

CREATING MODERN JAPAN AS A CULTURAL UNIT

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Introduction

When we try to analyze the Japanese society in a comparative perspective, we tend to take the existence of Japan as a cultural unit for granted. In other words people tend to lean on the presupposition that the Japanese archipelago, from Hokkaido to Okinawa, has always been a culturally homogeneous unit. In reality, however, "Japan" as a cultural unit is nothing but a product of "invented tradition." The purpose of this paper is to clarify our understanding of this cultural unit by analyzing historical processes in modern Japan.

By the expression "a product of invented tradition," I suggest that it was the product of a historical process of absorbing heterogeneous elements and modifying them to become a part of the same cultural unit. I can agree that Japanese society is, relatively speaking, more homogeneous and has more historically continuous elements than many other societies. At the same time, because of this apparent homogeneity and continuity, people tend to ignore or overlook the aspect that Japan as a cultural unit was the product of a certain historical process.

In examining this tendency, I would like to pay particular attention to the process of creating a cultural unit called "Japan." The following analysis will therefore focus on the cultural invention aspect which has been ignored in previous studies.

1 Civil War at the Time of Restoration and Its Legacy

1.1 Divided Japan

Let me begin with the eve of modern Japan, i.e., the time of Meiji Restoration. It was clear that Japan was divided into the two parts: southwestern fiefs led by Satsuma and Choshu on the one hand, and northeastern forces which supported shogunate government on the other. This hostility may have been the residue of the battle between Toyotomi camp and Tokugawa camp at Sekigahara in 1600. Or one might say that the hostility between western and eastern forces can be traced in the early 13th century, when the *Ritsuryo* system, with a Chinese type of code written in Chinese characters, was in competition with the Kamakura-Bakufu, with its *Goseibaishikimoku* (in 1232), or the law written in

kana (Japanese syllabary).

Against the above historical background, at least for a few years in the eve of modern Japan, serious conflicts took place between western and eastern forces. The violent confrontations were temporarily avoided by the peaceful evacuation of Edo castle in April 1868, but serious battles continued in Aizu and other places until the defeat of Bakufu forces at Hakodate, Hokkaido. (We might note here that there is a psychological residue of the conflict even today. A few years ago the mayor of Hagi city in former Choshu proposed to Aizu city an official reconciliation, but the proposal was not accepted because of the bitter memory on the part of defeated side.)

1.2 Formation of Counter-culture as a Residue

Although violent conflict did not last more than two years, psychological tension between western and eastern forces continued in different ways, often in terms of bitter written debate. Nakamura Masanao, who had been sent to England by the shogunate government, moved to Shizuoka after his return because the Shogun was forced to move there in 1868. He translated J.S. Mill's *On Liberty* and published it in Shizuoka in 1872. The translation was widely read by activists in "freedom and people's rights movement" (*jiyu minken undo*). For instance, Kono Hironaka, from a northeastern fief, wrote in his autobiography that the translation caused revolutionary change in his ideas.

Shiba Shiro, former samurai in Aizu fief, after his return from the seven-years stay in the US, published a novel called *Kajin no Kigu* (literally meaning *Encounters with Beautiful Ladies*) in 1885, and it became a major bestseller. Visiting Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the hero of the novel, a Japanese man, encounters a beautiful woman; she tells him that her father, an activist in the Irish independence movement, died in jail. Both of them had admired the independence movement of the US from Britain. This admiration and the hero's sympathy with the Egyptian situation under colonial rule and with the ruined people of Poland appeared in the novel seems to be a projection of the author's antipathy toward the established Meiji government.

Many intellectuals who had belonged to the eastern camp became active in forming a counter-culture against the Meiji government led by former samurai in Satsuma and Choshu. Newspapers became a strategic base for their activities. Fukuchi Gen'ichiro and Kurimoto Joun, both of whom were former retainers of the shogunate government, were two of the more famous journalists in this anti-government camp.

Another base of activities among intellectuals from the eastern camp was the Christian church. Quite a few active Christians came from either shogunate

government or the northern fiefs, among whom Uemura Masahisa is the most important figure. Few of them were politically hostile to the Meiji government, but many of them wanted to establish a new identity after the defeat of the shogunate government, so that they could maintain some form of independence from the new regime.

1.3 Absorbing and Marginalizing Counter Forces

Those who were dissatisfied with the Meiji government were not necessarily limited to those from the eastern fiefs. After the defeat of the eastern fiefs, sporadic rebellions led by dissenting leaders emerged in the western part of Japan; Saigo Takamori was the most important of these rebel commanders. After the Satsuma Rebellion led by Saigo in 1877, military revolt became impossible and dissatisfied people in politics joined “freedom and people’s rights movement” which recruited activists from all parts of the nation. In 1881, the decision was made to steer the nation after the Prussian model rather than the English type of constitutionalism. And in 1889, the Meiji Constitution was promulgated.

Thus consolidated, the new establishment tried to absorb capable leaders who used to be in the anti-establishment camp. The process of absorbing the counter-elite began with ennobling the former fief lords of the eastern camp together with those from the western camp. Those counter-elites considered to be exceptionally capable were also recruited to serve the newly decided national goal of “enriching the nation and strengthening the army” (*fukoku kyôhei*). Enomoto Takeaki, who was the commander of the anti-government forces at the Hakodate battle, was the most remarkable example. He became Minister of the Navy in 1890 and continued to occupy many other important positions.

But this was not the fate of all former anti-establishment leaders. In fact, the majority of former samurai in the eastern fiefs who had fought against the Satsuma-Choshu troops were marginalized, often sent further north to the northern end of the mainland or Hokkaido, which was called Ezo at the time.

2 “Domestication” in the Name of Civilization: “Assimilation (*Doka*)” of the Ainu

2.1 The Development of Hokkaido and Ainu-policy

Many mainlanders were forced either socio-politically or economically to move to Ezo to develop the resources there. Thus the Ainu, the indigenous people there, had to face new difficulties in the same way as those in the American frontier. The Meiji government renamed Ezo as Hokkaido and established the office of the Commissioner of Colonization. The development of Hokkaido was

important not only to enrich the nation but also to defend the nation against the attack from the north, i.e. Russia. Thus many mainlanders were settled there as farm soldiers.

The flood of mainlanders and their cultivation of frontier land deprived the Ainu of their right to continue their way of living by fishing and hunting. In 1899, the government established the "Former Natives' Protection Law" which allocated a certain amount of land to the indigenous people for cultivation, and encouraged school education. The Darwinian reason given for this particular legislation was that without help, the Ainu, who were less "developed," would cease to exist as a consequence of the "scientific rule" of survival of the fittest.

Some historians give various guesses concerning why at this particular time such a law was enacted. One guess is that because of the acquisition of a new colony in Taiwan in 1895 the regime wanted to establish rules regarding its governance of indigenous peoples. A second guess, based on fairly convincing evidence, was that the government feared that the dissatisfied Ainu would be organized by foreign missionaries, because many Christian missionaries were engaged in educating the Ainu.

2.2 The Influence of the Dawes Act in the US

Yet another guess is that Meiji leaders were influenced by the Dawes Severalty Act in 1887, which dealt with indigenous peoples in the US. Because many Americans participated in the development of Hokkaido, this influence may have been natural. In fact, there are two important similarities between the two laws: one is the allocation of land to indigenous people and another is promotion of education. There are, on the other hand, important differences. The Dawes Act, for example, allocated 80 acres of land to each person without the need for any application, whereas in Japan, people had to make special applications in order to receive less than one-sixth that amount.

Related to education, both laws encouraged people to learn the national language (English or Japanese), and de-emphasized the indigenous mother tongue. Language education was in both cases justified in the name of civilization: in order to be civilized, indigenous people had to be good at the language of the advanced civilization.

Furthermore, in the Japanese case, education included special emphasis on the loyalty of the Ainu to the emperor. When special schools for the Ainu were established, students began their classes with a solemn ritual of bowing in the direction of the imperial palace and reciting an oath as the emperor's loyal subject.

2.3 Creating “A Brave Former-Native Soldier”

The education of the Ainu with emphasis on language and loyalty was useful for creating brave soldiers. Actually, some Ainu proved to be especially capable in rescue work in 1902, when Japanese troops met with disaster in military practice in heavy snow. Some then proposed to form a special fighting unit composed of Ainu. Instead of approving this proposal, the government decided to recruit them into the general conscription system which had been put into force in Hokkaido in 1898.

Those Ainu who were drafted into regular units participated in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-1905. Fifty-one out of sixty-three such soldiers were decorated in recognition of their brilliant service. In particular, one soldier who was given the Japanese name Kitakaze Isokichi was headlined in the newspapers as “a courageous former-native soldier.” The treatment of Ainu soldiers as war heroes gave incentive to the indigenous people to assimilate into the Japanese way of life.

Special schools for the Ainu were abolished in 1922, so that they would be entirely integrated into the general educational system. In the integrated schools, social discrimination became more visible to the Ainu children, but they could not find any way of overcoming or escaping from the discrimination. Partly encouraged by the movement against discrimination among the Buraku people, some Ainu became interested in creating a movement to promote their social status. Even in this case too, however, they wanted to be equal as the emperor’s subjects. For instance, one such activists clearly stated that the Ainu could be proud of the fact that there had been no disloyal persons among them.

3 Overcoming of the Duality in Loyalty: Annexation of Okinawa

3.1 The Extinction of Ryukyu Kingdom

While the assimilation policy was being forcefully carried out in Hokkaido, called “the Northern Gate of the Empire,” a similar process was going on in Okinawa, the southern end of the country. One important difference between northern and southern ends was that in the latter the indigenous people (Okinawans) had a 500-year tradition of ruling their own kingdom. The kingdom of Ryukyu had had a close relationship with both mainland Japan and China. For instance, since the 17th century the king of Ryukyu ascended the throne with the approval of the Shimazu fief lord, but at the same time, the kingdom had been in a tributary system of the Chinese “Central Empire.”

In 1879 the Japanese government sent the troops to Okinawa to end this dual loyalty. The king was forced to move to Tokyo and later became a noble

and a member of House of Peers. If we can compare the Ainu with the indigenous people in the US, the analogy probably holds similarly for the Japanese annexation of Okinawa and the American annexation of Hawaii. The king of Hawaii, however, did not become a noble and instead the name of the king is simply remembered as the name of a street.

3.2 The “Assimilation” Policy

The “assimilation” policy in Okinawa had the same emphasis on education as in the case of the Ainu, but in this case, probably because of the larger number of more educated population, a normal school was established in 1880 to train future teachers, recruited among the Okinawans. Teaching the Japanese language and cultivating a sense of loyalty were two major foci in school education. The picture of the emperor was “granted” to Okinawan schools prior to those in other prefectures.

During the period of Sino-Japanese war in 1894 and 1895 there were some Okinawan political forces in favor of Chinese victory, but after China’s defeat, they lost their influence and Japan firmly eliminated dual political loyalty. Thus, the conscription system was introduced in 1898, although the right to vote was not given until 1912, i.e. twenty-two years later than for the people in the mainland.

The forced “assimilation” policy, accompanied by such forms of discrimination as the restriction of indigenous language and customs, created various kinds of dissatisfaction. Although political protest, sometimes with the expectation of help from China, turned out to be unsuccessful, a strike among middle school students, who were protesting a discriminatory schoolmaster, ended with his forced resignation. Incidentally, the schoolmaster thereafter got a new job in Taiwan, ending up in charge of education there.

3.3 Stepping-stone for Further Expansion

This fact, together with the fact that the first schoolmaster of the normal school in Okinawa and an Okinawan graduate got jobs in charge of Taiwanese education, indicates a close relationship between Okinawa and Taiwan. And the similarity in “assimilation-oriented education” in the two areas was a natural result of this relationship.

The unfavorable employment environment in Okinawa, however, forced many Okinawans to leave to find work elsewhere. The labor market for unskilled workers in the western part of the mainland invited many Okinawans who had been educated in the Japanese language. Although they were severely discriminated against, “assimilation-oriented” education was a necessary condition

for finding a job in the mainland.

Quite a few Okinawans emigrated. Starting from 1899, when twenty-six Okinawans left for Hawaii, the number of emigrants from Okinawa grew rapidly, reaching 4,670 in 1906. They spread not only in Hawaii and other part of the US, but also to many Latin American countries, the Philippines, Singapore and other parts of Southeast Asia, and to the Pacific islands. Unlike the Ainu, the possibility of going abroad made Okinawans more open to the wider world across the border, and made the ruling elite in Japan suspicious about the sense of loyalty among Okinawans.

On the other hand, as the level of education improved, including students sent to the mainland, some highly educated Okinawans could benefit from social promotion. In one case, an Okinawan navy officer was promoted to the rank of rear admiral. Such an example provided an incentive to get a better education, but discrimination prevented this from being an easy recipe for success. Instead quite a few got jobs in Taiwan and other Southeast Asian areas occupied by Japan as it began to extend its sphere of influence. Thus Okinawa provided Japan with personal resources for the expansion of the Japanese empire.

4 “Assimilation” in the First Formal Colony, Taiwan

4.1 “Gradual Application of Mainland Rule”

In terms of its usefulness in Japan’s imperial expansion, Okinawa played an even more important role by providing a good example of “assimilation” policy, which could then be used in the newly obtained colony of Taiwan. When Taiwan became the first formal colony of Japan, there were serious disputes among ruling elite concerning how to rule the new colony. The focal point was whether they should use the same legal system as that in mainland or the colony should be ruled in a different way from the mainland.

As the result of compromise the government decided to adopt “the principle of gradual application of mainland rule,” which means in proportion to the extent of assimilation the type of rule in the mainland would be applied in the colony. In order to advocate the adoption of this principle, supporters often cited the Okinawan case. They said that it took some time for Okinawa to be absorbed into Japan, but since Okinawa had successfully become a part of Japan, Taiwan would follow the same course.

Of course Taiwan had been a part of China and people there had had their own tradition. To those who advocated “the principle of gradual application of mainland rule,” however, the people in Taiwan seemed to have cultural and ethnic affinity to Japan, because both had a Confucian tradition expressed by

Chinese characters and both belong to the “yellow” race.

4.2 Justification for “Assimilation”(Dôka)

In the process of absorbing Taiwan into Japan as a cultural unit, we need to distinguish between two types of residents. One type was the indigenous people of the island, whose treatment by the government was similar to the policy vis-a-vis Ainu: i.e., domestication in the name of civilization. Because of the military consideration of maintaining order, a forcible “assimilation” policy was carried out and violent protests took place. Among them the most remarkable one was Musha incident in 1930, when more than two thousand soldiers and policemen killed about one thousand indigenous people.

Another type of people in Taiwan were those who had come from the Chinese continent, and they were not to be handled easily either. Although they were given their opportunity to choose their nationality within two years of Japan’s possession of Taiwan, even among those who became Japanese nationals there was still a strong sense of pride concerning their traditions. The Japanese ruling elite tried to find a justification for their “assimilation” policy in the following way: the victory of Japan in the Sino-Japanese war proved that Japan had been more successful in advancing civilization than China, and therefore there was sufficient reason for Japan to guide another Asian nation with a Confucian tradition toward civilization.

As for the content of “assimilation” education, language and loyalty were emphasized, as they were in the case of Okinawa. Because of the long tradition of Chinese culture, it was only in 1940 when the government succeeded in abolishing the column in Chinese in newspapers.

The cultivation of loyalty was not easy either. The method used was, however, the same as in the case of Okinawa: the promotion of a few to stimulate patriotism on the one hand, and marginalization of many on the other. The examples of the former case were the appointment of a collaborator to a member of House of Peers, and the promotion of Taiwanese intellectuals to become high officials in the puppet governments in Manchoukuo and in Nanking.

In contrast to these promotion cases, many Taiwanese were used in the battlefield in the Chinese continent for military transport and as translators. Later, when Japan expanded further to invade Southeast Asia, many Taiwanese were forced to serve in military operations in one way or another.

4.3 The Way toward the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere”

Although the Taiwanese were discriminated against by the mainlanders, they engaged in Japan’s military aggression with the awareness that they

belonged to the Japanese empire. In the latter sense the unit of Japanese culture had been expanded to absorb the Taiwanese not only in the eyes of ruling elite but also in the mind of the Taiwanese themselves, at least when they faced the outside world.

In 1942 the volunteer system for military service was introduced in Taiwan, and, particularly among volunteers from indigenous people, special fighting units were formed to join battles in the Philippines, Indonesia, and other areas in Southeast Asia. It was surprising that one soldier belonging to this unit was found in Indonesia in 1974, almost thirty years after the defeat of Japan. He was such an obedient soldier as to hide and survive without surrendering to the enemy. In 1943, the conscription system started in Taiwan and all strong Taiwanese youths were recruited for military service although the right to vote was not given to the Taiwanese until 1945, and they did not have opportunity to exercise that right before the defeat.

5 The Bridge to the Continent: The Korean Case

5.1 Geographic Position and Strategic Considerations

For Japan, the Korean peninsula has long been the connecting bridge with the Chinese continent. Because of this geographical position Korea has played an important role in introducing Chinese civilization into Japan since the fifth century. In the modern period, however, military and strategic importance was added to this consideration, because Korea was the focal point of the international power struggles between China and Japan, and between Russia and Japan.

Japan's colonial rule of Korea since the annexation in 1910 had many similarities, such as "assimilation" education, to that in Taiwan. There were, however, some important differences as well. One was the existence of an independent kingdom in Korea; the king was forced to agree to the annexation and to move to Tokyo to become a noble. A second difference was that because of the form of "voluntary" annexation, the Korean people did not have the choice of nationality which the Taiwanese had. The only possible way for Koreans to refuse Japanese nationality was to escape across the northern border to China. Some of them became activists in guerrilla operations around the border to fight against Japanese rule.

A third major difference between Korea and Taiwan is related to the importance of military strategy. Taiwan had civilian governor-generals for 17 years as the result of the influence of "Taisho democracy" movement, but in Korea all governor-generals were military persons. And half of them later became prime ministers in Japan. Even when some modification in colonial rule became neces-

sary because of the fierce independence movement in 1919, an admiral — not a civilian — replaced a general as governor-general.

5.2 The Process of “Japanization” in Korea

Despite these differences, the method of “Japanization” through “assimilation” education was the same in Korea as in Taiwan. In both cases the emphases of such education were on language and loyalty. The migration of many Koreans into the mainland encouraged the learning of Japanese, because in order to find a better job language ability was needed. The effectiveness of language education, however, is somewhat dubious; according to a report in 1936, when the Korean parents at a meeting of a nursery school for Korean children in Kyoto were ordered by the police to talk only in Japanese, many had to keep silence.

The difficulty in cultivating loyalty in the Korean mind was not very different from the Taiwanese case. One difference was that there were some who advocated a theory that the Japanese and Korean peoples had come from the same ancestor. This theory, however, could not persuade many people both among Japanese and Koreans. Although in 1912 the government ordered the ceremony of reading the Imperial Rescript on Education on ceremonial occasions, the content of the Rescript could not be applied without modification, because it was said that it contained the imperial ancestors’ teachings on the conduct of life.

In fact, more important was the ritual rather than the content of what was written in the Rescript, because the ceremony of reading it was simply a formality by means of which the Koreans proved that they were obedient imperial subjects. Probably a more important incentive for cultivating a sense of loyalty among Koreans was their expectation to be socially promoted. Although the actual opportunity was very much limited, there was a possibility of climbing up the social ladder by graduating from good universities. At the time of the ceremony of accession to the throne in 1928, one Korean student at the University of Kyoto, who was a grandson of an important collaborator, was allowed to join the ceremony. This was widely reported by the newspapers, although at the same time many Koreans who were suspected to be leftists or active in independence movements were either arrested or sent back to Korea.

The strategy of promoting some who collaborated and marginalizing the many who resisted was the main tool for realizing the government’s policy of “uniting the mainland and Korea.” As this policy gradually took roots, in 1938 the volunteer system was introduced and it was followed by the conscription system five years later. Moreover, many Koreans were recruited as civilians in the military service, among whom the most important case was that of guards of prisoners of war. Out of about three thousand such Korean guards, 148 were

prosecuted as war criminals for their treatment of POWs.

5.3 Use of Orientalist Policy and Its Modification

When E.B. Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, which is described by E. Said as one of the typical products of "orientalism," was translated into Japanese in 1911, Okuma Shigenobu wrote in the introduction that he had presented the original book to Ito Hirobumi to be used for Ito's control over Korea, then a protectorate of Japan. There was no evidence how much it was used. Judging from what happened, however, it was clear that control in the name of civilization was the common element found both in European and Japanese colonial rules.

While European colonial rule based on "orientalism" emphasized cultural differences between occidental and oriental cultures, Japan's colonial rule intentionally stressed the affinity between cultures in the mainland and colonies. This difference can easily be exemplified in the field of education in colonies. The western orientalists, including Cromer did not introduce their own language on the elementary school level, whereas in Japanese policy the education of the children in colonies was in Japanese from the elementary school level.

Thus an interesting two-sidedness of Japan's colonial rule should be pointed out here. On the one hand, the colonial rule was justified in the name of civilization, i.e. because of the Japan's superior position of being more "civilized," or, in another word, "westernized." On the other hand, Japan wanted to absorb her colonies into her own cultural unit by evoking the sense of cultural affinity existed in colonies. The cultural affinity was particularly emphasized when oriental or Asiatic spiritualism and groupism was contrasted to the materialism and individualism (in Japanese expression the term has a pejorative connotation like egoism) in the West. If this superiority complex as the another side of the inferiority complex to the West can be called "occidentalism," Japan's colonial policy was a paradoxical combination between "orientalism" and "occidentalism": the aspect of "orientalism" was used to justify the hegemony of Japan as the most advanced country among Asian nations, and the aspect of "occidentalism" played an important role to appeal to the sense of solidarity among Asian peoples who had been suffering from the western imperialism.

6 Expansion of the Cultural Unit "Japan" and the Change in Content

6.1 Elasticity and Situationality of the Unit

After having a quick glance on the historical process of Japan's colonial policy, let me indicate some characteristics related to my major Subject, i.e. Japan

as a cultural unit. Japan's colonial policy had many difficulties and conflicts, but as far as one particular nature of absorbing colonies into her own cultural unit is concerned, the goal was relatively well achieved. At least some soldiers recruited from colonies fought seriously as emperor's subjects and thus proved that a Japanese value system had been internalized to some extent.

The flexibility of the border of Japanese culture in absorbing people in colonies through "assimilation" policy was accompanied by another aspect, i.e. its nature of situationality. Japan as a cultural unit was situational in two senses: firstly it did not mean that all people in the unit were treated equally; and secondly one could be "in" on one occasion and "out" on another occasion. The second aspect requires some additional explanation. There were many concentric circles with the emperor in the center. People in colonies may have been treated as being outside the inner circle of Japanese culture if the mainland and colonies were contrasted. Yet the same people were treated as Japanese, i.e. within a larger circle of Japanese culture, vis-a-vis outsiders who have no Japanese nationality.

For instance, there were approximately two million Koreans in the puppet country Manchoukuo at the end of the last war. They were sometimes treated as outsiders because some of them had escaped from the Korean peninsula with a hostile feeling toward Japanese rule. On other occasions, however, they were considered the Japanese emperor's subjects because some of them were forced to settle down to expand Japan's sphere of influence.

This situational nature is closely related to the two-sided ideological characteristic of the emperor system. On the one hand, the idea of "under imperial rule all subjects are equal" seemed to be egalitarian, but it is nothing but a relative equality vis-a-vis outsiders. On the other hand, there was a principle of hierarchical order that distinguished higher rank from lower rank. And this ranking was decided by the distance from the emperor.

And the link that connected these seemingly contradictory ideas was the slight possibility for the people in the lower rank, such as those in the colonies, to be promoted socially in proportion to the degree of their assimilation, and thus to become closer to the emperor. In this sense, there remained the possibility, however small, that those in the lower rank may be promoted to a higher rank and those in the outer circle may be allowed to join the inner circle.

6.2 The Change of Ideological Content with the Expansion of the Empire

In order to absorb people in colonies with different tradition into the expanded empire, there was a need to modify the ideological content of the empire. Loyalty to the emperor continued to be the focal point, but it could not be justified by the family-state idea, i.e. the belief in the myth of emperor's being the

head of an extended family of subjects sharing a common ancestor. In this sense, patriotism in the 1930s needed a difference in emphasis from that at the end of the 19th century.

In order to adjust to the new situation to absorb people in colonies emphasis moved from patriarchal principle to something more flexible. Watsuji Tetsuro's 1934 article "The Japanese Spirit," which emphasized the "tolerance" of the Japanese character, and Hasegawa Nyozekan's best-selling 1938 book, *Japanese Characteristics*, with its emphasis on Japan's "assimilationist" tendency, were typical works that corresponded to this new need.

The above discourses seemed to be more liberal than "*kokutai*" ideologies in the Meiji period or those which were advocated by extreme rightists among their contemporaries. In reality, they were not really liberal, because although they used the term "tolerance," they lacked the sensitivity to the difference of cultures. They advocated the "flexibility" of Japanese culture in order to absorb people in colonies without genuine awareness of the difference of culture.

The above modification created new difficulties. If its characteristic is the tendency to be flexible in absorbing new elements, the question must be raised concerning what is the positive content of such a value system. The modification to make the system more flexible thus sacrificed the substantive content of the value. As a result, loyalty to the emperor was demonstrated through adherence to rituals; the performance of the ritual became more important than the content of the value which is represented by the ritual. Such rituals as the ceremony of reciting the oath as the emperor's loyal subject and bowing in the direction of the imperial palace became a part of routine daily life.

6.3 Spread of Conformism from Colony to the Mainland

The ritualization first took place in colonies when the "assimilation" policy was forcefully carried out. Then the same tendency was introduced into the mainland partly because the content of imperial ideology became vague and partly because half of the governor-generals of Korea became prime ministers in Japan and introduced the same method of manipulation.

In fact, many elite bureaucrats in colonial rule received important jobs in Japan and fully utilized their experiences in colonial rule. Another example here was the use of "voluntary groups," which had by nature to be, extragovernmental, for supporting this "ritualization" of public life and the demonstration of loyalty. The ritualization for cultivating loyalty and mass mobilization through various organizations, which were at the end integrated into one monolithic body called the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, resulted in hyper-patriotic conformism.

Ironically enough, though the attempted military coup in 1936 turned out to be unsuccessful, the ascendance of leaders with experience in colonial rule helped to establish a “garrison-prison state” for the whole of Japan to carry out the total war.

7 Legacy in the Post-war Period

7.1 The Indifference toward Decolonization

As a result of Japan’s acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, the territory of Japan shrank to Japanese archipelago. The former colonies became independent of the Japanese empire. Japan’s surrender to the allied forces meant that it did not need to be troubled by the process of decolonization, as was the case of many western imperialist powers. Because an awareness of the need for decolonization was lacking among Japanese elites, they did not pay sufficient attention to the people who had belonged to colonies. While Germany gave the opportunity to choose nationality to the Austrian people who had been under German rule for seven years, the Japanese government arbitrarily deprived the people of former colonies of their Japanese nationality, no matter where they lived. Thus about forty thousand Koreans were left in Sakhalin for more than fifty years. There have been many other problems due to this policy of unilaterally depriving nationality. One example of these problems relates to the lack of compensation for the damage during the war to the people in former colonies.

In addition to this, the flexibility of the cultural unit, which played an important role when the empire expanded, made Japanese people experience the shrinking process as if it were something natural, because expansion had been gradual and considered to be natural. The feeling about the shrinking process may be related to the indifference of many mainlanders toward the separation of Okinawa, which became a district under the direct military rule of the US. Since the border had gradually expanded to absorb new elements, not many were interested in how much territory was lost as a result of the shrinking process. In the eyes of the people in the center, the periphery was not very important anyway. The secret emperor’s message in September 1947 to the Occupation authority to ask the continuation of military occupation of Okinawa exemplified this attitude.

As a result of the shrinking process, a smaller territory without colonies seemed to be more homogeneous than before. Thus the Japanese people tended to believe that the myth of homogeneous society was more applicable than before. In reality, however, the Okinawans had to wait for 26 years until they got the same right to vote as the mainlanders obtained in 1946. Even thereafter the

discrimination against Okinawa has continued, indicated by the fact that 75% of the American military bases in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa.

7.2 Center-periphery Relationship

In this way the relationship between center and periphery or that between north and south has continued within the smaller territory. Although the national goal of strengthening the army has ceased to exist, “enriching the nation” has continued to be important as a national goal. Thus, because of “developmentalism,” with its emphasis on increased GNP, the gap between the advanced or developed areas and underdeveloped areas has continued. The less developed periphery has always been sacrificed for rapid development by, for example, the construction of dams and nuclear power stations for providing electricity for industrial development in the center.

The north-south relationship is noticeable not only geographically but also socially. The new school system, which was institutionalized after the American model, played an important role in “assimilation-oriented” education to produce appropriate human resources for rapid economic growth. Those who cannot catch up with others in adjusting to the goal of the education system are marginalized and discriminated against.

7.3 Historical Continuity

If we look at the post-war situation in the above way, we have to conclude that there is a historical continuity in recreating cultural unity centered around the dominant value-orientation. The content of the values may be different from before, but the manner of producing cultural unity is the same. The current process of creating cultural unity has two notable features. On the one hand, the assimilation into the dominant culture is justified in the name of civilization or for the sake of development. Since ethnocentric fanaticism with loyalty to the emperor as a divine figure has been discredited, the seemingly universal and more “rational” goal of development has become the most important ideological basis for the new value-orientation.

Another aspect was added after the emergence of the increased national confidence in the 1970s and 80s. It is a more particularistic element with an emphasis on cultural identity. One indication of this emphasis was the discourse called *Nihonbunkaron*, which advocated the uniqueness and superiority of Japanese culture.

The above two aspects seem to be contrasting and contradictory with each other. In reality, however, they complement each other in the same way as does the relationship between orientalism and occidentalism mentioned above. The

orientalist element, i.e. orientation toward “rational” goal of development facilitates the assimilation to the dominant culture in the center, and the occidentalist element is useful to maintain internal conformity vis-a-vis outside world.

After the emergence of the NIES as economic powers in the 1980s, a new tendency emerged related to the second element. It was the tendency to evaluate Japan as a model for the “Asian” type of development. What is meant by the “Asian type” is usually not clear. Sometimes it is identified with Confucian tradition and occasionally used as an excuse to be excluded from the application of universal value such as human rights. The “Look East” policy adopted by the Malaysian government seemed to support this idea. Recent economic difficulties in many Asian countries including Japan have made many people feel that the success of “Asian” type of development is dubious even if there were such a type.

8 Conclusion

After the Japan’s defeat, started another cycle of development which was not very different from the past. The continuity in the context of this paper exists in the two-sided effect of assimilation to the dominant culture in the center: intensifying internal conformity while expanding the cultural unity in a concentric way. In the postwar period, however, the expansion of political territory has been strictly forbidden. Instead the expansion of sphere of economic influence was realized by stationing Japanese “colonies” composed of dispatched businessmen in capital cities in Asian countries.

The two ways of justifying the forced assimilation have also been continuous: On the one hand in the name of civilization or for the sake of development, and on the other by emphasizing the uniqueness and superiority of the Japanese culture.

The second cycle which started after the defeat is now coming to an end because of the internal difficulties and the pressure from abroad. The internal difficulty comes from the diversification within the so-called homogeneous society. The voices of minority groups such as Koreans and Ainus together with other groups facing discrimination, such as handicapped people, have become more influential than before.

The people in the periphery have begun to express their own views even against the “national interest” defined by the people in the center. For instance, the referendum in Maki town decided against the construction of nuclear power station and as a result questioned the energy policy decided on by the national center. Additionally, the referendum in Okinawa demanded the reduction of

American military bases and by doing so questioned the national security policy of the central government.

From abroad the north-south relations are being questioned related to the problem of ODA. Many of the "economic aid" programs have been profitable for Japanese business and ruling elites in the recipient countries, with, for instance, the sacrifice of local people who are forced to leave the land they live for the construction of dams. The transnational cooperation of many NGOs tackling the problem of ODA is now exerting influence on government policy-making.

Now the time has come to reexamine the pattern of development and the process of creating a cultural unit to buttress such development. How it can be done successfully is another task to be tackled separately. In this paper, I have aimed simply to clarify the historical process of producing cultural unity, with the hope that this analysis will be necessary step for overcoming difficulties caused by forced assimilation.