

書評

三谷博・並木頼寿・月脚達彦編
『大人のための近現代史——19世紀編』

(東京大学出版会、2009年)

(Mitani Hiroshi, Namiki Yoriyoshi, and Tsukiashi Tatsuhiko eds., *A Modern History for East Asian People*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2009)

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Introduction

During the postwar era, much ink has been spilled in writings about U.S.-Japan relations. Politicians and diplomats have waxed eloquently about the relationship between these two countries through the years. During a 1983 visit to Washington, D.C., Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro proclaimed that Japan was an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” (positioned against the Soviet Union). This Cold-War comment endeared Nakasone to his host, President Ronald Reagan. It was around this same time that the American ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield, began saying, over and over, “The U.S.-Japan relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none.”

So much stress has been put on the relationship between these two countries that Japan’s connections with the rest of the world, both contemporarily and historically, have sometimes been obscured. A new present typically demands a reexamination of the past, however. Japan remains closely allied with the United States, but China is now its most important trading partner. And the importance of South Korea to Japan seems increasingly clear, both to address the problem of North Korea and to counterbalance the rise of China. At present and in the future, Japan faces an especially globalized world that includes new opportunities but also threats. At the same time, it must navigate its relationship with the United States whose global influence is in *relative* decline (as is that of Japan) as much of the rest of the world modernizes.

But globalization is nothing new, as the book *A Modern History for East Asian People* informs us. Even during the last decades of the Tokugawa era during which Japan’s contact with the outside world remained regulated especially closely, Japan was open to influences from civilizations near and afar. The extent of these outside influences and challenges magnified many times over from the 1850s on, as Japan was coerced open and opened itself widely to the world beyond the archipelago.

It was in this complex, interconnected environment that modernity in East Asia (defined in this book as China, Japan, and Korea, but not Vietnam) took shape. This excellent book is simultaneously designed to be readable and understandable to the non-

specialist, and yet to enable adults (thus the original Japanese title) to understand the complexity of East Asian history, including the interactions with outside forces, during the nineteenth century.

The Opening of Japan

As Mitani Hiroshi stresses in the opening chapter, until the middle of the nineteenth century Japan remained in the middle of a world order centered, substantially, on China. When the topic of Tokugawa-era Japan is taught to students in the United States and Europe, they generally fixate on Japan's relations with Holland at this time because Holland is more familiar to them. It is not as though the trade and cultural interactions resulting from Japan's one formal pipe to Europe were not significant, but the volume and value of trade with China at the time dwarfed that of trade with the Netherlands, lucrative though the latter was.

China was Japan's most important trading partner going into the modern period. It is once again Japan's most important trading partner. It is possible that, from a future perspective of the long scope of global history, the 150 or so years of Euro-American global dominance lasting from approximately 1800 to 1950 may seem like a passing chapter in a broader story of worldwide modernization. But historians, myself included, tend to shy away from the impossible task of predicting the future, so I include that comment as a mere conjecture.

Mitani, whose contributions to this book of collected essays are particularly significant, informs us that although Japan was never entirely closed off from the world, well into the nineteenth century it nonetheless constituted a small, self-contained world. This self-contained world was turned upside down from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and Japan would go on to play a central role in introducing modernity, for good and for bad, to Asia overall.

Although Mitani looms large in this book along with his fellow editors, the volume brings together the expertise of twenty-nine scholars who contributed pieces ranging from chapters to short comments at the end of chapters. This strategy has assembled a tremendous range of expertise and a multiplicity of perspectives. In totality, the book provides a broad and powerful synthesis.

It is deserving of translation into English so that it can reach a broader audience. The imbalance that exists between the many works first published in English that are then translated into Japanese and the few works first published in Japanese that are then translated into English is as serious as any of the trade imbalances that exist between Japan and its economic partners. Very little that is published in Japanese reaches a wider audience. It is no exaggeration to point out that many Japanese scholars in the humanities and social sciences exist in a world so self-contained that it brings to mind the Tokugawa system of only closely regulated trade and contact with the outside world. It is imperative, for Japanese scholars and for the rest of the world (which otherwise can easily be oblivious to important breakthroughs in Japan) that a formalized system of translation be established to lessen the

imbalance. One needs to be realistic—the translation imbalance is not going to be corrected by market forces. It is something that can be remedied only through programs supported by the government of Japan or by private foundations.

To return to *A Modern History for East Asian People*, several distinguished scholars have contributed chapters explaining the local context in East Asia on the eve of modernity. Motegi Toshio stresses that each of the East Asian countries had developed distinctive cultures and approaches to the outside world. Japan, for example, did not participate in the tributary system with China, and maintained an equal relationship directly with Korea.

Miyazaki Fumiko emphasizes that although Japan itself remained divided into 250-plus domains that were substantially autonomous in many areas and yet kept under closer supervision by the House of Tokugawa, a sense of nation had already developed, particularly among samurai. The same was true of a national intellectual network. Within the intellectual circuit, and at private academies, merit trumped class, at least to some extent. Also, Japan was part of an East Asia network that shared information not only on the immediate neighborhood, but also about the rest of the world. Tsukiashi Tatsuhiko returns to the theme of an intellectual network in East Asia in a later chapter about “Western Learning” in Korea before the modern period.

Okinawa occupies an important place in this reconsideration of Japan’s interactions with the outside world during the nineteenth century, for it represented a borderland at the intersection of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean cultures, as well as of influences from Southeast Asia. Chapters 5 and 6 introduce China’s society and Korea’s society on the eve of modernity. In chapter 7, David Wolff traces Russia’s gradual eastward expansion from the seventeenth century, when the valuable fur trade lured Russians to the east. What was a gradual expansion gradually became a very deliberate official policy of imperial expansion from the 1840s on.

The story of Russia’s modern imperialism eastward is often omitted, curiously, from discussions of the various modern imperialisms. Thus it was enlightening to find the basic outline of Russia’s imperial expansion, which brought Russia into closer contact and eventually conflict with both China and Japan, included in this and later chapters. The question of whether Russia is part of the East or of the West has been as central to Russian history as the same question has been to Japan’s modern history since Fukuzawa Yukichi urged that Japan “get out of Asia” (and join the West) in an 1885 essay.

Much of the middle section of the book addressing Japanese responses to Western intrusions in the decades leading up to the Meiji Restoration was left in Mitani’s deft hands. Mitani suggests that Japan seems to have sensed the threat posed by Western powers intent on colonizing the world earlier than its neighbors. It was also lucky to be on the observing side of the Opium Wars between Britain and China, able to gain some insights about the force of Western military technology before suffering its power firsthand. The concluding chapter returns to the significance of the Opium Wars, which began a transition whereby China moved away from maintaining a closely regulated system of trade with the outside

world to being thoroughly integrated in the global economic system.

Endo Yasuo contributed a nifty chapter on what led the United States to turn its attention to the Pacific in the decades leading up to Perry's 1853 mission that "opened" Japan (as we learn in the next chapter, it could have just as easily be a Russian admiral to "open" Japan). One important part of the equation that turned American westward toward the Pacific is provided in an interesting statistic Endo cites. Of the 900 whaling ships operating between 1835 and 1855, 80 percent were American. These ships sought ports in Northeast Asia at which to take on supplies. Another part of the American interest in the Pacific was the desire by the Americans to establish direct steamship service to China in order to reconfigure, in their favor, the world trade routes at the time. But Endo's chapter of America's role in the Pacific, fine though it is, is appropriately part of a broader story of complex and overlapping globalization at the time, rather than the main storyline in a teleological account of U.S.-Japan relations.

Japan as a Conduit of Modernity for East Asia

Beginning with chapter 16, the book focuses more on the role played by Japan in introducing modernity to the rest of East Asia, the sort of topic that, when handled insensitively, can result in howls of protest from neighbors who experienced the coercive and exploitative forces of Imperial Japan firsthand. Emotions aside, however, it is undeniable that Japan was a critical conduit through which the rest of Asia first experienced modernity, from learning the rules of the international system of nation-states (the Sino-Japan Amity Treaty of 1871 was the first modern treaty signed between East Asian countries) to lessons in industrialization, and the scholars here have done a sensible job in tracing this role in all its complexity.

Namiki Yoriyoshi traces the devolution of central authority in China from the Opium Wars on, a time when China (and the rest of East Asia) was nonetheless pulled into the international system of nation-states that replaced the previous East Asian order. Kawashima Shin and Motegi Toshio note that in spite of 1871 Treaty of Amity, Japan and China soon entered conflict over Okinawa, over which Japan asserted its sovereignty by sending troops to Taiwan. Japan clarified the precise boundaries of its emerging modern nation-state (whereas previously there had been a vague sense of where "Japan" ended), and its modern territory would come to include a vast empire even as China's imperium contracted. Chinese leaders nonetheless came to understand the modern concept of and importance attached, within the international system, to defining precisely the nation-state's physical borders, and jealously guarding one's sovereignty over every inch of that territory (see chapter 21).

Even as the drama over Okinawa was playing out, the young leaders who had overthrown the bakufu and propelled Japan on the path toward modernity divided over whether to send a military expedition to punish Korea. The expedition was rejected, but Saigo Takamori was one of several key leaders who left the government at that time. Within a few years he would lead the most significant challenge to the nascent Meiji state.

Japan's story of modernization sometimes comes across as seamless to casual observers, so rapidly did Japan formulate a nation-state and go onto be a great power, but the authors here do well to stress the often precarious situations that the young leaders faced, including rebellion from within. On the political and social front, the Meiji state often had to pull back when reforms it introduced proved too much to the dislike of the populace. On the economic front, entrepreneurship is a central part of the story of Meiji, but many entrepreneurs failed again and again before perhaps finally experiencing success. It is nonetheless true that the Meiji leaders made quick study of modern ways, for example forcing Korea to open itself from 1877 on by essentially the same coercive means and treaty language that the Americans had used on Japan only two decades earlier.

Chapter 22 examines modernization in Japan, China, and Russia. The Great Reforms of the 1860s that initiated Russia's modernization are chronologically as well as thematically comparable to the reforms that accompanied the Meiji Restoration in Japan, as is the later progression of Russia's industrialization. China, too, followed a similar path toward modernity as did Japan and Russia, but in a more sporadic fashion.

The introduction of Russia into the overly worn comparison of Japan's "successful" and China's "failed" modernization makes all the difference in transcending the old paradigm, and is a credit to this book. Japan and China are portrayed as having been impacted by the "West," but who exactly was the West? Russia was impacted by the same outside forces, namely Britain and the next, small group of modernizers, as were Japan and China. This reminds us that there were many countries in the so-called West that were late modernizers, too. The real issue is modernity, not geography, however much Japan's victory over Mother Russia (a "white" country) in 1905 roiled a world order dominated at that time by Euro-Americans.

Tsukiashi's portrayal of a Korea, from the 1880s through to the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), has having one foot remaining in the old world order centered on China and the other foot in the modern international system, is an apt portrayal of civilization caught between old and new. It is also a portrayal that could be applied to the histories of many nation-states as they undertook steps to break away from systems that had served them well for centuries in order to enter the modern world. During this same period, China and Japan, who saw their own interests vested in the future of Korea, undertook programs to build up and further modernize their militaries (a narrative that is rarely absent from the story of any nation-state's modernization because, more often than not, might has defined right in the modern age).

Whereas the Sino-Japanese War represents one of two "good wars" for Japan at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, in chapter 26 Kawashima, Sakurai Ryoju, and Tsukiashi stress how defeat shocked China and represented a decisive blow against the old system. The reforms in the name of modernity came fast and furious in China the late 1890s. The same was true of Korea, however, an angle that is often left out of other narratives of East Asian history that focus so extensively on China

and Japan that it brings to mind the overweening focus on U.S.-Japan relations. Before their modernization reforms progressed very far, however, both Korea and then China would experience intrusions from Japan that shaped the course of their modernities, and which left a bitter legacy that lingers to this day.

Conclusion

In the concluding chapter, Kawashima poses an important question. If one is to write a book about East Asia during the nineteenth century, what commonalities did the three countries share? Each was influenced by Western culture, to be sure, but more interesting to Kawashima is the concept of standardization. It was only through standardization of a wide range of practices that, for example, trade between these countries could be accelerated dramatically. Along the same lines, systems of communications (e.g., telegraph lines in the nineteenth century, or the technology supporting cell phones today) do not work well without standardization. The same can be true of efforts to contain infectious diseases. This standardization across East Asia, Kawashima stresses, was the key commonality experienced by the three countries as part of the modernization process.

With its focus on East Asia in the global context in the nineteenth century, this book, if made available in English translation, would offer itself as the perfect initial reading in a course about Japan in world history that would feature other recent, rare examples of global history at its best. Here I am thinking of three books in particular that address the first half of the twentieth century, three books in which Japan features prominently. Marilyn Lake's and Henry Reynolds's *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) traces the development, around 1900, of an "international religion of whiteness," in other words an international community of whites who felt bound together by race, and the subsequent challenges to this racist order. Japan's role in challenging this religion of whiteness looms large.

Cemil Aydin's *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (Columbia University Press, 2007) is an erudite examination of how intellectuals in the Middle East and Asia alike embraced modernity, but not necessarily a modernity that was western, and especially not the Euro-American version of modernity that posited that one's level of civilization was based on race (white), religion (Christianity), and geography (Europe and America). Japan looms large in this story. Aydin stresses that observers from India to Egypt made the following conclusion after observing Japan's modernization, the success of which was symbolized by its victory over Russia in 1905: "The Japanese success in modernization proved that the promises of Western modernity were universal and applicable everywhere, irrespective of race, religion, and geography."

Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anti-Colonial Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2007) introduces the irony

of Japan's modern history whereby the first non-white, non-Christian country to modernize and become a great world power also went onto to become an imperialist power that treated its colonial subjects with the same condescension whites reserved for non-whites. Manela reminds us that President Woodrow Wilson himself never intended to apply his concept of self-determination to non-whites (and the Wilson Administration was stunned by world-wide movement it sparked), but Manela also shows that the explosion of anti-colonial nationalism, including among Koreans, that defined the global Wilsonian moment placed Japan in an awkward position. An imperialist itself, Japan had no intention of supporting self-determination in reference to the peoples under its control, and in fact brutally repressed the 1 March 1919 independence movement in Korea.

Students and scholars alike who make their way through these four books will have a better appreciation of the importance of global history, but also of the effort required to do it well. I await the English translation of *Otona no tame no kingendaishi* (Nineteenth-century edition).

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