The Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Reader

Kuan-Hsing Chen and
Chua Beng Huat

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Asian Cultural Studies or Cultural Studies in Asia is a new and burgeoning field, and the *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Journal* is at its cutting edge. Committed to bringing Asian Cultural Studies scholarship to the international English-speaking world and constantly challenging existing conceptions of cultural studies, the journal has emerged as the leading publication in Cultural Studies in Asia.

The Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Reader brings together the best of the ground-breaking papers published in the journal and includes a new introduction by the editors, Kuan-Hsing Chen and Chua Beng Huat. Essays are grouped in thematic sections, identifying issues which are important across the region, such as state violence and social movements, as well as work produced by *IACS* sub-groups, covering topics such as feminism, queer studies, cinema studies and popular culture studies.

The *Reader* provides useful alternative case studies and challenging perspectives, which will be invaluable for both students and scholars in media and cultural studies.

Essays by: Firdous Azim, Melani Budianta, Partha Chatterjee, Hee-Yeon Cho, Cho Han Hae-joang, Chua Beng Huat, Ding Naifei, Hilmar Farid, Hanasaki Kohei, Josephine Ho, Kelly Hu, Hans Tao-Ming Huang, Po-keung Hui, Kim Hyun Mee, Kim Seong-nae, Kim Soyoung, Liu Jen-peng, Eric Ma, Meaghan Morris, Muto Ichiyo, Tejaswini Niranjana, Ashish Rajadhyaksha, A. B. Shamsul, Sun Ge, Toriyama Atsushi, Eva Tsai, Wang Hui, Paul Willemen, Yoo Sun-Young, Shunya Yoshimi.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2007
by Routledge

Published 2014 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY, 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-43134-7 (hbk)
ISBN 13: 978-0-415-43135-4 (pbk)

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Acknowledgements

The *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies: Movements* project has been an inspiring, exciting and rewarding experience. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to and assisted with a project still in a very early phase of its intellectual journey. We are grateful to all the writers who have contributed to the past issues of the journal, particularly those who have agreed to be included in this volume, and to members of the editorial collective and the advisory board for their unfailing support; without this, the project as a whole, and the present *Reader* in particular, would not have been possible. Generous funding for the initial phase of the project was provided by the Japan Foundation; National Science Council (ROC) and National Tsing Hua University (Hsinchu, Taiwan) continues to provide ongoing support. Finally, a two-year visiting research fellowship provided by the Asia Research Institute at National University of Singapore enabled the two editors to work on this *Reader* under the same institutional roof. We would like to thank Grace Hui-Chuan Wu and Emma Chun-Yu Liu for their assistance on the production of this *Reader*.

When we started the project in late 1990s, there were not many intellectual groups working together across the national boundaries in Asia. Limited and small as the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies project was, and is, it has demonstrated that solidarity across borders is possible. This thread has broken the ice. Over the past decade, we have been very happy to witness more groupings emerging, though the process is still very slow. We hope that regional interactions and integration will soon be more widely perceived as an urgent intellectual responsibility in Asia. What we will continue to do for the moment is to open more spaces and build more mechanisms, bringing in new members from the generation of intellectuals that follows us, so that when the momentum arrives, networks of trust and friendship will be in place and will be able to be mobilized. The present volume marks only a beginning of the next and subsequent stages of the project: a greater and greater production of knowledge, beyond the journal and associated books, can follow.

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Introduction

The *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies: Movements* project

Throughout the twentieth century, the West has been the inspiration for Asian intellectuals. The West has mediated and shaped the mode of knowledge production in the analyses of Asian societies, politics and cultures, and in self-understanding. The hegemony of 'the West as method' blocks the possibility of us looking towards relatively similar historical experiences shared in Asia, Latin America and Africa. The formulation of 'Asia/Third World as method' is to open up the West-oriented singularity and to multiply frames of reference and sites for identification.[1] The *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies: Movements* project is a small attempt to search for alternatives.

In early 1997, Rebecca Barden, then the senior editor of Cultural Studies within Routledge, approached us to start an Asia-based journal. Having organized the two Trajectories Conferences in Taipei in 1992 and 1995,[2] some of us thought that there was a sufficient basis to take up this challenge. We recognized the simple fact that no 'Asian' publishers had built up distribution networks enabling the circulation of critical materials throughout Asia and beyond, only transnational publishers such as Routledge.[3] In order to establish connections and to produce knowledge within Asia, accepting this invitation could mean being able to bring about a fundamental change: acting to tilt the unbalanced direction of the flow of knowledge through the existing infrastructure. So we decided to form an editorial collective and respond to the call.

Since the inception of the project, we have been conscious that there is no unity to the imaginary entity called 'Asia', hence the term 'Inter-Asia'. In 1998, the first Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Conference was held in Taipei to prepare the first issues of the journal. The name *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies: Movements* was agreed upon by the editorial board during the meeting, and the journal was inaugurated in 2000. It started with three issues a year and, since 2005, has published four issues a year.

Our agenda has been simple: to contribute to the integration of an imagined Asia at the level of knowledge production. More specifically, we set out to: (1) generate and circulate critical work in and out of Asia and beyond; (2) slowly link and facilitate dialogues between the disconnected critical circles within Asia and beyond; and (3) provide a platform on which academic and movement intellectual work can intersect. Only later did we realize our own naivety: these aims were far easier said than done. Nonetheless, to a limited extent, we are achieving some of these ends.

Hitherto, English publications about cultures in Asia have been published mainly outside Asia and international publications in English from Asia have been minimal. Difficulties in 'translating' scholarly work based on Asian languages into English has resulted in intellectual production in Asia being somewhat disconnected from the global

circuit. As one of the first pan-Asian international journals in Humanities and Social Sciences to publish and circulate quality interdisciplinary scholarly work in Cultural Studies-related fields generated directly out of Asia, the journal fills a critical gap in making intellectual work produced in Asia available in English. Stemming from our objective to publish works produced in Asian languages, we have also made a special commitment to translation work. And, further, to facilitate mutual translation, the journal has been building alliances with locally-based leading journals in Asia. By 2007, essays previously published in the journal have been translated from and into several Asian languages – for example, Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian.

In the past, having Asian intellectuals 'looking West' has left intellectual circles in Asia disconnected from each other. One of the tasks of the journal is to build a platform for an 'Inter-Asia' intellectual community by creating links between and across local circles. Therefore, the journal performs a double function: (1) linking together communities in Asia; and (2) linking Asia to the global community. As elsewhere, journals in Asia have played important roles in intellectual and political processes, partly because a journal is always a space where groups of intellectuals congregate. Though a journal is the material product circulating in social space, other networks of event and activity are always generated through the intellectual groupings around the journals. Through the strategy of building a list of affiliated journals, so that translation copyrights between the *IACS* journal and other Asian-language journals can be waived, we are able to link some circles together.[4] Further, although Asia-based, the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies project is not self-enclosed. We have published essays from Europe, North America and Latin America. We have been actively linking with, and will continue to link with, global intellectual communities. We have, therefore, managed to initiate some of these dialogues, though it is still early days.

The title of the journal, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies: Movements*, positions the project as a part of the larger Asian intellectual movement. One central mission is to construct a space of intellectual activism between critical scholars and movement organizers. We see this space as a product of our own history of struggles in Asia, in various forms of democratic social and political movements, and it is the journal's responsibility to continue that line of critical intellectual work beyond academic institutions. Given our recognition that there is no cultural and/or historical unity, but in fact very significant regional and sub-regional differences throughout 'Asia', including the effects of globalization on regionalization, there is an urgent demand to move beyond nation-state boundaries to intersect the regional and sub-regional. In this work, the journal is providing space to the intellectual communities in Asia, for long overdue voices.

As the journal's mission is to link across the Asian continent, an editorial collective was constituted with 24 scholars (who are both leaders within their own national contexts and are also internationally known), located in 20 cities spread through 15 countries across the Asia-Pacific. Such a wide geographical spread of the editorial board members is rare in the Humanities and Social Sciences and it has only become possible with the emergence of the Internet. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of Cultural Studies, the academic backgrounds of the board members include: Sociology, Anthropology, English Literature, Film Studies, Communication and Media Studies, Comparative Literature, Political Theory, Translation Studies, Intellectual History, Political Economy, Political Sociology, Social History, Gender Studies, Queer Studies and Urban Studies. Since 1998, the editorial collective has met twice a year in different Asian

cities. Besides charting important editorial policies, in each of these instances workshops and seminars were organized to meet local intellectuals. The editorial collective has also organized four larger-scale conferences so that different circles and networks could converge, and materials for publication could be further generated. The first conference was held in Taipei in 1998, the second in Fukuoka, Japan in 2000, and the third in Bangalore, India, in January 2004. The fourth conference took place in Seoul, in July 2005.

Over the years, *IACS* has been gradually indexed in the following: the Bibliography of Social Science; Cambridge Scientific Abstracts; Current Contents/Arts and Humanities; Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Sciences; the International Bibliography of Social Sciences; Sociological Abstracts; and Worldwide Political Science Abstracts. From 2005, it has been included in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). Inclusion in the major indexes means that the *IACS* project has effectively created a space where scholars from the next generation, who are forced to deal with such mechanical 'recognition' by their employers in the securing of their academic careers, can find a space for their intellectual work.

In 2004, during the editorial collective meeting at the Bangalore Conference, it was decided that an Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society be established. We deemed that the project was ready to make the next move to expand the network, beyond individuals and into institutions, with the focus of the *IACS* project shifting from journal production to wider intellectual activities. After two years of preparation, the IACS Society was formally established in Seoul, with Kim Soyoung, film director and Professor of Screen Studies in the Korean National University of Arts, as director and Shin Hyunjoon, Head of East Asian Studies Center at Sungungheo Unversity, as executive director.

The two major items on the agenda of the Society are to organize biannual conferences and also graduate student summer camps. The first open-call conference in 2007 was hosted by the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Shanghai University, directed by Professor Wang Xiaoming. A pre-conference for postgraduate students was held. The theme of the main conference was 'Conditions of Knowledge and Cultural Production'. To fill a major gap in Cultural Studies, one focus of the conference was on three dimensions of peasantry, namely agriculture, village and peasant; the dominant population in Asia is the peasantry, yet the field of Cultural Studies has been completely silent on this complex and urgent issue. The inaugural postgraduate student summer camp was planned for South Korea in 2008.

Besides the IACS Society, the project is advancing to form an Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Institute, as a coordinating body to initiate a deeper and larger scale of Inter-Asia interaction. An Inter-Asia publisher is also being considered so that greater intellectual resources can be made available directly out of Asia.

In all these endeavours, the IACS project is of course confronting problems that have to be overcome. First, as a regional journal, it remains limited by both the bias and basis of its origination in East Asia. Though the editorial policy is to maintain a balance in the publication to include materials outside of East Asia and Southeast Asia, the interaction between sub-regions has not yet fully unfolded, nor has the building of contacts with critical circles in West and Central Asia. How to link with the not-yet-connected parts of Asia needs to be a major objective for the future.

Second, in comparison with other English journals, *IACS* has done relatively more translation work, so as to include the writings of non-English-speaking intellectuals.

Translators capable of rendering difficult intellectual materials from Asian languages into English are few. The project will have to cultivate more networks of translators in order to perform the function of trans-local linkages.

Third, already mentioned, the *IACS* project is an initiative bringing intellectual circles in different parts of Asia to recognize each other's concerns and understand the research being carried out. Far from becoming each other's reference point, there is a long way to go to evolve a critical mode of knowledge. We will need to work hard to make subsequent generations of intellectuals conscious of the different historical conditions in Asia, in order to transform problems generated from an over-reliance on knowledge of or from the West. We envisage that the opportunity for such transformation will take place on the level of collaborative work across borders among postgraduate students and younger faculty members.

Fourth, interaction between critical circles in Asia is indeed occurring, though its speed is slow and the intensity could be stronger. The most productive way of interaction is still being sought. Due to the past experiences, *IACS* must transcend its current limit of communication through written language: visual and audio forms of expressions have to be incorporated.

Fifth, the agenda to link intellectuals in academic and social movements, with the slogan 'to movementize scholarship, to theorize movement', has not yet been fully carried out. Though there is systematic participation from the movement circle, the dominant forces in the project are still located in the academic institutions. How to widen *IACS*'s links is an issue that is constantly addressed. Past practices have made those of us involved in the transnational dialogue realize that we can no longer conceive of the interactive field in a stable and rigid form. We will need to reconceptualize the meaning of 'movement' and 'scholarship'. In the context of neo-liberal globalization, academic institutions proved to have relatively stable resources and have become major sites for the reproduction of 'movement'. In the process of becoming an integral part of the 'movement', the meaning of the academy itself is redefined. In short, 'to movementize scholarship, to theorize movement' needs to be pushed further.

It should be clear from the above discussion that the *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* project has yet to achieve all its intended aims.

Those who have been involved come from very diverse intellectual and academic backgrounds, not to mention the immensely different local histories in the regions in which each of us has been immersed. At this point, our networks are limited to the South, Southeast and Northeast Asias; further links will hopefully be extended in the future. Even though the network is still small, we already know and feel that the living conditions of the network members are far from being the same. To understand the critical works generated, we need to look beyond the surface of discursive production to reach the material living conditions within which the intellectual works are produced. We have learnt not to use a set of fixed criteria to quickly give judgements on works produced in very different places. We have learnt to see each other's strengths and weaknesses, and to work within these limits and differences. Our, unpronounced, hope has been that, at some point in the future, when different sites in Asia become reference points to one another and different intellectual circles begin to interact, new and alternative modes of knowledge production might be able to emerge from this

experiment. We are now only at an early stage of discovering what intellectual concerns exist in our own localities. We need to work longer, further and deeper.

We do nevertheless have some measures of success. In the past, it was difficult to locate materials directly produced in non-English-speaking parts of Asia. Even if one could find them, they were likely to be found in Anglo-American publications, in which authors living in Asia often had to compromise on addressing their own local concerns to cater to the issues and concerns presupposed in the Anglo-American local contexts.[5] Now, the journal has opened a space for problematics grounded in different localities in Asia to emerge. In the past, to develop a reading list for a graduate seminar on Cultural Studies in Asia, it would have been hard to know where to begin. Now, gradually, the journal has made it possible to meet some of these concrete demands. In the process of being 'forced' to produce each issue on schedule, critical materials have emerged and accumulated. A rigorous referee system, seriously applied, has enabled the journal to maintain a strong academic standard, and hence to establish itself as a major publication in the international field of Cultural Studies. The journal now makes a modicum of material available in English for interested readers who want to read pan-Asian, locally-based intellectual work coming directly out of Asia.

For the past ten years or so, we have attempted to put some of these highly motivating ideas into practice. We all feel there is something important and worthwhile emerging in these intense dialogues among ourselves and beyond. The *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Reader* is our first attempt to share what we have achieved in this initial stage with those who are concerned with the project.

Kuan-Hsing Chen and Chua Beng Huat

Notes

1 See Kuan-Hsing Chen (2005), 'Asia as method', *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, no. 57: 139–218 (in Chinese).
2 See Kuan-Hsing Chen (1998), ed. *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge.
3 There are now trans-border bookstores, such as Kinokunia, and the Singapore-based Page One, which have emerged in various Asian cities, but not publishing houses. None of the American university presses, which have had huge intellectual impact in Asia, have solid global distribution networks.
4 A more obvious example is the big 'journal alliance' panel organized in the 2000 Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Conference, held in Fukuoka, where a number of journal editors were invited to reflect on the history and problems of the journals they have edited. See *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (2001), Journal Alliance section.
5 In the field of Cultural Studies, the problematic is always locally grounded. The editorial process has taught us that most of the original and creative papers are indeed those addressing local issues and concerns. Therefore, whether a problematic has local bearing has become one of our editorial principles.

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Part I

Setting the agenda

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Chapter 1

How does Asia mean?

Sun Ge
(Translated by Hui Shiu-Lun and Lau Kinchi)

Introduction

The question of Asia, like the question of modernity, resists any attempt to provide a clear explanation partly because it is loaded with interconnected issues from many facets. Asia is not only a political concept, but also a cultural concept; it is not only a geographical location, but also a measure of value judgement. The Asia question itself does not bear any necessary relation to the question of hegemony and counter-hegemony, although the attempts to tackle this question have brought into play considerations of hegemony of the East and the West. The question itself does not entail nationalism, although the theme of nationalism has been conjured in the course of discussing this question. Another reason why the question of Asia is difficult to explicate is that it is hardly a question of substantialization, namely, by way of ascribing to it unequivocal geographical attributes. Quite contrarily, it is often invoked in the discussion of questions that bear no direct relation, or are even in stark opposition, to any geographical considerations. For a long historical period, Asia has not been treated as a self-contained geographical concept, but has only been put forward ideologically in opposition to Europe. The discussion of Asia involved not only the question of Eurocentrism, but also the question of hegemony within the East. As difficult as it is to sort out the question of Asia, it remains an underlying thread running through the intellectual history in the modern world. Hence, we still have to grapple with the question of Asia as one that constitutes a totality in itself.

The fact that, in the history of the academic world, 'Asia' as a singular term has emerged to name collectively a plurality of countries and regions deserves our attention. As Edward Said has pointed out in his book *Orientalism*: 'To speak of scholarly specialization as a geographical "field" is, in the case of Orientalism, fairly revealing since no one is likely to imagine a field symmetrical to it called Occidentalism. Already the special, perhaps even eccentric attitude of Orientalism becomes apparent. For there is no real analogy for taking a fixed, more or less total geographical position towards a wide variety of social, linguistic, political, and historical realities.' (Said 1985: 50) However, what Said fails to understand is that there is another side to this problem. That is, for the Asians engaged in the discussion of the Asia question, though one cannot say there is precisely something called 'Occidentalism' worked out by them, there indeed exists, and not without reason, in abstraction an ambiguous single entity named the 'West'. Although it is no longer meaningful today to consider the 'West' as a single entity, Occidentalism had, at least in the modern history of East Asia, once

played a key role in mediating the self-knowledge of the nations within the East with important questions being stirred up in the process.[1] Said's study has shown us the political and ideological nature of the object of Orientalism. He has also shown us the Eurocentrism concealed in Orientalism. Thanks to this understanding, we can begin our discussion on a higher level. In view of the recent efforts of the Western intellectuals in deconstructing the myth of colonialism, we do not need to pursue any specialist research before we can accept as common knowledge the question of 'the right to discourse' of the West over the East, implicit in both Orientalism and the Asia question. At the same time, if we turn our attention to the history of the East, we can also find that its question of Asia is involved in similarly complicated ideological positions. However, in the hands of the Asians, Orientalism becomes different from that which Said criticizes, for it is directed against the Asian Occidentalism. To a large extent, it is not positioned against the Western world from the perspective of the East, but rather against an image of the West constructed in Asia. Therefore, it not only involves the question of reclaiming the right from the West, but importantly, it reveals complicated historical relations within the Asian nations. Thus, the question of Asia must not merely be pursued within the framework defined by the dichotomy of East versus West, but also should be considered as dealing with internal problems in the Asian region. In turn, the contextual exploration of the Asia question will echo, and respond to, the Saidian question posed by Western intellectuals.

This paper will inquire into the question of Asia within the historical context of East Asia. I will mainly deal with materials from the intellectual history of modern Japan. This focus is the result of my personal acquaintance with this particular field, and is also taken because the question of Asia does not assume a similar importance, and hence position, equally in the intellectual histories in East Asia. In other words, the awareness of the Asia question as being problematic was only sensed by those countries situated on the peripheries, as opposed to in the centre, which had undergone both struggles for survival and cultural crises. Hence, it is not at all a coincidence that we can learn more about the question of Asia from Japanese intellectual history than from China's, and this basic fact prompts me to take a different perspective from that of Western intellectuals on the question of Asia – a question that deserves greater attention from intellectuals in both the East and West. In the course of thinking about this question, it occurs to me that the reflection on the Asia question has brought about a variegated process leading us to confront our own history. In the end, in thinking about the Asia question, we are not led to being absorbed in the question 'What is Asia?', but rather to reflect on 'What sort of issues in fact are set forth in discussions with regard to Asia?' In other words, Asia is merely a medium, through which we are effectively led to our history, and it is precisely because of this historical significance that it is important we keep asking 'How does Asia mean?'

Two approaches: does Asia exist?

The question of Asia is tricky, simply because, as a subject matter, it carries a different content in different times, without any inherent connections between them. Therefore, if the question of Asia is pursued in terms of causal relations, we shall not be able to gain much from it. Yet there is indeed continuity with regard to a certain sense of

direction underlying the question of Asia. Without a good grip on the historical contexts of the discourse on Asia, we would not be able to understand the mode of existence of the Asia question. In the context of Japanese intellectual history, the question of Asia is often associated with the following 'accepted observation': after the Meiji Ishin (Restoration), there are two lines of thinking among intellectuals in Japan regarding the question of Asia; one is represented by Fukuzawa Yukichi's (1960) idea of 'Disassociating from Asia and integrating with Europe' (*Datsu-A ron*); and the other is represented by Okakura Tenshin's advocation of 'Asia is one'. The former upholds that Japan should forsake the 'unmanageable allies' in Asia so as quickly to join the ranks of the European and American powers. The latter stresses the commonality of Asia civilizations in the embodiment of the value of 'love' and 'beauty' which cannot be offered and superseded by the European civilizations.

The publication date of 1885 for Fukuzawa's *Datsu-A ron* is important in understanding the work's context. Okakura's (1976a) 'Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Art of Japan', written in English, was published in 1903, and is also a work of its time. The two ways of thinking embodied in these works were not intended to oppose each other. It was only when the Japanese intellectuals of later generations reconstructed Japan's intellectual history that Fukuzawa and Okakura were turned into representatives of two opposing views of culture, both according with the need of later generations to position Japan *vis-à-vis* Western civilization in modern Japanese history.

At the turn of the century, Meiji Japan was confronted by a seemingly simple, and yet complicated, problem. On the one hand, Japan was keen to shake off its centuries-long subordination to the centrality of Chinese culture, and also the traditional competition with Korea for a place closer to the centre, by becoming part of the Western and world civilization, and re-ordering the international relations in East Asia. Yet on the other hand, it had to face racial opposition in which the West had the upper hand. Being coloured, Japan could not really become the ally of Europe and America; it could not but present itself to the world theatre with its Asian face. Long before the founding of the modern state, the Japanese had already begun to challenge China as a cultural centre. And as Japan had to open itself to the West even before the Meiji Ishin, it became impossible merely to confine oneself to the region of East Asia when dealing with the relationships between the three East Asian countries. We must rethink the whole in the global context or, to be more precise, in the context of the international political configuration among Europe, America and East Asia. Hence, in the field of intellectual history, Fukuzawa's (1995) *Bummeiron no gairyaku* (*An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*) formulated a unilinear evolutionary perspective on the progression of history to justify predatory states of affairs in the process and the Western civilization as the culmination of that particular evolutionary process. On the other hand, scepticism was also incurred about the evolutionary view of history. Intellectuals with a different mindset from those clinging to evolutionary views were committed to developing a critique of the material civilization of the West, while digging at the same time into the tradition of the East so as to uncover principles that transcend the predatory logic. The cultural positions of the latter are more aesthetic. However, no matter how different the two approaches were, in the context of the Meiji era, the apparent opposition between them was derived from the same sense of crisis, with regard to the question

of confronting the Western civilization. Both sides were aware that, in order to fight and prevail over the encroaching Western powers, it was necessary to count on Asia as the counterpoising sphere against Europe and America, and to count on building an alliance among the three East Asian countries, and even among other coloured races. It was only after the Second World War, after Japan had seen the pernicious extension of pan-Asianism into the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere, that reflections on history constructed Fukuzawa and Okakura as representatives of two different views of civilization. Postwar Japan was left with the twin legacies of identification with, and criticism of, the Western civilization. It was in the attempt to reconcile these tensions that Fukuzawa and Okakura were turned into two pivotal points on which the essential structure of pan-Asianism hinges.

Before writing *Datsu-A ron*, Fukuzawa, in fact, advocated 'The solidarity of East Asia' (*Toyo rentai ron*). For him, this idea had a double structure, i.e. it stresses that each East Asian country must push for revolutionary reform of the old regime and overthrow the power of the conservatives within the country, and only then can it be rid of the pressure from the Western powers. In other words, Fukuzawa's conception of 'solidarity' does not regard national boundaries as its precondition, but rather predicates upon the criterion of 'civilization'. He does not believe that the coloured races can join hands to resist the Western powers simply because they are coloured. He also, therefore, advocates that actual support should be given to the progressives of neighbouring countries in helping them with their coup to overthrow their own conservative regimes, so as to export 'civilization'.

During Fukuzawa's time, the so-called 'pan-Asianism' was not a theoretical proposition, but a cry for action, for which the vehicle could be roughly grouped together under the title 'aspiring activists' (*ronin* or *shishi*) – radical elements engaged in subversive activities in neighbouring East Asian countries. The Japanese *ronins* were deeply involved in the 1884 coup in Korea. Similarly, for the 1911 revolution of China, persons with Japanese names were also intensely implicated.[2] At the turn of the 20th century, Japan's Asianism contained, in a paradoxical relationship, both a sense of solidarity and a desire to expand. It also harboured a genuine sense of crisis and an antagonism against the presence of the European and American powers. In connection with this, we can list a number of political activists and intellectuals connected to pan-Asianism: Konoe Atsumaro (the chairman of the House of Peers and the founder of the East Asia Common Culture Society) advocated strongly, on the grounds of racial differentiation, intervention into the affairs of China to save it from the fate of colonization by the white people. Tarui Tokichi (a frustrated political activist of the popular movement), in the first edition of *Daito gapporon* (*The Great East Federation*) published in 1893, strongly proposed the integration of Japan and Korea in the struggle against the European powers. Miyazaki Toten (1970) (an activist who gave life-long support to the revolution in China) wrote *Sanjusannen no yume* (*My Thirty-three Years' Dream*), which expressed his aspirations for and feelings about the Chinese revolution. Kita Ikki (an activist holding ultra-nationalist views, who was very influential with young generals and colonels in the Showa period) was preoccupied, as a nationalist, with pan-Asianism.

In fact, Fukuzawa can doubtlessly be included in this list, for his idea of disassociating Asia is based on the idea of East Asia as one. In addition, of course, the *Datsu-A ron* (*Disassociating Asia*) was the outcome of Fukuzawa's emotional involvement in the politics of the time. Many scholars have pointed out that Fukuzawa's *Datsu-A ron* is

outspokenly opposed to the national mood at the time of its publication. Therefore, rather than seeing it as the result of his theoretical thinking, it should be understood as a reflection of Fukuzawa's individual way of reacting to particular affairs.[3] Fukuzawa had, in fact, in this short piece, lucidly demonstrated to us the theoretical part of his thinking, which is his principle of relativism with regard to understanding the question of civilization. *Datsu-A ron* is only a short article, but it is highly charged throughout with Fukuzawa's particular sense of urgency. It starts with: 'Communication in the world is becoming more and more convenient and time-saving, and the influence of the Western civilization is looming over the East, sweeping everything along with it on its way.' (Fukuzawa 1960: 238) However, for Fukuzawa, the influence spreading from the West could not be simply taken as the coming of an angel. Beneath the facade of its fascination was concealed its potential for destruction. He wrote, 'Civilization is like the spread of measles and we do not have any means to stop (cure) it. We cannot even withhold an epidemic that is harmful, let alone civilization that comes double-edged with both advantageous and disadvantageous effects, while the advantages often overshadow the disadvantages!' (Fukuzawa 1960: 238) The comparison of civilization to measles, and the belief that the wise should choose to 'help it spread' and enable the people 'to sooner bathe in the atmosphere of its ways', embodied Fukuzawa's opinion of the main trend of the world of his times: it was an ineluctable trend that Western civilization would dominate the whole world, and nations of the East were incapable of resisting it, just as the Tokyoites were defenceless in the face of measles spread from Nagasaki. However, since the advantages of civilization outweigh its disadvantages, it seems that the only choice is to accept it. Whilst it is true that Fukuzawa's theory of civilization is not without its own detailed contents, and *Datsu-A ron* only suggests the perspective from which he sees modern civilization, the measles metaphor he employs separates him from later generations who uncritically admire Western civilization, unable to sense the inherent tensions. Our reading of the intellectual history in question must begin with this understanding.

After he had stated his fundamental judgement on Western civilization, Fukuzawa expressed his disappointment with the immediate East Asian neighbours, and urged Japan to break off with its neighbours in the East, for he thought they were doomed to fall. Fukuzawa's greatest fear was that the West would regard Japan as a barbaric country, like its doomed neighbours. What is primarily conveyed in *Datsu-A ron* is Fukuzawa's sense of doom for the survival of the Japanese nation; his disappointment with the neighbouring Asian countries; and, as a consequence of this disappointment, his evaluation of Asia as barbaric. There may be different interpretations of his 'break-off statement', but the undeniable fact is that Fukuzawa, Japan's most remarkable modern thinker, is completely committed to the 'Survival of the Fittest' way of thinking in his reflection on Asia's value. Fukuzawa has even gone to the extreme of ignoring Japan's geographical location in order to ideologically cut Japan off from Asia. This shows that Fukuzawa had already begun to consider the question of relativity with regard to the geographical conception of Japan. In relativizing the geographical conception of Japan, Fukuzawa is obviously relativizing the conception of civilization at the same time. Although Fukuzawa emphasizes 'integrating into Europe', he is certainly not handing over to the Europeans the sole claim to civilization, for he believes that Japan is also eligible to join Europe in the march of civilization.

Anyone who understands a little of Japan's modern intellectual history would know that at the time of Edo, there was an idea of the 'Hua Yi Order' among the Japanese Confucianists. This comes from ancient China's way of geographical thinking, supplemented by some cultural evaluation. It is thought that the Di (the uncouth northern tribes in ancient China) can be raised to become the 'Di humans' through mercy. This reflects the functional disposition of the kind of thinking in the differentiation between the Hua (the Han Chinese) on the one hand, and the Yi (Eastern tribes in ancient China) and the Di on the other. As the territory of China was being expanded throughout history, it became possible to view the assimilation of 'outer fringes of civilization' as China's 'internal affairs' (although the processes of intermarriage between the Hua and the Yi-Di in the history of China were greater than could be covered by the term 'assimilation'), and this way of thinking continued even until the times of the Qing Dynasty in the face of unequal demands from the Western powers. When Hong Kong was ceded, it was understood to be an act of pacification towards the Yi by the Hua. Hence, in China, in view of the flexible sense of territorial boundary, the categories Hua and Yi were basically that of substantial political geography, where the position of 'Hua' as the centre was irreplaceable. However, in Japan, Hua and Yi were taken to be the two measures of political culture, marking the presence or absence of 'mercy', 'virtue' and 'ethical governance', and were no longer merely understood geographically as the relation between the centre and its peripheries. For example, the well-known Confucianist Ogyu Sorai argued in his *Ten Essays in Ken-en* that: if the Yi can elevate themselves and become like the Xia (the name the ancient Han people called themselves), then they should be regarded as Hua; if the Xia regresses to become like the Yi, they should be looked down upon as the Yi. The main criterion for distinguishing Hua from Yi is whether both adhere to the rites and teachings of the sage kings of the ancient times (quoted from Koike 1985). Dazai Shundai also said in his *Keizai roku* (*Discussion of Economics*) that, etiquette, the people of Yi are no more different than the people of Hua. Conversely, for the people of Hua the centre could become the Yi and the Di once they lose their etiquette (quoted from Koike 1985). Therefore, for the Japanese, 'Hua' and 'Yi' are interchangeable; it is only the hierarchical order of the ethical governance that must be preserved.

Since the beginning of a new era with the fall of the Ming dynasty and its replacement by the Qing dynasty, the upper class of Japanese society gradually arrived at the view of the so-called 'Hua-Yi metamorphosis'. In this view, the Japanese refuted the orthodoxy of the China of the Qing Dynasty as the representative of 'Hua', and hence claimed to replace China as the representative of 'Hua'. This move contained Japan's first ideological reaction against the previously unchallenged position of China as its esteemed teacher. However, there is another, similarly important, point about this event that must not be ignored. What these modern Japanese did in their ideological reaction was to separate the sign from its physical referent, so that 'Zhong Hua' (Hua the Centre, referring to China) could become a sign for any arbitrary entity, freed from any relation to the territorial boundary of China. Thus, a premise foreign to Chinese thinking was instituted, i.e. the so-called cultural identification and the provenance of that culture can obtain a relation of relative autonomy from one another. In the last phase of the Shogunate, as the Japanese were applying the perspective of the Hua-Yi order in dealing with the world, a related slogan also emerged: 'Revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians' (*Sonno joi*). This was a reaction to the demand from the West for Japan to open its

door, and this slogan also carried the message of the symbolization of Japan. Later history showed that the two 'hans' (domains) with the loudest cry against the barbarians were pushing the hardest for Japan to open its door.[4] From the Meiji era, the Japanese had been thinking along such lines, in the face of world civilization, and opened themselves fully to the world. During the Meiji era, the Japanese calmly accepted the Western civilization as 'Zhong Hua'.[5] They regarded the more advanced West as a more orthodox representative of 'Zhong Hua' than themselves, thus stretching 'the Hua-Yi metamorphosis' even further, even to a global context.

Fukuzawa has undoubtedly adopted this line of thinking, although in the opposite direction. In fact, the so-called 'Disassociating Asia and integrating into Europe' is to abstract Japan from its Asian geographical context by turning it into a symbol of transferable cultural carrier, hence making it possible for Japan to proclaim its integration with other powerful modern states at the other end of Eurasia. Under these circumstances, the geographical location of Japan becomes irrelevant. This new set-up of the 'world' rearranges 'the Hua-Yi metamorphosis' order as they had tried to arrange it before, when the relationship between 'Zhong Hua' and 'Yamato' constituted the axis for them.

'Disassociating Asia and integrating into Europe' and the 'Zhong Hua-ization' of the Western world prevailed together, reflecting the sense of cultural crisis and national crisis of the intelligentsia and the upper circles of the Japanese society in the 1880s. This was very different in orientation from the similar sense of crisis in China at about the same time. For the Chinese, their sense of crisis was directed towards a reshaping of their culture from within, while for the Japanese, it prompted them to seek, outside Japan, new world connections that may help them to shake off the crisis. Since Fukuzawa turned Japan into a symbol, where it could be relatively abstracted from its geographical location, he had to, then, re-allocate it a new position. However, he knew better than anyone that the position could not be in Europe. Thus, Fukuzawa's situation was even more precarious than that during the times of Edo when the idea of 'the Hua-Yi metamorphosis' was put forward. The latter merely tried to convert the relation between Japan and China. Furthermore, it was mainly 'Zhong Hua' that was subjected to symbolization, without depriving Japan of the anchor of a home. However, when Fukuzawa subjected Japan to symbolization and attempted to break it free from Asia, it became more difficult to maintain one's wishful thinking: You want to integrate into Europe, but are you welcome? You want to break away from Asia, but is Asia agreeable?

In the 1880s, the situation was already too difficult for Fukuzawa to deal with. The imminent question was, with two opium wars ushering in the invasion of China by the European powers, Japan too was confronted with the danger of a life and death situation on the one hand, and the possibility of extending its influence into China on the other. This was an absolutely concrete situation, leaving no room for the play of symbolization. The dilemma of Fukuzawa's relativism could not become the primary concern of today, because it cannot be abstracted from its specific context. However, it is understandable that at the time when Fukuzawa's idea of 'Disassociating Asia' merged with the consciousness of crisis, particularly under the sway of the outcomes of the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese Wars, which gave Japan an illusion of being a powerful state, not having the anchor of a home could hardly present itself as a problem.

However, Fukuzawa has left a chronic problem to future generations, i.e. the recurrence of alternative trends of thoughts of 'Disassociating Asia' and 'Reviving Asia'. Right up to the present day, the argument over whether Japan is an Asian country continues to be voiced, and Fukuzawa's symbolization of Japan must be held partly responsible for this. Fukuzawa has made the symbolization of Japan into such a binding force that only an alternative symbolization can replace it, leaving later generations no other choice than to look for a different view of civilization to counter that of Fukuzawa, in order that Japan can have a place in Asia.

About two decades after Fukuzawa, Okakura (1976a) published 'The Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Art of Japan', which proposed a view of civilization that stressed the integral nature of Asia, and its context was completely different from Fukuzawa's. Its concern was no longer how Japan could survive in the predatory modern world, but rather how Japan could offer the modern world values for a new understanding of civilization. Okakura's thinking on the civilizations of the East and the West is wholly confined to 'the activities of the Spirit'. His conception of Asia as an integral whole is founded on his reservations about the civilization of the West. He is different from Fukuzawa in this respect because, unlike Fukuzawa, he does not see the development of the world in terms of victory and defeat, with victory as the measure of the hero. At the time when Okakura published his work in London, he was confronted with the same problems that Said would face more than half a century later, i.e. Occidentals only understand the Orient by way of self-centering and making easy assumptions, therefore the civilization of the East is only admitted into the world picture through the projection of Western civilization, but never as an autonomous value system. As Okakura said in another article: 'If the Orient must overcome their ignorance about the Occident, then need not the Occident abandon what they have already known about the Orient? The Occident possesses an extensive system of learning, yet they are also deeply biased!' (Okakura 1976b: 97) In this respect, Okakura's conception of Asia as an integral whole reflects the tension inherent in the relation between the East and the West, which is totally different from Fukuzawa's, even though both are the products of attempts to respond to the intrusion of the West.

'The Ideals of the East' begins with a famous paragraph. It includes a statement that contains the underlying perspective of Okakura's discourse:

> Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilizations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas. But not even the snowy barriers can interrupt for one moment that broad expanse of love for the ultimate and universal, which is the common thought of inheritance of every Asiatic Race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from those maritime people of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of life.
>
> (Okakura 1976a)

As all the peoples of Asia embrace a love for the Ultimate and the Universal, which is lacking in the civilization of Western Europe, as those peoples are obsessed with the technical, the civilization of Asia is far superior to the civilization of Western Europe. Okakura did not forget to stress the specific function of Japan as he expounded on the

civilization of Asia. For him, Japan was fulfilling the function of a museum for the civilization of Asia. However, if compared to Fukuzawa, Okakura's complex about Japan was more flexible, although his discourse was later appropriated to support the proposition of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere, despite this proposition never being Okakura's concern. If 'The Ideals of the East' was taken to be a narrative of history or art history, the way it approaches knowledge and the knowledge in question would become dubious. However, in the context of Okakura's confronting the West, his position provides his narrative with an extremely important value, i.e. Okakura has, at the beginning of this century, made the Occidentals see that the Orient have their own way of knowing and evaluating themselves, totally different from the Occidentals' idea of Asia. Furthermore, the Orient's view of Asia indeed constitutes culturally a challenge to the Eurocentric view of civilization.

Okakura had led a legendary life. He was sent to Europe and America in his early years to study the history of art in the West, which only made him believe more strongly in Asian art. Okakura was also interested in real politics at this time: however, his personality caused his official career to be beset with frustrations, but he was not at all deterred, and continued throughout his life to concern himself with the fundamental problems of political thinking and culture in the field of art. This enabled him to put forward propositions in opposition to those of the prevailing concern in a Japan that was increasingly absorbed in the values of the West. What he proposed was the values of Asia. He concluded that the fundamental problems of the world should be judged on the basis of standards derived from Asia and not from the West. This way of thinking was not, in fact, against the current of its times, for it coincided with the desire, harboured by the Japanese government and the upper circles, to place Japan in a superior position within the newly interpreted Hua-Yi order. In fact it would be more appropriate to view Okakura's idea of 'Asia is one' as a variation of Japan's construction of a new world order.

If we contrast what is said above with Fukuzawa's exposition of the idea of 'Disassociating Asia', the two are in opposition to each other with respect to the cultural values propounded by them. Yet this is not all. In fact, deep down we can see something in common between the two. Whereas Fukuzawa sees Western civilization as a kind of epidemic, although having greater benefits than measles, Okakura sees it as inferior, as totally absorbed in the consideration of means rather than ends. Both of them were confronted with the opposing relation of East and West, and an existing Asia. More importantly, each had, in his own way, subjected Asia to symbolization. For Fukuzawa, the existing Asia became the symbol of a doomed barbarity, while for Okakura, Asia was the symbol of Love, out of which the world's three great religions were born. With regard to the question of whether to break off from Asia or to revive it, Fukuzawa and Okakura can indeed be seen as the two foci in history; around them, the elliptical trajectory of Japan's modern history can be traced.[6] The question of whether to 'Disassociate Asia' or to 'Revive Asia' is, in other words, asking whether Japan is an Asian country – whether Japan bears any responsibility and obligation to Asia. These two poles have always been the variations in a duet that refuses to go away in the intellectual history of modern Japan. They indeed constitute the foci of an ellipse and, what is more, unspent energy is still radiating from these two foci even to this day. However, if we allow ourselves to be confined merely to this ellipse in our consideration of the question of Asia in the modern history of Japan, another equally important thread

of Japan's modern thought would be omitted. In order to examine comprehensively the meaning of the question of Asia, we have to go beyond the picture provided for us by Takeuchi Yoshimi and Hashikawa Bunzo, and temporarily bracket together the opposing positions of Fukuzawa and Okakura. This will allow us to see an overview of their similarities, and to locate further a different thread of thought, which is in contrast to that of Fukuzawa and Okakura. We would, in this way, discover that both Fukuzawa's and Okakura's discourses have a highly ideological function, and similarly neglect consciously the deficiency in the divide between Asia and the West.[7] In contrast to this practice, later in the intellectual history of modern Japan there emerged a different thread of thinking that, objectively speaking, is directed against their practice of symbolization and the way the divide between East and West is constructed. This thread points to a different approach that began with Watsuji Tetsuro.

Watsuji Tetsuro (1889–1960) was a philosopher of equal standing with another philosopher, Nishida Kitaro (1870–1945), in the modern history of Japan. His writing activities mainly lasted from the early 20th century to the postwar era. He was actively involved in the academia in matters of grave political significance in the Showa period for issues such as the construction of Japanese nationalism and the debates around Tennoism. In this regard, Watsuji Tetsuro was basically taking the stand of the rightist intellectuals. However, it is still not quite right to view him as an intellectual concerned with praxis, for his concerns were from beginning to end confined within the academia, and the question he pursued insistently concerned the limitation and the effectiveness of the central value system based on individualism in the modern West. Proceeding from this basic thinking, he repeatedly explored the relation between subjectivity and objectivity, questioning whether it is possible to isolate each term as an object of knowledge, and also the question regarding the mode of relation between an individual and the collective to which the individual belongs.[8] Watsuji (1935) wrote *Fudo: ningengakuteki kosatsu* (*Local Conditions and Customs: Studies of the Human Sphere*) in the 1920s, and published it in 1935, at a time when Japanese fascism was growing in influence. Ideologically, Watsuji supported Tennoism and upheld Japan to be the centre of the conception of the world. This dimension of Watsuji's thought overshadows the productive aspects of his conception of the world; however, we must not throw away the baby with the bath water and turn our back on the task of reflecting on the positioning of Watsuji's *Fudo* in history. This work put forward the theme of the organic relation between forms of human society and the natural conditions for discussion, against the background of Watsuji's dissatisfaction with the philosophical thinking of the West, and the modern conception of values. Watsuji was motivated by the critique of philosophical thought, of which Descartes is the representative, that postulated that the subjective mind was the substance of the existential conditions of being human. He was also sceptical about the contemporary orientation in the values of his time. Thus, he undertook to rethink the connotations of 'human'.[9] In Japanese, 'human' usually denotes a particular individual as well as someone being among others. Additionally, 'human sphere' adds to the notion of 'human' the connotations of one's sense of being part of a group and interpersonal relationships, hence it can be employed to indicate the state of being of an individual, and of being part of a whole, at the same time, without differentiating the one from the other. In other words, the concept of 'human sphere' already comprises the notion of self and the notion of others, while the term in Chinese does not carry these connotations. Watsuji believed that it was

the contribution of modernity to establish the ways for an individual qua an individual to approach the world. However, individualism wanted to suppress the fact that 'an individual was only a conjuncture in the web of the human sphere' by substituting the individual, which is the part, for the human sphere, which is the whole. Therefore, he saw it as his task to rectify the mistake committed by the abstract approach of individualism in modern Western thought through dedicating himself to establishing 'the ethics of the study of the human sphere'.[10] Watsuji's *Fudo* can be regarded as an extension of *Ningengaku toshiteno rinrigaku* (*The Ethics of the Study of the Human Sphere*), and also as the preparatory step for his later work *Rinrigaku* (*Ethics*) (Watsuji 1937). Although Watsuji revised his perspectives in the course of his movement from one work to the other, he was consistent in his criticism of the modern Western individualistic way of thinking, in which the subjective is opposed to the objective and its unilinear perspective of historical progress. Besides directing against individualism, Watsuji was also motivated by his desire to correct the deficiency in Heidegger's (1987) *Being and Time*, where Heidegger paid more attention to the temporal dimension than to the spatial dimension; hence the deliberate stress of the significance of spatial difference to the human civilizations. In his *Fudo*, Watsuji repeatedly states that the history of mankind and the natural conditions in which humans resided could not be treated in isolation from one another. History is the history of 'local conditions and customs', and 'local conditions and customs' is the 'local conditions and customs' of history. In other words, the static differentiation between human as the subject and nature as the object is senseless, and the specificity of natural conditions is the constraint of fate which mankind cannot surmount.

Watsuji Tetsuro distinguished the local conditions and customs of mankind (by mankind Watsuji did not mean to include every human being on Earth, but only that part of the human race needed for the demonstration of his arguments, which meant only the region covered by this question of Asia) into three types: monsoon, desert and pasture. (In his later work *Rinrigaku*, he added two more types to the three already given: the human sphere of the pioneer, and the human sphere of the steppe, so as to include in his consideration types such as America and Russia; however, the former three divisions remained his primary concern.) The first two types include East Asia (or 'Asia', as Okakura refers to it in his discussion), South Asia and West Asian Islamic countries. The last type refers to the Mediterranean and the Baltic regions, regions regarded by Okakura as being disposed to the pursuit of means and not the end of life. Simply by considering the way in which the divisions were made, we can tell that in Watsuji's discussion of the question of local conditions and customs, the binary opposition set up between Asia and Western Europe by ignoring the natural division of geography is meaningless to him.

According to Watsuji, the national conditions of monsoon bring about the cultures of India, Southeast Asia, Japan and China. The basic feature of monsoon is 'moist'. Moisture is the fountain from which all things flourish and grow, notwithstanding the threat it poses to the existence of mankind. Hence, it is the symbol of 'life', and the people living in the monsoon regions, therefore, must not pit themselves against the root of life, but instead must acquire tolerance and passivity, which in turn accounts for the cultural characteristics found in these regions. The national conditions of desert produce the cultures of Egypt and Arabia and, therefore, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. 'Dry' is the feature of the desert's natural condition, and as it threatens the

existence of mankind and all living things, it is the symbol of 'death'. Peoples living in the desert regions are thus made to confront nature, forging combative relations to it. Furthermore, they also tend to relate to other tribes in the form of confrontation. The personified God is the contribution of the desert peoples to mankind, only counterpoised by the depersonified Absolute Being of India. Europe is the region that has the natural conditions of pasture. Being endowed with both moist and dry characteristics, nature in the pasture region accords well with the desires of mankind, enabling mankind easily to discover the laws of nature for it to follow. This is the foundation of science. Furthermore, the ability to manipulate nature also makes it easier for mankind to free itself from the shackles of nature, and consequently produces the spirit from competition to rivalry, as represented by the Greeks. This is not only the source of the expansionist character of Europe, but also the root of the formation of slavery, in the services of the liberation of a few from nature, at the expense of many, by reducing them to the raw existence of livestock. This is the soil from which the flowers of the European civilizations blossom.

As an elaboration of his position propounded in his treatment of *Ethics*, Watsuji's *Fudo* cannot be said to be a successful work. First, he failed to provide a comprehensive theoretical model to deal with the relation between the individual and society, and the relation between the subjectivity of humans and the objectivity of nature. Consequently, he can hardly avoid being misread as a 'natural determinist'. Although he repeatedly stated in his work that 'natural conditions is not the cause of culture', and 'the historicality and the conditionality of nature are the two moments of culture', his narrative mode appears to be that of natural determinism as it unfolds. Therefore, in order to grasp properly the *Fudo* perspective, it is necessary to take into consideration Watsuji's basic approach in his treatment of ethics. This will enable us to discover that, notwithstanding the contradictions in *Fudo* and Watsuji's theoretical inadequacies, it has, in fact, concealed within it a very important thought.

In *Ningengaku toshite rinrigaku*, Watsuji, borrowing from Heidegger's phenomenological studies, differentiates between 'beings' and 'Being'. He stresses that a being, according to the popular sense, is a phenomenon, an Other to Being, and Being manifests itself through a being. Only when we subject the popular sense of phenomenon to the hermeneutical method of phenomenology can it be liberated from the 'given' (i.e. transforming the phenomenon into Kantian intuition), and acquire the structure of a phenomenological object, thereby disclosing the 'dynamic structure of the Being of the Human Sphere' contained in the everydayness of the phenomenon. In connection with this, the return to 'Being' from 'beings' is to proceed from 'beings'; that is to say, the point of departure is confined by the range of possibility of actual experiences. It is not possible that beings can be present at all times, and can be equally accessible to everyone in the same way. Hence, the Being of human is historical, and a change in the historical situation means that the possibility of approaching a being, and the ways to interpret it, will be different and may even be transformed (Watsuji 1963: 122–128).

The philosophical elaboration by Watsuji Tetsuro shows that he basically adopts the position of phenomenology and the hermeneutical method, particularly in approaching history. This cannot be ascribed to him as his invention. His invention rather lies within this: he does not merely confine himself to elaborating on the theoretical level, but tries to translate the philosophical understanding to history itself.

In *Fudo*, Watsuji carried out what he declares in *Ningengaku toshite rinrigaku* as 'the destruction of hermeneutics'. This is what is proposed by Heidegger – that 'destruction is a critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must be employed, are de-constructed (*Kritische Abbau*) down to the source from which they were drawn'. But Watsuji considers that Heidegger's idea of man remains abstract and unhistorical, for he can only think in terms of an individual, distanced from the double structure that binds an individual and society. In other words, Heidegger fails to get close enough to the founding praxis of the Being of the human sphere. What Watsuji wants to accomplish is to trace back to the roots of the traditional concepts of relation between man and nature, and relation between history and natural conditions, so as to re-open them and shake off the abstraction imposed on them by Heidegger, retrieving the foundational Being of the 'everyday reality'. Therefore, when Watsuji studies the influence of natural conditions on human activities, he is not occupied mainly by the human activities themselves. His main concern is, rather, the relation between a particular human activity and the natural conditions. Again and again he calls attention to the historicality of natural conditions and the conditionality of nature in history, out of a desire to dissolve the subject–object binary oppositional thinking of modern Western philosophy that is centred on the subject, and replace it with the relation between subject and object as the point of departure. (It is undeniable that the intelligentsia of the East has also participated in the aggravation of the polarization of this binary thinking.) Closely read, we will find that every piece of his treatment of natural conditions and customs is focused on the formative processes of the relation between human and nature, rather than the results of established culture. This is his practice of prying open the traditional concepts.

When *Fudo* appeared in the 1930s, its most important significance was not the world history it provided in the sketch, which was actually so problematic that it was more or less ignored by later Watsuji scholars, but rather the way the sketch was outlined. It provided a refreshing opportunity for a new approach to history. Watsuji's determination to dissolve the subjectivity made him take up the position of a bystander as he sketched the forms of civilizations of Eurasia, and strived to introduce a deterministic perspective of natural conditions into the discourses on the cultural specificities for every civilization he undertook to sketch, thereby trying to construct a configuration of pluralistic spheres, coexisting with one another. Within such a configuration, no single culture was in a hegemonic position over the others. Neither could there be any culture deemed to possess universal values. With such a specificity given, Watsuji's argument for viewing Japan as the centre of world history and his ideological support for Tennoism were deconstructed under the weight of his own theoretical understanding.[11] More importantly, in the 1930s, Watsuji unwittingly provided the clue to a different approach to the question of Asia from that of Fukuzawa and Okakura. His approach starts with everyday reality, and not with concepts and ideologies in the pursuit of knowledge about the world, thus moving away from the model of the symbolization of Asia produced by Fukuzawa and Okakura. In fact, only by resorting more to everyday experience can an investigation of the question of Asia really be carried out. Although the question of Asia was never a question for Watsuji, as almost all Watsuji scholars have pointed out that Asia never figured as a fundamental fact in Watsuji's mind, Watsuji did, without knowing it himself, bring forth a critical

question: does Asia really exist? And his work *Fudo* shows us a path different from that framed by the East–West binary opposition. Thus Asia is being dislodged from its position of being a given, allowing it to be open to interrogation.

It is beyond my ability to provide an overall assessment of Watsuji's thinking on ethics. However, I can say that it is important that a different line of thinking be retrieved from Watsuji's position on the question of Asia, otherwise our understanding of the Asia question in the Japanese intellectual history would be based, in a limited way, on those trails blazed by Fukuzawa and Okakura, and the chance for considering Asia differently would be lost. Subsequently, we would be led to an unnecessary disjunction between intellectual history and the other social sciences, and be unable to discern the limitation of each discipline hence this would leave the Asia question to be tackled solely in the domain of intellectual history. In fact, if we go beyond the confines of the 'ellipse' defined by Takeuchi Yoshimi and Hashikawa Bunzo, we can discover that the important moment for the discussion of the Asia question may not be located within the intellectual history demarcated from other disciplines, but rather at the point of convergence between it and other disciplines. The later development of the Asia question, on the one hand, had continued to be constituted along the paths prescribed by idealization and symbolization, which were leading to the proposition of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere; on the other hand, it had also begun to follow Watsuji's suggestion by considering the pursuit of the close connection to natural conditions and geography which suggested the notion of 'the actually existing Asia'. When these two approaches, one geared toward ideas and the other reality, find their point of encounter, their actions upon each other would bring forth new issues, ones which had not happened in Watsuji's time but some decades later.

Convergence of the two approaches

As two different responses out of a sense of crisis about their own time, Fukuzawa's and Okakura's views of Asia have virtually defined the direction of thinking for Japanese intellectuals of later generations. However, there is an enormous blind spot concealed in this line of thinking: from the very beginning, Asia is approached as a symbol, making it possible for Asia to be detached from its actual geographical location; this in turn leads to the restriction of the West, which is set in contrast to Japan, as an abstract background, expressed only vaguely. As a consequence, it becomes possible to discuss the matter in extremely abstract and ideological ways. As Meiji Japan managed to push rapidly through the modernization process and became a power among the modern states of the world, the formation of fascistic nationalism was escalating during the Taisho period and the early Showa period, in which the question of Asia, instead of bearing a sense of the national crisis during the Meiji period, was metamorphosed into an instrument of public opinion for the legitimization of Japan's desire to become the overlord in East Asia. The height of this development was the projection of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere, a project disdained by all other Asian countries. To the postwar Japanese intelligentsia, the most important event was the Tokyo Trial convened by the Allies. The 'Europe' that Fukuzawa had wanted Japan to join refused to accept Japan into their company as a member of the United Nations, while its Asian neighbours would not accept Japan as a possible ally due to its wartime

aggression. Thus, the postwar Japan was left truly homeless, being separated from Asia without succeeding in integrating with Europe. The ambition of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere fell to the ground. However, after the 1950s, the duet of 'Disassociating Asia' and 'Reviving Asia' re-emerged, and by the time of the mid-1960s, there was again the cry of 'the affirmation of the Greater East Asia War', casting once more a shadow over the question of Asia. Fukuzawa and Okakura should certainly not be held responsible for such an outcome, yet the duet of 'Disassociating Asia' and 'Reviving Asia' in the intellectual history of modern Japan did begin with them. As the pressing antagonism between the East and the West during the Meiji period faded, the question of Asia slid gradually towards aggression and expansion, driving into obscurity its possibility for introducing into the history of civilization a turning point. This is why the question remains undecided today and why, whenever opinions regarding the question of Asia are put forward, the aggression committed by Japan is always raised.

For Asians, the Asia question is primarily a question of the sense of solidarity, a sense that arises in the midst of the aggression and expansion perpetrated by the West. Thus, the sense of solidarity is articulated with a sense of national crisis, which distinguishes the question of Asia from the Orientalism and even the criticism of Orientalism in the West. In 1924, Sun Yat-sen (1986) made a speech in Japan on 'pan-Asianism', focusing on the question of race. In reference to the Russo-Japanese War, Sun stressed that the coloured races were excited by this war for 'it was the first time in the recent several centuries that the Asians had beaten the Europeans'. By 'Asia', Sun meant to include all the coloured races of the Asian region. He further argued from the above assertion that the culture of the Rule by Benevolence in Asia would necessarily win out over the European rule by Force, and went on to warn Japan to make a prudent choice between the two positions. Sun Yat-sen did his utmost to stress the necessity of a sense of solidarity for Asia. 'In treating pan-Asianism, what sort of problems do we want to solve with the fruits of our study? It is none other than finding out how the suffering peoples of Asia can resist the European powers. In a word, it is to defend the oppressed peoples against injustices perpetrated on them.' Sun Yat-sen's view of Asia contains something that is lacking in Japanese views of Asia – a fundamental concern for weaker peoples. For the early Japanese thinkers, the question of weaker peoples did not constitute their primary concern. Even so, there was still a certain consistency between Sun Yat-sen and the early Japanese thinkers, and this consistency was even stronger than that found between the current and the earlier generations of the Japanese thinkers. Indeed, among Sun Yat-sen or Fukuzawa and Okakura, the question of the Asian solidarity was provoked by the white race and, for that matter, even when Fukuzawa would like to seek the termination of the connection, while Sun and Okakura viewed building solidarity within Asia as their means, they were all confronted by the problem of 'how to react to the European powers'. But, after the Second World War ended, this problem no longer claimed priority in people's minds. On the contrary, what had been relegated to a secondary question now came to the fore – this is the question concerning the factuality of the sense of Asian solidarity. The Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere not only destroyed the dream of 'restoring the status of the Asian peoples' as Sun Yat-sen saw it then, it also tore apart the Japanese intellectuals' illusion of solidarity. Notwithstanding that the chant of pan-Asianism

was at its loudest during that period, it had turned into a mere ideological war cry, where it had once been an ideal and a way of thinking, for it was not in any way prepared to face and deal with the fact of its aggression against its Asian neighbours.

After Sun Yat-sen, the soil for the cultivation of discussion of the question of Asia disappeared in China, but Japan was haunted by this question all along. In postwar Japan, the intellectual arena had to rethink its position in the global setting, finding it impossible to go beyond Asia to face the world directly. The most crucial question was whether Japan, after its defeat in the war, was under any obligation to Asia. As for pan-Asianism, which was always bound up with the aggression of imperialism in the 20th century, the question was how the shadow cast by this history could be made to disappear.

Under such circumstances, 'Asia', together with 'nationalism', became words so engulfed in ambiguity in modern Japanese language that progressive intellectuals of postwar Japan basically avoided the question of Asia altogether. Takeuchi Yoshimi, however, was an exception. He was the one with the audacity to be 'a cat's paw', and traced the provenance of the terms that were marked by the imprint of an ignominious historical memory, so as to uncover the principle underlying them.

The journey that Takeuchi Yoshimi's thinking has gone through will not be discussed here.[12] The important point here is that his way of thinking basically proceeds by delving into the object he undertakes to criticize or even reject, so as to differentiate his position from it from within. Before he tackles the question of Asia, he has already, in this manner, dealt with two symposiums for youth: 'Overcoming the Modern' and 'The World History Position and Japan', which aimed to incite young people to take to a war of aggression. In his treatment of these two symposiums, Takeuchi Yoshimi tries to differentiate three aspects: thinking, ideology and the user of thinking. By doing this, he hopes he can abstract from the intertwining aspects the tradition of Japanese thinking. Of most of the controversies provoked by him, it is important to note that their activities can be characterized as 'differentiating between the baby and the bath water'. Takeuchi's peculiar approach enables him to feel no qualms in digging up for examination those events and thoughts in the history of modern Japan that are imbued with rightist characteristics. Among these is the question of Asia.

Takeuchi is prompted by his postwar pursuit of the question of nationalism. When he provoked the debate on 'national literature' in 1951, Asia constituted for him an essential perspective from which to reconfigure nationalism. The situation of postwar Japan was of a defeated nation occupied by America and made to act as America's Asian ally in the cold war setting. Such extreme complexity pushed Japan into a new round of discussions around 'Disassociating Asia and integrating into Europe'. Among the highly critical, progressive intellectuals, quite a number devoted themselves to searching for weapons in the modern European and American thought, and hence left behind the question of Asia. As for the leftist intellectuals related to the Japanese Communist Party, they were faced with the double-bind problems of internationalism and nationalism against the cold war background, and they too did not give a place to the question of Asia. Still haunted by echoes of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere, progressive intellectuals also stayed away from this subject which is redolent of unpleasant historical memories. Thus, the question of Asia was basically shelved in the vein of the rightist view of history. Takeuchi's insistence in such circumstances on

broaching the question of Asia and the question of pan-Asianism deserves particular attention, for he explicitly stated that bypassing Asianism and the rightist nationalist thoughts in the sorting out of the tradition of Japanese thought would only lead to something fictitious and conceptual. Takeuchi came to this particular understanding on the basis of his observation about the cultural movement of Japan's proletariat and the internationalist stand of the leftist intellectuals from the Communist Party network. He thought that this movement neglected the right-wing 'trend of native thought', and simply refuted it from the outside, and hence could not constitute any genuine criticism of it. Therefore, when Umesawa Tadao published his ecological view of history in the 1950s, and effectively set off a flush of talks about 'Disassociating Asia' and 'the uniqueness of Japan', Takeuchi Yoshimi realized that it was a crucial moment in the modern history of Japan. As his most forceful response, he compiled the book *Asianism* and published it in 1963 with the long introduction 'The Prospect of Asianism'. Takeuchi is almost the only one in Japan's intellectual history to pursue the question of Asianism, and to abstract principles from it. Although the limitation of his thinking is very obvious, through him we can search relatively deeper into the vein of Japan's Asianism.

'The Prospect of Asianism' is a reading guide for the book, *Asianism* (Takeuchi 1963). The latter was published by Chikuma Shobo, as Volume 9 of the *Collected Works of Modern Japanese Thinking* (*Gendai Nihon shiso taikei*). Writings representative of Asianists since the Meiji period were collected in the book. Takeuchi selected the historical material himself, composed a chronology, and even separated the material into categories according to the ways he saw them. Takeuchi's basic understanding is: Asianism is simply a disposition, not a substantial body of thinking that can be objectively defined. Hence, it is different from thinkings that are organically related to reality, and can be receptive of nationalism, statism, expansionism and even left-wing internationalism without coinciding completely with any of them. At the same time, Asianism is not an established thinking such as democratism, socialism or fascism, hence it cannot stand on its own and must depend on other ways of thinking for its being. For that matter, Asianism by itself is not capable of being 'narrativized' into a history of a single trend of thought.

Why, then, does one still want to broach a subject that cannot constitute a historical proposition in its own right? Takeuchi points out that in Japan's modern history, Asianism is a 'mood' present all around, and the ideas that run through Japan's modern history are founded on this 'mood'. Since the left-wing thinking in Japan avoids the question of nationalism, thereby alienating itself from the actual social life of Japan, they basically have not sorted out and carried forward the legacies of thoughts since the Meiji period, leaving them solely to be remoulded by the ultra-nationalism of the right-wing ways of thinking. In fact, what we see in the fate of Asianism is exactly the epitome of the fate of the intellectual history of modern Japan. Takeuchi Yoshimi thus took it upon himself to sort out this intellectual legacy encoded by the right-wing thinking, seeking to draw out the Japanese intellectual tradition that defies being reduced to ideologies.

Takeuchi Yoshimi arranges the selected material into four parts: (I) Prototype; (II) Mood; (III) Logic; (IV) Transmigration (tensei). In Prototype, Takeuchi includes Okakura's 'The Ideals of the East' and Tarui Tokichi's 'The Great East Federation'.

These two articles are of different orientations. Takeuchi puts them together in Part I, Prototype, for he recognizes the sense of solidarity contained in Japan's Asianism, as does Okakura in his idea of an integral culture and Tarui Tokichi in his notion of strategic alliance. The former lays down the foundation for Asianism culturally, while the latter provides the scenarios for an Asia in union on the practical level. Tarui's federalist idea differs from the cry for aggression in that it does not aim to occupy Korea, but rather stresses that the binding in federation between Japan and Korea is made on the basis of an equal footing. Takeuchi regards them as the prototype of Asianism, for he sees in them a highly idealistic nature that is founded on a sense of crisis about the actuality. For the parts Mood and Logic, Takeuchi includes articles from Miyazaki Toten, Uchida Ryohei, Okawa Shumei and others – in total, the work of seven people. These people either had had direct involvement in the internal affairs of other Asian countries or even had taken part in the aggression. Takeuchi intends to abstract from the writings of these active agents the shape of the mood of Asianism and the line of development of the logic. Takeuchi observes that, if for these people Asianism and expansion since Meiji are almost indistinguishable, it makes no sense to rigidly define the two as distinct from each other. On the contrary, what needs to be differentiated is, rather, whether the thinking in question would generate discursive potential and consistency. On the basis of this consideration, Takeuchi chooses papers from Miyazaki and Okawa, while rejecting those that agitated for the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere. He sees the latter as only 'pseud' thinking, that establishes itself through the suppression and destruction of all thinkings around Asianism; he considers them as 'the extreme form of thoughtlessness of Asianism'.

At the same time, Takeuchi tries to extract from the interstice between these two parts (Mood and Logic) a question: How to come to the understanding that Mood and Logic became separated when Japan's pan-Asianism turned to imperialism, as Logic turned into the logic of aggression and Mood failed to become principle? Takeuchi pursued this question in his collection of three papers in the fourth part. The papers are 'Nationalism in Asia' by the geographer Iizuka Koji, 'Kotoku Shusui and China' by the historian Yishimoda Sho, and 'The intellectuals of Japan' by the writer Hotta Yoshie. Among these three intellectuals' conceptions of Asia, the sense of urgency that Takeuchi characterized the question of Asia with at the Prototype state dissolved, together with the romantic sentiment of pan-Asianism that once instigated a zeal for assassination campaigns and inspired imperialistic ideologies in a time of political turmoil. They represent the most objective analyses of all the papers in the book, complementing well Takeuchi's reading guide. The naming of the part Transmigration (tensei) reveals that, to a large extent, Takeuchi intends to make sense of the questions raised in these texts by his contemporary intellectuals within the historical context of Asianism.

'The Prospect of Asianism' is not concerned with the question of Asia, and not even how the Japanese see Asia. It is concerned with the fundamental problems implicated in the modernization of Japan, i.e. the inherent connection between expansion and the modernization of Japan, which the trajectories of Asianism can help to reveal. During the Meiji period, Asianism was concerned with principles and ideals. By the advent of the 20th century, this side of Asianism's concern gradually disappeared and, finally, turned into the extreme form of thoughtlessness, and hence the tragic fate of Asianism.

Takeuchi Yoshimi has sharply noted that although it is difficult to sum up Asianism for the different shapes it takes, it remains as a mood throughout and fails to rise above itself and develop into a 'thinking'. Consequently, the development led to its appropriation by the rightist groups with strong inclination towards expansion. Kokuryukai (Black Dragon Society) and Genyosha (Black Ocean Society) are two such groups, and they became the principal agents in the translation of Asianism into practice. Logic, in turn, is gradually reduced to the logic of imperialism, leading finally to the idea of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere. Takeuchi further points out that the separation of Mood and Logic began with Kotoku Shusui and Uchida Ryohei, disciples of the civil liberty thinkers Nakae Chomin and Toyama Mitsuru of Genyosha respectively. The two disciples were, from the very beginning, unable to build up among themselves the kind of understanding and friendship found between their teachers. Thus, Kotoku Shusui approached the question of imperialism on an abstract level, while Uchida Ryohei took the practical level, which led to a path that took the rightist turn. Leftist intellectuals, in giving up nationalism for internationalism, were left with 'importing socialism' from the start, thus turning thinking into pure abstraction. Kotoku is a typical example. On the other hand, the ideology for aggression of the Amur River Society succeeded in monopolizing the question of Asia. All this was due to a sense of reality induced in them by nationalism. Takeuchi points out that, because the left failed to carry forward the intellectual legacy of nationalism of the Meiji period, the legacy could only pass on through forms of right-wing thinking. Thus, the left must also be held responsible as an 'accomplice' in the development of Asianism into imperialism.

Asianism, compiled by Takeuchi, is a masterpiece and probably the only one of its kind in the intellectual history of postwar Japan. In this particular work, Takeuchi displays the whole complex configuration of the question of Asia: the relation between Japan's modernization and expansionism; the relation between Japanese nationalism and internationalism; and the blind spots between the leftist and rightist approaches to the question of nationalism. It was not until Takeuchi elaborated on the discourses on Asianism since the Meiji period that the question of Asia could be located at the intersection of a complicated system of trends. And as Takeuchi sees it, the question of Asia does not constitute a centre of significance by itself; it only acquires its significance as a thread, articulating the different trends mentioned above. In this way, Takeuchi problematizes Asia directly, and thereby aggression and Tennoism – the thorniest problem to deal with in the intellectual history of modern Japan.

However, as he himself clarifies in *Asianism*, Takeuchi's view of Asia remains only a Mood. This is particularly clear if we look at his other writings concerning Asia, in which the question of Asia is discussed together with the question of modernization. He not only deliberately turns Asia into an abstract idea in opposition to Western Europe, but also turns Europe into an abstract entity. This certainly has to do with the inherent reference to principles of the problems Takeuchi directly confronts and the problems he insists on formulating. However, there is another side to this problem: Mood alone is not enough to raise the idealization of Asia to the level of principle underlying the sphere of world history. Perhaps Takeuchi's idea of Asia is effective in countering Orientalism criticized by Said, and in sketching the uniqueness of Japan. Despite the fact that in his idea of Asia, Takeuchi overly stresses both 'Asia' and 'the

West' as a monolithic whole, integral in itself, the problems confronted directly in Takeuchi's idea are real and intense. Yet this is not enough to enable Takeuchi's idea of Asia to face an Asia that is a composite of economic, cultural, political and social strands. Its limitations immediately reveal themselves once it is taken beyond the field of ideas. This limitation of Takeuchi can only be made apparent by placing it side by side with an alternative idea of Asia that is similarly concerned with principles and yet not merely restricted to idealistic exposition. Just as is the case with Watsuji Tetsuro in relation to Fukuzawa and Okakura, the frame of reference for Takeuchi's idea of Asia can only be found outside the field of intellectual history in Japan. Fortunately, at the end of the 1950s, such a frame of reference existed among the works of the intellectuals of Japan: it is Umesawa Tadao's ecological historiography of civilization.

Umesawa Tadao is a layman with regard to intellectual history, but he is able to turn his speciality in zoology at the Science Faculty of Tokyo University into a richly inventive thinking, namely, a habit of judging matters according to one's sense of things without simplistic acceptance of any established premise and conclusion. In 1955, Umesawa joined an expedition to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. After the trip, he began to question the concept of Asia as an integral whole and the holistic mode of thinking of Asia versus Europe. He started to construct a world picture of his own to counter the Marxist historical materialism in Japan. In 1956, he published *Between East and West* and, in 1957, his representative work *An Ecological Historiography of Civilization*. Umesawa's basic view is that the understanding of Asia as an integral whole is that of the West. For the Asians, Asia is a composite of multifarious cultures. Additionally, Japan occupies a peculiar place in Asia; it cannot be the representative of Asia, let alone set itself up as an example for other Asian countries. In contrast, Japan bears more affinities with Western Europe and, therefore, it makes no sense to contrast Japan with Western Europe in order to ascertain Japan's characteristics. In order to do that, Japan should be compared with other Asian countries. Just around that time, Toynbee was visiting Japan, so Umesawa's work was being publicized as a response to Toynbee's challenge, contrary to Umesawa's own intentions. Umesawa's whole range of works throws doubt on, in an ironic way, the function of ideology. The value of his works is not to be sought in its conclusion, but rather in his firm approach to ecological history in his discussion of cultural differences, and in his stress on the significance of personal experience. This approach reminds one of *Local Conditions and Customs* by Watsuji Tesuro, and further suggests the possibility of a line of thinking in contrast with the humanistic approach of intellectual history.

By ecology, Umesawa means the ways of life of humans. From colour designs and behavioural characteristics, to clothing, food, shelter and transportation, all are for him crucial criteria for differentiating cultures. He tries to establish a theory of 'cultural function' in contrast with a 'genealogy of culture'. In a genealogy of culture, the essence of each culture is stressed; but for a theory of cultural function, cultural form is stressed. Take architecture as an example. With genealogy, its starting point is the material and the sort of wood used, etc, but the starting point of cultural forms would be the style and the use of a work of architecture. Umesawa, borrowing from the theoretical approach of biology, tries to sketch the variations in the ways of life of human communities, while variation is being understood along the line of parallel and pluralistic relations. In this connection, another pair of contrasting categories is necessarily invoked.

In addition to the contradiction between the genealogy and the cultural forms, we also have the opposition between the biological theory of evolution and the ecological study of metamorphism. Umesawa points out that in the history of human understanding, these two pairs of opposites are internally related: evolution is necessarily a theory of genealogy or pedigree, which stresses that human beings ultimately reach the same *telos*, and differences existing between different regions are only differences in different stages before the final stage. On the other hand, metamorphism in ecology recognizes that the subject and the environment are in a dialectical relation. It also admits that each way of life has its own *raison d'être*. Umesawa, in his attempt to sort out the law of history by means of the ecological historiographical approach, formulates a theory of 'subject-environmental system of self-movement'. No judgement of cultural values is involved in this formulation and, more importantly, the way of understanding things in terms of their 'essence' as the fundamental attributes is being challenged here.

On the basis of understanding such 'non-essential' attributes in ways of life as the criterion for the study of the law of history, Umesawa redraws the division within Eurasia. He names the two ends of this continent, i.e. Western Europe and Japan, 'the first region', characterized by the highly modernized ways of life found in them. He names areas outside this region as 'the second region', characterized by non-modernized ways of life. Then Umesawa compares each of the characteristics of one region to a corresponding characteristic in the other region,[13] and stresses along a line of thinking in close proximity to that of Watsuji Tetsuro, the relation of natural conditions to the making of history. On the historical geometrical map drawn by Umesawa, Eurasia is divided into a wet region, an arid region and a subarid region. He further asserts that: 'From the ecological point of view, history is the traces left by the process of interaction between humans and land. In other words, they are the traces left by the subject-environmental system of self-movement. Among those key factors that determine the pattern of this process, nature is the most important factor. The display of natural factors is not random, but rather in the form of a geometric distribution' (Umesawa 1967: 169).

In the landscape of the world history from the view of ecological history, the meaning of Asia is being questioned. Umesawa said that he heard a certain intellectual in Pakistan tell him that, 'We are all Asians', and was shocked, for he felt that the identity claim was merely a conceptual play, lacking in either substantial content or affective support. He asserted that this could only be a certain 'diplomatic fiction' (Umesawa 1967: 178).

Umesawa Tadao went a stride further than Watsuji Tetsuro. Though the latter brings in 'local conditions and customs' to the question of Asia, and ignores the ideological aspect of the question, he is not prepared to challenge the concept of Asia itself. As for Umesawa Tadao, the truthfulness of the concept of Asia itself becomes doubtful. Moreover, the assumption of an objective approach by Watsuji Tatsuro is, after all, a form of representation corresponding to his inner humanistic attitude, which leads to his affinity to thinking with right-wing inclinations. Umesawa Tadao, on the other hand, being formed in, and through, a natural science discipline, adopts a stronger epistemological attitude towards his object of study. However, as Umesawa Tadao pursued his study in 1957, he found he was situated at a time when the intellectuals in Japan were preoccupied with thinking over nationalism and Japan's position in Asia, whether it should be responsible for Asia, and whether it was a special nation in

Asia. This situation presented Umesawa Tadao with an unexpected difficulty, preventing his ecological approach in the study of history from becoming a 'knowledge', for it was inevitably appropriated along the lines of ideological thinking that necessarily led to arguing for the superiority of Japan and the breaking away from any obligation to Asia.

But even so, the ecological approach to the study of history has, after all, provided another possibility for rethinking since Watsuji Tatsuro. For the accepted mode of thinking in terms of the binary opposition between East and West, the so-called Oriental culture and the Occidental culture are each characterized by their own particularities, which in turn are to be understood in terms of constitution of unchanging essence. When Okakura put forward the idea of Asia as an integral whole, his assumptions about the civilization of Asia are based on a genealogical view of culture. Therefore, even though he has noticed evidence of cultural differences between Asian countries, and even within the same country, when he is dealing with the difference within the Asian civilization itself, Asia for him is still regarded as possessing the value of an independent entity, serving to counterpoint Europe, rather than becoming a fluid concept in terms of cultural functions. Fukuzawa's 'Disassociating Asia' is also a cultural genealogy with a different starting point. When Fukuzawa discusses the question of the positioning of Japan, he bases it on a presupposition of the unchanging essence of civilization, rather than proceeding from the consideration of the functions of civilization. Thus, even though it is possible for Japan to join the West in Fukuzawa's thinking on the question of modernity, the value of civilization represented by the 'West' is absolute. The starting point that Okakura and Fukuzawa have determined for Japanese intellectual history is basically a starting point within the frame of cultural genealogy yet, in their thinking, there are elements of a cultural functional perspective that fail to develop under the weight of the tension of their times. Regrettably, later scholars of Japanese intellectual history fail to take up this side of their thinking, and even help push the essentialist view of culture towards the extreme, as Takeuchi Yoshimi, in his reworking of the question of Asia, does when he calls to our attention the transformation into fascistic nationalism of the earlier sense of solidarity that guided the thinking of Asia. Notwithstanding the shrewd thinking of Takeuchi Yoshimi, the taking up of the question of Asia again fails to break away from cultural essentialism in the postwar era. Although Takeuchi has noticed the genealogical perspective in the thinking of the question of Asia, his confinement within the mode of thinking of intellectual history makes it impossible for him to disrupt the essentialist thinking on culture.

Given such a situation, Umesawa Tadao was met with misreading that gave him headaches each time he published his work. In the summer of 1957, he was invited to give a talk at a regular meeting of the Society for the Study of the Science of Thinking. He was asked to speak on the topic 'Japan seen from the Ecological Historical Perspective'. Umesawa Tadao took this opportunity to clear up misreading of his works, and made a sharply critical speech. He pointed out that *An Ecological Historiography of Civilization* was regarded as a discourse on Japanism by its readers, which was not what he had expected, and contrary to suggestions for revision in the theoretical framework and the examples in the text. Umesawa Tadao regards Japan as belonging to the first region, taking Japan as having a structure of modernization similar to that of Europe. This has the effect of boosting the spirits of some of those agitating for 'Japanism' and making those who are against 'Japanism' scowl. Umesawa said, 'While I am dealing

with the constitution of the world, the reception only focuses on a very small region, leaving the systemic approach to a totality, the most important theoretical consideration, or rather that which I am most proud of myself in the book, untouched by any in-depth criticism.' 'I am really shocked by the indifference of Japanese intellectuals toward the state of the world outside Japan.'

Despite Umesawa Tadao's effort to invite academic discussion in a purely epistemological manner, he had provoked a new round of debate about the ideas of 'Disassociating Asia' and 'Reviving Asia'. There were those who demanded that the ecological approach to history be applied directly to, or extended to solving, the problems Japan, in reality, was facing. After rebuking such demands, Umesawa Tadao sharply criticized the prevailing state of learning in Japan: '"the ecological approach to history" is not concerned with the question of "ought" in its inquiry, but with the approaches to finding out about the structure of the world and the formative processes involved, hence it cannot be an evaluation of the existing situation and certainly not the guiding principles for transformation . . . I find the predilection for the question "ought" of the Japanese intellectuals really overwhelming.' (Umesawa 1967: 128–146)

Among the various misreadings, Takeyama Michio's (1958) 'The Positioning of Japan's Culture' is the most representative. This is a speech made at the group discussion of Japanese Culture Conference, an organization of anti-communist liberal intellectuals. In the speech, Takeyama quoted, out of context, Umesawa's idea of Japan, together with Western Europe, as belonging to the first region, in order to support his argument for the superiority of the Japanese nation in Asia. On the one hand, Takeyama flagrantly spoke discriminatingly against other Asian countries as he stressed that Japan was not one of the Asian countries and did not bear any obligation to Asia. On the other hand, he also stressed that Japan was the example in modernization for other Asian countries. Although both start with the same proposition that Japan is not part of Asia, Takeyama and Umesawa think in opposition to one another: Umesawa opposes all ideological efforts to serve the demands of reality and attempts to dissolve this 'diplomatic' fiction of 'Asianism' through a recontextualization within the framework of world history, while Takeyama turns Umesawa's ecological approach to history into a new fiction, serving the ideology of the superiority of Japan.

The claim of Japanese superiority represented by Takeyama's view of Japanese culture is a continuous line of thinking running throughout the intellectual history of modern Japan. During the Meiji period, such a frame of mind is accompanied by a sense of national crisis, which fosters the emergence of eminent thinkers.[14] However, after the Second World War, this particular frame of mind has gravely debilitated the substance of thought, metamorphosing into the loud brawls of ideological assertions, causing great detriment to the tradition of thought in Japan, and leading astray elements of thinking which otherwise are capable of being deepened. The violent appropriation of Umesawa Tadao by Takeyama profoundly reveals the detrimental power of such a frame of mind. At the end of the 1950s, the thinking of Asianism and the anti-Asianism thinking of the ecological approach to history, or the theory of local conditions and customs, cross paths for the first time in the midst of the new round of 'Disassociating Asia' debates. This intellectual convergence is made possible through the effort of Takeuchi Yoshimi and, in a different way, from that of the appropriation of Umesawa by Takeyama.

In August 1958, Takeuchi Yoshimi wrote a series of articles on 'Two Conceptions of the History of Asia' for Tokyo Shimbun. In the articles, he deals with Umesawa Tadao's and Takeyama Michio's ideas of 'Disassociating Asia' from a historical perspective. Takeuchi ploughs through the ostensible similarity between the two conceptions and explores the central difference between the two: in Umesawa's ecological approach, what is stressed is the interaction and counteraction taking place between the human subject and the natural environment. It is neither a geographical determinism nor a determinism of energy resources. Takeyama, however, twists such an ecological approach into a unidirectional determinism in the service of his anti-communist political agenda. While Umesawa bases his understanding on the experiences and observations acquired in the field of ecology, and his functional perspective does not involve questions of values, Takeyama bases his understanding on the established ideology of Eurocentrism, leaning towards the values of a monistic view of civilization. Umesawa multi-spatializes history, i.e. while history is normally regarded as a self-contained development of a unidimensional nature, Umesawa, in his ecological approach, treats this common conception of history as a record of the 'traces' of the ecological metamorphism which, Umesawa stresses, is of a pluralistic nature, thus rendering history impossible to be maintained as a self-sufficient subject. Takeuchi Yoshimi calls this 'the annihilation of history'. As for Takeyama, history becomes omnipotent, turning into a heavy 'being'. For Umesawa, all things are, in the final analysis, constituted by elements horizontally related to one another. But for Takeyama, the only system of values he can understand is that which can be hierarchically arranged. To establish the order of each value or, more precisely, to arrange the values according to a certain established order, is the spring of his enthusiasm in the pursuit of knowledge. This explains why, even though both Umesawa and Takeyama idealize history and the world in an image of their own, one takes as his principle actual evidence, while the other, dogmas.

Having offered the above succinct analysis, Takeuchi Yoshimi further points out that: 'In trying to find out the principle of Asia from the subjective perspective of Japan, one must confront the reality of Japan's ignorance about Asia, as Umesawa has pointed out. But what Takeyama is doing is that, instead of confronting one's own ignorance, he takes advantage of it.' (Takeuchi 1958: 90–91)

The above conclusion of Takeuchi Yoshimi reveals to us the whole complexity of the question of Asia. First, he unveils that the basic position of Japan's intellectual history lies in the assumption of Japan as the subject in the search for an understanding of the principle of Asia, a position shared by Japanese thinkers through the ages. Furthermore, he points out that the search for the principle of Asia must be based on the understanding of Asia, and this is just what Japanese thinkers, through the ages, have not done thus far. Thirdly, he discloses that advocates of 'Japanism', like Takeyama, are taking advantage of the ignorance and the blind belief in the superiority of the Japanese for their own ideological or political purposes. In fact, Takeyama is only a typical example of 'self-consolation' in the increasingly fevent new movement for self-isolation from the world since the Second World War. The ignorance of the intellectuals and the ordinary folk in Japan about their Asian neighbours, not to mention the whole of the rest of Asia, is a blind spot not to be overlooked in the Japanese views of Asia, from the time of Fukuzawa to that of Umesawa Tadao.

In such a situation, it is very difficult to build up Japan's intellectual tradition. This inherent deficiency of Japan's intellectual history with regard to the question of Asianism

makes it impossible for thinkers in Japan not to move beyond the horizon of intellectual history. The frame of reference provided by Umesawa Tadao is unique in its 'annihilation' of history and value judgement, and also in its corresponding epistemological approach to Asia. Because of this uniqueness, it not only makes the blind spot of intellectual history visible, it also finds a point of juncture with the latter.

In 1961, just after Umesawa Tadao published his work on the ecological approach to history, and before Takeuchi Yoshimi (1970) wrote his article on Asianism in Japan, the two had a very interesting conversation with one another. Judging by information available at this time, this seems to have been the only cooperation between intellectual history and ecological history with regard to the question of Asia. The questions brought about in this conversation precisely suggest the direction, and the differences, in the thinking about the question of Asia by Japanese intellectuals, since that time.

Their basic common position in this dialogue is the criticism of the monistic view of civilization. Takeuchi has committed his life to the destruction of the Eurocentric monistic conception of civilization, so as to work towards a pluralistic conception of civilization. It is precisely because Umesawa holds a similar position to Takeuchi that Takeuchi can respond to Umesawa's writing in an accurate way, thus clearing up serious misreadings of Umesawa's work. Umesawa expresses his agreement with the ideas in Takeuchi's 'Two conceptions of Asia' as soon as the dialogue began, and acknowledges Takeuchi Yoshimi for having expressed, in a concise manner, what he wanted to articulate but failed to, showing that Umesawa is also aware of his sharing of a common position with Takeuchi Yoshimi.

However, between the two, there lies a chasm of difference. While Takeuchi Yoshimi grants that Asia does exist, Umesawa thinks that the defining line is meaningless. To go further, the former's assertion about Asia is made within the realm of ideas, a pure realm that the latter is seeking to dismantle. The latter negates Asia precisely because he is aware of the overly optimistic and wishful thinking of the former's working with pure ideas. To Takeuchi, Asia is an idea, a method, and the instrument he can use to refute the use of evolutionary theory to explain history. But whether this Asia exists substantially or not, is not the crucial question for Takeuchi. In fact, he is doing his utmost not to substantialize Asia. To Umesawa Tadao, the symbolization of Asia ignores the multifarious facets of Asia, which is not acceptable to his academic training. For him, the pluralistic nature of civilization does not need to be articulated through setting up the binary opposition of Asia versus Europe. Just dissolving the presupposition of a unifying Asia will do the job. However, on a higher level, they were both confronted with a real problem: the government of postwar Japan claimed itself to be the example of modernization in Asia, disguising its intention to dominate Asia. The political situation is so severe that they are able to transcend their theoretical differences and work together, on the basis of a shared sense of responsibility as intellectuals. It is this severe political situation that enables them to attempt to transcend their theoretical difference to work together, grounded on their sense of responsibility as intellectuals.

In the dialogue, Takeuchi Yoshimi offers the following definition for Asia: 'I think Asia is produced in response to Western powers in the course of modern history. That is to say, after the invasion of Western powers, the various ancient and medieval regimes are being destroyed from within. This destructive power perhaps may be called the productive power; or the spirit. In short, this is a movement that begins with the establishment of modernization or of capitalism.' (Takeuchi 1970: 146) Accordingly,

those countries understood as lacking such an inherent power of self-negation are not to be counted as Asian countries. Takeuchi Yoshimi cites Israel as being one of those countries that cannot be called Asian, while Cuba is to be included as an Asian country. Japan, since it does not possess the power of self-negation, cannot be counted as an Asian country either.[15]

Umesawa Tadao cannot agree with such an idealized and symbolized definition of Asia, for it is impossible for him to imagine a region such as Asia as being detached from its geographical attributes and turned into an object constructed by intellectual history. But he agrees with Takeuchi Yoshimi regarding the positioning of Israel and Cuba, and he even adds that 'Central and South America can be regarded as the Asia of the New Continent' (Takeuchi 1970: 146). But this is as far as the compromise goes, for Umesawa is fundamentally dubious about the effectiveness of treating Asia as an idea. When Takeuchi Yoshimi imposes the definition of inherent self-negation on Asia, the regional structures and the endogenous uneven relations defining the Asian region itself are all being covered up. Therefore, after having gone along with Takeuchi Yoshimi's suggestion of treating Asia as an idea, Umesawa immediately directs the discussion to the aspect that he is concerned with and which Takeuchi Yoshimi neglects. This is the structural problem of a collective of large and small states peculiar to Asia.

Beginning from his earliest published work, *An Ecological Historiography of Civilization*, Umesawa is very much concerned with Asia's system of civilization. He points out that, in the second region, there is the large central state with its ancient civilization, defying disintegration even as it enters into the modern world, while at its fringes there may develop the modern form of the first region. Thus, Umesawa is the first to raise the question concerning the relation between large states and surrounding small states within the regional structure of Asia. As mentioned above, he points out that in 'the second region' there are four traditional empires, namely, the Chinese Empire, the Turkish Empire, the Russian Empire and India. The small states surrounding them are under the shade of the cultures of the empires, and cannot be the centre of civilization, although it is possible for them to develop technologies.

Notwithstanding his inability to perfect his supposition, in contrast to Takeuchi Yoshimi's blindness to the dynamics of relations of forces between large states and small states throughout history, Umesawa's thinking is obviously more illuminating to later studies of Asia. In the dialogue, Umesawa Tadao points out, 'the size of a state is a crucial factor that must be taken into consideration in the discussion of Asia . . . The ways large states and small states exist should be very different. Furthermore, their historical backgrounds are in reality also different.' 'Therefore, in dealing with actual problems and problems of the future, the question of the motive power operating through the interrelation of these materially inscribed states must also be considered. That is to say, the sediments from history are an integral part of their interrelationships. I think all this cannot be made to disappear simply by reacting against the West. The troubles of Asia are far more complicated.' (Takeuchi 1970: 147–148)

Takeuchi frankly admits that he is not concerned with the relation between large states and small states, for he is more concerned with how the civilization of Asia can be revised to the level of universal principles so as to counter the might of the principle of Western Europe. Umesawa believes that this is only an optimistic ideal, and to those

Asians with similar ideas this is an act of good intention. As to whether such a presupposed state can really gain the upper hand, this is very doubtful. 'Inside Asia itself, one cannot say that there does not exist key elements detrimental to universal values of humans.' (Takeuchi 1970: 150)

After Umesawa cites India as an example, reminding us of the danger of alienating ideas from actuality, Takeuchi Yoshimi makes the following conclusion: 'I hope such a realism can be respected, so that ideas can be prevented from being formed in opposite directions.' (Takeuchi 1970: 154) Obviously, Takeuchi recognizes the tension between idea and reality. It also shows that the position he takes in intellectual history can work with the position of the ecological approach to history to rid themselves of the influence of ideological assumptions.

Regrettably, such cooperation has not persisted between Takeuchi and Umesawa. They continue to reflect on the question of Asia along their own lines of thinking, with no sign of further opening themselves up. Takeuchi still adheres strictly to the level of ideas in the discussions of the ideals of Asia and the question of the possibility of a different course of history for Asia in the book *Asianism*, compiled in 1963. By 1975, when he edited the book *The Unfolding of Asian Studies*, he had already done away with any consideration of the complexities implied in the question of Asia and had reverted to the state in which he wrote *Modern China and Modern Japan.* He proclaimed, 'Asia is the concept of defiance with regard to modern Europe'.[16] On the other hand, Umesawa persists in his reflection on civilization along the line of his ecological approach to history. However, he too seems to have given up the intention to work with intellectual history scholars. In the 1980s, he was committed to developing a new area of research – civilization studies – and he mainly worked with ethnologists and cultural anthropologists, many of whom are from the faculty of science and engineering.

From 1984, Umesawa convened the annual international conference on civilization studies, in the name of the National Museum – the institution to which he belonged. The products of these conferences are compiled into anthologies of papers such as *Civilization Studies on Modern Japan*, *Civilization Studies on Urbanization* and *Civilization Studies on Ruling Regimes*. In these discussions, the suppositions Umesawa raised at the end of the 1950s in his *An Ecological Historiography of Civilization* are elaborated upon, allowing him to put forward, in a more distinct manner, his understanding of the history of civilization and the comparative study of the history of civilization.

In the keynote speech collected in the *Civilization Studies on Modern Japan*, Umesawa offers an account of his overall understanding of the system of relations between the subject and the environment:

> Even when dealing with history, I think it is always necessary to approach history from the perspective of our understanding of civilization. That is to say, the most important understanding of the historical perspective of civilization is that it is not simply the successive relations that are our concern; the synchronic relations must also always be taken into consideration. For any given period, there simultaneously coexist various cultural elements, all kinds of institutions and media, constituting a whole system. Therefore, history can be regarded as the changes in time undergone synchronically in these coexisting features. Hence, if one confines oneself to only a part of the whole system and studies its diachronic profile, the possibility

> for solving any problem is next to nil. I do not mean to criticize historians, but in the past, all kinds of history are often treated as the diachronic process of change occurring to a part of the features in an extremely over-simplified way. The situation would be changed immensely by the introduction of the historical perspective of civilization, i.e. all things that are contemporary are related to one another in a certain way, and this system of relations is moving all together.
>
> (Umesawa 1984: 23–24)

Umesawa Tadao's civilization studies may not be of much originality as far as its contents are concerned, particularly in the section on the question of Asia, where he puts forward the differentiation between the first region and the second region, a division basically not accepted by people after him. However, his work in bringing forth the civilization studies, and his decades-long endeavours, deserve particular attention. He brings in new thrusts to the study of the question of Asia, whereas it has always been conducted before within the field of intellectual history, which is drowned in ideas, thus making it inevitable that the question is confined to a narrow view. Furthermore, Japanese scholars in intellectual history turn out to be unable to make a necessary reflection on the narrowness of their views. The appearance of Watsuji Tetsuro could have provided a pivotal change of horizons in the intellectual histories, from remaining within the state of 'mood' in Asian studies towards opening up a much wider perspective of regional structure. This kind of pivotal change, however, did not take place then. Umesawa is again another such pivot, and thanks to Takeyama Michio's deliberate appropriation and Takeuchi Yoshimi's prompt correction, Umesawa's works are being taken to the most productive level, thereby enabling them to bring about a truly open view for the Asian studies scholars in contemporary Japan.

However, after he had abandoned the attempt in the early 1960s to engage Takeuchi Yoshimi in dialogue, Umesawa Tadao also gradually loses the edge of tension in his thinking. Today, 40 years after the publicity of *An Ecological Historiography of Civilization*, he is not so vigilant about the reproduction of the discourse of Japan-centrism. On the contrary, his perspective begins to turn from 'the Structure of the World' to 'the Culture of Japan'. Ironically, he is now falling back to the position he criticized 40 years ago of 'the inclination to be framed by the question "ought" of the Japanese', and turning his ecological approach to the evaluation of the existing state of affairs, or even to a guiding principle for the contemporary reforms, as an attempt to identify the path that Japan should take into the 21st century.[17] The destiny of Umesawa's ecological approach to history, in turn, has demonstrated the difficulty for social science and humanist thinking in maintaining a dialogue; it also suggests that it is not possible to remain solely within a single discipline in dealing with the question of Asia.

At the beginning of the 1960s, Japan and Asia were in a turbulent situation, presenting a solid and intense context for intellectuals to cross boundaries and engage in interdisciplinary dialogue. After the 1970s, the interdisciplinary dialogue gradually lost the edge, not only among the intellectuals of Asia, but also within the intelligentsia of Japan itself. Although the discussions on the question of Asia during this period, compared to the 1960s, were richer and more systematic, it was becoming more and more an academic exercise and intellectually oriented. It is questionable whether the accumulation of knowledge obtained in such a way can really help the Japanese under-

stand Asia. When the grave fact that Takeuchi Yoshimi and Umesawa Tadao were confronted with is pushed under the carpet, the Japanese knowledge of Asia can only amount to the extremely biased orientalism as criticized by Said.

The concealed fact of the ongoing duet of 'Disassociating Asia' and 'Reviving Asia' in Japan implies the lack of a sense of responsibility towards Asia on the part of Japan. It also indicates that Japan is lacking in the area of self-identification. Takeuchi Yoshimi endeavoured to establish such a sense of responsibility within the realm of intellectual history because he was aware of an opening for self-identification concealed in the knowledge of Asia of modern Japan. None of the political discourse of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere, in the earlier years or the later academic discussion, could hide this fundamental truth: Japan fails to constitute its subjectivity sufficiently in the process of knowing Asia because it fails to turn the question into an opportunity for self-identity.

In fact, it can be considered an act of violence to put Watsuji Tetsuro and Umesawa Tadao together in the discussion as if they were tracking the same line of thinking. The positions of their thinking and their ways of learning differ so obviously that we are discouraged from doing just that. Furthermore, there is no sufficient evidence to show that Umesawa Tadao has been essentially influenced by Watsuji Tetsuro. However, the reason I still venture to put them together is out of a consideration that we are too used to discussing a problem within the boundary of one discipline, and so neglect the complexity and the many-sidedness of the problem. We tend easily to criticize our predecessors for the limitations of their thinking while neglecting the rationale peculiar to the historical context against which the thinking takes its form, hence we also fail to see the possibility of the growth of knowledge. All this makes it too easy to delude ourselves into thinking that we are breaking new paths. Take Watsuji Tetsuro's *Local Conditions and Customs* as an example. If it is only read as an ethical treatise within the field of ethics, then it is not clear where to locate it in the later intellectual tradition. With the help of critiques from people like Sakai Naoki,[18] we can see more clearly now that the idea of local conditions and customs in Watsuji is different from Umesawa Tadao's ecological approach to history: the former obliterates subjectivity on the basis of genealogical cultural essentialism in genealogy in modern Western thought, while the latter tries to resist such cultural essentialism with the standpoint of functionalism.

But if we confine our consideration only to this level, we will not be able to confront the following more complicated facts: Asianism is such a problem because it involves different fields and intellectuals of varying positions at the same time, thus what we see here is not merely the complicity between universality and particularity. Not even the complicity between imperialism and colonialism in its Eastern version is enough to constitute the full horizon for the study of Asianism. Besides this perspective, we can see an even richer constitution through the process of the persistent construction of Asianism by the Japanese throughout the modern period. It is in this connection that I think we can, in fact, locate a position for Watsuji Tatsuro's local conditions and customs perspective in a much wider horizon, which is a different horizon standing in opposition to that of Asianism as an ideal, suggesting a different approach to Asia. Through the civilization studies of Umesawa Tadao, I see a growth of this possibility, that is, to question afresh the Asian question by taking Asia as a region rather than as

an idea. With Watsuji Tatsuro, such a way of questioning is unwitting and indistinct and is premised on the absence of Asia. With Umesawa Tadao, the questioning becomes conscious and unambiguous, taking the idealism and the cultural essentialism on Asia as objects to be deconstructed. But, at the bottom line, the concern with local conditions and customs must be recognized as the contribution of Watsuji Tetsuro. No matter what sort of ideological effect *Local Conditions and Customs* had, it has, after all, provided a pivotal point for the discussion of Asianism to steer away from Fukuzawa's and Okakura's idealistic approach, towards a different dimension of thinking.

The positioning of *Asian perspectives* and the problems it reveals

Almost at the same time as Watsuji Tetsuro's ethical study, there existed an unnoticed line of thinking that problematized Asia. As it is more theoretically inclined and lacking in the inherent tension of thinking, it therefore did not arouse as much interest as the discussions of the Asian question. However, the possibility for a new turn implicit in this line of thinking is becoming more discernible half a century later.

This is the thinking on Asia of the historians associated with the Kyoto School of thought. The founder of this tradition of historiography was Naito Konan, and as I have not done any systematic study on this school, I cannot offer an overall evaluation. Here, I offer only preliminary thoughts on two historians and their thinking on Asia.

The first is Suzuki Naritaka (1907–1988). He took part in the two symposia, 'The Standpoint of World History and Japan' and 'Overcoming the Modern', in the early 1940s. He specialized in Western medieval history. His teacher, Karaki Junzo, was labelled as 'anti-modern'. As a scholar of the Kyoto School, it is symbolically significant for Suzuki to have taken part in these symposia which, on the one hand, indirectly supported the propagation of fascist ideologies and, on the other, earnestly pursued theoretical discussion. To Suzuki and other Kyoto School scholars, theoretical pursuits were a more important concern than pursuing thinking that confronted reality and political responsibility. It is precisely this attitude of judging from aloft matters of politics that caused them to be used by political forces.

Suzuki does not directly engage in the historical study of Asia. His concern is the pattern of 'world history'. He thinks that one of the fundamental problems for modern history is 'the becoming one of the world'. The becoming-one process is not brought about through 'a natural process of thousands of years of mutual relations between the various parts of the world that eventually give birth to an integrated world. Rather, this occurs through a sudden and drastic process of incorporation into one entity, with the history of long periods of isolation shared by various parts of the world that had not been broken by exchanges among them interrupted as if overnight' (Suzuki 1990: 14–15). Suzuki stresses that the world becomes one not through the sharing of common ideals and orders consistent with one another. It is rather the consequence of Europe's unilateral expansion, the Europeanization of non-European regions. Suzuki also points out, in a similar vein, that 'Europe began to emerge in an all-pervading context from ancient times, and also took shape in an all-pervading context in medieval times. While, for Asia, tracing back to the dawn of the history of mankind, we find several distinct cultures taking shape separately and developing autogenously and independently of

one another. These distinct origins then developed into autonomous, self-contained cultures, churning out histories that are closed to and autonomous from one another. Unlike to Europe, whether politically or culturally, Asia has never been a unified whole. While the unifying nature of Europe is real, it is unreal for Asia to be ascribed a unifying nature. If Asia can be attributed a common Asian consciousness, this is only possible for the last hundred years. And that is only made to emerge as a reaction to Western European imperialism.' (Suzuki 1990: 33)

Suzuki's way of thinking is representative of the dominant notion in the modern period and understanding of the world within intellectual circles. Such thinking not only coincides with Toynbee's 'challenge and response' model of historical explanation, it also coincides with the track of thinking among modern Japanese intellectuals on the question of the substantialization of Asia. Interestingly, such a way of thinking is that of intellectuals in the West in relation to the discussions on the process of the globalization of modernity, except that it is appropriated by Suzuki so to counter Eurocentric ways of thinking. Undeniably, the mindset for posing questions in this way possesses the paradoxical character peculiar to Westernized intellectuals of the East. This enables Suzuki to identify more easily with the idea of 'Japan's uniqueness' on the theoretical level. It is certainly not coincidental that he and Takeyama Michio engaged in conversation many times.[19]

Certainly, the question of Asia cannot be tackled directly through people like Suzuki, whose expertise lies rather in the field of European history. Among scholars of Japan studies, Miyazaki Ichisada (1901–1998) directly dealt with the study of Asia in its entirety, and echoed Suzuki's world history perspective from the perspective of Asian Studies. Even though there is nothing in common between Miyazaki and Suzuki in terms of specific conclusions, the pivotal point of Miyazaki's thinking and that of Suzuki are in agreement. Both are motivated by a will to resist the hegemony of Western Europe and endeavour to construct a new idea of world history.

In 1942, Miyazaki was instructed by the Ministry of Education to take part in compiling and writing *The Outline of the History of the Greater East Asia*. This was, of course, scholarship commissioned by the authorities and was meant to serve aggression. However, Miyazaki dealt with this thorny problem according to the Kyoto School's ways of understanding. 'Of course, in terms of scholarship, such things should not be written. But we can neither turn a blind eye to the Asian history according to the vision of Europeans looking down from a commanding position in which Asia is represented as stagnant without progress and development.' (Miyazaki 1975: 2) It is with the will to challenge Eurocentrism that Miyazaki, together with others, undertook to 'rewrite' the ideological objective of the Ministry of Education's attempt to produce a reader for the people of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere. They broadened the history of Asia by including West Asia, as well as East Asia. The rewriting also transposes the provenance of civilization from East Asia to West Asia, describing the process of the gradual movement towards the East of civilization, until it finally reaches Japan. In this portrait of the flowing of civilization into the East, Miyazaki showed a contradictory attitude towards the positioning of Japan. Ideologically, he is inclined to echo the idea of regarding Japan as the centre, but he is so rigorously trained in his scholarship that he cannot allow himself to do that. Consequently, he adopted an objectivistic attitude with regard to the historical positioning of Japan.

It is, however, not true that Miyazaki's concept of Asia is directed against Japan's militarism. In fact, like most other scholars of the Kyoto School, Miyazaki does not have a clear understanding of the current political situation. As a result, in a simplistic manner, he identified politically with the ideologies of militarism. But the political stand of Miyazaki does not occupy a significant position in his scholarly activities. Beyond theoretical considerations, he does not show any interest in questions of thinking and ideologies.[20] His theoretical concern is the problem of the constitution of world history. And the question of the unity of Asia can become an object for his thinking because, like Suzuki, he also wants to depict a picture of world history different from that framed by Eurocentrism. Therefore, even though his thinking assumes Japan to be representative of Asia in the struggle against Western Europe, which leads to the justification of Japan's aggression beginning from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, he does not simplistically take the ideologies of Japanese nationalism and militarism as his basic position. The view he establishes through his study of Asia implicitly contains in it quite rich productive elements.

An Outline of the History of the Greater East Asia had not been finished by the time of Japan's defeat, saving Miyazaki from leaving a taint on his record. But this did not significantly affect him. Even when the Ministry of Education gave the order, shortly after Japan's defeat, to erase all traces of evidence of such a project, he managed to publish the work in 1947 under a different title, *An Outline of the History of Asia*. The basic characteristic of Miyazaki's study can be seen in this work, and it is particularly remarkable that *An Outline of the History of Asia* contains significant elements from the legacy of Asianism while reworking them into a new direction.

As *An Outline of the History of Asia* takes the entire Asia as its object of study, theoretically it must deal with the fundamental fact that the region of Asia is characterized by cultural differences, a fact leading Umesawa Tadao to deny the existence of Asia. While Suzuki invokes a unifying Asia to confront the challenges from Europe, Miyazaki does not put forward an integrated Asia as a countering force. He thinks that the history of Europe has been studied quite comprehensively, and has become part of world history. But the study of the history of Asia remains far behind, inadequate for assuming a position in world history. In view of this, Miyazaki wants to move the study of Asia forward so that the history of Asia, seen by the West as stagnant, can become a part of world history. As for the cultural differences in Asia, Miyazaki believes that this cannot be cause enough to keep them isolated from one another, for 'the ties of communication link them closely together.' (Miyazaki 1987: 20) But Miyazaki is also inclined, like Umesawa, to confront the regional differences within Asia. Thus, in *An Outline of the History of Asia*, he differentiates between three main civilizations in Asia: the Indian, the Chinese and the Persian Islamic civilizations. All other Asian cultures are regarded as variations of the three main types. On the basis of this, Miyazaki directs his attention to the discussion of 'communications' between these civilizations from ancient times until today, focusing particularly on the disintegration and mutation of civilization due to the inherent mobility of the civilization in question.[21]

Miyazaki discusses, from a completely different direction than that of Umesawa, the interconnections between the different areas in Asia, without framing it within the opposition of Europe and Asia. On the contrary, Miyazaki translates his mode of

analysis on the interconnections between different cultures within Asia to the relation between Europe and Asia. He thereby dissolves the simple model of the opposition between Asia and Europe in analysing their relations. In attending to the interconnection between Asia and Europe historically, he moves forward one step further than did Suzuki. His conceptions of the history of Asia are described as 'a history of communications' and 'a history of contacts'.

According to Miyazaki, historical studies must begin from 'tangible facts' that are well known to people, but 'the phenomena of facts are not all there is, for they are only the results produced by the encounters between immense powers. The power includes not merely the whole of the people's and the state's intellectual and will power, but also the potential of the economic resources of the land activated by this power. In fact, the regions that exist in history are produced as the field of the actions of such power. The power that shapes a region is also the power that shapes an age.' (Miyazaki 1987: 224) This reminds one of the unresolved difficulty in Watsuji's thinking of the relation between local conditions and history, the fundamental proposition concerning Umesawa in his ecological approach to history, and the studies of regional histories in today's Japan. And the way Miyazaki thinks about regions suggests that it is possible for the study of regional history and the study of intellectual history to converge.

Miyazaki has consistently opposed the kind of Asian studies that treat the distinct cultures of different regions as an isolated object of study, and then compiles the non-related isolated studies into a book. In his discussion of the 'contest' between different peoples and cultures, he tries to show the inherent organic connections that history allows us to see. To do that, Miyazaki follows the study of European history and divides the history of Asia into ancient, medieval and modern, and further extends this framework to the discussion of the continuation of the modern period into 'the most recent modern period'. He then argues that the 'Renaissance' occurs in West Asia, East Asia, and then Europe, denoting the respective beginnings of the modern age in each area. Such a process occurred around the ninth century in West Asia, the eleventh century in East Asia, and between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Europe. Miyazaki thinks that this process follows a temporal sequence, with the phases in the sequence mutually influencing one another. The European Renaissance is the latest to occur and, with the greatest achievements, provides Europe with the foundation to engage in the most powerful projects of expansion in the modern period.[22] The most problematic point in Miyazaki's narration of history is his taking for granted the mode in which history is narrated in modern Europe. He believes that this can be regarded as a universal mode of narration, even though such a representation of history is derived from the need to explain history in Europe. Thus, he thinks that one can employ such a mode of narration to deal with various situations in different areas of Asia. Therefore, the explanations he offers of the Renaissance in different areas cannot but be a semblance of truth, and his account of the formation of nationalism as well as the modern state in modern China is strained.

However, what Miyazaki does should not be compared with the simplistic appropriation of Western theoretical frameworks. He thinks hard on his methodology for studying history, one which aims towards the establishment of world history as an organic whole, and it is on the basis of the assumption of the inherent organic connections

of world history that he employs the Western model. Thus, Miyazaki does not appropriate Western theoretical frameworks of history statically.

He is concerned throughout with the dynamic relations linking Asia and Europe as the content for demonstrating his theoretical model. For example, Miyazaki thinks that the motive power of the Industrial Revolution in England comes from India. As England had, very early on, laid the ground for wool production and processing, the beginning of the importation of raw cotton from India stimulated the development of the textile industry at home. However, as wool processing was originally performed as a cottage industry, the massive importation of cotton posed new demands on this mode of processing, leading to the standardization of production and the establishment of specialized factories. Efficient and low-cost machinery was then invented, with the steam engine representing the revolution in motive power, giving rise to the Industrial Revolution. 'Without the supply of raw materials and the markets for the exportation of products produced with them, the newly invented machines perhaps would have lain idle until they were destroyed by the reactionary forces of the medieval period, leaving behind for the later generations only a nostalgic topic for conversation. In fact, even the spirit of the Industrial Revolution itself was aroused as a response to the impact of the active trade with the East.' (Miyazaki 1987: 350–51) Miyazaki deals with the relationship between the East and the French Revolution in similar ways, stressing particularly the influence of the Chinese and the Japanese Confucian social forms on the Christian societies of Western Europe, which were in opposition to Islam. He believes that the non-religious form of Confucianism helps break the binary thinking in the demarcation between the 'us and them' of religious thought, thereby providing those arguing for the elimination of religion in Europe with powerful intellectual weapons (Miyazaki 1987: 354–55).

For Miyazaki, England's Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution were the beginning of what he calls 'the most modern era', that is, what normally is called the beginning of modernity. When Miyazaki considers these two historical events by relating them to Asia, the significance of this gesture is not that his argument is convincing, but rather that his idea, written 40 years ago, brings up a subject which has become the focus of a series of discussions for later generations. Above all, it even subtly echoes the expositions of Wallerstein and Braudel on the globalization of capitalism.

There are, however, still other problems. Miyazaki and Suzuki, being from the same generation, were confronted with the urgency of their times, which was intimately connected to the nourishment sustaining their scholarship. The relationships between the Kyoto School and the Second World War require a separate paper, but I will simply note that the objectivity of the Kyoto School was maintained through very turbulent times. Many scholars personally took part in the war of aggression. Such a contrast between scholarship and the times in which it is conducted deserves study, rather than being dealt with reductively. The problem of the elimination of subjectivity in Watsuji should also be discussed within such a context. I believe that within this particular historical context, some very interesting questions may be drawn from an examination of the so-called objectivity of scholarship.

The intellectual tradition created by the Kyoto School has left a complicated legacy for intellectuals of later generations engaged with the question of Asianism. Between the idealistic approach to, and the symbolization of, Asia in the question of Asia, on

the one hand, and the rejection of treating Asia purely on the level of ideas, on the other, is a different approach – that of searching for an understanding of historical structure out of materiality. Even though Kyoto School scholars fail to sort out the relation between thinking and scholarship and put scholarship in the service of ideologies, their writings suggest the possibility of understanding Asia differently. That is, they offer the possibility of bringing the idea of Asia and the material Asia together, allowing the two approaches to integrate through the perspective of a fluid 'history of communications'.

Regrettably, although many works on the question of Asia have appeared since the 1980s, most are merely, as Miyazaki has already criticized, isolated studies of different areas of Asia then compiled into a book without bothering even to ask whether the chapters are in anyway related. These studies may have made some contribution and furnished further details. However, they fail to reach the level achieved by their predecessors with regard to an overall picture. Dynamics and a sense of crisis are missing. So too are a boldness of vision and an aspiring spirit in scholarship.

It is only in the early 1990s that a new trend of discussion on the question of Asia, aroused by the publication of a seven-volume series, emerged among intellectuals in Japan. That series is *Asian Perspectives*[23] published in 1993 and 1994 by the Tokyo University Press. The chief editor was Mizoguchi Yuzo, Emeritus Professor of the Tokyo University, in collaboration with other professors of the Tokyo University, Hamashita Takeshi, Miyajima Hiroshi and Hiraishi Naoaki.[24] This series has gone further in its questioning than any discussions of the issue of Asia in postwar Japan. The contributors reflect on the 'unfolding of the historicity of knowing as regards Asia in Japan'. They also approach the question of Asia in terms of the history of the questioning, and re-examine both the meaning of the relations between Japan and Asia and the relationship between the question of Asia and the question of modernity. Although it is inevitable that the collection contains both good and bad work and diverse themes, the series nevertheless has achieved once again the problematization of 'Asia'. However, the most remarkable thing about the series is the collaboration between Mizoguchi Yuzo and Hamashita Takeshi that symbolizes the joining of intellectual history and regional studies, the most important of its kind since the short conversation between Takeuchi Yoshimi and Umesawa in the early 1960s.

Mizoguchi Yuzo specializes in Chinese intellectual history. The most distinctive characteristic of his studies is his approach to an object of study from within. That is, he is attentive to the texture of the object of study without assuming any presupposition to be true. In his study of Chinese intellectual history, particularly of the period when the Ming Dynasty is collapsing and the Qing Dynasty is emerging, he grasps the complex context specific to this critical historical transition, and follows close to the internal tensions of that period in posing his questions. As an intellectual historian, he displays an internal intensity much stronger than what we find with other historians. The intensity manifests itself in the way Mizoguchi conducts his interrogation, which always unfolds along the line of 'moments of tension' in history.[25] The primary motive of Mizoguchi's study of Chinese intellectual history is to search for principles that are understood by him in ways similar to that of Takeuchi Yoshimi. He is not concerned with the interpretation of anything outside the concrete historical process; the principles he discusses reside in unrepeatable historical events.

Mizoguchi began his academic career by critically examining postwar intellectual historians, such as Takeuchi Yoshimi and Maruyama Masao. However, he carries on the tradition of Japan's modern intellectual history in his pursuit of principles. His own studies only concern the question of Asia indirectly; Chinese intellectual history is always his primary preoccupation. But as he proceeds with his study, he manages to dissolve all established premises and ideas in his field, particularly the premise defining the so-called modern thinking produced by the 'occidentalists' in the East. This makes him very different from Miyazaki. Although Miyazaki also attends to the turbulences and transformations in Chinese history, his entrance into Chinese history is always guided by the periodization of European history. In addition, although Miyazaki does uncover important questions in his study of Chinese history, he is bound to neglect whatever cannot fit into that periodization. And the part Miyazaki neglects is precisely those problems Mizoguchi is concerned with and prepared to deal with. What Mizoguchi has displayed is a historical picture very different from that derived from modern European narrative. What Mizoguchi manages to portray in his remarkable analysis in historical case studies is beyond the reach of the presumed Western mode of thinking, which is the engraved texture of China's modernity. The tracing of the engraved texture in Mizoguchi's historical studies leads to the study of history over a long period, and this characteristic distinguishes his historical study from those of historians who only deal with periodized history. In this respect, the case studies of Mizoguchi are deeply imbued with a sense of history. On the basis of scholarship over long periods of time, Mizoguchi tries to forward a conception of the principles of China's modernity and, hence, to theorize it. Mizoguchi's approach to the history of China from within reveals to us the limitations of concepts from the modern West, making the series he edits something that must not be neglected.

Hamashita Takeshi's specialty is modern and contemporary Chinese history, particularly economic history. He pursues the inherent structure of the object he sets out to study, and tries to construct it as a rule-governed structure. His concern for structure prompts him to reconfigure the organic connections in the Asian region, which resulted in his famous study of the tribute system. Hamashita reveals through an analysis of the tribute system in East Asia, with China as the centre, a very important fact: for East Asia at the transformational period of modernization, there was no nation-state in the Western sense. The region's history formed in and through the trans-border grid of the tribute system, and its inherent dynamics are also subject to the excitation of the tribute system. Even in Japan's conception of severance from Asia and endeavours in modernizing itself, these events occurred in reaction to the historical constraint of tributary relationships; that is, as merely the means rather than as the ends, to free Japan from the position of a tributary state. Hamashita's regional study is a direct response to the question of Asia. He discusses not only the relations existing in the East Asian region, but also the limitation of the externally defined 'modernity' for East Asia in the comparison between Asia and Europe. But there is a fundamental contradiction in his discussion of the question of Asia. For Hamashita, East Asia is conflated with Asia. Furthermore, he is not interested in the question of the relation between an abstract idea of Asia and the understanding of East Asia in terms of the existing network of the tribute system. As a result, he is forced to apply the network of the tribute system to discussions of the regional structures of other Asian areas.

Both Mizoguchi and Hamashita are surprisingly in harmony in their interrogation of the limitations and even ineffectiveness of the employment of the modern concept of the European nation-state in the understanding of the history of East Asia. Notwithstanding that, Mizuguchi broaches the questions within the framework of the country 'China', while Hamashita considers matters within the framework of a region with China as the centre. It is precisely in this respect that the series engages with the problems provoked by the impact of the encounter between the internal dynamics of the non-European world and the European world from very different perspectives.

Regrettably, perhaps because of a paucity of likeminded historians, the series lacks an overall examination of the conceptions of Asia formed in Japan since the beginning of the modern period. Originally, volume five was to be dedicated to discussions of 'modern Japan's understanding of Asia' by the four editors, but in the end only one chapter, by Hiraishi Naoaki, was published. Hiraishi's chapter, 'Modern Japan on "Asianism"', is the only article in the volume that seeks to sort out Asianism, but it is unable to provide the essential points for guiding relevant discussions. Furthermore, the article is restricted by the demarcations made within Japan's intellectual history. Thus, it is unable to consider the rich contents covered in the series. In addition, the scholars who contributed to this volume also lack a sense of placing their studies in the historiography on intellectual history and the social sciences since the Meiji period. Furthermore, it is the series' obvious intention to break away from the practice of restricting contributions only to scholars from one nation, as represented in the habitual conceptions of 'Japanese on Asia'. Consequently, one-fifth of the writers are from other East Asian nations and the United States. Therefore, with regard to its relationship to the carrying forward of Japan's intellectual tradition and the tradition of scholarship, the position of the series is not clear. Interestingly, however, the scholars of intellectual history as represented by Mizoguchi and the scholars of the social sciences, as represented by Hamashita, display their connections to the traditions of scholarship and thinking of earlier generations in their fields of research. This makes it possible to explore the thread of Japan's Asianism through their studies. We can discover that, as people today have already moved beyond the simplistic binary frame of the opposition between East and West, and are confronted with the complicated problem of globalization, the Japanese today are still primarily engrossed in the question of Japan's self-identification. If, while reading this series, we remove the contexts of an entire century of thinking on Asianism in Japan from our consideration, we will be unable to find entry deep into this Asianism.

After skimming the history of thinking on Asianism, beginning with Fukuzawa Yukichi, we may now understand a hidden contradiction in the modern Japanese person's Asian complex. Since ancient times, Japan and China were in an unequal relationship. With that background, Japan, upon entering the modern era, attempted to take the place of China and become the main agent confronting the West through the 'Hua-Yi metamorphosis'. Thus, the contradiction is developed by at least three constituents: Japan, China and the West. Whether the West is an abstract fabrication is not a key question here. What is crucial is how Japan locates its position in the dynamics of such a configuration. One can say, unlike as for China, the problem of self-identification for modern Japan can only be solved through the medium of Asia. The complexity of the problem is because Japan's reflection on Asianism is all but unable

to free itself from the determination of such a non-academic factor of actuality. Thus, it constitutes almost all along a theme for right-wing intellectuals, forcing Takeuchi to adopt the 'cat's paw' method as he tries to uncover reflections on Japanese intellectuals' responsibility to Asia and on the modernity of Asia. And it is precisely along such a thread that the various transpositions in Asianism can occur in history. How can the series *Asian Perspectives* differentiate itself from this historical thread that recalls such unhappy memories?

No matter how the editors of *Asian Perspectives* defined their tasks, it is not possible for them to initiate totally new discussions. In fact, the intellectual tradition that they cannot but confront poses many very different problems to them. How to settle the problem of the symbolization of Asia raised by the elliptic trajectory defined by Fukuzawa and Okakura Tenshin? How to tackle the visualization by Watsuji of replacing the conception of Asia versus Europe with the conception of three distinct modes of local conditions and customs? How to deal with the efforts of Miyazaki in the reconstruction of world history through the reconstruction of the relationship between Asia and Europe via the history of communications? How to take up the reflection of Umesawa with regard to the deconstruction of the conceptual framework of Asia and the substantialization of the Asian region through the breaking of its symbolization? How to confront the 'ideology of Japanism' from Watsuji to the Kyoto School? And how to treat the goal of Japan's cultural identification that Takeuchi seeks to achieve through the examination of Asianism?

It is true that *Asian Perspectives* expands the horizon of reflection beyond Japan to cover the entire Asia, but what the scholars face is first and foremost the problem of Japan. And today, after the relationship between Japan and Asia is being objectified and turned into an object of academic study, it is not for scholars of intellectual history such as Mizoguchi Yuzo, who are adept at dealing with the internal entanglements in history, to respond to such a situation. It is for fine scholars of economic history such as Hamashita Takeshi, Kawakatsu Heita and Miyajima Hiroshi to respond. This, to a certain extent, displaces the direction of the questioning from the elliptic trajectory delineated by Takeuchi with regard to the question of Asia, making it closer to the field of Umesawa and even Miyazaki. At the same time, it also weakens the ideological problem that Asianism faces historically, but it also, in turn, clouds its own positioning.

Hamashita (1986) participated in the conference 'Civilization Studies', which was hosted by Umesawa. His article 'Tribute and migrants' was included in the collection *Civilization Studies on Ruling Institutions*. Of course, this cannot be proof that Hamashita identifies with Umesawa, for he holds a basic understanding of Asia opposite to Umesawa. He not only acknowledges the necessity of the independent existence of the Asian region, he further stresses the relativization of the concept of nation-state through geopolitics. Compared to Umesawa's denial of the existence of Asia and his adoption of the state as the basic unit in the discussion of the question of civilization, Hamashita's approach is very different. Yet, on a deeper level, Hamashita can be considered as representative of those scholars in Japan who study an area in the broad sense of a sphere, as in Umesawa's ecological approach to history, providing it another chance to be reactivated.

Umesawa noticed very early the question of differentiating in the Asian region between large states of civilization and small states on the fringes of the large states.

Watsuji only touched upon this question lightly. As a result, he failed to draw the attention of scholars of intellectual history. Umesawa, too, is not able to develop the notion of the difference between a central civilized state and the small states around its fringes into 'relations studies'. Miyazaki tries to discuss the question of trade relations in the Asian region, but he cannot deal with the historical material for such a study and remains merely at the stage of envisioning. Moreover, Miyazaki cannot free himself from the discursive framework of a nation-state, and does not reach even the extent of Umesawa's argument for differentiating between large states and small states. However, for scholars such as Hamashita, in their studies, the question of the relations between a civilized large state and the small states bordering it constitutes the main line of research. Furthermore, unlike Umesawa and Miyazaki, they do not take the state as a unit of research, but go beyond the boundaries of states and turn their attention to the study of the relations between trans-border social structures and the world. They also, through their practice, provide the foundation for communication between economic history and intellectual history, thereby turning Umesawa's 'annihilation of history' into the task of rewriting history. Thus, we find in Hamashita's works, the attempt at reinterpretations of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere and 'Disassociating Asia and integrating into Europe'.[26] This is the problem that Umesawa tries to evade and that Miyazaki simplifies and rationalizes. Hamashita neglects the strong inertia of the logic of intellectual history and does not bring his own research and the fruits of the study of corresponding intellectual history together. For this reason, his interpretation of the Greater East Asia Coprosperity sphere and of 'Disassociating Asia' has not resulted in anything positive except in ideological misreading. But this is not a reason to reject Hamashita's scholarship; rather, it reveals the predicament of regional studies without intellectual history. More important than this predicament is the opening that Hamashita's works are able to create. The nation-state framework is radically questioned in his studies, and this leads to a reinterpretation of modern Asia (East Asia to be more exact), thereby creating a possibility for communications between intellectuals of East and West and also an effective frame of reference for scholars of intellectual history. In this connection, Hamashita, Kawakatsu and Miyajima complement one another. Kawakatsu's (1994) 'The establishment and development of the East Asian economic sphere' and Miyajima's (1994) 'The formation of small peasant society' discuss the question of the East Asian regional system from a perspective 'outside China'. Kawakatsu's paper particularly deserves our attention. This is not because he has briefly sorted out the economic history viewpoint of the historians of the Kyoto School represented by Kuwabara Jitsuzo, or because he has worked on and added to Umesawa's ecological approach to history. It is because he has attempted to put forward his own view of 'the system of countries that are closed to the outside' within this intellectual tradition, and has further developed some key questions in the discourses on Asia in Japan.

Kawakatsu's study of economic history and Miyazaki's of Asian history have very similar perspectives in that both focus on the trade relationships among the different countries of East Asia rather than on factors of ideology, and the mutual impacts and contacts that come with these relationships. They also focus on the interaction as a result of trade relationships between Asia and Europe in the midst of the modernization process. Interestingly, although Kawakatsu does not cite Miyazaki, he too pays attention

to the relationship between the Industrial Revolution in England and the cotton from India, and arrives at a conclusion completely consistent with Miyazaki on the basis of a richer data analysis than what Miyazaki could have had:

> Before the Industrial Revolution, England needed a century for the reproduction of products produced in India. Only with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution could a reproduction even better than the original product be successfully produced. It is generally believed that England's Industrial Revolution was not caused by anything outside England. But rather, it was the strong external pressure exerted on England by the region with the original product that made the Industrial Revolution inevitable. The Industrial Revolution is by definition accompanied by a radical revolution of the economy and society. If generally it is said that the impact of the West is the international conditions of Japan's industrial revolution, the international conditions of the Industrial Revolution of England must then be the impact from the East, or rather Asia.
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> (Kawakatsu 1996: 61)

However, Kawakatsu discusses the Asian background of England's Industrial Revolution in a completely different context from that of Miyazaki. And that context was Kawakatsu's effective questioning of the use of schemas from the historiography of Western Europe in the study of the economic history of Asia. The questioning of the Industrial Revolution in England as autogenous is directed against the postwar Japanese historian Otsuka Hisao, who argued that England's Industrial Revolution was autogenous. Kawakatsu not only calls into question such a conclusion, he also questions the comparative method Otsuka employs in his historical studies by taking the mode of the modernity of Western Europe as the criterion for the judging and the comparing of Japan's modernity. Undeniably, this is also the schema employed even by Japanese historians such as Miyazaki who were blessed with insight from their study of Chinese history and attempted to go beyond Eurocentrism. Therefore, in view of such a situation, Kawakatsu appeals for 'the search for a perspective for Asia'. On a deeper level, then, Kawakatsu's Asian studies have revealed the vulnerability of historians of China, such as Miyazaki, who initiated 'the communications history' approach, bringing the existing studies of relations between Asia and Western Europe to an even more complicated dimension. And it is in this dimension that Kawakatsu proposes his view of the system of 'closing Japan to the outside world'.

This is his response to the 'world system' of Wallerstein.[27] However, if we pursue Kawakatsu's thinking further, we are led necessarily to another problem. Running through the trajectories of thinking from the discourse of a world system of self-isolated states to the discourse on the perspective of wartime history is the subtext of a shifting of the focus of the narrative of the East Asian history from the mainland countries. This implies the dissipation of the question raised by Hamashita's conception of the tribute system with regard to the structural relations between large and small. Even more important, however, than the difference between Kawakatsu and Hamashita, is that Kawakatsu is now confronted with the same problem as that which confronted Umesawa. Their theories are unable to dissolve the ideological posing of the idea of 'Disassociating Asia'. Similar to Umesawa's eventual move towards surrendering himself