

COLONIALISM AND POST-COLONIALISM IN ASIA:
JAPAN AND CHINA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

by

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(Under the Direction of Dorothy Figueira)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between Japan and China from a post-colonial perspective. Taking the critical tools such as Said and Certeau, I examine the way that authors of two major texts, Akutagawa's *Travels in China* and Okakura's *The Awakening of Japan*, used methods similar to those of Orientalism to strip China and its people of their humanity and authority. These two texts exemplify two disparate methods that the Japanese employed to strip the Chinese authority, but I will show that they both aim for the same goal, namely denying China its independence and creating a logic that will serve to bolster the case for the Japanese colonization of China. The conclusion expands the scope of this thesis, looking not only at its application within Comparative Literature but also within International Affairs and related fields.

INDEX WORDS: Postcolonialism, Colonialism, Asia, Japan, China, Okakura, Akutagawa, Nationalism

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

In this thesis, I will examine the relationship between Japan and China during the thirty years before the start of the Pacific war. Though the body of material surrounding this period is large, I have chosen to focus on two texts: Akutagawa's *Travels in China* and Okakura's *The Awakening of Japan*. These texts represent the major Japanese genres that engaged ideas of China during this period: the travelogue and the social-political treatise, respectively. During the period before the Pacific War, Japan joined and outdid the Western Powers in colonizing China. This colonization culminated in the Pacific War, the conflict that Western historiography generally categorizes as a part of World War II. From the early 1930's until the United States' entry in late 1941, the combatants were mostly groups of Chinese resisters and the Japanese imperial army.

I will demonstrate that these texts constructed a colonial discourse that was meant to strip the Chinese people of their subjectivity and their country of its independence and authority, thereby making them and their country easily coercible for Japan's colonial machine. This fleecing of China's subjectivity and authority was accomplished in a manner that is similar, although not identical, to the way that the Western Powers stripped the subjectivity of their own colonial subjects. Of course, Japan's history with China is significantly different from the history between the

Western Powers and the various parts of the world that they came to dominate, so this colonization was accomplished through different methods. Nevertheless, what these texts support and represent is a colonialism that is similar to the Western Powers' Orientalism as analyzed in Edward Said's book of the same name. Despite the similarity between Western colonialism and the Japanese colonial adventures in China, post-colonial studies, a branch of criticism that has become prominent in Comparative Literature in the last thirty years, has given little attention to this Japanese colonialism.

For the theoretical aspects of my analysis of these texts and other related texts, I rely heavily on Edward Said's literary criticism of Europe's colonization of the Middle East in his seminal work, *Orientalism*. Initially, it was his work that precipitated my thoughts on the subject of inter-oriental Orientalism, and his writings have remained an important consideration throughout the project. Beyond Said, there are several theorists who have influenced this thesis, whose criticism I had in my mind when I was writing. I will be drawing ideas from Michel de Certeau's ideas along with Michel Foucault's idea of 'discourse' as set forth in *The Archeology of Knowledge*. These thinkers will form the basis for the critical background of this work.

Initial Interest and Relevancy

As I was being initiated into Comparative Literature and was developing an interest in East Asia, relations between these two nations grew frosty. In the Yasukuni Shrine (靖国神社) issue, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited a shrine dedicated to all those who had died for the Emperor during the latter half of the

nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. This included a small group of war criminals. Along with other East Asian nations, China has protested these visits, claiming that they are an example of Japan's unapologetic attitude towards its crimes in the Pacific War and a sign of its resurgent nationalism which will destabilize Asia and harmony-seeking China.

Along with the growing frigidity in the relationship between these two nations, on a personal level, I was introduced to the problem between these two Pacific powers through a Mandarin teacher who virulently hated Japan.¹ My teacher's feelings are by no means unusual. A majority of Chinese people hold negative feelings towards Japan, and periodically anti-Japanese protests in China flare up into violent destruction.² Expressed succinctly in an interview concerning anti-Japanese riots, a middle-class entrepreneur in Beijing shouted, "The Japan issue is deep in our bones."³ Less clear is the reason why these feelings are so deep. Scholars and observers have offered various reasons for this anger: World War II atrocities, Japanese colonialism, Japan's economic success and the Chinese tributary relationship to the Japanese.

These elements have all contributed to this special animosity, but the strength of these feelings is still uniquely intense. One could apply these reasons, except the last, to a number of colonized-colonizer relationships that continued to splinter shortly after the end of World War II, yet these relationships do not fuel the same intensity of emotions. Although they were arguably not as bad as colonizers, the English and the French committed atrocities in their colonies. Nevertheless, the feelings of these colonies have not continued with the same degree of fierceness that the Chinese

¹ Even though we had two Japanese students in our class, he still never missed an opportunity to discuss his hatred towards the Japanese, denigrating Japanese technology and yelling about Japan's crimes during World War II.

² Bennett Richardson, "No Apologies as Anti-Japan Riots Continue," *The Christian Monitor*, April 8th, 2005.

³ Joseph Kahn, "Beijing Finds Anti-Japan Propaganda a 2-Edged Sword" *The New York Times*, May 3rd, 2005.

feelings for the Japanese have. English is the preferred language for government in India despite 200 years of, at times, brutal domination.⁴ Vietnam maintains close cultural ties with France despite a bitter colonial war. This sort of cultural respect is rarely encountered between Japan and China. Nor do the Chinese generally resent the English or the French for their colonial adventures in China to the same degree as they do the Japanese. Protests against Western colonizers are rarer and less violent than protests against Japan.

While I was being initiated into the discipline, these sorts of problems, on both a personal and international scale, occupied my thoughts and introduced me to these issues. It can be of little surprise that when I looked into the theoretical aspects of Comparative Literature, it was the post-colonial that most fascinated me. As I considered a thesis topic, it seemed natural for me to examine the origins and the ideas behind the acrimonious relationship between China and Japan.

By adding the context in which the ideas for my thesis germinated, I hope to have explained not only my personal interest in pursuing this project but also its relevancy. Although the texts that I am examining are almost a century old and are rarely read today, I believe they are still relevant. They are not old, arcane topics exhumed from musty tomes simply for pedantic purposes. Instead, the problems that I will examine in the following thesis are alive, albeit in the reincarnated form of issues like the Yasukuni Shrine, international textbooks spats and problems of nomenclature (discussed in the appendix). My explorations are concretely important to understanding these contemporary problems.

⁴ Duncan Forrester, "Madras Anti-Hindi Agitation, 1965: Political Protest and its Effects on Language Policy in India" *Pacific Journal* (1968): 20.

Applicability of Orientalism

Reading that I will base my analysis largely upon the ideas put forth by Said, my reader may ask, “Can we really apply the ideas of *Orientalism* to the relationship between two ‘Oriental’ nations?” This skepticism is valid and should be considered before embarking on a project like this.

The main problem is one of location. Can we really talk about Orientalism between Japan and China? In the book, *Orientalism*, Said concentrates on European colonial nations and their relationship with the Middle East. Specifically, he concentrates on France and England and their colonization of nations like Egypt and Palestine. Does his discussion, which is bounded by the above limitations, have anything relevant to say about the relationship between these two East Asian nations?

After researching the problem, I have concluded that Said’s analysis can produce valuable insights for our understanding of the relationship between China and Japan just as it did for the relationship between Western Europe and the Middle East. Said’s topic focuses on European colonial powers dominating its cultural ‘other’ from the seventeenth century onwards. He mentions that all cultures have their own way to view (and to distort) those cultures on their periphery. However, he asserts that the discourse of Orientalism is more than simply one culture’s distortion of another. It is the systematic, aesthetic disenfranchisement of the Oriental ‘other’ by Europeans in order to facilitate their effort to colonize the ‘Oriental.’ If we are to accept that Said’s study can be applied to the problems between Japan and China during the early twentieth century, I must prove that colonizing Europe’s relationship with the Middle East is significantly similar to Japan’s relationship with China.

In fact, ample evidence exists to suggest that these relationships are similar. Before the Renaissance, it was Europe who was on the periphery of the more advanced Middle East, the reverse of the situation under European colonization. For much of history, Europe's backwardness contrasted with the great intellectual and technological progress in Islamic countries. Since the Renaissance, this cultural imbalance and power structure has been reversed. As Europe embraced the values of the Enlightenment, many Islamic countries withdrew into themselves, shirking those values they had once espoused. Europe's scientific advances outpaced the Middle East's technological progress. It used this advantage to rule over its 'other.' Europe became the center and the Middle East became its periphery.

In describing Japan's relationship with China, one could almost replace the word "Europe" with "Japan" and the words "Middle East" with "China." From the beginning of Japan's history, China was not only the cultural center of East Asia. It was also the 'other' against which Japan defined itself.⁵ Japan was on the cultural periphery of the sinocentric system. With the expansion of the Western Powers' empires, East Asia's sinocentric views were shaken, and they were exposed to radically new technologies and philosophies. While China rejected these changes, withdrawing into a shell of conservatism, Japan eventually embraced the changes brought about by the arrival of the Western Powers. As a result of the Japanese willingness to modernize, it became the most powerful country in East Asia by the end of the nineteenth century. This switch in power relations led Japan to attempt to subjugate China for its own political and economic benefits in a manner that is parallel to what Europe did to the Middle East after the Renaissance. In this process, Japan attempted to aesthetically strip China of its authority.

⁵ Peter Carroll, *Between Heaven and Modernity: Reconstructing Suzhou, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2006), 146.

One major difference between these two situations is that Japan was not able to excise its cultural indebtedness to China as easily as the West was able to do to the Middle East. Today, the average Westerner is not aware that many of the advancements that fueled the Renaissance were originally imported from the Islamic world. The secularism of Averroes, knowledge of Aristotle and advances in science and mathematics were transferred to Europe because of the increased intellectual commerce between the two traditions, but the West gives little attention to these contributions. However, the Japanese were not able to forget their cultural dependency on China so easily since prominent reminders appear throughout Japanese life. For example, the Japanese language still uses imported Chinese characters (汉字, Mandarin - *hanzi*, Japanese - *kanji*) for much of its written language. Culturally, Japan is still heavily influenced by ancient China's intellectual tradition, most conspicuously the philosophy of Confucius. Buddhism was imported from China into Japan and is still regarded as a major religious force in the island nation. These cultural debts are not as easily forgotten as the European's debts to the Middle East.

Examining Said's argument further, the West's mechanism for 'forgetting' its debts to the Middle East and the reason why Japan could not easily use this mechanism both become clear. Said states:

Their great moments were in the past; they are useful in the modern world only because the powerful and up-to-date empires have effectively brought them out of the wretchedness of their decline and turned them into rehabilitated residents of productive colonies.⁶

⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 35.

In this passage, Said is explicating the British Prime Minister Balfour's logic for why it is acceptable, even necessary, for England to colonize Egypt. The Japanese used a similar line of reasoning to legitimize their conquests of China. According to Japanese leaders and the text that we will examine, China had been great, but its time was over. It now needed an 'up-to-date' nation like Japan to make it useful.

Although Said is admired and read in literature departments on campuses throughout the country, in the thirty years since *Orientalism* was published, the critic and his thesis have come under wilting criticism. The most prominent of these critics is Aijaz Ahmed. Ahmed debunks several important pillars of Said's work. He suggests that it is more of a personal manifesto than a work of criticism. He rightfully points out the scope of the project is not only unclear but also impractical. The most damning charge Ahmed levels is that Said does not give voice to any oppressed Orientals even though the purpose of his project is ostensibly to strike back at imperial forces by giving voice to colonial subjects. Yet, as Ahmed observes, Said rarely quotes from Middle Eastern sources. Instead, his narrative is mostly engaged with exploring Western sources, and most of the quotes are from Western authors.⁷

For a variety of reasons, some of which will become apparent as the arguments of this thesis unfold, these shortcomings do not affect my supposition that Said's analysis is still applicable to these texts. The problem of scope does not reduce its value to me as a critical tool because the countries explored within this thesis are already well outside the bounds that Said set up for Orientalism.

⁷ Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations and Literatures* (New York: Verso, 1992), 159-197.

Other Background

Other than Said, there are several critics from outside the conversation on Orientalism who informed my thoughts on the subject of this thesis. Michel De Certeau functioned as part of the theoretical foundation for my research. As the title of one of his most famous works, *Heterologies*, implies, Certeau's thoughts and writings focus on the conceptualization of the 'other.' Although the 'other' as the colonial subject is not his main theoretical concern, he wrestles with this problem in several different places in his critical works. In a chapter in *The Writing of History*, he discusses the 'other' in the eyes of a French explorer encountering an Amazonian tribe. In this chapter, Certeau deals with the manner the primitive 'other' is transformed into a sexual object. This eroticization of the 'other' starkly contrasts with the techniques of the authors I examine, and my concerns about these authors will be informed by Certeau's discussion. In *Culture in the Plural*, he discusses problems of discourse, suggesting that, for critics of a discourse within a closed system, it is nearly impossible to escape from the discourse. Instead, these critics are only able to commandeer the discourse for their own purposes.

Outside these critics who are important to understanding the theoretical background for my thesis, I would also like to discuss and define several ideas that are repeatedly referenced in this document. For the discussion of colonialism in China, I identify two 'groups' of colonizers. The first group is the Western Powers. This group includes all the European nations that had concession areas in China such as the British, the French, the Americans, the Portuguese, the Russians, the Germans, etc. The second 'group,' the focus of this thesis, is the Japanese colonialists. This division between the Japanese and the Western Powers is arbitrary, making it problematic

from a historiographic perspective. Despite this historiographic problem, the distinction between the Japanese and the European colonizers was and still is recognized by several groups, suggesting that there is good reason to classify these two groups as different types of colonizers.

The Westerners accepted the Japanese into their colonial club at the time that they began colonizing China, and the Japanese colonizers did many of the same things that the Westerners did in China, carving it up for their own economic benefit. However, the Japanese were eventually more successful and more forceful than the other colonizers of China. By the start of the Pacific War, they had severely limited all Western Powers' influence, especially outside of Shanghai. Thus, Western historiography came to distinguish Japanese colonization from Western colonization. Even in our contemporary history books, the Japanese colonization of China is cited as one of the justifications for the Allies' war against Japan, but criticism of America or England for their similar colonial adventures in China is largely ignored.

The Japanese also saw themselves as different from the Western colonizers. Many of the Japanese claimed that they were not colonizing China. As will be discussed more thoroughly in the fourth chapter, they simply claimed that they were liberating China from the non-Asian colonizers who did not belong on the continent. Contemporary China also differentiates the Japanese colonizers from the Western colonizers. Western colonization is vilified but not to the extent that the Japanese colonization is. This hatred is partially due to the bitter war fought between the two nations, but this cannot entirely account for this arbitrary differentiation the Chinese also make. I have made an artificial distinction between the Western and Japanese colonizers. Despite the arbitrary nature of this distinction, the West, the Japanese and

the Chinese all agree to distinguish between these two groups, suggesting that this distinction is at least partially valid (or validated).

Another term that I use frequently is colonialism. In this thesis, it retains its meaning of a distant nation controlling another nation by coercing it and exploiting its technological advantage. I also use the term colonialism to stand for a form of Orientalism, the political project to systematically undermine a group's subjectivity by aesthetically stripping its 'other' of its authority and humanness. However, the word 'Orientalism' does not encompass the relationship between China and Japan. Thus, for this thesis, I will rely on the word 'colonialism' to connote Japan's project to aesthetically strip the Chinese people of their subjectivity.

At times, the term colonialism is also insufficient for describing the power relations between two countries. In these cases, I use the term hegemonic. In this thesis, hegemony is simply one country imposing its will or authority on another country, and colonialism is just a particular brand of hegemony. For example, the relationship between China and Japan during the first millennium was certainly not colonial. The Chinese governments during this period had little interest in the island nation to the East, and, even if they had, they would not have had the naval power required to dominate the island as a colonizer. Yet, the Chinese did dominate Japan in several ways. Culturally, the Japanese admired the Chinese and generally followed their lead in matters of civilization. The Chinese were also able to exert their political power on the Japanese, squeezing their neighbor for political concessions. Although not colonial, this relationship was characterized by one country exerting its will upon another. For the purposes of this thesis, these types of relationships will be labeled 'hegemonic.'

Throughout this thesis, several other important terms appear, and it is necessary to define their meaning within this paper. One of these terms is authority. This authority is the authority accorded to all to make decisions for themselves, whether they be individuals or nations. Just as individuals have the authority to make decisions regarding their own life, countries also have the authority to make decisions about how to resolve the challenges they face. Colonialism and hegemony are the process of another country removing or detracting from that authority. The idea of authority is closely linked with that of subjectivity. Subjectivity is used in this thesis to mean those essential qualities that differentiate individuals or groups from those outside. Subjectivity is the internal matter that makes one oneself.

Finally, the concept of the 'other' appears several times in this thesis. This important concept stretches across the various branches of literary criticism but is especially important in post-colonialism, the critical foundation of my work. As the name suggests, it is the idea of everything that is not included within the 'self.' Its scope ranges from other individuals to cultures and religions that are different from one's own. For example, Christianity's most important 'other,' that which it compares itself to in order to define what it is, is certainly Islam. In the same manner, the Chinese function as Japan's 'other.'

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The problem that I have chosen to research is grounded in a unique historical milieu. When the Japanese first coalesced as a people, Chinese civilization was already well developed, and it was the only major civilization close enough to influence them culturally. The impressions that Chinese civilization left on Japan are indelible and still readily apparent today.

Despite the cultural intimacy these two nations share, there has always been a great deal of suspicion between the two. The Japanese had fears of China dominating Japan, and Chinese feared Japanese pirates.⁸ This mutual suspicion, along with the cultural debt Japan owed to China, combined to produce a strange relationship between these two East Asian powers. After the East Asian system of international relations was completely upended by the arrival of European gunboat diplomacy and the subsequent rise in Japanese power, this unique relationship manifested itself in a violent fashion. To come close to understanding the motives behind each party involved and the interactions between them, it is important that we establish a few facts about the history of their relationship.

⁸ Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1992), 5.

A Brief Outline of Sino-Japanese Relations

Japanese history, particularly the its cultural foundations, cannot be discussed without also examining China. It is difficult to attach a particular year that Japanese culture and its state began. Approximately three thousand years ago, the Japanese began developing agriculture.⁹ During this period, they first made contact with the Chinese and other Asian continentals, but, until the introduction of Buddhism in 552 CE, China and its culture was still a different and faraway world. After Buddhism entered Japan, much of Chinese culture was imported into Japan and adopted wholesale, leaving little room for modifications to adapt it to the native, Japanese culture.¹⁰

However, as the power of the Tang Dynasty waned and Japan developed a stable, centralized government, there was a shift in Japan away from things Chinese. In a pattern that has since been repeated several times in the history of the relations between these two countries, the Japanese imagination was no longer as concerned with China as the Chinese state weakened. In Japanese literature, China became a simplified and romantic notion, a distant country troubled by unrest.¹¹ Rejecting or ignoring the precedents in Chinese culture and literature, the aristocracy turned towards native elements for cultural pursuits. This period was regarded by later historians as classical Japanese culture.¹²

The influence of Chinese culture ebbed in and out for centuries of Japan's history. At some points, China's influence over Japanese culture was strong, and the country was regarded with fear and awe. At other points, it slipped into the back of

⁹ Conrad Totham, *A History of Japan* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 24-26.

¹⁰ David J Lu, *Japan, A Documentary History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 20.

¹¹ Conrad Totham, *A History of Japan* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 109.

¹² *Ibid.*, 119.

the people's minds, again becoming a distant and unworthy country. One of the most important points in the relationship between these two countries occurred within a period marked by the waning influence of Chinese culture. In 1279, the enervated Song Dynasty was overtaken by the expanding Mongol empire as was the rest of China. Later, Kubla Khan sent several envoys to Japan demanding the "king of the little country" and the rest of Japan submit to him. These demands were rejected by the Kamakura Shogun each time an envoy came bearing the Khan's demands. The Khan did not take the cold shoulder well and decided to invade the 'little country.' Twice, he attempted to bring an armada full of Mongolians, Chinese and Koreans, but both times he failed to successfully establish and maintain a foothold in Japan.¹³ Other than 1945, the Mongolian attacks were the only time in Japanese history that the threat of an invasion of Japan was looming. Although this expedition was led by a Mongolian ruler, it made a great impression on the Japanese image of China and its intentions towards their nation. It has long contributed to a suspicion that China desires to subjugate Japan.

After the attempted invasion, the Japanese again became less interested in Chinese culture. The period under Tokugawa rule (1603-1868) was one of those with relatively little if any foreign influence. For most of the Tokugawa period, the only foreigners allowed to enter the country were small numbers of Chinese, Korean and Dutch ships, and their entrance points and activities in Japan were strictly regulated. Officially, the Tokugawa government refused to establish relations with China as they felt subservience in the system of international relations no longer suited the dignity of Japan.¹⁴

¹³ Louis Frederic, *Japan: Art and Civilization* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, inc. 1969), 262-263.

¹⁴ Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1992), 2.

This political isolation was followed by an attempt to isolate themselves culturally. Japanese artistic and philosophical connections to China were severed, and an attempt was made to promote native artistry and thought. Oddly enough, much of this cultural isolation was accomplished by ostensibly embracing Chinese culture. Soon after Japan's Tokugawa Shogun was established in Tokyo, China's Ming Dynasty slipped into turmoil. Order was restored with the establishment of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), a dynasty founded by Manchurians, a group of non-Han Chinese living in northeastern China. The Manchurian's dynasty was often viewed as a barbarian dynasty, and their legitimacy as the rulers of China was questioned throughout their reign although they endeavored to prove they could be as 'Chinese' as anyone. During the turmoil of revolution and rebellion, many artists and priests fled their native China, taking refuge in Japan. As intellectual refugees from China took up residency in Japan, they imparted many of their technologies and philosophies to the Japanese.¹⁵

As the roots of the 'barbarian's' reign grew deeper, it increasingly appeared that the Manchurians had established a long-standing dynasty. Considering the influence of classical China on Japanese culture and the recent influx of learned sections of Chinese society into Japan, some Japanese began to make the claim that they, not China, were the true heir to the classical Chinese tradition.¹⁶ This claim's influence was limited, and most of the population continued to regard China as a beacon of civilization. Yet, this claim would resurface in later periods, and we will encounter versions of it in the texts of Akutagawa and Okakura.

The Tokugawa Era was marked by a long period of stability and isolation from the outside world. However, as European technology advanced and mercantilism

¹⁵ Conrad Totham, *A History of Japan* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 230.

¹⁶ Ibid.

reached its peak, Japan and the security under the Tokugawa Shogunate was threatened. In 1853, the system restricting foreign entrance to certain ports and certain nationalities known as *sakoku* (鎖国) fell apart after Commodore Perry demanded that America be allowed to open a consulate and American vessels be given coaling rights on the island. After Commodore Perry's demands were accepted, Japan entered the period of the most intense and dramatic changes in its history. The government shed the Shogun as its leaders and took the Emperor, who, for the previous millennium, had been a powerless figure head imprisoned in his palace in Kyoto, as its new leader.

With the Meiji Restoration (the name this period took from the restoration of the Meiji emperor), the emperor was nominally restored to power, but real power was held by the emperor's ministers and the bureaucracy in Tokyo. More important than the transfer of power from the Shogun to the Emperor was the accompanying shift in the Japanese way of life. Modernization began at a rapid pace. The Japanese government implemented a program to adopt many of the scientific and cultural advances brought by the Western Powers while still maintaining a Japanese 'spirit.' Within half a century, the Japanese went from being a relatively isolated society that was powerless to resist the four gunboats of Commodore Perry to being a country whose military defeated Russia. This modernization program occurred in stark contrast to China which was semi-colonized by the Western Powers as it attempted to resist the changes by adopting a conservative attitude to stymie reforms.

Part of the program of modernization after the Meiji Restoration was to distance itself from China. During this period, the new Meiji government encouraged the revival of Shintoism, the native religion of Japan, partially to distance itself from Chinese-influenced Buddhism. The new Meiji government used Shintoism to fan up

nationalistic support for their government and to emphasize the importance of the emperor. They also used it to minimize the Japanese debt to Chinese religion and philosophy, instead promoting their native religion. For example, Basho, the famous haiku poet, was heavily influenced by Daoism, but this Chinese influence was muted in public discourse to promote his connections with Shintoism. Later, this suppression of the cultural connections between the two countries increased even more in the face of the military leadership's call for the entire nation to fall in line with their nationalistic goals.¹⁷

However, this rejection of things Chinese was relative. China still played a major role in Japanese tradition though its importance and stature had decreased. One of the important traditions in Japanese education in which China was still held in high esteem was the *kangakusha* (漢学者, literally the ones who study China). Since childhood, these men had received an education almost exactly the same as their upper-class contemporaries in China would have received. This involved reading and memorizing passages from the classical Chinese canon and being able to compose artistic works in classical Chinese (文言文), the written language based on earlier forms of Chinese that functioned as a lingua franca throughout the Chinese empire and in states beyond such as Vietnam, Korea and Japan. Considering their educational backgrounds, the two authors on which this thesis will focus could be said to follow in this tradition, but neither of them could fully be considered *kangakusha* because of the Western influence on their education.¹⁸

This is a skeletal outline of the history of the relations between China and Japan with a few important spots treated briefly. If the reader is unfamiliar with the

¹⁷ Peipei Qiu, *Basho and the Dao* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 2.

¹⁸ Joshua Fogel, *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1996), 66-68.

subject of this thesis, this outline should provide him or her with the knowledge necessary to understand the history that is occurring around the texts I will discuss. Below, I highlight three issues in this relationship that heavily influence the topics on which this thesis focuses.

Japanese Written Language

Most languages have an arduous road to literacy, but Japanese took perhaps the most torturous path to create a written language. Japan did not have any form of written language before their encounters with the Chinese. This first encounter left a permanent mark on the Japanese language that is still readily visible today. At this stage early in the history of the inchoate country, they adopted the Chinese written language wholesale as their own written language with only a few native Japanese elements to differentiate it from texts written in China at the time. Many scribes in Japan were actually Chinese immigrants brought to Japan specifically for keeping records because it was understandably difficult for native Japanese aristocrats to write in this complex language so different from their own.¹⁹

Slowly, the Japanese aristocracy began to move away from using the Chinese language as their only written language, but Chinese characters continued to dominate. Most educated men were trained in classical Chinese (this remained the case until almost the twentieth-century), and their education focused on Chinese. In developing another written language, the Japanese still employed Chinese characters, but they grafted these characters onto the Japanese language. They were given native, Japanese

¹⁹ Louis Frederic, *Japan: Art and Civilization* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, inc. 1969), 115.

pronunciations and became easier to wield in Japanese.²⁰ The effect of Chinese on the construction of the Japanese language during this period is immense. Even today, these characters are still used (in forms that have evolved only slightly), making it relatively easy for the Japanese and Chinese to understand the general meaning of each other's written language.

As some Japanese speakers adapted Chinese characters to their native language, others sought ways to bypass the use of the bulky Chinese written language. Linguistically, Japanese is different from Chinese in several key features. Unlike Chinese, Japanese is not a tonal language, and it has a more limited number of sounds that can be produced. Unlike Chinese, syllables in Japanese are often combined to form words three or four syllables long. Though many Japanese tried to overcome them, these differences still made the Chinese written language cumbersome to adapt to Japanese. They soon sought to sidestep the use Chinese characters.

To do this, they invented their own syllabaries. Two syllabaries were produced from Chinese characters, and these were significantly simpler than the Chinese characters from which they developed. Because they were excluded from studying Chinese, aristocratic women developed one of these native syllabaries, *hiragana* (平仮名), to accommodate their education in Japanese. Concomitantly, Japanese Buddhist priests reading texts brought from China developed another native syllabary, called *katakana* (片仮名), to assist them in reading these texts. Both of these syllabaries are major parts of the Japanese language today. Either would be adequate for writing Japanese similar to the alphabet in English, but they are generally only used to represent Japanese grammatical elements or words borrowed from foreign languages. Although they could have bypassed the cumbersome Chinese characters

²⁰ Yaeko Sato Habein, *The History of The Japanese Written Language* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1984), 8.

and instead used either of these syllabaries, the Japanese, for several reasons, continued to depend on Chinese characters for much of their written language.²¹

During periods of contact between the two nations, their linguistic relationship gave them the opportunity to communicate through written language even when neither could speak the other's language. With an education dominated by Chinese learning and an ability to write fluidly in classical Chinese, many Japanese who traveled to China, such as the *kangakusha*, were able to communicate with the Chinese during their visits on a level unavailable to Westerners or to later Japanese visitors whose education relied less on Chinese learning and more on Western learning. Since the elites from both groups were educated in classical Chinese (文言文), they were able to communicate with each other through what is called "Brush Conversations" (笔谈, Mandarin – *bitan*, Japanese – *hitsudan*). Brush conversations took place not in the medium of the spoken word but by writing comments on paper shared between the participants. Even though two educated men might not be able to speak the other's language, they could still converse using this method.

Not surprisingly, this writing bond led to an affection between the two countries. However, this connection did not always manifest itself in positive ways. Okakura argued that because the Japanese better understand China (that they could write their language), they were the ones who should rule over it, not the Westerners. This linguistic connection gives them the authority to colonize Japan and speak for China. Their linguistic relationship provided not only a shared cultural characteristic but also proved to be a rationale for Japanese colonization of China.

This cursory introduction to the Japanese language demonstrates how much influence Chinese culture and language had on the Japanese. Today, this influence is

²¹ Ibid., 21-29.

not only apparent, but it is the first thing that generally strikes an individual when encountering Japanese for the first time. These debts to Chinese culture were not easily overlooked, and this became an important component in the colonial interaction between the two countries before the Pacific War.

Japanese Buddhism

Outside the realm of language, China's most important and visible contributions to Japanese culture came in the philosophical and religious realms. Buddhism is one of the most important of these influences. Even today, China's contributions to Japanese Buddhism are readily apparent and too significant to neglect, especially considering the importance that Okakura places on this connection.

Traditionally, Buddhism is said to have entered Japan in 552 CE, from China by way of Korea. At this time, the Japanese were coalescing into a national unit, and their formation was heavily influenced by Chinese governance and culture. This was true for Buddhism as well. Upon first encountering Chinese civilization, the Japanese quickly noted the popularity of Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, and they adopted a great deal of Buddhism directly, with little innovation or adaptation to Japanese cultural practices. The Japanese relied mostly on the Chinese or the Koreans (who themselves were dependant on the Chinese) for their copies of the scriptures. The connection between Buddhism and Chinese influence manifested itself throughout this period in Japan. For example, the capital at Nara, Japan's first permanent capital, resembles the Tang Dynasty's capital of the time, Chang'an, and is saturated with Buddhist temples and monuments. This is the location of the Great Buddha (大仏, *daibutsu*). Buddhism became so powerful in this city that the capital

was moved elsewhere to escape the influence of the new religion. The influence of China on Japanese versions of Buddhism is readily visible on artifacts from the period.²²

As Japan established its own culture, it began to infuse Buddhism with native elements not found in the Chinese versions imported to the island nation. During the Kamakura era, Buddhism became more popular with the commoners than it was in the previous period. This class was less influenced by the Chinese elements than the aristocracy. Their mark was left on the religion as it became more idiosyncratic, making it more of a native religion. During the Tokugawa Era, Buddhism advanced little. As a result the lack of foreign influence in the Japan of this period, the religion atrophied until the end of the Tokugawa Era. By this time, it was more stagnant than at any time since it had arrived in Japan.

Japanese Confucianism

Confucian is not so much a religion as a philosophy, and it is the most celebrated native crop of China's fertile philosophical fields. As in China, Japanese Confucianism was concentrated predominantly in the aristocracy, and it focused on the ethics of rulers and the relations between them and their subject. Although the Japanese encountered Confucianism in their early contacts with the Chinese, its influence took root only sporadically at this time.²³

The minor influence of Confucianism upon its arrival in Japan in the fifth and sixth century is attributable to historical context. At the time China was entering into Japan's national conscience, Buddhism was ascendant in intellectual and artistic

²² E. Dale Saunders, *Buddhism in Japan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 91-100.

²³ Warren W. Smith, *Confucianism in Modern Japan* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1973), 6-8.

circles. Confucianism, though important during the Han Dynasty, had been relegated to relative obscurity by the Tang Dynasty.²⁴ It was Buddhism, not Confucianism, that heavily influenced Japan. The Japanese took the most interest in what was popular in China at the time, namely Buddhism.

It was not until the sixteenth century, around the beginning of the Tokugawa Era, that Confucianism firmly took hold of the Japanese intellectual attention. In the intervening centuries in China, the famous Song Dynasty (960-1279) scholar Zhu Xi (朱熹) had reinvigorated Chinese Confucianism. After Zhu Xi's retooling of Confucianism, the Ming Dynasty adopted his form of Confucianism as their official philosophy. During the height of the Ming Dynasty's power, the Japanese took note of this change in intellectual fashion on the mainland, and, in a period of relatively close relations between the two countries, the Japanese officialdom and aristocracy imported Confucianism as it had done with Buddhism a millennium before.

This internalization of Confucianism reached its height during the early part of the Tokugawa era.²⁵ By this time, China's Ming Dynasty was collapsing, and Japan, with the establishment of its centralized form of feudalism under Tokugawa Ieyasu, was beginning to distance itself from China as its own strength grew comparatively. Under this distancing, Confucianists in Japan were pressured to disassociate themselves from China and to re-form their philosophy in a way that reflected a more universal, less Chinese perspective. Instead of being grounded in China, being a sage was something that could be accomplished by anyone who had been submerged in the Confucian tradition, Chinese or Japanese. To test their loyalties, Japanese

²⁴William Theodore De Bary, Irene Bloom and Wing-tsit Chan, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1999), 540.

²⁵Warren W. Smith, *Confucianism in Modern Japan* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1973), 8-9.

Confucianists were asked who they would support if Confucius arose from the dead and led a Chinese invasion of Japan.²⁶

This attempt to excise the Sinitic nature of Confucianism was a major part of the philosophy's rise during the Tokugawa Era, but this movement was not limited to problems of Confucianism. Across Japan, there was an attempt to claim that China had degenerated and that now Japan was the true heir to the classical Chinese tradition. This argument was incorporated into the discussions of Confucianism. Modern China had lost the essence that had made classical China so magnificent. Some Japanese scholars of the period even suggested that Chinese government had forgotten the sage's teachings on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled while the Japanese government had returned to the governance of the three dynasties, the mythological period often lauded by Confucius and others as the paragon of virtuous governance. The conquest of China at this time by the non-Han Manchurians only added evidence to the case that China could no longer be called the heir to the Confucian tradition.²⁷

All of these elements combined to produce a Japan that was powerful and independent from China although much of its culture had been transplanted from China. During the Tokugawa Era and the Qing Dynasty, this distance and self-sufficiency, would be a factor in the problems the two countries would experience as they entered the modern era.

²⁶ Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1992), 4, 79-80.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER THREE

AKUTAGAWA'S TRAVELS IN CHINA

Introduction

Akutagawa Ryunosuke (1892-1927) was one of the most important writers in twentieth-century Japanese literature. Born in Tokyo, he was raised by relatives after his mother went insane and died. Sickly as a child, he developed a love of reading during his bouts of disease, consuming book after book instead of participating in the more 'normal' activities of healthier children.²⁸ Most of these books he read in his youth were from the classical Japanese and Chinese traditions, but, in high school, he became interested in Western Literature. By the time he arrived at the Tokyo Imperial University,²⁹ he had decided to major in English.³⁰

His most famous works include short stories like "Rashomon," "The Nose" and "Within a Groove." "Rashomon" is the famous tale of a man's decision to become a bandit during a time of turmoil at the end of the Heian Period (794-1185). This story is not to be confused with the movie entitled "Rashomon," directed by Akira Kurosawa. Kurosawa based the plot of his film on another of Akutagawa's stories, "Within a Groove," although he drew elements of the film from both stories. Akutagawa's career was explosive, starting off with hit stories like "Rashomon" and "The Nose," both stories written before he was 'discovered' by Japan's literary public. These works established his fame and, even today, are still his most popular works.

²⁸ Joshua Fogel, "Akutagawa Ryunosuke and China" *Chinese Studies in History* vol. 30, no. 4 (Summer 1997), 6.

²⁹ This university has had several names throughout its history, but today, it is Tokyo University. It is still, as it was during Akutagawa's time, considered the nation's flagship university.

³⁰ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1998), 571.

However, after he burst onto the literary scene, Akutagawa quickly faded into mediocrity, producing few creative stories of note.

While tumbling down to the position of a has-been writer, he accepted an assignment to make a trip to China for the *Osaka Daily*. His responsibilities included sending back periodic reports on the state of affairs in modern China, its politics and its literature, and comparing it to the constructed notions that the Japanese public held of a 'mythic' China.³¹ These reports were published in a series of articles by the famous writer to garner publicity for the newspaper. It was these dispatches on which he based his travelogue, *Travels in China*.

Despite the decline in his stature, Akutagawa was uniquely qualified to evaluate China for this assignment. Beyond his status in Japanese literature, he had studied classical Chinese language and was deeply impacted by classical Chinese literature. As a child, he was enamored with the works from the classical Chinese canon such as *Journey to the West* (西游记) and *Water Margin* (水浒传) before he studied English literature.³² His familiarity with classical Chinese literature can be seen throughout his travel narrative. For example, while shopping in Shanghai, he recognizes a shop sign that is written in the famous, Tang-dynasty poet Li Bai's (李白) style of calligraphy.³³ Although the study of Chinese language and literature had been staples of Japanese education for more than a millennium before the 1860's, the Chinese canon was less emphasized than Western works by the time Akutagawa started school. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he still became thoroughly

³¹ Joshua Fogel, "Akutagawa Ryunosuke and China" *Chinese Studies in History* vol. 30, no. 4 (Summer 1997), 7.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Akutagawa, 16. For the sake of simplicity, the citations within the major text of this chapter will simply be referred to as "Akutagawa," followed by the page number on which the quote or citation can be found. The translation used for these citations is Joshua Fogel's in the article in *Chinese Studies in History*.

immersed in the classical Japanese and Chinese canon through his reading outside of school.³⁴

One point to consider before entering into the analysis is the reception of the text. I will argue that this text contains a series of strategies to colonize China, but it is not clear whether Akutagawa intended for his text to be used in this manner. What is clear is that it was employed to forward colonial objectives. In 1940, this text was included in an anthology of Japanese travel texts to China. In the introduction, Kimura Ki, an anthologist, hoped that his compilation would garner public support for Japan's China policy (the colonization of China). He commended these authors for contributing to the bank of knowledge on China for Japan's general readership, and he implies this knowledge will be an important part of the subjugation of China to Japan's 'assistance.'

Akutagawa's rhetoric and Kimura's use of it clearly demonstrated how the production, content, and influence of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Japanese knowledge of China mirrored the functional relationship between Western Orientalist scholarship and European and American imperialism.³⁵

Kimura's usage of this text demonstrates that it could be and was employed for colonial purposes and that these strategies of colonialization were clear to many of his Japanese readers.

³⁴ Akutagawa, 16.

³⁵ Peter Carroll, *Between Heaven and Modernity: Reconstructing Suzhou, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2006), 146.

Bifurcating China

Fukuzawa Yukichi was one of the earlier members of Japan's intelligentsia to champion Japan separating from Asia and joining the Western Powers to "enjoy the fruits and endeavors of civilization."³⁶ By attacking the argument that Japan should unite with its neighbors, China and Korea, to fight back the Western colonizers, he defended those who want to cut the nation off from the rest of Asia in his "Essay on Separating from Asia" (*Datsu-A Ron*, 脱亜論). He claims that Japan owes nothing to the rest of modern Asia because "Today's China and Korea have not done a thing for Japan."³⁷ Like each Japanese person contemplating Japan's relationship with China after the Meiji Restoration, Fukuzawa must deal with the debt that Japan owes to China for its cultural contributions. Just as Akutagawa will do, Fukuzawa resolves this issue by dividing China into two temporal parts: today's China (along with Korea) has done nothing for Japan. Within this argument is the silent acknowledgement that the China of yesteryear did do something for Japan. Quietly, he divides China into the past and the present, beating a path for Akutagawa and others to follow in their construction of strategies to colonize China.

In the first chapter, I theorized that, although Europe's Orientalism and Japanese colonization effort are similar phenomena, there are some major differences between the two. Like the Japanese, the Western Powers constructed their colonial subjects, whether they were Arabs, Indians or Native Americans, into primitive sub-humans that need to be ruled over, but, the Western powers never held their colonial subject in as high regard as Japan held China. Since the historic ties between the

³⁶ Fukuzawa Yukichi. "Datsu-A Ron" in *Japan: A Documentary History*, ed. by David J Lu (Armonk: New York: M.E. Sharpe 1997), 351.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 352-353.

Western powers and their colonies were less visible, it was much easier for Europeans to imagine their 'others' as subhuman primitives. Fukuzawa's implication that modern China is not the China of the past is similar to the strategy of these European powers but less effective. More of an effort is needed to separate Japan from the rest of Asia. Akutagawa provides this necessary supplement to Fukuzawa in his own bifurcation of China.

Since their debt is readily apparent in their language and their culture, the Japanese had a more difficult time forgetting what the Chinese had given them. For much of their history, China was a beacon of civilization and the origin of many of their cultural practices, making it difficult to view them as uncivilized 'primitives' in the way that Europeans were able to easily imagine their colonial 'others.' The Japanese had to first rid their Chinese 'other' of its glorious connotations, and then they could bring it down to the level of the 'primitive.' Akutagawa's strategy was to first acknowledge China's glorious past and incorporate this past into his explanation of the problems that he saw in modern China.

With his education, Akutagawa was able to draw on classical Chinese literature from memory. When his health forced him to spend several days in a hospital, he recalls that he was awakened by the weather several times and reminded of poems from Wang Cihui's *Collection of Doubtful Rain* (王次回的疑雨集). After reminiscing on one poem, he tells us, "I don't know how many times I repeated this line of poetry in my bed."³⁸ In other passages, this admiration for Chinese literature becomes more apparent. When he enters a temple filled with the vengeful, satanic demi-gods, he is once again reminded of Chinese novels he read as a boy.

³⁸ Akutagawa, 16.

Focusing on Chinese literature might imply that he is promoting China rather than detracting from it. However, it becomes clear that contemporary China does not measure up to the China that he recalls from his youthful readings. Discussing characters from two famous Chinese literary pieces, he looks into a congested market and laments:

From such a crowd it should not be too difficult to find heroes of this sort. However, no matter how I looked, I'd never find a Du Fu, a Yue Fei, a Wang Yangming, or a Zhuge Liang. In other words, present-day China is not the kind of China you find in poetry and essays. It is the kind of obscene, cruel, greedy China that you find in fiction.³⁹

In Akutagawa's colonial designs, discussions of the glories of bygone China are a necessary acknowledgement of Japan's past dependency on Chinese culture. Japan cannot easily shake off its obligations to China as Fukuzawa attempted to do. Instead, Akutagawa and other writers focus on separating China into two distinct parts and comparing those parts. Whereas Fukuzawa pays little attention to the ancient half, Akutagawa imagines it as a past paradise that is not only the predecessor of China but also as a spiritual and cultural ancestor of Japan as well. The modern half of his 'other' is a dirty and barely civilized country lacking the great heroes of the past. There are two separate Chinas, and they can be treated as two distinct entities. This temporal division follows in the tradition mentioned in the historical introduction, that of the Tokugawans claiming to be classical China's true heir. By painting modern China as an uncivilized wasteland that is completely separate from classical China, Akutagawa supplies evidence that Japan, not China, is the true heir of classical Chinese heritage.

³⁹ Akutagawa, 17.

Akutagawa was not the only writer to divide China into two distinct temporal pieces. Sato Haruo (佐藤春夫) was a Japanese modernist author, and, like Akutagawa, he incorporates this bifurcation in the handful of his works that focus on China. On a trip to China, Sato befriended some of China's literary celebrities including Yu Dafu, who took him on several tours to some of central China's famous sights. After this journey, Sato set a story, "The Star," in China's not-too-distant past, during the collapse of the Ming Dynasty (around 1644).⁴⁰ In this story, written in 1920, Sato imagines China as the setting of a fairy tale. The plot is idealized and the setting seems more like the unreal world of mythology rather than an actual geographic location. The characters are also difficult to call Chinese. Instead, their behavior and social commitment seems suspiciously Japanese.⁴¹ Like Akutagawa, Sato draws on the erstwhile China as part of Japan's common heritage. For Sato, China's past is just a canvas on which it is convenient to fantasize about an idealized version of Japan's past.

In one of his later stories, "The Children of Asia," Sato addressed the modern half of his constructed, bifurcated China. By this time, 1938, Sato, like many other Japanese writers, had begun defending his nation's actions and tried to build a rationale for the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, the official name for Japan's imperial project. In this story, he imagines modern China as a spiritual and cultural wasteland. China's literary elite, including a caricatured version of his friend, Yu Dafu, are portrayed as toeing Japan's Asian policy of uniting into one Asia. Sato uses ancient China as a setting to project his fantasy of Japan's past, and his stories clearly divide ancient China from its unworthy, modern scion which he believes should

⁴⁰ Haruo Sato, *Beautiful Town*, trans. Francis Tenny (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 11-13.

⁴¹ Ruth Benedict, *The Sword and the Chrysanthemum: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (New York: New American Library, 1946).

follow Japan's lead. The colonial implications behind Sato's "The Children of Asia" are much more explicit than those in Akutagawa's travelogue. In Sato's work, Japan is the engine regenerating Asia, and China's esteemed writers come to the realization that Japan will save all of Asia from the "White Disaster" through their Japanese education and through cooperation (or should I say collaboration) with Japanese forces.⁴²

Akutagawa is less explicitly colonial than Sato, but it is still easy to use his separation of the modern and the ancient to justify colonization. By imagining ancient and modern as two distinct entities, there is no need to reject Japan's cultural foundation if the Japanese want to subjugate modern China and imagine its people as less civilized. Like many Tokugawans, Akutagawa can argue that it is the Japanese who are the heirs to classical China, and modern China does not deserve the respect that classical China holds in the Japanese mind.

Bestializing the Chinese

The bifurcation of the country into two China's allows for the Japanese to begin to derogate Chinese authority, but it does not complete the task. It only neutralizes the potency of the image of China in the Japanese mind. To be effective colonizers, they must continue to devalue the image of modern China until it appears as a primitive backwater filled with animalistic barbarians in the minds of the Japanese public.

Akutagawa begins this process as soon as his narrative enters China. Stepping off the boat in Shanghai, one of Akutagawa's first impressions is of the Chinese

⁴² Christopher Keaveney, "Sato Haruo's "Ajia no ko" and Yu Dafu's Response: Literature, Friendship and Nationalism" *Sino-Japanese Studies*. vol. 13, 2 (March 2001): 20-31.

rickshaw drivers scrounging for a customer getting off the recently-docked boat. Before China, he had a positive image of rickshaw drivers. They brought to his mind the vigorous spirit of the rickshaw drivers in Edo (the name for Tokyo before 1868). Like so much of China compared to Japan, the Chinese rickshaw drivers do not live up to his Japanese expectation:

It would be no exaggeration to say that Chinese rickshaw pullers were filth incarnate. Furthermore, if you look at them as a whole, they all look sleazy. They stand all around you and scream something at you with their necks craning in your direction, so that Japanese women who have just disembarked will surely be frightened at this uncanny sight. In fact, when one of them pulled at my coat sleeves, I pulled back behind Jones [a British shipmate] who is a tall man, and I almost ran away.⁴³

This passage almost sounds like he is in a zoo with wild cats “screaming something [in their incomprehensible language] at you” and birds “with their necks craning.” He presents the average Chinese worker as a cultureless primitive who needs to be penned up in a cage so that they do not frighten the civilized Japanese ladies who recently arrived in the country. This rhetorical transformation of the rickshaw driver into a wild beast strips the Chinese of their humanity.

In another passage, a rose peddler is treated poorly by some Euro-American sailors, so one of Akutagawa’s companions, sympathizing with her and the poor treatment she receives, gives some money to her. As they leave, she comes chasing after his companion and Akutagawa comments, “Even after getting the coin from us, she seemed intent on forcing our wallets open. I felt sorry for the beautiful roses being

⁴³ Akutagawa, 12.

sold by such a greedy person.”⁴⁴ Sympathy for his fellow human vanishes as she is brought down to a level beneath plant life. The flowers are worthier of the reader’s sympathy than this ‘thing’ that is selling them, thus dehumanizing her.

Presenting the Chinese as no better than animals or plant life, Akutagawa is stripping the Chinese of their humanity and authority. In another section, we can see this discourse being further developed. “I asked the waiter where the toilet was, and I was told to use the sink in the kitchen. In fact, before me over there was a greasy-looking cook providing an example of how to do so. That was, to say the least, disgusting.”⁴⁵ In this passage, there is no direct attempt to assign the Chinese cook with a non-human qualities, but there is certainly the sense that China is the kind of place where people lack all sense of culture and propriety. They don’t even have the facilities that make us humans (read Japanese) better than animals.

The bestialization process reduces the Chinese to human material that needs to be controlled, and it implies that they can be exploited, just like domestic animals need to be controlled in order to be make products for their owners. This bestialization process provides two reasons in the rationalization of colonialism. One reason benefits the colonized: the Chinese are little better than animals so they require the control that a colonizer can give, thus they benefit. The second reason benefits the colonizer: the Japanese can exploit the materials that China has to offer (including human material) to their advantage, and it is implicit in the comparison of the Chinese to animals.

⁴⁴ Akutagawa, 15.

⁴⁵ Akutagawa, 31.

Discourse of the Dirty 'Other'

Illness played an important role in Akutagawa's journey, and this importance readily manifests itself in the text. His departure to China was delayed due to his health, and he was forced to wait for more than a week in Japan until March 21st, 1921. After his recovery, he undertook the journey to China, but he was again struck by sickness as soon as his ship entered open water. He discusses his sea sickness in the travelogue, remarking that it must be punishment for his jibes at his friend and famous Japanese painter's fear of the sea. Soon after arriving in China, Akutagawa had to be hospitalized. He eventually recovered and was able to visit several of the country's major metropolises, but his health caught up with him. By July, his travels had left him in no condition to continue, and he was forced to return to Japan.⁴⁶ While recovering his health in his native land, he pieced this collection of notes into the travelogue that became this text.⁴⁷

His health situation made him a keen observer of China's hygienic problems. His impression of China is one that is often obsessed with health concerns. For Akutagawa, modern China was a place of filth, disease and disgust which requires someone other than the natives to come clean it up. He uses the filthiness of China to suggest that contemporary China lacks the qualities necessary for being a modern nation.

Describing one of his experiences with Chinese opera, he enters into a discussion of the dirty 'other.' "This is China, though, so you have to watch out for even those wicker chairs. While I was sitting one time in such a seat with Mr. Murata,

⁴⁶ Joshua Fogel, "Akutagawa Ryunosuke and China" *Chinese Studies in History* vol. 30, no. 4 (Summer 1997), 8.

⁴⁷ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japaense Literature of the Modern Era* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1998), 571.

I was bitten, as feared, by a bedbug in a couple of places on my wrist.”⁴⁸ Although he is bothered, this seems to be an everyday experience, or, at least, it is an everyday experience for China. The first sentence of the passage quoted above suggests that one must be cautious about all these quotidian experiences, because, in China, it is not unusual for something dirty or dangerous to be lurking beneath them, even in a chair which would normally (read as in Japan) be safe to sit in.

Later in this same theater, he discusses the accessories that are being passed out to the theater-goers:

When you have taken your seat, hot towels are distributed . . . Having witnessed a dignified-looking Chinese man blow his nose with one of these towels after thoroughly wiping his face, I decided that the towels were also “*buyao*” [not wanted] for awhile.”⁴⁹

Once again, the motif of China being a dirty, disgusting place returns. Akutagawa’s tone is more humorous than condemning, but, the Japanese reader is still expected to be disturbed.

What makes the filth in this passage and the previous one so damning is its incongruencies with what one expects to be socially acceptable. In this passage, the violation is committed by a well-dressed man who appears unlikely to breach any of the rules of social decorum, but, in fact, he does something as disgusting as blowing his nose into a towel that is supposed to be used to wipe one’s face. The attire of this man gives an air of respectability to his blowing snot into the face-wipes. In the previous episode, the incongruency was in the safety that should be associated with the act of sitting in the chair. Normally (again read in Japan), one would not have to worry about sitting in a chair at a theater. Here, in this place of the ‘other,’ there is no

⁴⁸ Akutagawa, 20.

⁴⁹ Akutagawa, 21.

clamor to complain about this filth, nothing strange when one's chair has bedbugs or when a gentleman blows his nose into a towel. It appears to Akutagawa that, in modern Chinese society, these instances of filth are acceptable, almost typical. This makes Chinese society appear to not be as advanced in sanitation.

In a later passage at the theater, he discusses his visit to the backstage area in another Shanghai theater. Discussing how pitiful the facilities are, he calls it the "back of the stage rather than the dressing room."⁵⁰ The walls were worn and the smell of garlic hung in the air. The actors were also all "filthy-looking" except for their faces, which are "made-up perfectly."⁵¹ He details the experience of a famous Chinese actor who was dumbfounded by the elegance of Japan's Imperial Theater's dressing rooms. "But if you're used to these miserable dressing rooms and then see the beautiful dressing rooms of the Imperial Theater, you'll surely be impressed."⁵² This comparison of the elegance and filth of the two countries is especially acute since the theater is an area of culture and, in many ways, should represent the best each culture has to offer. Filling the theater with filth divorces modern China from its status as the center of East Asian culture. By denigrating China, Akutagawa is attempting to establish Japan as the most civilized country in East Asia, the new cultural and political hegemon. This restructures the East Asian hierarchy, making Japan's colonial project more feasible.

In a passage called, "Inside the City," Akutagawa begins by describing a famous pavilion in a park and the decrepit state into which it has fallen. There is algae growing in the lake, covering the surface in an ugly, green hue, and the structure of the pavilion looks as though "it might fall apart at any minute."⁵³ Both of these

⁵⁰ Akutagawa, 23.

⁵¹ Akutagawa, 23.

⁵² Akutagawa, 23.

⁵³ Akutagawa, 17.

observations ring with a sense of degeneration, reminding his Japanese audience that China is no longer the up-to-date power in East Asia. He begins to describe the man at the pavilion but quickly digresses into a discussion of his need to cross the lines of narrative propriety in order to effectively describe China, defending his use of vulgar terminology. Returning to the man at the pavilion whom he had begun describing, he paints a vivid image, and the reader understands why he prefaced his remarks with seemingly tangential comments on vulgarity:

“Now let’s go back to that Chinese man. There he was leisurely pissing into the lake. Nothing seemed to faze him in the least—Chen Shufan could raise his rebellious banner in the wind, the popularity of vernacular poetry could die down, . . . The Chinese-style pavilion that rose in the cloudy sky, the lake covered by a sickly green, and the arc formed by the single stream of urine as it poured into the lake at an angle—this is more than a scene of melancholy. At the same time, it is a bitter symbol of this grand old country.”⁵⁴

The scatological scene, part of the continuing discourse of filth, plagues the Chinese and distinguishes Japan from those barbarians who will piss anywhere. This dehumanizes and ‘others’ the Chinese.

This passage has several elements that combine to achieve dehumanization. The historical and literary references to which “that Chinese man” pays no attention are meant to demonstrate that, although the China of the past has produced great heroes and august literary traditions, the modern Chinese person is indifferent to these accomplishments. Our urinating friend conceives of himself only as an individual, not as a part of his “grand, old country”, thus, he is able to literally piss all over his own heritage.

⁵⁴ Akutagawa, 17.

Akutagawa mentions Chen Shufan, vernacular poetry and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty to imply that the Chinese have another negative characteristic. The Japanese of this period commonly held that Chinese people were completely unaware of the glorious traditions behind their country and were willing to sell it away for temporary, personal gain. This is part of a larger discussion by the Japanese public of how the Chinese are not able to see themselves as a part of a nation. Toutomi Soho, an influential journalist during the Meiji period, in commenting on the state of China's roads, said, "China's streets are iron-clad evidence of the lack of public mindedness among the Chinese people."⁵⁵ The Japanese who made this claim often suggested that the Chinese could not be public-minded because they no longer recognized the glorious traditions of their heritage. This argument is an extension of those Tokugawans who claimed that Japan was the heir of classical Chinese culture. Since the Chinese lacked awareness of their tradition, they could not be the true heirs of that tradition.

According to this Japanese idea, the Chinese are completely unaware of the important historical happenings occurring around them and do not properly respect their own heritage. They are only capable of taking care of their personal business. This tradition, to which Akutagawa is contributing, manipulates the image of the Chinese people in a way similar to Akutagawa's attempt to portray them as dirty, animal-like objects. The Chinese lack concern for their political situation, thus they cannot be expected to run their own government. Instead, they need a more advanced people who do concern themselves with these issues to rule over them. Perhaps the Japanese.

⁵⁵ Peter Carroll, *Between Heaven and Modernity: Reconstructing Suzhou, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2006), 27.

Another revealing aspect of this passage is that Akutagawa calls him “that Chinese man.” This appellation suggests that the man is in fact a representative for all of China. This transformation of him into a symbol of the average Chinese person is made explicit in the final sentence of the passage. With this sentence, all of China is simply a filthy, old place that, although it may have been great in the past, is now becoming less valuable because the Chinese will just piss on it whenever they desire. In this narrative, China is not just a location with filth. It is a location populated by filthy, primitive and beastly people.

This discourse of the dirty ‘other’ is not by any means unique to Akutagawa’s text. A concern for the lack of cleanliness and for the scatological problems can be found in Japanese travelogues throughout the period. Takasugi, one of the leaders of Japan’s first officially sanctioned journey to China in the nineteenth century, noted that most of Shanghai’s residents lived in “unbelievable filth” that was difficult for him to describe. His companion, Hibino, sounded a similar note when he detailed the chamber pots being washed out in Shanghai’s Huangpu River.⁵⁶ This motif is common throughout the body of literature of Japanese travelers to China in this period.

Along with these other travelogues, Akutagawa’s text is laying the groundwork for Japan’s colonial project. By manufacturing an image of them that is filthy and sub-human, he is reducing the Chinese from the givers of civilization to men urinating on their beautiful and historically significant relics. After doing this, the Japanese colonial machine can more easily deal with China as human material. Arguing for the colonization of China, one could suggest that the Chinese are now so primitive and filthy that they will just piss away all those important relics which mean

⁵⁶ Joshua Fogel, *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China, 1862-1945* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1996), 50.

so much to Japan's own culture as well as to China's, thus the Japanese are obligated to enter into China to try to control the situation.

This discourse of the dirty 'other' is emphasized by both Akutagawa and other Japanese writers. Akutagawa's health situation and Japanese culture's penchant for cleanliness are the most likely explanations for the reason why this discourse concerned with uncleanliness is employed to undercut the Chinese peoples' humanity. When screening the culture that it desires to colonize, the colonizing culture must use its own normative values to denigrate its 'others.' All of these passages express contempt for the Chinese people by reducing them to the level of filthy sub-humans that need to be governed by a cleaner, more intelligent power. This can be regarded as constructing an ideological foundation for the colonization of China. In the Orientalist discourse, the oriental subject is too obtuse to rule himself, and the same can be said for Akutagawa's image of China. The Chinese are too dirty to be invested with any authority.

The Wild, Wild China

Another reason that Akutagawa's travelogue provides for supporting Japan's colonization of China is that of danger. Throughout his text, there is a sense that danger is lurking everywhere, looking to attack anyone. Akutagawa straightforwardly states, "From what I observed, law and order did seem bad."⁵⁷ He dedicates an entire section of his travelogue to discussing the topic of crime. In this section, he examines social evils like prostitution, opium and street crime. Prostitution is everywhere in Shanghai, he says. Prostitutes often appear in teahouses or on street

⁵⁷ Akutagawa, 29.

corners in rickshaws waiting for customers. Opium use is also common, and there is no need for users to conceal their habit. Many addicts, both men and women, participate in the flesh trade for their fix, and Akutagawa comments on this connection.

As for crime, he gives several examples of rickshaw drivers turning to banditry, robbing their patrons while they ride to their destinations. The most extreme cases that he reports are of women whose ears and fingers are cut off to steal their jewelry. Overall, he paints a very violent image of Shanghai. Law and order are of little consequence, and criminals may commit egregious crimes for a small gain.

Outside of stories concentrating on crime, other dangers also seem ubiquitous. When they are disembarking the ship, Akutagawa and his company push past the animalized rickshaw drivers to find a horse-drawn carriage. Shortly after entering the carriage, the horse runs into a brick wall. The driver foolishly whips the horse despite it having nowhere to go. While being whipped, the horse almost overturns the carriage. Akutagawa ends this passage by saying “In Shanghai, unless you’re prepared to die, you can’t even ride in a carriage.” Like the crime and theater scenes discussed before, this passage has a sense that the quotidian life in Shanghai is infused with danger.

After leaving the nearly deadly horse-drawn carriage, he realizes that the hotel arranged for him by the *Osaka Daily* is the same place where a gunman assassinated Kim Okgyun, a Korean proponent of adapting Western techniques for Korean modernization. His assassination, occurring when Akutagawa was still an infant, solidified Japanese public opinion against the Chinese and partially precipitated the

war between these two countries.⁵⁸ It also provides Shanghai with an aura of political turmoil that serves his narrative's purpose of painting a chaotic picture of a China that needs to have rules imposed on it and that needs to be ruled. In this hotel, Akutagawa seems to be constantly looking behind his back, and the narration is infected with the ambiance of a cloak-and-dagger novel. "We were soon led into a dark but weirdly gaudy reception room. In a place like this, you wouldn't have to be Kim Ok-kyun [sic] to be unexpectedly shot through a window."⁵⁹ Akutagawa is so frightened by this hotel that, after discussing the matter with the others accompanying him, they decide to move to a nearby hotel that is not as creepy.

All of these incidents and crimes present a Shanghai that is unruly and full of outlaws. Besides making the text a more interesting read, it also implies to the Japanese reader that this is a place that needs someone to rule over. The danger in Shanghai demonstrates how urgent it is for the Japanese to colonize China. The implicit claim Akutagawa makes is that the Japanese may be able to restore the order that a 'normal' society should have. Like the discourse of the dirty 'other' and the bestialization of the Chinese, this pervading sense of being threatened is a rationalization of Japan's imperial project. His description of Shanghai suggests a country that has slipped from being the beacon of civilization to a Hobbesian world lacking stability and demanding someone to rule it.

One important qualification concerning this sense of danger is that it is for the most part limited to Shanghai. When Akutagawa travels to other places like Suzhou or Beijing, he does not suggest that an assassin is lurking around every corner. "Shanghai is said to be the number one "city of evil" in China. Since people from all

⁵⁸ S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power and Primacy* (Cambridge, Cambridge U.P., 2003), 96-100.

⁵⁹ Akutagawa, 12.

over the world congregate here, it probably couldn't have been helped."⁶⁰ His logic implies that the Western Powers are partially responsible for the high levels of crime. Although this shifts the blame for the "China problem" away from the Chinese to a certain extent, it implies that the other imperial powers are not fit to rule. The Western Powers' involvement in the danger motif makes Japan's colonization appear even more necessary. Part of the colonial case that these texts are trying to make as a group is not just that China needs to be colonized. By the time the Japan opened up to the world in the 1850's, China was already under the semi-colonial domination of England and other Western Powers. These texts make the case that China's colonization by the Western Powers has not been adequate and another power is required.

Conclusion

One final topic I would like to consider before we leave Akutagawa is how effective his strategies are at preparing the Japanese public for Japan's colonial project. As was discussed in the section entitled "Bifurcating China," one thing that is necessary is to degrade the idealized image of China that has dominated Japanese thought throughout its history. If the reader only relies upon the text, Akutagawa is certainly successful. Without having to tamper with the image of China's glorious past, Akutagawa produces a China that is wild, dirty and dangerous. Without explicitly endorsing the colonial program, he paints a picture that suggests to the reader that a Japanese colonial experiment would be a step in the right direction. The West cannot do it. They are partially responsible for the mess that is already there,

⁶⁰ Akutagawa, 29.

and it is where Westerners are concentrated that crime is most prevalent. Akutagawa's persuasive style and well structured arguments are very successful at convincing the reader to support Japan's colonial project. The most effective part is that his case is made implicitly.

CHAPTER FOUR

OKAKURA'S *THE AWAKENING OF JAPAN*

Introduction

Okakura Tenshin (岡倉天心, 1862-1913), also called Okakura Kakuzo (岡倉覚三), was a major force in Japanese art and education from the 1890's until his death. His father, Okakura Kan'emon, was a samurai from the Fukui Province in the center of Japan's western coast. In 1859, Okakura Kan'emon moved to Yokohama, a new city near Tokyo that was bulging with foreigners and business opportunities, to strike it rich in the silk business. Yokohama, previously a small fishing village, was one of the sites selected by the Shogun for Japan to begin encountering the outside world.⁶¹

Okakura Kan'emon was wealthy enough to send his son to be taught by some of the most prestigious missionary-educators in the country, James C. Hepburn and S.R. Brown. Under the tutelage of these and other Westerners, Okakura received a Western education in English. This education handicapped his Japanese, teaching him little of the Sino-Japanese heritage that most contemporary Japanese schoolchildren studied.⁶² A vignette illustrates the problem of his studies: In 1870, Okakura Kan'emon went into Tokyo on business and he allowed his son to accompany him on the trip. Traveling into the city, the father was horrified that his son could not read any

⁶¹ Victoria Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity: Okakura Tenshin and His Circle* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 4-5.

⁶² F.G. Notehelfer. "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin" *Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol. 16, No. 2. (Summer, 1990), 313.

of the Japanese signage along the way. To rectify this deficiency, his father soon modified his schooling. Part of it was to be completed at a temple, studying a more traditional curriculum. In the other part of his education, he continued with his studies in English under missionaries. This abnormal education caused him problems in his adult life. He never wrote as well in Japanese as he did in English, and his calligraphy, generally the sign of good-breeding, was embarrassing.⁶³

After this awkward start in his education, he went on to attend the University of Tokyo, the same school that Akutagawa would attend.⁶⁴ Here, he continued to study the English language along with Western philosophy under a variety of professors. One of these professors, Ernest Fenollosa, would be a major influence on Okakura's future philosophy and career. Under Fenollosa's instruction, he developed a sense of prioritizing native art while the rest of the country was doing the opposite, abandoning traditional styles in favor of Western ones.⁶⁵

After completing his degree, he worked in the new Meiji government, traveled to Europe and the United States to survey Western art and was promoted to the director of the country's leading art school, the Imperial Art School. His directorship ended when, in a struggle over the school's direction, Okakura refused to allow the school to prioritize Western styles over native ones. In 1898, along with several other professors, he resigned his post at the school to register protests over the school's pro-Western stance. In fall of the same year, he founded another school, the Japan Art Institute, whose purpose was to balance the needs of Japanese art to westernize while

⁶³ Ibid., 315-316.

⁶⁴ Both of these authors attended the same university though through the last century it has changed names several times. Today, as in the days of Okakura, it was called the University of Tokyo, but, during Akutagawa's matriculation it was called the Imperial University. Throughout its history, it has always been the nation's flagship institution.

⁶⁵F.G. Notehelfer. "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin" *Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol. 16, No. 2. (Summer, 1990), 318-319.

still maintaining its native substance.⁶⁶ During this period, his relationship with Fenollosa's developed even further, and he was able to put their philosophy into practice at the new institution.⁶⁷

His career working in art schools was intertwined with journeys to bring back to Japan a broader knowledge of art. He traveled to Europe and America on a mission to expand Japan's understanding of more 'modern' forms of art, and he later traveled to China and India to investigate the state of traditional Asian art. During his travels, he developed a pan-Asian philosophy and became friends with such luminous figures as Rabindranath Tagore, the poet. In the last part of his life, after he wrote *The Awakening of Japan* and his other most important books, he worked for the Boston's Museum of Fine Art, eventually becoming curator of the museum's Japanese and Chinese art department.⁶⁸

This variety of disparate experiences, packed into one lifetime in this incredible, if flawed figure, combined to form Okakura's philosophy. This philosophy is a study in contradiction. An anti-imperialist, he employed parts of the Western imperialists' very-own orientalist discourse and manipulated it to assert Japan's own position on the world stage. A pan-Asian figure, he claimed that all of Asia needed to work together to throw off the shackles of the "White Disaster," but he insisted that movement be controlled by Japan.

⁶⁶ Victoria Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity: Okakura Tenshin and His Circle* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 157-163.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 320.

⁶⁸ *Okakura Tenshin and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Nagoya : Nagoya Bosuton Bijutsukan, 1999), 13-15, 38.

The Awakening of Japan

Before analyzing this text in depth, it is necessary to briefly introduce this text to the readers. It was the second to last major work written by Okakura. At the time, Okakura was spending a third of his time in Boston, a third in Japan, and a third shuttling around Asia on assignment for the museum. Concomitantly, Japan was preparing to fight Imperial Russia for control of Korea and a sphere of influence in continental northeast Asia. “Russia herself is responsible for the possibility of that peril which she now attributes to the peaceful nations of the far East.” Just reading the last chapter of *The Awakening of Japan*, one would think that the entire text is a public campaign to convince the English-speaking nations that Russia is the real danger to peace in East Asia.

However, it is more than just an anti-Moscow public relations campaign. It is the formula for an anti-Western imperialist, pan-Asian, pro-Japanese weltanschauung. Okakura lectures on the history of Asia and Japan for his uninformed Western audience, starting from before Mongolian dominance in the twelfth century, through Japan’s Tokugawa Era, to the contemporary situation. As he lectures his reader, he weaves a historic narrative that allows Japan to strip China of its authority and dominate it. Using the threat of Western Imperialism, or as Okakura calls it “White Disaster,” he calls on all of Asia to band together under Japan’s lead in an effort to eject the Western Powers from Asia. This call was eventually taken up by the Japanese Imperialist under the banner of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere to rationalize the colonization of much of Asia.

Like Akutagawa’s, Okakura’s writings were explicitly employed for colonial purposes during the Pacific War. It is no coincidence that the three books of

Okakura's that are most insistent on his hegemonic version of pan-Asianism were translated and published in Japanese in 1922, just as Japan's imperial machine was starting. After this, his ideas were incorporated into Japan's imperial project, especially statements like the first sentence of *The Ideals of the East* where he states simply, "Asia is one."⁶⁹ In publishing the complete English writings of Okakura, his grandson claimed that he wanted to clear his grandfather's name of its association with Japan's Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere that nationalists had attached to it during the War.⁷⁰ He claims this association is unfair, but I will demonstrate otherwise.

The Scope of Okakura's Vision of Asia

Before examining the mechanisms that Okakura used to graft all Asia together, we must discuss the scope of this vision. Unlike Akutagawa, Okakura wraps all of the stationary civilizations of Asia into one unit. The breadth of his vision is best presented in the first paragraph of another text, his *The Ideals of the East*:

Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilisations [sic], 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-inheritance of every Asiatic race.⁷¹

The Himalayan Mountains are a geographic screen that cannot separate the single spiritual unit that is Asia. This mystical vision of a united Asia is seen throughout his

⁶⁹ Tenshin Okakura. *The Ideals of the East* (London: J. Murray, 1905) 1.

⁷⁰ Koshiro Okakura, introduction to *Collected Writings*, by Tenshin Okakura (Tokyo: Heibonsha Limited, 1984), vii.

⁷¹ Tenshin Okakura, *The Ideals of the East* (London: J. Murray, 1905), 1.

oeuvre, including in *The Awakening of Japan*. His vision extends beyond Akutagawa's dichotomic boundaries of the relationship between China and Japan. Nevertheless, it gives priority to these two countries.

For the most part, his vision of a united Asia includes China and India within the Japanese sphere of influence. Although it does not mention any peripheral countries specifically, his vision implies that it also includes those countries such as Vietnam and Burma that functioned in either the Sinocentric or Indocentric systems. Concerning the nations of the Middle East, the only one he mentions more than once is Turkey, and his interest in Turkey is only cursory. "The great Turkish empire which bore the brunt of Western advance and often hurled it back to the walls of Vienna."⁷² He may consider Turkey as part of his Asia, but he does not incorporate it with any sense of commitment.

One group that he does exclude from Asia, at least as a spiritual unit, is the nomadic peoples who lived to the north of the Chinese such as the Mongolians and the Manchurians. These tribes are technically from the continent of Asia, but they do not share the same unifying factors that the rest of Asia shares. The most important of these unifying factors is Buddhism. For Okakura, Buddhism is the religious force that unites Asia just as Christianity is the religious force that unites the West. Unfortunately for Okakura, he has to qualify his vision of Buddhism due to his problem with facts. While Buddhism was born in India, it had not been influential on the subcontinent for over a thousand years, yet he readily admits India into his united Asia. However, the Mongolians and other nomadic 'barbarians,' peoples he excludes from his vision of a united Asia, had been and were still Buddhists.

⁷² Okakura, 103. For the sake of simplicity, the citations within the major text of this chapter will simply be referred to as "Okakura," followed by the page number on which the quote or citation can be found. The text used for these citations is Tenshin Okakura's *The Awakening of Japan*.

Okakura maneuvered around these fact problems by ignoring them or offering vague explanations for them. He admits that “the Yuens [the Mongolian rulers of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368)] still adhered to Buddhism, though in the degenerate form known as Lamaism.”⁷³ Their commitment to this degenerate form of Buddhism is questionable, he claims, and these problems excludes them from the spiritual federation that makes Asia special. He does not further explain why these Buddhists are not true Buddhists, leaving the observant reader unconvinced of his exclusion. For the most part, he ignores the problem of India and Buddhism. Eventually, he implies that the extinction of Buddhism in India is a part of the “Night of Asia,” Okakura’s term for the Asian dark ages occurring throughout most of the second millennium. However, these efforts are only half-hearted and unconvincing. The contradictions that Okakura is forced to admit into his philosophy suggest that he has a prefabricated vision, and he is attempting to fit the facts into this vision instead of the reverse.

This problem with India is important considering the position that India holds in Okakura’s vision of Asia. In contrast to Turkey and the Mongols, India is an integral part of his united Asia. For Okakura, India is one of the two major fountainheads of classical ‘Asian’ civilization. Okakura was knowledgeable of India’s tradition, having traveled there on several trips. India is the wellspring of Buddhism, but it is no longer Buddhist. He papers over this problem, not allowing the facts to interfere with his vision. Without India, his vision is simply a union of China and Japan, similar to Akutagawa’s and that of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Incorporating India allows him to make pan-Asian claims like “Asia is one.” His proposal matches the Asian “Buddhaland” up against Western Christendom as a single geo-cultural unit. Just as the West can, to a certain degree, work together

⁷³ Okakura, 11-12.

against the rest of the world because they are intertwined through Christianity, Okakura believes he can convince China, India and Japan to work together under the screen of religious unity through Buddhism. Using Buddhism, Okakura constructs his united Asia as a group of nations that can combine to repel the advances of another group of nations, the Western Powers.

China and Japan are of course the most important countries in Okakura's vision of Asia. What is interesting to note about the scope of his vision is that, other than India, Okakura has little to make the claim that his philosophy is pan-Asian. Smaller nations are not worth mentioning, and Turkey is hardly given any attention. The nomadic tribes of north and central Asia are excluded from the schema. Very little of Asia is left to unite. Instead, the scope of his vision is not so much Asia as it is the 'Buddhaland' that he constructs. This is an arbitrary designation made by Okakura. It excludes those Buddhist Mongols, apparently because their form of Buddhism is not comparable to the rest of Asia's spirituality, and it includes India despite the fact that Indian Buddhism had been defunct for over a millennium.⁷⁴ These contradictions in Okakura's unified Asia reveal the extent to which he is manufacturing this unit, producing it for his own colonial purposes.

One point to note is that there is an inverse relationship between how involved Okakura envisions a country in his united, spiritual Asia and how far a country is from Japan. Modern Japan is the leader of Asia, and China is the next in importance in his vision. India is somewhat important. Anything much further west, although it may be a part of the Asian continent, is only tenuously a part of its spiritual federation. He does not explicitly state that in his text, but it is clear that his image of

⁷⁴ Ashok Kumar Anand, *Buddhism in India: From the Sixth Century B.C. to the Third Century A.D.* (New Dheli: Gyan Books, 1996).

this union only includes Asia's two great civilizations, India and China, and its rising power, Japan.

As for his motives, there are several possibilities as to why he constructed such a tangled vision of which countries are and are not Asian and why. The first is his artistic and educational background. Okakura's research into Japanese art and Buddhism lead him to follow their threads to their Chinese and Indian origins. Another explanation for the scope of his project is that it fits well into his anti-colonial schema. India was almost entirely controlled by the British, and China was semi-colonized by the Western Powers. By invoking India and China, he is able to unite those large, colonized countries. However, Turkey, never coming under colonial administration, could not as readily be called on for anti-imperialist rhetoric.

Finally, the most pessimistic interpretation of Okakura's motives for the scope of his project is not that he was being anti-imperial, but that the purpose of his vision of a united, spiritual Asia is to lay the foundation for Japan's colonial machinations. Thus, he only includes countries that he believes Japan could colonize. China gets the most attention because it is the country most readily colonizable. Some attention is paid to India because it seems like it could also come into Japan's imperial grasp. Other parts of Asia, like Turkey or Central Asia, are simply out of Japan's reach, therefore, it is not necessary to include them in his vision.

Collapsing Countries

Now that the scope of Okakura's vision is clearly delineated, we can examine more closely the strategies that he uses to transform China (and, to a lesser extent, the other nations within the scope of his vision) into a colonial object. Akutagawa's

strategy was to first suggest that China was a dirty, dangerous, almost bestial ‘other,’ not like that great China of the past that occupies so high a position in the Japanese imagination. Then he was free to insinuate that Japan needed to enter into China and help resolve its problems. Okakura’s strategy is almost the exact opposite, but it is as insidious, if not more so. Like many of the Western colonialists, Okakura collapses a variety of countries, languages and cultures into a single unit. This is the Asia or Buddhaland that we have discussed.

For the Western Orientalists, there is no need to distinguish between the various ‘others’ because they assume that each country has a relatively similar set of characteristics (they are dangerous, not rational, etc.). Okakura adopts a similar strategy of collapsing different countries into a single unit, but, unlike the Western Orientalists, his objective in yoking all of these countries together is to use their collective power to throw off the oppression of the Western colonizers. Instead of following Akutagawa’s strategy, Okakura synthesizes Asia into a single unit to erase the other countries’ idiosyncrasies, making them easy to colonize. The Japanese are assumed to be the leaders of this unit, giving them authority over the rest of Asia. By collapsing Asia into a single unit, he is able to claim that Japan is responsible for its own spiritual ‘little brown brothers’ in India and China.

This collapsing is accomplished using several different rhetorical strategies. The first strategy is to use short phrases that lack any real significance but that connote a mystical sense of unity among Asian cultures. Throughout the text, he uses phrases like “Asiatic Consciousness,”⁷⁵ “the Oriental conception of the social and super-social order,”⁷⁶ “all Eastern monarchies”⁷⁷ or “Eastern philosophy.”⁷⁸ These

⁷⁵ Okakura, 65.

⁷⁶ Okakura, 56.

⁷⁷ Okakura, 115.

⁷⁸ Okakura, 185.

phrases are not accompanied by any evidence, and they do not demonstrate to the reader that Asia is, in fact, united. Instead, they are meant to manufacture a foundation for the image of a united Asia which will be reinforced in other passages. Or, if the reader is a Westerner already thoroughly inculcated with the discourse of Orientalism, which is likely considering the book was written in English to be consumed by Westerners at the beginning of the twentieth century, it may only reinforce the idea that Asia (the Orient) is a single unit.

Other, larger phrases and metaphors are used to construct Asia into one entity that moves and thinks in parallel. Like the short phrases discussed in the paragraph before, these do not really offer any proof of a united Asia, they are just rhetorical ornaments meant to charm the reader into believing Okakura's idea. Early in the book, when he is still trying to initiate the reader into his project, he mystically links Indian and Chinese civilization using the major river systems flowing through them, the Ganges and the Yellow River. Many problems with this magical linkage quickly come to the mind of the acute reader: what about the Mesopotamia? Is it not a major civilization on the Asian continent bisected by a river? What eliminates it from this spiritual union? Okakura never explains these types of contradictions. Throughout the text, these contradictions leave the reader to wonder, as Okakura builds his colonial mechanisms, how seriously does he take himself?

At several points in the text, he offers comparisons similar to the one above as evidence that a spiritual nexus exists because their intellectual and social scenes resemble or parallel each other. In the chapter discussing Buddhism and Confucianism, Okakura makes the argument that all of Asia's societies are spiritually connected because the objective of a man's life in each country was to become a religious ascetic:

Chinese mandarins dreamed, amid palatial luxuries, of the bamboo forest, and sighed at the call of the pine-clad hills. The highest desire of an Indian or Japanese householder was to reach the age at which, leaving worldly cares to his children, he might learn that higher life of a recluse known as Banaprasta or Inkyo.⁷⁹

Okakura reasons that all of these countries are basically the same and can be considered part of the same unit because the ultimate goal of a man's life is to become an ascetic. Thus, they are all societies that strive to be spiritual. There are many problems with comparing different ascetic practices. Is it that each of these countries had reclusive practices that were similar enough to suggest that they are all a part of a single, geo-social unit, that they are all Asian? Perhaps the reader from 1905 under the sway of the orientalist discourse can easily believe this, especially when he uses exotic sounding words like "Inkyo" and "Banaprasta," but the contemporary reader is more skeptical of his argument.⁸⁰

Okakura offers another comparison as evidence of the spiritual nexus in the intellectual scenes of these three countries. While he is arranging his vision of a united Asia, he draws a parallel between the import of poetry in court life during the rule of Vikramaditya in India, China's Tang Dynasty and Japan's Nara period. He explicitly contends that this qualifies as a spiritual connection between the three nations: "From this synthesis of the whole Asiatic life a fresh impetus was given to each nation."⁸¹ This demonstrates to his readers how he envisions these disparate countries connecting with each other to form a single unit. Their intellectual and spiritual activities flow together and the confluence becomes "a vast stream of

⁷⁹ Okakura, 58.

⁸⁰ A Banaprasta is the last stage in the traditional life of a Hindu man. Inkyo is the traditional system of passing on headship of a household to the next generation, often involving the retirement of the older head into a more passive role.

⁸¹ Okakura, 9.

intercourse.”⁸² This intercourse becomes their shared “Asiatic conscience,”⁸³ and it is this evidence that is offered up to support his idea of collapsing each individual country into a unified Asia.

Again, the question is whether this is enough to qualify these countries as being spiritually unified. Like the last example, Okakura’s designation of what is and what is not a golden age is arbitrary. Islam was experiencing a sort of golden age at approximately the same time, one could argue. Why should the burgeoning caliphate not be included in his vision? Furthermore, questions exist with regard to how similar the three golden ages are. The Indian Vikramaditya was a reign, not a dynasty or period, and it is difficult to argue that there were many significant similarities. Finally, the most unsettling problem is that he presents little evidence of intercourse between these countries that one would expect to be necessary for a shared spiritual conscience. Certainly, the Japan of this time was influenced by China and the embassies it sent were an important part of the founding of Japanese culture. However, can the same be said of India and China? Was there really enough intellectual commerce to create a unified conscience, a sense that they were all one Asia.

Using these questionable assertions, Okakura is able to portray the Asia that he desires to see. In the Western colonial tradition, all things ‘eastern’ are regarded as a single unit that is the ‘other’ of the West. Okakura employs a strategy different from that of the Western tradition. Instead of ‘othering’ Asia, he attempts to ‘self’ it, internalizing it into his own nation’s identity. India and China are meshed, albeit questionably, into Asia, and they become Japanized under Japan’s leadership of the continent. The Tang and Vikramaditya poetry is transformed into a part of the

⁸² Okakura, 8.

⁸³ Okakura, 65.

tradition in which Japan shares (and vice versa). The Ganges and the Yellow River both become founts of the ancient culture from which all spiritual Asia sprung.

Although Okakura's vision of 'selfing' the Orient is the opposite of the Western practice of colonialism, it has the same objective. By claiming that Japan is one with the rest of Asia, he is authorized to speak for all of Asia. Since he alleges that they are a part of Japan's Asia, he is able to claim spokesmanship from them. Instead of there being various countries and cultures struggling against their individual problems with colonialism, their problems (and authority) are all channeled into Japan and its struggle against the West. The colonial implications of this process are apparent.

We must note that this collapsing of countries not only allows Okakura to speak for the voiceless, colonized Asia. It also allows him to distance Japan from China. Although he envisions China as a part of Japan's united Asia, he, like Akutagawa and many in Japan, is still wary of the overpowering influence that it has commanded over Japan in the past. In his schema, he presents Japanese civilization as an equal to China and India, but this is an inflation of Japan's status. This collapsing of countries is a strategy he uses to reduce Japan's dependence on China. "We must still regard Asia as the true source of our inspiration."⁸⁴ By collapsing the individual countries into Asia and suggesting that Japan is dependent on that 'Asia' for its culture, Okakura reduces the very visible dependence of Japan on Chinese culture that I discussed in the second chapter. Instead of Japan being indebted to China for its cultural contributions, it is indebted to Asia. This quietly reduces the status of China in the mind of the Japanese public, again making them an easier target for the mobilizing imperial forces.

⁸⁴ Okakura., 6.

One final piece of evidence that he offers to support his claim that Asia is linked is the Mongolians. He suggests that all of Asia is united because it was all brought low by the violent waves of Mongolian attacks. The Mongolians precipitated what Okakura calls “The Night of Asia,” a period corresponding roughly from beginning of the second millennium until the time that Okakura was writing. Like the period of religious unity before it, the Mongolian destruction linked the entire continent to a single fate and is, along with Buddhism, one of the most important elements in Okakura’s vision of a single Asia.

Japan as a Storehouse for the Treasures of Asia

With these elements in place, we can begin to look more holistically at Okakura’s vision. Buddhaland and Asia’s unique ancient culture were shared throughout the continent in the first millennium of the Common Era. Each spiritual innovation in one country in Asia spurred the other countries to innovate more. Then, the Mongol invasions spreading across China and India nearly destroyed that spiritual union and the glorious cultural artifacts that Asia had produced. It was not entirely destroyed because Japan was able to fend off the Mongolians. Okakura implies that Japan was able to store all the glorious elements of Asia because it was able to resist the onslaught of the Mongols. “The fact that we have preserved the arts and customs of ancient China and India long after they have become lost in the lands of their birth...”⁸⁵ The idea that Japan preserved the Asian culture that fell extinct elsewhere on the continent is encountered throughout the text.

⁸⁵ Okakura, 186.

In the previous discussions, the importance of Buddhism in Okakura's construction of a united Asia is apparent. He also uses Buddhism as evidence of his storehouse theory. Earlier we discussed that it seems like a contradiction to point to Buddhism as a unifying force since it had been extinguished as a religion in India long before. Instead of viewing this as a contradiction, Okakura integrates this discrepancy into his vision of Asia. Okakura implies that modern India's lack of Buddhism is part of the "Night of Asia," that Buddhism's disappearance from India was somehow related to other forces that precipitated the Asian dark ages. One of the inconsistencies in this part of his vision that he does not explain is that Buddhism stopped being a major force in India several centuries before the period that Okakura extols as being the bright point in Asian civilization. Nevertheless, the fall of Buddhism in India is a part of the reason Japan is a storehouse for Asian civilization. Buddhism is gone in India, but Japan still preserves it. Thus, Japan serves as a storehouse for ancient Indian or Asian culture.

Buddhism is the most significant element that India commits to the united, spiritual Asia, and China's main contribution is Confucianism. Okakura constructs Confucianism, not as the doctrine of a revered Chinese scholar, but as a universal doctrine that, while it originated in China, has absorbed numerous Pan-Asian elements.⁸⁶ Continuing his argument, he makes a statement that is so absurd it is hard to imagine how anyone could give it credence, even if their hermeneutic skills were skewed by Orientalism. "His doctrine [Confucius'] appears to have had only a temporary influence in China itself, but they possessed a peculiar charm for the Japanese mind."⁸⁷ Okakura's claim follows a pattern similar to the claim concerning India and Buddhism. Confucianism originated in China, but Japan has preserved it

⁸⁶ Okakura, 64-8.

⁸⁷ Okakura, 75.

while it has become extinct, or close to it, in China. The assertion that Confucianism was no longer an important part of China in the early nineteenth century is fraudulent, and it demonstrates the extent to which Okakura was willing to distort facts to fit his colonial schema. It is interesting to note that Fukuzawa Yukichi, the scholar discussed in earlier chapters who advocated the “Separating from Asia” doctrine, commented a few decades earlier that root of China’s problem was that they were obsessed with Confucianism.

He argues that Confucianism in China, like Buddhism in India, is no longer an important force in its philosophical and religious spheres. Ignoring the major influence that Confucianism still played in the China that he had studied and visited, he argues that Japan is the preserver of China’s contributions to Asian culture as well. This adds evidence (albeit flawed evidence) for his assertion that Japan is Asia’s storehouse, and its status as a storehouse excises the great debt that Japan owes to China for giving it Confucianism. The Japanese do not really owe anything to the Chinese, because, although China gave Confucianism to Japan, it was Japan who preserved the doctrine. More than the discussion of Buddhism in India, this discussion of Confucianism in China has a pejorative tone. Buddhism was hardly relevant at the time Okakura was writing, therefore arguing that Japan has preserved Buddhism for India is at least tenable. Considering the profound influence that Confucianism played and still plays on China, it seems as if Okakura is intentionally and maliciously stripping China of one of its most prized cultural treasures. Lacking this treasure, China becomes much easier to coerce through colonialism, and, gripping the stolen prize, Japan can claim to be the authorized spokesman for Asia and the preserver of Asian heritage.

It is important to note that there is a biographical reading of the storehouse motif. In an earlier text, he states, “Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization.”⁸⁸ Okakura was an art museum curator, and he had spent much of his life cataloging artistic works in Asia and returning to museums with them. The same year that he wrote *The Awakening of Japan*, he began working for Boston’s Museum of Fine Art, collecting and cataloguing the Museum’s Chinese and Japanese collection. Although the above reference to museums is more direct than any reference found in *The Awakening of Japan*, it suggests that elements of his personal life may have heavily contributed to his conceptualization of this problem.

Japan is the storehouse for Buddhism, Confucianism and other precious elements of Asian culture. Beyond the spiritual and religious elements of Asia, Okakura advances that the Emperor, the symbol of Japan’s body politic, is also invested with many Asian elements:

Mythology has consecrated it [the Emperor], history has endeared it, and poetry has idealized it. Buddhism has enriched it with that reverence that India pays to the “Protector of Laws” and Confucianism has confirmed it with the loyalty that China offers to the “Son of Heaven.” The Mikado [the Emperor] may cease to govern, but he always reigns.⁸⁹

Okakura attempts to romanticize the position of the emperor as a magical, less-than-political figure, but his imbedded message is clear. The Japanese state is, like its people and its culture, invested with the treasures of Asia. As Japan absorbed Asia’s treasures, the position of the Emperor was saturated with Asian-ness, implying that the Emperor is the figure most appropriate to reunite and lead Asia against the invading Western Powers.

⁸⁸ Tenshin Okakura, *The Ideals of the East* (New York: Dutton Publishing Co., 1920), 7.

⁸⁹ Okakura, 27.

The Emperor was restored to power in the 1868 Meiji Restoration.⁹⁰ Since he was reinstated as the Head of the Japanese state, Okakura's argument that his position is invested with the cultural accomplishments of the entire continent links his imagined pan-Asian coalition not only to the Emperor but also to Japan's new form of government. To make this link more explicit, he claims that, since the restoration of the Emperor, Buddhism and Confucianism have grown in stature and interest in Japan, and pan-Asian topics like Sanskrit and Chinese literature are being pursued with a renewed vigor.⁹¹ The new government, which he claims has rightfully restored power to the emperor, has also recharged the Asian elements that had been preserved in Japan. Linking the Emperor to pan-Asianism clearly reveals the political nature of his argument.

In previous sections, we have encountered the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, the banner under which Japan would try to colonize Asia. The rationale behind the Sphere was that Japan, being the strongest Asian nation, would unite all of Asia, evict the Western Powers from the continent and head up an organization resembling that of the Commonwealth nation with Japan selflessly assisting their Asian brothers. As the Japanese government formulated the structure of the Sphere, they believed that the relationship between Japan and the colonized countries would be modeled on the Confucian relationship between an older brother and a younger brother.⁹² The concept of the Sphere did not develop until after Okakura had completed this text, and he was not involved in the government's development of the concept. Nevertheless, the philosophy he proposes in this text and

⁹⁰ The extent of the power that the Emperor held is debatable. Okakura and most Meiji intellectuals asserted that the Meiji Restoration of 1868 fully restored the Emperors, but most historians aver that he was little more than a figurehead.

⁹¹ Okakura, 193.

⁹² Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (New York: Signet Classics, 1946), 53.

in others laid the ideological foundation for the Sphere. By collapsing all national differences into a single, united Asia that was preserved by Japan and stored in the figure of the Emperor, he implies that Japan has the political authority to lead Asia back to the status and cultural ingenuity that it once possessed.

Okakura's case that Japan is a storehouse of all the treasures of Asia is not a benign argument about the movement of ideas in Asia. It is a colonial rationale claiming the leadership and spokesmanship of Asia entirely for Japan and marginalizing those other Asian countries as less important, paving over their idiosyncrasies. The argument concerning the Japanese emperor further strips China and India of their own political authority and their leaders' right to lead the ousting of the Western Powers from their own country. In Okakura's arguments, their own native political structure is sidelined as lacking importance and potency in the anti-imperialist movement in favor of Japan's political leadership.

Imbedded within his assertion that Japan is Asia's storehouse are elements that dispossess the rest of Asia of their own countries' individuality and subjectivity. His falsified description of Confucianism strips China of its history and philosophy and instead assigns it to 'Asian' history and philosophy. This rhetorical legerdemain strips China of its cultural contributions to the world and relegates it to the status of a province under the leadership of Japan. The thrust of his storehouse argument has two parts: it strips the national authority from other Asian countries and assigns it to his constructed version of a pan-Asian past in a manner similar to his 'Collapsing Countries' strategy. The second step shifts all authority from the pan-Asian to modern Japan.

Japan as Asia's Leader

I have already suggested that several aspects of the storehouse motif imply that Japan is the nation which should rightfully lead Asia in its fight against the Imperialist Western Powers. This status bestows upon them the leader of this soon-to-regenerate Asia because they have preserved Asian culture, but Japan occupies this high position for other reasons as well. "The expenditure of thought involved in synthesizing different aspects of Asiatic culture has given to Japanese philosophy and art a freedom and virility unknown to China and India."⁹³ The Japanese have evolved beyond the glorious Asia that they preserved and have now synthesized a more advanced form of Asian-ness.

This theme is echoed throughout the text, especially in respect to China. Okakura's discussion of Japan's resistance to Mongolia is part of this claim that Japan is better than the rest of Asia. This idea that the torch of Asian civilization was passed to Japan after the Mongolian rampage provides Okakura with a strategy to concomitantly claim that Japan is attempting to liberate Asia while colonizing that same Asia. He is able to claim that Asia is united, but Japan is the leader of that union. While Japan survived with some damage, the Mongol's conquest was a blow from which "the Indians and the Chinese have never recovered."⁹⁴ By suggesting that the two major Asian powers never recovered from the Mongol hordes, he is able to reduce the image of China much in the same way that Akutagawa denigrated China. This method also resembles those discussed in Said, that of the up-to-date nation controlling the antiquated, formerly powerful countries. For Akutagawa, the qualities of an up-to-date nation were that it was powerful, hygienic, etc., but, for Okakura, it is

⁹³ Okakura, 188.

⁹⁴ Okakura, 16.

a spiritual up-to-date-ness that qualifies Japan to be a colonial power. The reason Japan has authority over the rest of Asia is because they are spiritually more advanced, because their spiritual growth was not so stunted by the Mongolian invasion.

Other than pan-Asian elements that the Japanese have preserved, native elements also qualify Japan to lead Asia's revolt against the Western imperialism. According to Okakura, the Oyomei sect is an advanced form of Buddhism and is better adapted to deal with the challenges that need to be faced in the modern world.⁹⁵ More importantly, Shinto, the native religion of Japan, is one of the most important factors driving Japan's rejuvenation after slipping into the Night of Asia. "It [Shinto] called upon Japan to break loose from blind slavery to Chinese and Indian ideals, and rely upon herself."⁹⁶ Oyomei Buddhism and Shintoism are two native elements of Japan's spiritual landscape that also made it a more hospitable environment for the 1868 revolution, giving Japan the ability to adapt to the Western intrusion and eventually lead the fight against it. These native elements are important in his schema, because they provide another explanation for why Japan became strong while the rest of Asia lulled under the tune of the imperial pied piper. Since the rest of Asia lacked these elements, they were not able to respond to Western Imperialism as successfully as Japan did.

These native elements assisted Japan in emerging from the "Night of Asia" as better suited to preserving and synthesizing the best elements of Asiatic culture. Okakura claims that these elements allowed it to lead the fight against the second occupation of Asia, that of the Western Powers. Okakura's insertion of this argument allows him to further maintain Japanese hegemony within the new Asian hierarchy. It

⁹⁵ Okakura, 83.

⁹⁶ Okakura, 87.

is easy to see how Okakura's schema for Asia was applied by Japan's military government as a philosophy justifying Japan's colonial project.

Conclusion

Okakura has presented a battery of arguments, making the case that, in its effort to rebuff the Western Powers and return Asia to the status that it once held, it must follow Japan's lead to escape the Night of Asia. His argument is significantly different from that of Akutagawa, but they both target the same goal. At first, Okakura's theory appears to strike a more conciliatory note than Akutagawa's. Instead of beginning his argument by describing what makes Japan better than China, he starts out by calling for the unity of all of Asia. But that promise of unity is empty.

Okakura reflects on why Japan should have this position: Japan is a storehouse for much of Asian culture. It resisted the Mongol invasion that brought on the "Night of Asia" when the great, Asian powers succumbed to the steppe barbarians' war machine. Finally, it has preserved several native elements that have allowed Japan to regenerate uniquely well. In his arguments, he masks Japan's colonial ambitions with calls for pan-Asian unity. By suggesting that Asia should reunify under Japanese leadership because Japan is better than the rest of Asia, he undercuts any calls of brotherhood. Once the reader recognizes this masking, it is difficult to not read his text in terms of imperialism. In a sign that he is aware that some of his readers recognize his intentions, he attempts to dismiss the charge that Asia could unite and challenge the hegemony of the West in the hope of squashing these charges before they gain credence among his readers.

One of the most intriguing elements of this colonial text is that he is ostensibly railing against colonialism. In fact, when he rails against colonialism it is really the imperial adventures of the Western Powers that he is attacking. This attack against the Western nations protects Asia from Western advances, saving them for Japan's own imperial adventures. It also provides his nation with a rationale for his schema of linking Asia together and then colonizing them through Japan's leadership in this linkage.

Before leaving this intriguing, if conflicting figure, I would like to offer another reading of Okakura's text. In the section concerning Japan as a storehouse, I mentioned that one way to understand this aspect of the text is through Okakura's resume since he was making a career out of collecting Asian artifacts and returning to Japan to store them in a museum. As a curator, he was inclined to see Japan as a "museum" of Asian culture. Discussing some of the motivations behind his own text, Said suggests that the purpose of his book was to discover his 'Oriental' nature through his training as a scholar in the Western world. "In many ways my study of Orientalism has been an attempt to inventory the traces upon me, the Oriental subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals."⁹⁷

As I discussed in the first chapter, Said's analysis in *Orientalism* has been at least partially discredited by theorist like Ahmed, but I propose Said's theory is still useful to understand these texts, particularly Okakura, in light of their biographical similarities. Okakura's youth was similar to that of Said's. Although he was fully Japanese, he was trained in the Western tradition, and, in many ways, he could not participate in his own nation's discourse like a native (i.e. his calligraphy problem).

⁹⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 25.

One reading for *The Awakening of Japan* might be to look at it in terms of its use of Western techniques and discourses to respond to Western imperialism and an attempt to trace and inventory those 'oriental' elements within himself, a self whose native elements have been obscured by his Western education. Although we cannot separate Okakura from his colonial designs on China, looking at him in this light, we can see him as a both a colonizer and a colonial subject reacting to another colonizer.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The most obvious conclusion for this thesis is that both Akutagawa and Okakura use a discourse similar to that of Orientalism. Both employ this discourse to strip their colonial 'other,' China and the Chinese, of their humanity. The purpose behind this is also clear. These authors are participating in Japan's colonial project even if their support is not active or intentional. The devices and strategies they use to set the foundation for the colonization of China differ substantially. Akutagawa divides China into two pieces: ancient China and modern China. Ancient China is Japan's cultural benefactor, and Akutagawa, in his stripping of China's authority, does not tarnish the authority of ancient China. In fact, he builds up ancient China, but this only serves to further besmirch the image of modern China. Presenting modern China as a dirty, crime-ridden location filled with bestial inhabitants, the image of modern China is thoroughly denigrated. This allows those who read his travelogue to claim that the Japanese need to enter China to control the situation and to protect the classical Chinese heritage to which they are the true heirs.

Okakura's strategy takes a different direction but arrives at the same place. He begins by calling for Asian unity, linking Japan with China and India as a single spiritual unit. This beginning bodes well, but the nefarious elements of his argument soon become clear. Asia is unified, but it is unified under Japan's leadership. The individualities of other countries within the unit are erased and replaced with Japanese elements. His vision of a united Asia is in fact simply trading one colonial ruler for another, the only change being one of skin color.

These conclusions are important, but they are only the beginning of the conclusions that can be deduced from the arguments presented in this thesis. Other problems need to be addressed in this section. In the Introduction, I claimed that one of the topical aspects of this thesis is that, although it involves texts that are approaching or more than a century old, the rhetoric and arguments within these texts are still being used. In the introduction to a translation of Okakura's most famous book, *The Book of Tea*, reprinted in the 1960's, the American publishers were still under the influence of this discourse, claiming that Okakura represented and understood "Asiatic civilization."⁹⁸ It seems unimaginable that a scholar of Japanese could recycle the theories that had been part of the logic underpinning Japan's failed war effort. Nevertheless, we see this rhetorical manufacturing of "Asia" into a single unit reappear. Perhaps it could be called 'the return of the repressing.'

What are the lessons that these conclusions have to offer us? One aspect of these authors' schemas that this thesis has only discussed cursorily is their rejection of Western Imperialism. Okakura claims that the "Night of Asia" slipped over the entire continent, eclipsing their collective glory under the bloody screen of Mongolian ravages. Now that Japan has recaptured the position that all of Asia once held, it will repulse those Western imperial forces which have trespassed into Asian territory. *The Awakening of Japan* and, to a lesser degree, Akutagawa's *Travels in China* both challenge and reject Western Imperialism as a solution to the problems of Asia. Like Said, they both look for solutions other than Western dominance.

The most disheartening aspect of this thesis is that the only solution both of the texts offer is that of Japanese colonialism. In their effort to debunk Western colonialism, the only alternative that they can present is themselves as colonialist.

⁹⁸ Everett F Bleiler introduction to *The Book of Tea* by Kakuzo Okakura (New York, Dover Publication, 1964), IX.

Pontificating on the French student's rioting in May 1968 and the problems of discourse in that event, Certeau states:

The frames of reference would be proof of a scandalous superficiality on the part of those who wish to collapse a system of authority without preparing its replacement; those who would joyfully throw themselves into violence without accounting for the repression or the fascism that their action would serve.⁹⁹

Like those French students manning the barricades in solidarity with the workers, Akutagawa and Okakura tear down the hegemonic discourse that has subjugated Japan and the rest of Asia, but they have nothing with which to replace it. In the end, there is no alternative to the colonial, hegemonic discourse. The only solution is to switch the colonizer.

Post-colonialism has been plagued by a similar problem. These critics, like Said, bring attention to the inequalities in colonial discourse and claim that they will use criticism to manumit the oppressed peoples of the world, the voiceless, the subaltern. However, they focus all their critical attention on the texts of the colonizers. This lends itself to the conclusion that, as soon as the oppressed is allowed to enter the discourse, it becomes dominant. As soon as it is able to speak, it takes the hegemonic position. The oppressed cannot speak, because anyone who is allowed to speak is necessarily not oppressed. Japan had been semi-colonized during the middle of the nineteenth century. Despite this colonization and the shame that the Japanese associated with it, as soon as they have an opportunity, as soon as they have a voice, they use it to carve out a hegemonic position of their own. Even worse, as my

⁹⁹ Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, trans., Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 4.

discussion of Okakura demonstrated, many Japanese used an anti-colonialist façade as their rallying call for their own colonization.

Post-colonialism follows a similar pattern. Post-colonial critics may claim spokespersonship for the colonial subject, but, the critic has a voice, thus he or she cannot truly represent the voiceless ‘others.’ Instead, he or she is only claiming spokespersonship for people who he or she does not actually represent. The most damning criticism that Ahmed levels at Said is that, although he claims to be writing against the Western canon, he discusses nothing but that canon, and he does not allow any Middle Eastern writers to enter into his discussion. His discourse is following a similar pattern. It does not allow for any discourse to exist outside the one that Said was trained in, namely, the Western discourse. Akutagawa and Okakura are also guilty of this sin. They attempt to reject the orientalist discourse, but they can only reinforce it.

One question that the reader might be asking as this work approaches its end is whether this thesis engaged in the same hypocritical discourse in which Said, Akutagawa and Okakura engaged. This thesis has only examined the works of the Japanese imperialists while ignoring the voice of the repressed Chinese. Like Said, did I only examine the voice of the hegemonic member of the discourse while not giving voice to the repressed? This accusation is partially valid, but it mischaracterizes the nature of my project. Unlike Said, I never claimed that the purpose of this project was to liberate the oppressed. The purpose of my thesis was to expose these colonial schemas and demonstrate that they were not significantly different from those of the Western Imperialists. In a murder trial, the prosecutor must focus on the actions of the accused. The actions of the victim are often trivial or irrelevant. In the same way, to focus on the repressed voice of the Chinese would not

have exposed the colonial intentions of the Japanese, what I set out to do. Nevertheless, examining the Chinese response to Japanese colonial efforts in light of this research would be a fruitful topic for further study. A more specific and relevant topic to the contemporary situation in international affairs would be to analyze the Chinese response to the Japanese colonial efforts and how these were incorporated into the construction of the modern Chinese identity as in the works of Yu Dafu or Guo Moruo.

Implications for International Affairs

Even today, we see this switch from the colonized to the colonizer occurring freely. Contemporary China participates in the game. Even though colonialism was more intense in China than Japan and anti-colonialist rhetoric is still an important part of People's Republic of China's national identity, the PRC, like Japan, becomes a hegemon as soon as they establish their nation's prestige and power (see appendix, "The Problems of Nomenclature").

These problems extend beyond literature and have important implications for the realm of politics and international affairs. As I mentioned repeatedly while discussing relevancy, this discourse is still being used on both sides of the Pacific. One interesting example of the continuity of this discourse is Kishore Mahbubani's first book, *Can Asians Think?* In this text, he, unwittingly or otherwise, employs arguments that are disturbingly similar to those used by Okakura exactly a century before in order to bolster his claim that Asia is rising to dominance in the international system. He argues that Asia is a single, cohesive unit that is on the rise and that has a single set of values that he calls "Asian Values." He even makes the argument that

Asia is returning from a “Lost Millennium,” echoing Okakura’s discussion of the approximately thousand-year-long “Night of Asia.”¹⁰⁰ I should mention that this author is highly regarded and his books sell well. He is currently the Dean of the National University of Singapore’s School of Public Policy. Before this, he was Singapore’s ambassador to the United Nations. This author holds an important position in the international community, yet he recycles the discredited arguments of Asia’s first native imperial power, arguments once employed to colonize Singapore. If a person in this position can make these types of assertions, what does that say about the state of our discourse?

Another interesting note is that some of the arguments used here are being recycled by the nations themselves, not just individuals like Mahbunbani. Of particular concern is the burgeoning China and its expanding interest in world affairs. Many commentators, some more informed than others, have suggested that China’s policy of “Peaceful Development” is actually a front to rebuild the former sinocentric Asia and eventually challenge Washington’s position as the Asian and even international hegemon.

This thesis is relevant to the discussion of contemporary China and its rise on the global stage in several ways. Okakura made an argument similar to that of the “Peaceful Development” policy in turn-of-the-nineteenth-century Japan. *The Awakening of Japan* was fashioned in the buildup of the Russo-Japanese War, and the text sought to reassure Anglo-American readers that Japan’s rise posed no threat to Europe. In fact, he claimed, it was Europe who needed to be policed, particularly the expansive and aggressive Tsarist empire. China’s “peaceful development” policy was

¹⁰⁰ Kishore Mahbubani, *Can Asians Think?* (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Press, 2004), 34.

initially proclaimed to reassure the Western Powers that its rise was not a portent of the fall of the American hegemony.

Another eerily striking similarity is the arguments used to assuage Western fears of Chinese dominance. Okakura attempted to convince Westerners that Japan and the rest of Asia were not threats because historically they were not inclined towards aggressive behavior as a nation. Specifically his argument rested on the supposition that the Great Wall was constructed for defensive purposes only and that it was a monument to the Chinese desire not to extend their borders.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, the Great Wall has been incorporated into China's national image as an artifact that gives them the moral high ground against the northern barbarians. They claim that the wall was constructed as a defensive structure and that it suggests that China has never been an aggressive power, wishing to expand its own borders. This is false, but the interesting aspect of this argument is that Okakura and modern China are both using similar arguments to claim that China (and, for Okakura, Asia) has always been inclined towards peace.¹⁰²

Further similarities exist. The "Peaceful Rise" policy could be construed as another Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. An important part of the "Peaceful Rise" Policy has been to shore up alliances or friendships with most of China's neighbors. This is best represented by movements like becoming heavily involved in ASEAN (the Association of South-East Asian Nations). Nevertheless, these similarities can only be extended so far. China is aware that its rise is being compared to that of Japan's by some Western scholars, and Beijing has wisely attempted to avoid any actions which would appear as too similar to Japan.

¹⁰¹ Okakura, 219.

¹⁰² Julia Lovett, *The Great Wall: China Against the World, 1000 BC – AD 2000* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 20.

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APPENDIX

PROBLEMS OF NOMENCLATURE

Throughout this paper, I have discussed how ideas of identity have been manipulated for colonial purposes using a discourse similar to that of Orientalism. My discussion has been directed at the Japanese constructing images of the Chinese for their imperial program before the Pacific War. Considering the length of time this relationship has existed and the changes it has undergone, these issues are not limited to the area or time to which my study has been confined. One of the linguistic problems that resulted from the colonial discourses on which I have focused in this thesis is the naming of China in the Japanese language. On this issue, both Japan and China still aggressively attempt to manipulate the other to maintain or establish their own hegemony.

Names often encapsulate a culture's struggle to define its identity. These sorts of identity problems occur in many cultures. For example, while most of the world calls Turkey's largest city "Istanbul," Greeks generally refer to it as "Constantinople." This controversy can be traced back to the acrimonious history between the Greeks and Turks, specifically the Ottoman Empire's capture of the city from the Byzantine Empire. Whether they realize it or not, every time a Greek chooses to refer to that city as "Constantinople," he or she is making a political statement concerning to whom the city belongs and who has the right to name it (or to rename it). The nature of that political statement is not germane to my topic. What is relevant is that all cultures give careful consideration to toponyms, the names of places. In the long and recently

violent history that has characterized the relationship between the Japanese and the Chinese, they have also experienced a problem of nomenclature.

This conflict centers around one typology for China, 支那, (Japanese - *shina*, Mandarin -*zhina*). Despite the fact that it was only used sparsely by the Chinese themselves, this term has a surprisingly long history. Scholars do not entirely agree on its origins, but most, including those Chinese who are specialists on *hanzi* character development, do agree that the word was derived from Sanskrit to represent the sound “Qin,” the first dynasty to unite all of China. It shares the same origin as Western words like “China” and “Sina,” both of which are derived from the Latin pronunciation of the Qin Dynasty. *Shina* entered China and those countries within the sinocentric system through Chinese translations of Buddhist texts.¹⁰³

Being derived from the pronunciation of the first unifying dynasty in Chinese history, one might expect the term to carry with it a sense of the past glories of China. Examining the meaning of the two characters, *hanzi* specialists have suggested the word connotes “a country where the people have much on their mind.”¹⁰⁴ The word was only rarely used in China, but, despite that, leading Chinese scholars such as the Imperial reformer Zhang Binglin (章炳麟) and Liang Qichao (梁启超) did occasionally use the term. These Chinese scholars certainly did not use it to imply anything negative about China.¹⁰⁵ Over time, it accrued a negative connotation, but that was only because the prestige of China itself sank in the minds of the Japanese people during this period. Overall, it is difficult to argue that the term carries any intrinsically negative connotations although many Chinese, even today, still believe it does.

¹⁰³ Joshua A. Fogel “On Japanese Expressions for ‘China,’” *Sino-Japanese Studies* vol. 2, issue 1 (December 1989): 7-8.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

From the outset of the twentieth century, many Chinese began to take umbrage with Japan's usage of the term. Until that point in history, the Japanese generally made the word for China by taking the character of the name of the dynasty in power or a particularly glorious dynasty and combining it with the character 国, meaning 'country.' With the fall of the Qing Dynasty in China, the term meaning the 'Qing country,' (清国, Japanese - *shinkoku*, Mandarin - *qingguo*) became an anachronism and quickly fell out of use in Japan.

During this period, the term *shina* grew in popularity. As mentioned in the second chapter, for most of the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868), the Dutch were the only Western nation allowed into Japan. During this period, curious-minded Japanese students would travel to Nagasaki, where the Dutch were confined, to learn from the Dutch about the world outside of Japan. Under Dutch instruction, they discovered that China was not the center of the world. These students selected a new name for China that resembled the toponym that the Dutch used and better reflected China's position in the larger world. There was no need for a neologism since a term similar to the Western word already existed in Japanese: *shina*.¹⁰⁶

The word that is currently the standard term used to represent China in both nations is 中国 (Mandarin - *zhongguo*, Japanese - *chugoku*). It is often directly translated into English as "Middle Kingdom" or "Middle Country" because it connotes the centrality of China,¹⁰⁷ and it implies that those outside of China are barbarians on the periphery.¹⁰⁸ Although this toponym was popularly used in China as it emerged into modern nationhood, the term was rarely used in Japan until after it

¹⁰⁶ Joshua Fogel, *The Cultural Dimension of Sino-Japanese Relations: Essays on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 68-71.

¹⁰⁷ Gary and Ming-Yeh Rawnsley, *Political Communication in Greater China: The Construction and Reflection of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 13.

¹⁰⁸ Micheal Weiner, *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 113.

was forced on them by the occupying Allied powers that included the Republic of China.¹⁰⁹

This was not the first time that the Japanese had tried to manipulate toponyms in an attempt to re-present the power structure in East Asia. The second chapter discussed how some Tokugawans attempted to claim the title of true heir to the classical Chinese tradition. These Tokugawans employed a variety of arguments to claim this title. One strategy to pry this title from the heir apparent, modern China, was to claim the name *chugoku* for Japan. Some Tokugawan's argued that the toponym was more befitting of Japan because it was surrounded by the four seas while China was surrounded by barbarians, and their government was regularly overtaken by these barbarians. Since the government of China was Manchurian at the time that this claim was made, it was especially effective.¹¹⁰ Aizawa Seishisai followed a similar line of reasoning in his seminal work, *The New Theses*. In this text, he quietly claims the title of *chugoku* for Japan since, according to Aizawa, Japan was the country that had best preserved Confucian governance.¹¹¹ These cases foreshadow the controversy over the Japanese toponym for China in the twentieth century.

Hidden in both nations' battle over these words is an underlying colonial argument focusing on a reevaluation of the East Asian power structure. The Japanese were keenly aware of the centrality *chugoku* implies. As they watched Chinese influence in the world fade as theirs concurrently rose in the twentieth century, the Japanese cited this shift in power relations as one of their defenses for the use of the term *shina*. In the *Tokyo Daily*, an editorial argued against the use of *chugoku* because it represented the bygone sinocentric system in which all the surrounding nations,

¹⁰⁹ Joshua A. Fogel "On Japanese Expressions for 'China,'" *Sino-Japanese Studies* vol. 2, issue 1 (December 1989): 12.

¹¹⁰ Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1992), 79-80.

¹¹¹ Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 8-9.

including Japan, paid tribute to China and were inferior to it. The editorial argues that, by using the term *shina*, “all people [stand] on equal footing,” diplomatically.¹¹²

This call to revise the historical relationship between the two countries by changing the name has reoccurred in contemporary contexts. In 1983, a professor of Oriental history at Tokyo University repeated the same argument the editorial used. This scholar summarized his ideas, saying, “*Chugoku* represents a time when Japan was weak and imported the culture of China for its own development; *Shina* should now be used because Japan is a modern nation. It has liberated itself from the antiquity of the Chinese world order.”¹¹³ Although separated by half a century, these arguments both utilized a similar strand of logic: the term *chugoku* represents the old world order and the term *shina* lacks these connotations.

The Japanese assertion that they are attempting to choose a name that reflects a more equal diplomatic footing is a hegemonic strategy. By getting rid of the term *chugoku*, the Japanese no longer linguistically recognize China’s centrality or the old sinocentric order in Asia. With this new term, the Japanese were able to attach whatever connotations they desired to the ‘new’ word. By changing to a toponym that the Japanese euphemistically call “more neutral,” it is certainly easier to move to a new view of China without being encumbered by the sinocentric perspective that *chugoku* represents.

This strategy is similar to Akutagawa’s attempt to bifurcate China. Akutagawa’s image of modern China is severed from the glorious image of classical China that is highly regarded in the minds of most Japanese people. This temporal division allows Akutagawa to construct a negative image of modern China while still

¹¹² Joshua A. Fogel “On Japanese Expressions for ‘China,’” *Sino-Japanese Studies* vol. 2, issue 1 (December 1989): 13.

¹¹³ Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 6.

acknowledging the glories of bygone China. The use of *shina* over the term *chugoku* is a similar movement. It allows the Japanese to linguistically represent China without any of the sinocentric baggage that comes with the term *chugoku*. The Japanese proponents of this term, such as the *Tokyo Daily* editorialist, make the point that *chugoku* represents a system of tribute relationships that is no longer valid. What is not explicitly stated in either Akutagawa's text or the newspaper's argument is that they do not wish to discuss China's past hegemonic position because they are trying to take that position for themselves.

What is the Chinese response to the Japanese attempt to shift the linguistic structure to better reflect China's weakened position in the international system? Not surprisingly, the Chinese are extremely hostile to the term *shina*. However, examining their arguments, the opponents attacking the term present little substantive evidence that it contains any real negative connotation. Guo Moruo (郭沫若), one of modern Chinese literature's most famous writers, led the charge against the Japanese usage of the term *shina*. Guo Moruo, who himself had spent a great deal of time in Japan, was fluent in Japanese and was common-law married to a Japanese nurse,¹¹⁴ claimed that there was nothing intrinsically pejorative in the term *shina*. However, when the Japanese used it, he claimed it had a negative connotation parallel to the European usage of "Jew." To demonstrate this point, he noted that, in Japanese multi-national designations (such as Sino-Japanese), the character for China is always in the posterior position. Not only are his arguments weak, but he also fails to mention that China has always put the character for China first in bi-national designations.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Yan Lu, *Re-Understanding Japan: Chinese Perspectives, 1895-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 95.

¹¹⁵ Joshua A. Fogel "On Japanese Expressions for 'China,'" *Sino-Japanese Studies* vol. 2, issue 1 (December 1989): 11.

Following Guo Moruo's own logic, does this not mean that the Chinese language holds China to be superior to other nations?

Guo Moruo was not the only one to protest the usage of the term *shina*. A large section of Japan's urban population during this time was Chinese. The Chinese community in Japan responded to the use of *shina* negatively by accusing the Japanese of stealing the European name for China. They claimed that this implied the Japanese, in a manner reminiscent to Fukuzawa's *Datsu-A Ron*, were trying to separate themselves from Asia and induct themselves into the cabal of powerful nations by humiliating China. Other Chinese critics suggested that the sound of the word connoted a variety of negative meanings including "death," "thing" or "control them."¹¹⁶ Anyone familiar with the Japanese language realizes that none of these arguments are really worth considering as that they are not supported by any evidence.

Guo Moruo's arguments contain their own rebuttal. Following his logic, China disrespects every other nation by placing other nations' names after China in binational designations. Of course, Guo Moruo avoids this point. He tries applying an 'anti-colonial' argument, but this argument would require conceding that the reason he is so critical of Japan's switch to the word *Shina* is that he wants to preserve what was his nation's hegemonic position in the sinocentric system. Instead, like the other Chinese critics, he offers only inane evidence for the problems with Japan's use of the term.

Earlier, we discussed how the Japanese shift to the term *shina* was a sort of colonial strategy meant to find a valueless toponym unencumbered by the long history of China's revered diplomatic position. It should be easy enough for the Chinese critics to reveal the colonial machinations behind the Japanese argument, but I could

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 11-12.

not find anyone who presented a cogent argument. Why? It is simply because, by making this argument, they would admit that their own argument is based on their own form of hegemony and that they do not wish for the Japanese to recognize that China is no longer the center of its diplomatic world. They wish to maintain their own hegemony. These critics are trying to linguistically reinstate the old political order. Again, there is no alternative the dominate discourse, only a switch in who dominates the discourse.

In the introduction to *The Lure of the Modern*, Shih Shu-mei, a Comparatist who is well-versed in Chinese and Japanese literature, broaches the *shina* problem. Like other Chinese opponents of the term, she believes that the Japanese term *shina* is derived from the European toponym. By rejecting the toponym that the Chinese prefer, *chuguoku*, for the European one, *shina*, Shih Shu-mei claims that the Japanese language is rejecting its Chinese cultural heritage. Taking the place of a Western colonizer, Japan's switch to *shina* degrades China to a state of a temporal backwater.

From the perspective of a Comparatist, Shih's criticism is the most troublesome. Shih Shu-mei is a Comparatist herself. According to her Curriculum Vitae, her academic interests include minority discourses and "(post)colonialism." With this sort of background, one would hope that she, of all the critics, would be able to bypass the colonial ruses and cut straight to the argument. Disappointingly, she instead participates in the hegemonic discourse, presenting an argument that does not correspond entirely with the sources she claims to be using and that (mis)leads the reader to believe that Japan is the only culpable party in this nomenclature issue:

Japan's narrativization of its distinctiveness from and superiority over China,

and its assertion of equality with the West, were expressed through the creation of modern Japanese neologisms such as “Shina” (the Japanese transliteration of the Western word “China”).¹¹⁷

Her points are disingenuously expressed. She elides the origin of the word, suggesting only that its origin is Western even though her sources (Fogel and Tanaka, the same sources cited in this section) state otherwise. Shih disregards the word’s long history and only informs her reader that *shina* is a ‘modern Japanese neologism’ that enters Japanese directly from Western sources. Her discussion leaves readers with the impression that the blame rests entirely on the Japanese, but the sources from which she draws her evidence say something very different.

In this thesis, my analysis has focused on two Japanese texts, examining how they tried to use rhetorical methods that are remarkably similar to what Said calls Orientalism to disenfranchise the Chinese of any sense of humanity or authority, thereby making it easier for the Japanese to colonize them. Aside from this chapter, my analysis has been limited in both the time period covered and the direction of the colonialism. Nevertheless, this appendix demonstrates that this discourse is far from something that is limited to this period, nor is this sort of hegemonic discourse something that only goes one direction. As I pointed out in the section entitled ‘Initial Interest and Relevancy,’ these battles are still being fought today. It also demonstrates that there is really no escape from the dominant discourse. The Chinese critics attempt to reject the Japanese rhetorical shifts, but it is only to preserve their own hegemonic position.

¹¹⁷ Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of Modernism: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 19.