their business within the comparatively exotic but still sufficiently homely setting of the Okinawa isles instead of crossing over to this heterogeneous continent straight away. *Asahi Shinbun*, 7 February 2005.
- 17 Meiji University has taken the revolutionary decision to restyle its Oriental history department into an Asian history department from April 2005 onwards, only to be faced with the infrastructural problem that almost all of its staff are China specialists and there are no suitable textbooks available. However, apart from the question how wide they will define ‘Asia’ it also remains to be seen whether they will not forget to incorporate Japan. *Asahi Shinbun*, 5 October 2004.
- 18 Even Takeuchi Yoshimi, when in the 1950s and 1960s advocating a reevaluation of Asianism, was anything but sure what the exact content was to be of Asia’s contribution to world culture and did not get

the overwhelming majority of the respondents tend to characterise Asia in a far less rosy way and thus show themselves faithful successors to the opinion leaders of the Taishō and Early Shōwa generations discussed above. To them Asia is nothing but an umbrella term for a group of underdeveloped, inferior nations, positioned on the periphery of civilisation and part of the third world, with a chronic deficiency in public peace and order, suffering from diseases and epidemics due to a lack of hygiene and mainly consisting of an unskilled workforce, which is chained to poverty by low wages and is withheld fundamental human rights through the workings of undemocratic or corrupt regimes. Such negative associations with the term ‘Asia’ of course imply that Japan is not a member and instead is as ever in a different, first world league of its own, together with a select Western elite that is caught in such various terms as *kyōkoku* (great power), *shuyōkoku* (important country), *keizai taikoku* (economic power), *bunmeikoku* (civilised nation), *senshinkoku* (developed country), and member of the G7 or G8.¹⁹

The lack of a clear Asian identity is definitely not a strictly Japanese phenomenon. Judging only by the photo sessions at the APEC conferences held in Asia, at which the local costume of the host country tends not even to befit the other Asian participants, a collective identity necessary to underpin the post-Cold War trend towards ideological and economic rapprochement between the various (East) Asian countries seems still to have a long way to go. However, in the case of Japan, things are very complicated. Apart from the above-mentioned ‘traditional’ island-mentality and the feelings of superiority towards Asia, the Japanese are also keenly aware of an increased tension with their direct Asian neighbours. The demise of the Cold War structure has sparked or renewed attention to the ‘comfort women’, history textbook, Yasukuni Shrine and other war-related issues and controversies, which seriously impede Japan’s relations with China and South Korea. Regardless of the increasing familiarity with Korean and Chinese food and cinema, many Japanese still seem to be very much aware of an invisible wall, not merely because of cultural and ideological differences but also because of a sense of being resented – a feeling that has only intensified due to sporadic waves of violent anti-Japanese manifestations in China since the Asia Cup soccer championship of August 2004. This explains why the recent sharp rise in media attention for China’s increasing economic, political and military power tends to come mainly in terms of a threat instead of an opportunity. The focus on SARS, the dragon heads (Chinese mafia), illegal workers, and cases of murder and burglary involving foreign students have cumulated into a true wave of *Chūgoku kyōi-ron* (China as threat-discourse), the most recent result of which has been a government-led drastic cut in the

any further than the not terribly concrete proposal that it should ‘rewrap’ (*tsutsuminaosu*) the superior cultural values of the West with ‘its distinctly Asian method of love and symbiosis’. Matsumoto Kenichi, ‘Ajiashugi wa shūen shita ka’. In Matsumoto, *Takeuchi Yoshimi [Nihon no Ajiashugi] seidoku*, Iwanami Shoten, 2000: pp.185-90

- 19 It has also been observed that of the Japanese social movements of the post-World War Two period the one with the most potential to develop into an Asian movement, namely the Beheiren (Federation of Citizens for Peace in Vietnam) of the late 1960s and early 1970s, was not more than a single issue-movement that lacked almost completely a consciousness of Asian unity. Due to the omnipresence of the American army it was easy to be anti-American, but becoming pro-Vietnamese was a lot more problematic for the simple fact that the vast majority of the Japanese had never met a Vietnamese. Hirai Kazuomi, ‘Betonamu sensō to Nihon no shakai undō – Beheiren undō no chiikiteki tenkai wo chūshin ni’, *Rekishigaku Kenkyū*, no.781 (November 2003): pp.117-24.

admission of Chinese students.²⁰ This feeling of unease and isolation within the Asian context is also evident from a *sake* commercial - and the majority of the *Nihonjinron* discourse - which stresses that Japan is not part of the West (*Nihon wa Seiyō de wa nai*) but completely leaves open the question which position the country occupies towards 'the East'.²¹

Japan's ambivalence towards Asia is reflected by similar doubts on the part of Asian countries to what extent Japan belongs to Asia, which are not merely inspired by the country's outstanding position as the leading economic power in the region but also by its image of most docile follower of American foreign policy.²² At a time that various serious attempts to bring about regional integration are underway, Japan will have to show its Asian colours if it does not want to find itself on the outside looking in. This will imply an unprecedented change in Japan's perception of Asia and, especially, its attitude towards China, both of which require an equally drastic change of its self-image ever since the late nineteenth century. Moreover, in case it wants to stand a serious chance to attain the long-cherished goal of obtaining a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, Japan will need the recognition of the Asian countries as one of them, something which the huge amount of developmental, economic and financial aid targeted at the region has not been able to accomplish. The most important requisite for Japan to be able to continue to play an important role in the Asian region and the world of the 21st century seems to be getting rid of the national self-image as the leader and most developed country of Asia or as the sole country with the unique mission to bring about a merger between East and West.²³ Just the mere fact that because of its sheer size and potential China is destined to once again overshadow Japan in the not all too distant future should, no matter how high the psychological barrier, direct the Japanese to a mode of thinking intrinsically different from the one they have adopted during most of the last two centuries. In this sense it may be very worthwhile for the present-day Japanese to reflect upon the process an indigenous generation of opinion leaders

20 As a result of the policy announced by the Japanese Ministry of Justice in November 2003 to introduce a stricter screening of foreign students from China, Mongolia, Myanmar and Bangladesh, the percentage of students from China issued a study visa for the academic year 2004 decreased by as much as 37 points (from 66% down to 29%) compared to the previous year. *Asahi Shinbun*, 7 March 2004.

21 Ōzeki Kara-Tanba commercial 1998-2001. It was broadcast for years, predominantly as part of the short CM-break in Terebi Asahi's daily digest of Japan's national sport, sumo.

22 That this image is not groundless will be clear from the many American military bases on Japanese soil, Japanese voting behaviour in the United Nations, the orchestrated American and Japanese frustration of former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir's East Asian Economic Caucus, and Japan's recent lobbying to include Russia, India, Australia and New Zealand in the East Asian summit, the latter with the clear objective to balance China's influence and to open up the summit to American participation as an observer.

23 The modern variety of this so-called *Tōzai bunmei* (*chōwa* or *yūgō*) *ron* (Theory of - the harmonization or amalgamation of - Eastern and Western civilisation) is best represented by the notion, most prolifically propagated by Umehara Takeshi, that Japan has an exemplary role to play in the world because of its (Buddhist) tolerance. However, the rather immodest idea that Japan should set an example from which the rest of the world should take learning is widespread, from the supporters of Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution who advocate that Japan should not become 'a normal country' because of its unique pacifist qualities as the only country that has experienced the horror of the atomic bomb to somebody like Kyocera president Inamori Kazuo who holds that Japan is uniquely qualified to become a 'virtuous power' instead of a mere economic or military power.

EPILOGUE

went through at the end of World War One, in the face of the arrival of a new world order that was also not any longer based upon military antagonism but upon economic cooperation, and to follow in the much more humble direction set out by men such as Horie Kiichi, Yoshino Sakuzō and Mizuno Hironori of an Asian country amongst equals.

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Samenvatting in het Nederlands

Dick Stegewerns *Aanpassen aan de Nieuwe Wereld – Japanse Opinieleiders van de Taishō-Generatie en de Buitenwereld, 1918-1932*

In september 1931 verwierp Japan de wereldorde door middel van de bezetting van Mantsjoerije. Deze agressieve daad resulteerde in een oorlog met China, Amerika, Engeland en andere landen, die voor Japan desastreus eindigde. Er is nog geen overtuigende verklaring voor deze plotselinge en drastische omslag van het schijnbaar internationalistische Japan van de jaren twintig van de vorige eeuw. Deze dissertatie vestigt de aandacht op de aanwezigheid van twee generaties in deze cruciale periode, wier blik op de buitenwereld fundamenteel van elkaar verschilde.

In hoofdstuk 1 verdedig ik eerst het beginpunt van dit onderzoek. Het einde van de Eerste Wereldoorlog is een belangrijk keerpunt in niet alleen de wereldgeschiedenis maar ook de Japanse geschiedenis. Het raamwerk van multilaterale verdragen, het doorslaggevende criterium van economische sterkte, het leiderschap van de Verenigde Staten, de afwijzing van militarisme, imperialisme en (gedeeltelijk) kolonialisme, de bevestiging van ethnisch nationalisme; al deze symptomen van de nieuwe internationalistische wereldorde waren ook voor Japan overduidelijk en het land besloot zich aan te passen en aan te sluiten. Dit betekende wel dat het streven naar volledige zelfvoorziening in de vorm van uitbreiding van de Japanse invloedssfeer in Noord-China – een noodzaak binnen de nieuwe trend van het ‘totale oorlog’-denken – gerelativeerd moest worden. Door de toenemende druk van het zich herenigende China, dat geen kolonie was en dus aanspraak maakte op het recht van nationale zelfbeschikking, werd Japan in de tweede helft van de jaren twintig gedwongen te kiezen tussen het respecteren van de wereldorde en het gewapend veiligstellen van zijn invloedssfeer.

De keuze verschilde per generatie. In mijn onderzoek ligt de nadruk op opinieleiders van de Taishō-generatie, geboren in de 1870er jaren. In hoofdstuk 2 en 3 behandel ik achtereenvolgens de econoom Horie Kiichi (1876-1927) en de politieke wetenschapper - en boegbeeld van de zogenaamde *Taishō democracy* - Yoshino Sakuzō (1878-1933). Beiden doormaakten een evolutie die karakteristiek is voor hun generatie: van trotse imperialisten naar twijfelende imperialisten, naar aanhangers van de nieuwe wereldorde en uiteindelijk naar pleitbezorgers van de Chinese nationalistische eisen. Ter contrast presenteer ik in hoofdstuk 4 de filosoof en sociaal wetenschapper Sugimori Kōjirō (1881-1968), een vertegenwoordiger van een jongere generatie, de vroege Shōwa-generatie, geboren in de 1880er en 1890er jaren.

In hoofdstuk 5 maak ik de balans op. De twee generaties deelden veel elementen, zoals de inzichten dat de naoorlogse wereldorde voornamelijk gebaseerd was op economische sterkte, dat oorlogsvoering derhalve een nieuw tijdperk van totale oorlog betreden had, dat Japan in dit nieuwe economische tijdperk meerdere fundamentele zwaktes kende, en de neiging om de oplossing te zoeken in Oost-Aziatisch regionalisme, maar ook een evolutionistisch optimisme en het zelfbeeld van de intellectueel als gids van het volk. Het object van hun hervormingsdenken was echter verschillend. Voor de oudere generatie bestond het ancien régime uit de imperialistische wereldorde van voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog, voor de jongere generatie uit de door de Verenigde Staten geleide naoorlogse wereldorde. De oudere generatie was in staat om de naoorlogse wereldorde als een relatieve vooruitgang te zien, de jongere generatie walgde van het gekonkel op de vredesconferentie van Parijs en wees de nieuwe wereldorde af als onrechtvaardig

omdat de ‘have-not’ Japan zijn gelijke deel niet kreeg.

Het belangrijkste element in de scheiding der kampen was echter of men China als een (toekomstige) gelijke staat dan wel natie kon zien of niet. Hoewel de Taishō-generatie op zijn laatst rond het midden van de jaren twintig het argument voor Japans-Chinese relaties op basis van gelijkheid in hun betoog incorporeerde, maakte de vroege Shōwa-generatie meer en meer openlijk zijn onbereidheid kenbaar om China zijn eigen weg te laten gaan. De neiging van de opinieliders van de Taishō-generatie om te zoeken naar samenwerking op basis van gelijkheid, zelfs met een zwakkere partij, kan ten dele worden verklaard door de identiteitsproblemen waar zij in toenemende mate mee geconfronteerd werden in de Japanse samenleving van na de Eerste Wereldoorlog. Als leden van een intellectuele elite die volgens de socialistische leer gedoemd was uit te sterven, begonnen zij zich te liëren aan en identificeren met het nationale proletariaat. In het verlengde hiervan, zochten zij rond de mid-20er jaren ook aansluiting bij het ‘internationale proletariaat’, bestaand uit de gekleurde naties. Een ander kenmerk is dat in hun beleidsvoorkeur ten opzichte van China de nadruk lag op een economische in plaats van een strategische alliantie: de commerciële kansen in geheel China wogen zwaarder dan de gevestigde positie in Mantsjoerije. Geconfronteerd met de opmars van de Guomindang besloten zij zich te schikken naar het Chinese nationalisme. In hun achterhoofd wisten zij dat dit beleid uiteindelijk de ontmanteling van het Japanse bolwerk in Mantsjoerije zou impliceren, maar dit verkozen zij boven het enige alternatief: een gewapende interventie die een onvermijdelijke verbreking van de economische banden met het grootste deel van China met zich mee zou brengen. Bovendien waren velen er zich van bewust dat Japan in een economische alliantie met China niet automatisch de sterkere partner zou zijn. De laatste had meer keuze en minder te verliezen. Derhalve redeneerden zij dat als Japan werkelijk een ‘speciale relatie’ met China wilde hebben, het vanzelfsprekend meer voor China moest doen dan de concurrenten.

De vroege Shōwa-generatie daarentegen leek in toenemende mate vast te houden aan sociaal-Darwinistische concepten als de ‘strijd om te overleven’ en ‘natuurlijke selectie’, die gevoelens van individuele en nationale superioriteit stimuleerden. Alhoewel hun argumentatie vaak in tegenstrijd was met het besef van de zwakte van hun eigen land, hadden de leden van deze jongere generatie een relatief sterk besef van een specifieke Japanse missie in deze wereld en waren zij overtuigd van Japan’s toekomstige sterkte. Geconfronteerd met het gestaag naderen van de Japanse invloedssfeer door de Guomindang-troepen, gingen zij de uitdaging aan en drongen bij de Japanse regering sterk aan op het inzetten van het leger. In hun blik op de buitenwereld, die meer op internationale confrontatie dan op internationale samenwerking gebaseerd was, had de Japanse invloedssfeer in Mantsjoerije de hoogste prioriteit. De totale oorlog met een niet-Aziatische macht die zij voorzagen in de nabije toekomst vereiste het onvoorwaardelijk gebruik door Japan van Mantsjoerije’s strategische locatie en natuurlijke hulpbronnen. In dit kader werden de voordelen van een volkomen van China onafhankelijk Mantsjoerije soms openlijk bediscussieerd. Het ontbrak hen dus duidelijk aan de bereidheid en het vermogen om China als gelijke te behandelen en diens (etnische) nationale rechten te erkennen. In plaats daarvan geringschatten zij vaak het Chinese nationalisme en hadden weinig moeite met een directe confrontatie. Hun kijk op Chinees-Japanse relaties was puur hiërarchisch; de positie van Japan als regionale leider stond buiten kijf. Dit was veelal een weerspiegeling van een vergelijkbare hiërarchische kijk op socio-politieke relaties in Japan in de zin van het pleiten voor speciale privileges voor een superieure elite.

Op basis van deze generatiekloof betoog ik dat het Mantsjoerije-incident van 1931 niet de

aanleiding vormde voor een verschuiving in het Japanse denken over het buitenlands beleid. Deze vond reeds rond het midden van de 1920er jaren plaats als een natuurlijk gevolg van het wegwijnen danwel afsterven van de oudere generatie en de groeiende prominentie van een jongere generatie. Wel dient het Mantsjoerije-incident gezien te worden als een belangrijk politiek breekpunt. Aan de ene kant op het vlak van de buitenlandse politiek, daar Japan door het grijpen naar voor dit tijdperk ongeoorloofde middelen onvermijdelijk de weg naar een heilloze oorlog en zelfdestructie insloeg. Aan de andere kant op het binnenlandse politieke vlak, waar de breedte van het publieke debat aanmerkelijk ingeperkt werd. De overgebleven prominente vertegenwoordigers van de Taishō-generatie werden monddood gemaakt en de vertegenwoordigers van de vroege Shōwa-generatie werden aangemoedigd de zelf-censuur die ze toepasten in de anti-imperialistische 1920er jaren te laten varen.

In de epiloog leg ik een verband tussen de periode 1918-1932 ('het Japanse interbellum'), waarin Japan zijn eerste ervaring opdeed met een wereldorde gebaseerd op multilaterale verdragen en instituties, en het heden. In een tijd waarin internationalisme nog nieuw en onbetrouwbaar was en steun voor (etnisch) nationalisme de basis van Japan's imperialistische en kolonialistische imperium slechts kon aanvreten, kozen de twee bovengenoemde generaties voor de tussenvorm van regionalisme. Het debat over het buitenlands beleid in de 1920er jaren was echter zo goed als gespeend van Azianistische argumenten. De term 'Azië' kreeg vaak een negatieve invulling en draaide zelden om meer dan China. Sinds het eind van de Koude Oorlog staat regionalisme na lange afwezigheid wederom volop in de belangstelling. Ook Japan draagt zijn steentje bij aan de vorming van een Oost-Aziatische Gemeenschap en velerlei regionale verbanden. In zijn 'herontdekking van Azië' wordt het land echter onveranderd belemmerd door een gebrek aan het bewustzijn deel uit te maken van deze regio.

Curriculum Vitae

Dick Stegewerns werd geboren op 15 maart 1966 te Rotterdam. Na het behalen van het diploma voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs aan de Openbare Scholengemeenschap Walburg te Zwijndrecht in 1984, begon hij met de studie Japanse taal en cultuur aan de Universiteit Leiden. In 1990, na onder meer anderhalf jaar verblijf aan Kyoto University met een studiebeurs van het Japanse Ministerie van Onderwijs en een stage bij het Nederlandse Ministerie van Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, legde hij cum laude het doctoraalexamen af. Hetzelfde jaar vertrok hij wederom naar Kyoto met een onderzoeksbeurs van het Japanse Minister van Onderwijs. In april 1991 werd hij toegelaten tot het Ph.D programma moderne geschiedenis aan Kyoto University, dat hij drie jaar later voltooide (*hakase kōki katei shūryō*). In datzelfde jaar kreeg hij een AIO-aanstelling aan de Universiteit Leiden. Hij verrichtte een jaar promotieonderzoek aan Tokyo University met een beurs van de Japan Foundation. Vanaf 1998 was hij als universitair docent en gastdocent verbonden aan de opleiding Talen en Culturen van Japan en Korea van de Universiteit Leiden. In april 2000 trad hij in dienst bij Osaka Sangyo University, eerst als assistant professor (*sennin kōshi*), later als associate professor (*jokyōju*, sinds april van dit jaar *junkyōju*). Het academische jaar 2004 bracht hij door aan het Institute for Reseach in Humanities, Kyoto University. Hij woont in Kyoto, waar hij ook als gastdocent verbonden is aan de opleiding 20e Eeuwse Geschiedenis van Kyoto University.