Objectivism and the Eradication of Critique in Japanese History

Stefan Tanaka

Japan's surrender in 1945 and the subsequent occupation by American forces created the potential for the termination of Japan's history as it developed in the early twentieth century and the opening for a different history. Indeed, stories of students blacking out line after line of their history textbook suggest the possibility for something quite different.[1] Central to this questioning of pre-World War II history was the interrelation between the nation-state and historical knowledge. Ogura Yoshihiko writes, "When entombed in a non-critical stance toward the logic of the Japanese 'nation-state' (*kokka*), no matter how one conducts research on Asia, one will never see 'Asia.'"[2] Ogura raises questions about the possibility of accurate research on other societies (as well as Japan) when one does not also interrogate the discursive structure of one's own position, especially within the unit of the nation-state. He raises as one of the troubling problematics of modern society the role of history in the separation of knowledge from life.

In post-World War II Japan it was clear to American occupiers and many Japanese that the history that had been practiced and taught was an ideological mystification that though "based upon real life" also "disguised or transposed that real life."[3] A number of historians, such as Tōyama Shigeki, Inoue Kiyoshi, and Ishimoda Sho, who were connected to the Rekishigaku kenkyūkai (Rekiken), a Marxist historical association, imagined a different modern. They sought a reconfigured past where history no longer served as one of those ideologies and mystifications that maintained that separation between knowledge and life.

While reading materials from this period, I have been struck by their conceptual sophistication—that is, the understanding of many of the problematics of a history in and of modern society—and their commitment to the centrality of history to political life. Yet until recently, such conceptual debates and historical issues have been virtually absent from Japanese studies in the United States. Despite their stature and centrality to history and the historical profession, these historians are infrequently discussed or cited, and when mentioned are usually summarily dismissed as "Marxist." I have also been surprised at the difficulty of finding many of the writings of these historians. Perhaps it is because I am in a corner of the United States; but computer databases, even though I am mindful of their incompleteness, have shown a paucity of citations of the Rekiken historians during the 1950s. No doubt there are problems with the framework of these historians, but we must also remember that many of the critical approaches that we use today are also grounded in an understanding of Marx. In writing this paper, I have often fantasized how our field might have evolved had the issues these historians raised been included—not necessarily accepted—in the historiographical training of Japanese history as taught in the United States.

From the end of the war through the 1950s and 1960s these historians debated widely from what today is called "theory" to the exegesis and significance of specific historical moments. Their efforts to reconfigure history, especially the relation between historical knowledge, national ideology, and (mis)understandings of Asia (especially China) parallel our inquiry into area studies in the United States. Their importance was not in connecting history to ideology—that was clear to most people in the immediate postwar period. They reintroduced the performative nature of history and also offered an alternative vision. History, they argued, is more than a descriptive discipline, it also enables, transforms, and restricts individuals and social units. They examined how objectivistic historical knowledge often reinforces a reality that is more linked to an ideological structure rather than the objects they purport to describe. Moreover, they proposed an alternate vision that, while fully located within a modernist project, sought to reaffirm the historicity of many modern categories, thereby bringing process and human agency back to historical studies.[4]

I hope that by raising some of the issues debated during the postwar years and by pointing to many of the reasons for their gradual elision in the 1960s, I will stimulate others to revisit—not resurrect—the writings of these historians. The end of the Cold War makes it imperative that we reexamine Japanese historiography during this period when, despite a strong, critical framework, history returned to the noncritical stance of which Ogura warns.

The Recovery of Time

On 11 January 1946, elementary school classes on ethics, national history, and geography were suspended. This act forewarned of the *Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan* which was submitted to the Supreme Command of Allied Powers (SCAP) on 30 March 1946, which asserted that the history

and geography curriculum played a "major role in political and militaristic indoctrination" largely because "Japan's recorded history has been consciously confused with mythology, and its geography protectively and even religiously self-centered."[5] Here, the ideology that guided those who made history is questioned, covered up (in the blackening out of texts), and a potential is opened for eradication. But ultimately (to get well ahead in my narrative), the connection is only covered up, hidden by a facade. The Ministry of Education quickly followed this report, proposing reforms to the curriculum that would correct the nationalistic history of prewar Japan (that had been considered objective and scientific). The ministry sought a 1) scientific and objective perspective, 2) a history, not only of royalty and nobility, but also of people (*jinmin*), 3) a history from a world history (*sekaishi*) perspective, and 4) a history of industry, economics, and culture rather than wars and political transformation.[6]

In October provisional textbooks were approved; the first elementary history textbook, compiled by the Monbushō (Ministry of Education), was *Kuni no ayumi* (Ienaga Saburō was one of the authors). The major (and significant) change was to alter the temporal markers, changing them from national eras symbolized by emperors and the glorious nation-state to historical eras within Japan's past. For example, the 1943 textbook divided Japan's modern period into "Emerging world," "Rising Japan," "Defending East Asia," "The shifting world," and "The glorious reign of Showa." The same period in *Kuni no ayumi* is "The decline of the bakufu," "Meiji restoration," "The world and Japan," and "From Meiji to Showa." The subchapters shift from imperial reigns and glorious events (such as the Imperial rescript and wars) to political, economic, and social changes.[7] Even though the authors were criticized for not going far enough, of "old authoritarian ideas," "mistaken emperor-centrism," and "defense of militarism,"[8] it is an indication of hope, of a new history that does not glorify the nation-state.

Historians at this time focused on authoritarianism and the failure of democracy. The principal issues were why didn't a more democratic government emerge in Japan, despite the creation of modern political and economic systems; and how can history help understand how a more democratic, modern society might be created. The debate among historians covers a wide range of issues, from which data to include and exclude to a concern over the level of reflexivity, a questioning of methods—especially the notion of pure research—and epistemological concerns. A central group of critical historians associated with Rekiken sought to reenvision the spatial and temporal parameters of historical studies.[9] These historians were influenced by a translation that was published in 1947 of Marx's manuscripts that form the basis of his *Grundrisse*.[10] This debate on the structure of history itself revolved around the third of the Monbushō proposals, to write history from a world historical perspective (*sekaishi*). They viewed *sekaishi* as a global historical perspective that would interrogate the conflation of history with the nation-state, a collusion that facilitated the concentration of power in the state. Their goal was to refocus history away from the nation-state toward peoples, using socioeconomic structures and modes of interaction as the principal criteria for creating temporal categories to measure change.

In 1949 Inoue Kiyoshi proposed that Rekiken focus on the "fundamental contradictions of various societies (later changed to social structures)."[11] Thus, even though the lineage to prewar Marxism is apparent, this marks a departure from the previous focus on modes of production and absolutism. In that year Rekiken made the "basic laws of world history" (*sekaishi no kihon hōsoku*) the theme of their annual meeting. The themes for the following years were related: the stages of nation-state power (*kokka kenryoku no shodankai*, 1950); the national problem in history (*rekishi ni okeru minzoku no mondai*, 1951); on national cultures (*minzoku no bunka ni tsuite*, 1952); and Asia in the world (*sekai ni okeru ajia*, 1953).[12] The 1949 meeting began what many have considered the "golden years" of Rekiken that lasted until 1953.

Second, Rekiken paralleled this conceptual reformulation of history into abstract temporal categories—primordial and ancient, medieval, and modern (*gendai*)—with a structural reorganization that better fits this framework. These periods were defined by socioeconomic conditions, for example, primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist societies. I should note that there was no agreement on the exact meaning and content of these periods.[13] Regardless of what we think of this Marxist framework, the prioritization of temporal categories over national or regional entities has the potential at minimum to historicize the spatial categories we use in writing history and about history (connected to Japan as well as more generally).

The historical profession in Japan up through World War II was (and still is) divided into discrete geographic histories—Japan (*kokushi*), the Orient (*tōyōshi*), and the West (*seiyōshi*). In this structure, the nation-state is naturalized; in all three "fields" it becomes the referent, the often unspoken norm by which others (*tōyō*) and (*seiyō*) have been studied. *Kokushi* turns the referent into an object as well.

This "new" periodization has the potential to recognize one of the major limitations of history. Rekiken historians correctly identified and sought to correct a site of slippage in modernist histories, where the unit of analysis, the nation-state, becomes simultaneously diachronic and synchronic. Tōyama is quite explicit that an antithesis to their proposal is the focus on a single coun-

try (*ikkoku*; he does not use the word for nation-state, *kokka*). The privileging of the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis elides critical data and problems about the transformation of societies and the relation between people and structures. Through claims to science and objectivity such histories incorporate critique: criticism is allowed as long as it does not destabilize the myth of the referent. Usually scientific and critical histories assume the nation-state; it is part of that common sense of the historical profession that naturalizes historical forms into immanent categories. It recalls Koselleck's invocation of Hegel in a description of *Geschichte*, in contrast to *histoire*, which works through—and creates and maintains—a unity, the collective singular of the nation-state. According to Koselleck, this collective singular "made possible the attribution to history of the latent power of human events and suffering, a power that connected and motivated everything in accordance with a secret or evident plan to which one could feel responsible, or in whose name one could believe oneself to be acting."[14]

Tōyama argues that in histories that presuppose the nation-state (in his later writings he extends this to regions), the historicity of a unilinear narrative of development (à la Hegel, Guizot, Buckle, etc.) is elided. He argues that national histories too often overemphasize the uniqueness of the nation, looking for data for differentiation rather than the relationship to general trends. Indeed, this is so evident that we regularly frame questions and use subcategories that presume that differentiation is the goal of history. Moreover, once the spatial form is defined, a linear progressive framework reinforces the naturalness of that space. This national space is reinforced by chronologies of political epochs codified as objective history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that pretend that the nation-state has always existed. Japanese history, for example, has usually been divided by political change that feigns progress while essentializing the nation-state: Nara, Heian, Kamakura, Muromachi, Tokugawa, etc. Moreover, because the nation-state is the primary unit of analysis, the human dimension is deemphasized and only used as examples for the development of the national unit as if it speaks for the human.

One of important aspects of the Rekiken proposal is this historicization of spatial units that have become naturalized and institutionalized. They argue that the history of all societies should be described not by political epochs unique to that place, but by conditions that affect all societies, albeit in different ways. In a recollection written in 1967, Tōyama gives a sense of this world history in a rather long passage:

> The structure of world history that we want is not one that enumerates the historical phenomena of each nation (*minzoku*) intersecting them with the same temporal eras that connect them through a history of intercourse. It is not a mode of grasping development where the history of all nations, divided into advanced and late developing, follow the same developmental path; thus under the influence and leadership of the advanced countries the late-developers follow in their wake. The world history we want is a world history with a uniform (*ittei*) structure with laws of development. Today, the nations (*minzoku*) of Asia, Africa, and Latin America possess both unique (*dokuji*) values and codes of behavior (*undō hōsoku*); they occupy particular positions, serve particular roles, and are conjoined with the forward drive of the developmental laws of world history. The people (*jinmin*) of imperialist countries, of socialist countries, and of newly independent countries, while each are at different developmental levels and strive to resolve different issues, can be connected by a common theme where they share an autonomous and equivalent issue of overcoming imperialism and colonialism and achieving peace, independence, and democracy.[15]

The reorganization of history into these universalistic categories of conditions that all societies (will) experience maintains the progressive movement of post-Enlightenment history. This temporal structure was considered scientific (as an antithesis to nationalist histories). At this point, both an alternative history and one reduced to a variation of the same, a return to bourgeois history, are possible. The important difference between the different historical visions is an inversion of the relationship between the particular and the universal. By turning to temporal moments rather than the nation-state as the referent of historical inquiry, this framework possesses the potential to bring out one of the secrets at which Koselleck hints, the naturalization of temporal categories within the nation-state, where chronologies or epochs enable the elision of the myriad temporalities that might coexist; for example, time of the body, seasonal time, eschatological time, as well as different horizons of expectations.

It is important to point out that *sekaishi* did not provide a different temporal horizon as the modernist history that Rekiken historians criticized. It is still based on a universalistic ideal—that of development—that unfolds from some primitive form to an ideal (not yet known) future. The periods themselves are a modification—via Marx—of the Hegelian primitive, classical, and modern. Their historiographical debates sought to locate the moment of transition from one socioeconomic condition to another where different data are located within these modified categories. Their history was one that argued that this is science, the other, despite claims to objectivity, is not. They, too, were looking for that authentic past, that altar of history that historians believe can be retrieved when others' problems are corrected. But they underestimated the power of such posi-

tivistic history that also made claims to science, but one based on simplistic biological metaphors;[16] and they were often blind to the ways that their own conceptual structure could become equally static within a vision of a scientific history.

As is implicit above, these historians did not deny the importance of histories of the particular, nor did they deny the centrality of nation-states in the twentieth century. To do so would be folly. They were seeking to problematize the historicity of these historical forms as well as the primary unit of analysis, the nation-state, in which such progress had been deployed. Tōyama, for example, emphasizes the relation of the laws of world history (the universal) to the particular, not vice versa. To understand specific relations of the various people to the noninstitutional and fluid socioeconomic forms used in *sekaishi*—social structure, economic development, and class—nations (*minzoku*) provided that delimited, but fluid, unit of analysis.

The theme of the 1951 annual meeting was "problems of nation in history" (*rekishi ni okeru minzoku no mondai*).[17] *Minzoku* provides the data through which these historians tried to recover experiences of the many, the "real" and concrete, in a history that had devalued the human world in favor of the objectivity and certainty of politicoeconomic institutions.[18] Tōyama explains the centrality of *minzoku:* "The perspective of the nation was both a quest to grasp concretely and developmentally the dialectic relationship between the universality and particularity of the historical laws of one country and a problematic that, by locating the history of one country into a world history, sought to understand through the subjectivity of the respective nations the connection between the developmental laws of one country with the developmental laws of world history."[19] The use of the nation provides the historical particularities that had been occupied by the nation-state while simultaneously working in a framework that deemphasized the nation-state. Moreover, an emphasis on nation, the various peoples, diverted the principal topic of history from the political institutions to the mobilization and utilization of various resources for political (and economic) purposes.

One possibility opened up through this framework is the recognition of the problematic of nonsynchronism—that different nations, people, groups, etc. at the same moment have different temporalities. Here Tōyama is attempting to recover the historicity of history, that the categories, objects, and forms that we use today are not necessarily apposite for descriptions of earlier moments. The positivism of bourgeois history insists on the representation of pasts according to fixed temporal categories that render difference into a hierarchical unit. Koselleck calls this temporalization of society a new time, *Neuzeit.*[20] It is an apt word, for it forces us to recognize the historicity of the very concepts we commonly use in historical discourse. For Rekiken historians, by exposing the historicity of concepts and structures, such as the nation-state, they found it possible to locate the areas where modern society has elided (or naturalized as an essential characteristic) the very contradictions of its own system. History was not to be described through abstract concepts, such as progress, mechanical time, etc., but through processes and interactions of peoples. It was an attempt to recover experience in modern society. For example, in their hands, *minzoku* is reconfigured from its national-socialist ties to a liberatory concept. Toma Seita writes in 1951:

> Until now, the emperor-system government has completely substituted statism and anti-foreignism for Japan's ethnic national consciousness; thus the development of both an ethnic national consciousness with a populist foundation and a concept of international solidarity has been greatly hampered. Moreover, modernism, which has had such a strong influence over our intellectual class, has arrested the development of ethnic national consciousness and worked to encourage cosmopolitanism.[21]

Minzoku in this framework was an attempt to recover the time of nations, the multiple temporalities as a constantly changing (in dialectical relationship with the historical laws), rather than eternally fixed, form.[22] The use of *minzoku* here recognizes the fluidity of the history of contemporary political units. Tōyama, for example, points out that in the ancient period the earth was divided into many worlds: Greece and Rome, the Orient, the subcontinent, and the East, centered around China. The latter, he argues, was not an "East Asia" (an idea that is today institutionalized in many universities); it did not exist, nor did a Japan, China, or Korea as nation-states. Instead, these peoples existed in a world centered by a Chinese imperium. Differentiation of these three entities emerged only with the rise of mercantile capitalism. Rekiken historians did not deny a *minzoku* that can be identified using today's terms, Japan, Korea, China, but that the nature of their interaction to other places differed in interaction with the historical laws. In other words, while there is clearly a Japanese nation-state in the nineteenth century, it is a mistake to find the same unit (albeit with a different level of development) in an earlier period when the idea of a Japanese *minzoku* was much weaker. Tōyama is arguing for the recognition of both the differences of the local, the *minzoku,* where the particulars of interaction with capitalist markets differ by time and region, and of the relations among the capitalist nations: the nature of their competition, when each entered different regions, and who entered which place.

The inversion of universal and particular brings up the power relation embedded in discursive structures of world development, an issue that has only recently (since Said's *Orientalism*) become commonly acknowledged. It was an attempt to discuss contemporary issues and recent histories of formerly colonized places outside of a conceptual framework that reinforced the colonial hierarchy but while also recognizing the centrality of modernity. Rekiken historians pointed to the failure of comparative studies in the way it reinforces the nation-state by emphasizing the characteristics of one place as normative by highlighting the differences of another.[23] Inoue went further; he pointed to those "illusions" of connection and interaction through, "convenient words"—intercourse (*kōryū*) and transmission (*denpa*)—that mask the preeminence of the particularities of the nation-state as well as the asymmetry of the global capitalist system. The problem, he argues, is not in the linearity per se but in the merging of linearity with cultural types. In Hegel, who Inoue identifies as the first to write a world history that unifies Asia and Europe into a global historical framework, he finds some commonality in spirit and freedom (Inoue conveniently overlooks Hegel's religiosity). But, he points out, it evolved into a history that rejected the principle of development in favor of asymmetric classifications, the division of peoples into fixed cultural spheres or types (*ruigata*) (he cites Weber's cultural spheres as an example) located along various points of a developmental scale. Thus, on an international level, variation is relegated to differentiated but hierarchically fixed typologies. By foregrounding the temporal structure, this framework is attempting to bring back the formerly naturalized developmental process (and categories) as objects of inquiry. Only after historicizing those categories and frameworks can one then restore history of the particular through those connections of the local to different historical moments and sociopolitical forms.

The Recovery of History: The Elision of Time

The year 1953 marked the end of the "golden years"; much of the momentum of the previous five years began to wane. Rekiken historians continued to write quite actively. Historians such as Inoue, Tōyama, and Ishimoda are among the best-known in the profession. Yet the drive to refocus history dissipated. No doubt much had to do with the changing political and international scenes. But as Tōyama points out, commitment was tepid and, more important, there was insufficient understanding of the principals of *sekaishi* to overcome the habits and infrastructure of an academia that privileged the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis.[24]

But perhaps a more important problem, one that confronts us today, is the similarity between Rekiken and orthodox histories, where attempts at critique often supported that which was criticized. In this case, the similarity of the Marxist framework to the modernist historiography, especially the two principal components, unilinear development and *minzoku*, made the transformation even more difficult. They lend to a rather simplistic reading of problematics in ways that reduce the oppositional possibility to variations of the whole.

Linearity shorn of its processual dynamic could easily (and would be) reintegrated into discussions that assumed geocultural integrity. For example, in seeking those moments of transition, the precise boundaries of one era and another (ancient to feudal and feudal to modern), these historians reified a different category, that of the temporal era rather than the nation-state. In commenting on historiographical debates such as the transition from ancient (slave) to feudal societies or whether the Meiji Restoration was a bourgeois revolution, Tōyama points out that the seemingly major differences among authors were often rather narrow.[25] The study of process gave way to categories which served as markers of process; feudal and modern merely replaced tradition and modern. Moreover, because this new history was "more" scientific, objective data was critical. But because the data which focused on socioeconomic change was very close to institutions of the early states, the differences between state, nation-state, and nation were easily blurred. In these modern histories, though the nation-state was supposed to be problematized, each utterance bore a connection to some part of the history of the nation-state, the meaningful presence. The nation-state (*kokka*) has sufficiently incorporated (or co-opted) elements of the nation, the *minzoku*, or Volk, to obfuscate the unpacking of rhetoric, politics, and history, thereby returning discussions on *minzoku* to a category of immanence. As we have seen today, it is very difficult to separate the idea of nation from histories and the ideology of the nation-state.

A different problem was linearity itself. Though Rekiken historians were critical of modernity as it evolved in a liberal-capitalist mode, they were much more sanguine about a Marxist variation. But in the latter, despite the efforts to build in a heterogeneity into the universalist framework, they did not eliminate the hierarchies that restricted the subjectivity of colonized places. Part of the problem, as Tōyama recognized in a retrospective, was that they did not then see the possibility of a bidirectional interchange. Discussions on imperialism and capitalism focused on the effect of these forces on Japan or Asia; they did not investigate processes in the other direction.[26]

Perhaps most important was the reemergence of orthodox historians. The renewed confidence of these historians can be illustrated in the annual reviews

published in *Shigaku zasshi*, the journal of the Japanese Historical Association. In contrast to a besieged mentality in a lament about the historical discipline in 1948, the review of 1950 celebrates the revival of different fields. But more important, this review was organized by region—Oriental, Western, and Japanese—and employs a chronology through political eras (in the case of China, dynasties) and subregion as natural categories. The section on Oriental history (written by Wada Sei, the senior *tōyōshigakusha* [Orientalist] at Tokyo University) is further divided by epochs and national group along virtually the same lines as prewar Japanese academia; for example, Chinese history is divided into pre-Qin; Qin and Han; Wei, Jin, and Tang; Song and Yuan; Ming and Qing; late Qing and Republican. Regional/national categories follow: Manchuria and Korea; Mongolia and Inner Asia; and Southeast Asia and India. In a high school social studies text on world history by the title *sekaishi*, probably written in 1952 (the introduction was written in January 1953), Wada and Yamanaka Kenji write within a framework of progress, recognize that modernity, the civilization of the West is dominant, point out problems with a unilinear time, and argue for the variance of civilizations (*bunmei*) and human experience. In this sense, they are in line with Rekiken. But the principal point of difference is the nature of variance as it is produced in a historical framework. Wada and Yamanaka argue, perhaps unconsciously, that this difference is both the base and the goal of historical research. They write, "It is critical to know the development of these heteronomous cultures in order to investigate the essence of human cultures. This knowledge is more important than even thinking about the history of the development of Western civilization."[27]

On the one hand, this statement can be read as a plea to incorporate the history of the Orient (*tōyōshi*) into any account of world history—a prewar line. But they recognize that it is not a matter of incorporation, but the mode of incorporation. They prefer separate accounts that presume the integrity of cultural and national units. There is an oblique criticism to the Rekiken version of *sekaishi*; they argue that a deterritorialized history that combines East and West into synchronic forms fosters confusion: "One cannot understand the conditions of historical development, it unnecessarily complicates a complex past, and it fosters unease and confuses readers."[28] They propose to discuss the history of the West and the history of the East separately until the modern period when a single world and world history emerges. Thus in the chapters on *tōyō*, China centers a discussion that is organized through its dynastic changes and relations with peripheral peoples. The history of the West begins with ancient Greece and moves through Rome, the Middle Ages, early modern (Renaissance), revolutionary period, and the formation of nation-states in the nineteenth century. Text on Japan is virtually absent; its history is to be discussed in courses on Japanese history. Yet Japan is present in this text, forever the referent by which other histories are evaluated.

Even though they recognize intercourse between the Occident and Orient in the ancient and medieval periods, the "conditions of historical development" mask a presupposition of spatial, cultural, and national divisions—Orient and Occident, and subdivisions, China, India, and Southeast Asia—as primary categories over social or ideational forms. The categories proposed by Rekiken, because they do not use those units of analysis, are depicted as overly complicated and fostering confusion. Instead, history for Wada and Yamanaka should use the naturalized categories of the present to discuss the past.

This structure illustrates the response of the orthodox historians, especially those who held positions in the major universities and research institutions through the war. Despite the soul-searching during the 1960s, this structure has continued until the present. It is the "commonsensical," i.e., objectivist methodology, that elevates fact over theory. Enoki Kazuo explained this common sense:

> Historical theory (*riron*) and perspective are certainly essential in investigating historical facts and grasping historical development. However, facts are not born and history is not formed from theory. Theory is induced from historical facts, and theory is abstracted from history. Historical theory acquires the support of historical facts and then everybody pays attention to it. Facts are synthesized through the historical perspective of the investigator and then given structure. Certainly one area of growth and advancement of our postwar historical profession is the understanding and integration of such a commonsensical methodology and the recognition of the necessity of a "rich and fruitful" historiographical structure. In any event, 1951 was the fruitful year that our historical profession gradually regained composure and equanimity and inaugurated new advances.[29]

Enoki is reasserting the primacy of the historical fact, that is, concrete data over conceptual structure. Of course, in his mind the division by areas and political periods are "natural"; they are not conceptual. He ignores Droysen's sage statement, that facts are stupid without interpretation, in favor of a naive reading of Ranke's *wie es eigentlich gewesen* (Inoue's reading of Ranke that recognizes his rhetoric and the referent in the German nation or Protestantism is overlooked). It is here that the historicity of history is occulted. Time is rendered as periods, irrespective of the conditions that gave rise to such divisions; nation-states become those timeless vessels as if they always existed in the current (al-

beit more primitive) form that allow for a chronology that stands for time; and cultural areas take on conditions of a chronologically fixed place. They become part of that "secret or evident plan" that Koselleck describes (or what Enoki calls the "commonsensical") that pulls all heterogeneity to the collective singular and supports the conviction (though illusory) by which people act. But the claim to common sense is quite devious. Categories and statements of intent make many of the same claims as Rekiken historians. Problematics they raised are incorporated as variations of the natural process of development. Though (or because) organized chronologically, these periods efface the problematics of process and transformation in favor of finite units where dates suffice for process and transformation. By reducing one's vision to a narrow moment of an immanent nation, positivistic historians such as Wada were eliminating the possibilities for heterogeneity—what was called unnecessarily complex—and gaining more control over their object of study. Wada has reaffirmed a property of modern historical methodology, to avoid chance wherever possible.[30]

Celebration: Effacement of Critique

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s debates continued on the relation between history and the possibilities for a less hegemonic and homogeneous history, thus the nation-state. Despite the lack of agreement over the exact narrative as well as the methodological issues, the majority of Japanese historians operated within the general framework proffered through Rekiken. We must remember that the new elementary and high school textbooks generally followed this *sekaishi* framework.[31]

In the 1960s Rekiken confronted a formidable challenge. In 1960 John W. Hall and Edwin Reischauer convened a conference at Hakone, one of the initial meetings of the Conference on Modern Japan, more commonly known through the edited series published by Princeton University Press. The conference was a special project of the Association for Asian Studies and supported with a grant from the Ford Foundation. And in 1962 the Asia and Ford Foundations sought to invigorate the study of China in Japan through grants to the Tōyō-Bunko.

Both events must be seen in relation to the Cold War and the buildup of area studies programs in the United States. In the first case, the study of Japan's transformation shifted from a historical problematic that sought to understand the relation between institutions *and* inhabitants as a way to expose and correct structural imperfections, to an exegesis of the transition as a "case study" (actually model) of a worldwide, i.e., universalistic, transformation of a non-Western place to a modern nation-state. In other words, Japan became historical data to describe the process of modernization. In the second case, the support of Japanese research on China using the considerable body of expertise of Japanese researchers (especially those connected to the elite prewar institutions) would provide the data that simultaneously highlighted Japan's "success" (in comparison to an intransigent and "traditional" China) and provide prescriptions of American policy to foster liberal capitalism in East Asia.[32]

In Japan these events gave renewed focus to Rekiken historians and awakened memories of especially those China historians whose own research was connected to Japan's imperialist policies in Asia.[33] Historians again questioned the separation of past from present as a pretense for claiming objectivity, the role of theories and methods, and the relation between scholarship and national policy. These debates are remarkable for the candor, sophistication, and openness in which many historians sought to transcend arbitrary but institutionalized boundaries. In many ways, the issues that confront area studies today were rehearsed at this time. In both cases, the central issue or target was the application of modernization theory (with its lineage to Hegel and especially Weber) through area studies. Ōta Hidemichi's criticism is common; he criticized the hidden values in the emphasis on rationality and mechanization and discerned its convergence with supporters of the Pacific War in the tendency to pardon Japan's invasionary path from the Meiji to the Pacific war.[34]

Most Japan specialists are (or should be) familiar with the Hakone conference held from 29 August to 2 September. In a sense, this is the originary moment (not a beginning) for Japanese studies in the United States. But it also marks the effacement of much of the Japanese historiography written between 1947 and the early 1960s. In short, it sets in motion a shift from Japanese historians determining the contours of their history to American academics setting the agenda. I will not rehearse the conference here. Summaries are readily available.[35] Appraisals, written by Tōyama, Ronald Dore, and Reischauer, were published in Japanese newspapers.[36] Here I would like to think about this conference not for what emerged, but for what was ignored. In reading the preconference materials and published reports in English and Japanese I have been struck by the naivete and arrogance of most American participants and the quite sophisticated critiques by many Japanese participants that contrasts with the impression in the Princeton series. My lament is that Japanese studies today would be conceptually much stronger had a dialogue emerged rather than a silencing of difference. Also surprising is the active interaction of Japanese participants, perhaps because public discussion was conducted in Japanese but more likely from recognition that the proposed conceptualization would efface a substantial portion of historiography over the previous fifteen years. But even though the con-

ference itself overcame a common stereotype that Japanese are not active participants, Hall's English report uses that stereotype to localize and diminish the criticisms and issues that Japanese scholars raised.[37]

Even though participants were rather evenly balanced, the meeting was structured and took place in a way that minimized the influence of Japanese scholars on the conceptual construct of modernization.[38] First, the meeting was structured to authorize modernization theory as proposed by Hall and Reischauer. Hall suggests the following agenda in a memo: first-day discussion—"'Modernization' in terms of general principles," focusing on the issues raised by Dore, Hall, Reischauer, and Levy; second day—discussion of modernization in Japan; and third day—the study of Japan's modernization. While this does not necessarily set priorities, Hall ends with the following request to Japanese participants: "It will be noted that the papers prepared by American participants are largely directed toward the problem of the first day's discussion. It will be most helpful if the Japanese participants will direct their thought to the more specific problem of the modernization process in Japan proper."[39]

Even though the essays of Japanese scholars were also directed toward the general principles of modernization, the structure proposed by Hall is consistent with an Orientalist stereotype: the conceptualization is that of North American scholars (Dore was then at the University of British Columbia), while the natives, the Japanese, serve as the informants. The relegation of Japanese scholars to native informants is described by Kawashima Takeyoshi in his complaints that American scholars curtailed discussion on critical issues, such as democracy, capitalism, and feudalism as value-laden and not directly related to the topic. On occasion when Japanese participants brought up these issues, they were abruptly dismissed with what he called "emotional responses" by several American participants, no doubt an exasperation at the subjectivity and "ideology" of the Japanese participants. Such condescension was felt by a number of the Japanese participants.[40]

Despite the tension, strong words, and often sharp disagreements, there was considerable agreement over the principal issues and problems. Proceedings in the Japanese language encouraged their participation, but it did not overcome misunderstandings when words and concepts bore different contexts and legacies; the American "open approach" sought objectivity using rational and mechanistic criteria; Japanese questioned the absence of democracy and socioeconomic transformation (from feudalism to capitalism and socialism); and both sides operated within a universalistic paradigm that envisioned the development of societies along a modernist trajectory. Hall writes, "It is in this context that the concept of modernization has been brought into being as something more inclusive of the total range of changes affecting the world in modern times."[41] Hall's "total range of changes" is similar to that of *sekaishi*. Both modernization theory and *sekaishi* claimed to be universal, scientific, and interdisciplinary.

One of the fascinating issues about the limits of science when applied to humans that this conference demonstrates is the extent to which their modern scientific methods obscured a shared ideal, in this case, democracy. The surprising curtailment of any discussion of democracy, dismissed as value-laden, reflects less a disinterest than an unbridled optimism.[42] But Japanese scholars, especially Tōyama and Kawashima were right to focus on this moment. It is at this point that Koselleck's warning that "the determinations of experience are increasingly removed from experience itself."[43] Hall writes, "The attempt to devise a unified and objective conception of modernization is not a light task, for it calls upon the scholar first to detach himself from the actual flow of history around him and secondly to give up any preconceptions he may have had about the values upon which modern society might rest."[44] For Hall, this means a detached objectivity. This, of course, is disingenuous for the very separation of experiences, American and Japanese turns American values into norms and transposes, as subjective, those concerns of the Japanese scholars into subjective and value-laden issues. Kawashima aptly points out that such empirical methods have been used in history by an orthodoxy against something considered heterodox. This elision of experience becomes clear in Reischauer's explanation of the difference between the two sides:

> Because Japanese scholars have experienced the whole process of Japan's modernization there is a strong tendency to consider Japan's modernization through their values (*kachi*). In other words, in Japan they think about desired results. On the other hand, because westerners have not experienced modernization to the same extent, they view it objectively. They try merely to record and analyze events of a century ago and defer value judgments.[45]

Reischauer presupposes that the past is separable from the present, but only concerning the object of study. He has simultaneously effaced the Cold War as a framing event (i.e., the subjectivity of American scholars, especially Reischauer) and the recent experience of these Japanese historians having lived through a fascist period. Tōyama's paraphrase of an American retort to his critique of modernization theory exposes this myopia, "Japanese scholars emphasize the distortions and slowness of Japan's "modernization," but we evaluate Japan, as a part of Asia, as an example that has rapidly succeeded."[46] In other words, Japan has now become a successful model in Cold War Asia.

Hall's report in the Jansen volume attempts to encompass the range of discussion; he does acknowledge Tōyama's critique. But rather than engaging these issues, he describes Tōyama's voice as one that substitutes "chaos for order, of a 'no-system' approach instead of one based on conceptual certainties."[47] Hall's comments echoes Wada's criticism of *sekaishi,* of unnecessary complications and confused readers. Hall's chaos is the multiple and contradictory possibilities in history, a part of modernity itself, while his conceptual certainties is that property of modern history that seeks to avoid chance.

Tōyama's critique of modernization theory questions its simplicity, what Inoki Masamichi called seductive (*mirokuteki*) but limited, and exposes the conceptual poverty that permeates area studies today. His criticism of modernization theory follows the general problematics raised in *sekaishi.* First, he points how categories and norms are too often defined through the particular; by using England and France as the implicit norm, peculiarities (impediments to modernization) are found in tradition—the very nationalistic characteristics that were celebrated in Japan's imperialistic and fascistic periods—not in the process whereby past forms are both destroyed and employed for different but modern purposes. Second, he points out that the emphasis on an objectivity guided by mechanization and rationality fosters a fragmentation of the object of study despite professions to interdisciplinarity. For Tōyama, the avoidance of capitalism, especially its effects on society and politics in favor of exegeses that measure successful growth, both supports and is supported by fragmented studies within various disciplines that use mechanistic criteria to determine change. In area studies, interdisciplinarity becomes a mask for empirical studies where culture obviates the need for disciplinary rigor. And last, he argues that modernization theory conflates time; it flattens the many and considerable changes that occurred from the eighteenth century through the twentieth century into this category of modernization. Indeed, one of the problems of area studies today is the tendency to reduce temporality into two categories, the modern and traditional. Even newer studies that profess to bring out the invention of traditions often operate within a flattened notion of time.[48]

We can only speculate where Japanese historiography might be today had we engaged with these issues in the 1960s. To Hall's credit, he did acknowledge Tōyama's critique (though as an afterthought); but in postconference reports, the subsequent seven conferences, and recent historiography, those who were most critical have been virtually elided from recent historiography.[49] The pattern by now should be clear, Marxist historiography is reduced to economics or dismissed as value-laden.[50] Hall (and others) dismiss these issues as simply a different "problem consciousness," one that he depicts as declining (therefore anachronistic)—he describes Inoue Kiyoshi and Eguchi as younger scholars who are moving away from their Marxism. The presumption here is that Marxism is unchanging, and the critiques of Inoue and Eguchi support his proposal for a different history.[51] This view should be placed within the organizational structure of the conference, where Japanese participants were native informants and any criticism of those "certainties" (here undefined) can only be those of the less sophisticated.

While most summaries note the differences between Americans and Japanese, there was also considerable differences within each side, especially the Japanese participants. These variations provided Hall with the opening to incorporate a "Japanese" point of view. Some, like Maruyama Masao who focus on the individual psyche rather than structural issues of capitalistic society, were retained for their interest in how individual Japanese did or did not make the transition to the modern. Maruyama's focus on individuation touches on questions of democracy, but only as long as cause can be localized in the culture or past (tradition or the individual), not the system. In the last essay of the first volume of the modernization series, Maruyama divides the Japanese participants into two groups: the Marxists—Tōyama and Ōuchi (we should also add Kawashima)—are those who focused on "limiting the notion of modernization to a particular historical process, that is, the process from feudalism to capitalism."[52] The second group comprised those (unspecified) who were willing to work within the modernization approach, but one more broadly conceived to include "ethos" and "ideology." Maruyama, too, trivializes the breadth and alternatives of *sekaishi,* reducing it to the process from feudalism to capitalism and contrasting it to a broad and universalistic modernization theory. Maruyama, of course, has become well known among American Japan specialists; he became a native informant in two senses: the Japanese scholar who is somewhat critical but willing to work amidst the modernization framework; and the intellectual historian who brings ethos and qualitative issues to Japanese studies.

So in the name of a framework that professes breadth and universalist methods we have seen the institutionalization of hermetic fields of study that vigorously defend their particularity. We now have a study of Japan that emphasizes national particularities, as both a positive (that of uniqueness) example for what it was able to accomplish, as well as an impediment—those traditions and legacies, the past, that hinder modernization. Positivistic data dominates, approaches that question the framework are rendered as too difficult, chaotic, and "theory." Japanese historians, such as Tōyama Shigeki, Ishimoda Sho, Inoue Ki-

yoshi, Eguchi Bokurō, Uehara Senroku, etc., were not only virtually effaced from the Conference on Modern Japan, but their historiography is removed from American Japanese studies.

An Epitaph

The accounts of the Hakone meeting by Dore and Tōyama in *Mainichi shinbun* indicate the road taken by subsequent conferences was a lost opportunity for dialogue between the different approaches. This is apparent in the titles: that of Tōyama's suggests hope despite quite different backgrounds, "Possibility for Scholarly Cooperation Despite a Different Present and Traditions," while that of Dore suggests difficulty and closure, "Difference of Problem Consciousness: A World Perspective and an Ethnic Perspective." Tōyama in recognizing the differences suggests that such a conference bears an important similarity with domestic meetings, the need to recognize that agreement is not always forthcoming and that one can learn from others. Dore's assessment of the conference indicates the arrogance of Western scholars. He attributed the differences to the cosmopolitan experiences and wealth of the Western scholars in comparison to the provincial Japanese. He writes, "American scholars can travel throughout the world with support of foundations, etc. and there are many who participate in the plans to support overseas economies. Japanese scholars are surrounded by a major impediment, that is, language and lack of resources, and with the exception of the natural sciences, the taint—of course not to the extent as Russia—of a provincialism (*shimaguni*) remains strong."[53]

These concluding paragraphs serve as a metaphor for activities that followed the Hakone conference. The Conference on Modern Japan continued, with carefully selected Japanese participants (or by omitting those who were critical of this version of modernization theory).[54] Meanwhile, in Japan—a long way from Bermuda and Puerto Rico—academia took up the challenge of modernization theory and had to confront a new issue. In 1962 the Asia and Ford Foundations proposed to use their considerable riches to invigorate the study of modern China, i.e., to make Japanese scholars less provincial. The plan to support the Tōyō Bunko—resources, graduate student fellowships, and institutional support—paralleled the Ford Foundation's support of area studies, especially of China, in American universities. But in Japan this proposal along with the Hakone conference awakened memories of those whose research was tied to Japan's imperialist policies in Asia. *Rekishigaku kenkyō* responded with special issues on modernization, Japan, and history in May 1961, on academic freedom and responsibilities in November 1962, and on the subjectivity and duty of historians in September 1963. In October and November 1963 *Shisō* published special issues on Weber and modernization theory. Tōyama, too, revised *sekaishi* taking area studies into consideration.[55]

Tōyama's "new" version of *sekaishi* highlighted the international aspect of Western capitalism by dividing history into the following categories: the age of ancient world empires; the age of the dissolution of ancient world empires; the age of formation of world markets of capitalism; the age of imperialism; and the collapse of imperialism. The purpose of this history was to conceive of a historical framework that corrected a bourgeois history that exoticized the Orient by placing the experience of peoples and countries into meaningful, autonomous positions within history.[56] He did not find the problem in the identification of bourgeois history with the West (to do so pretends that history as practiced today is universal). He acknowledges that the historical unification of the world took place at a particular moment in Western (he identifies Hegel) writings. But he criticizes the way that this history stratifies societies and areas into fixed categories. Tōyama argues instead that world history should be "a history of all nations (*minzoku*) as a structural composites that differ by developmental levels and social structure. That composite structure changes over time and one can establish autonomous temporal divisions of world history as an indicator of fundamental transformation of that structure."[57]

The strength of this proposal is in the centrality of processes and interactions as the central feature in the transformation of peoples. Categories and characteristics of time, region, or nation-state are temporal—that is, fluid. Tōyama recognizes the heterogeneity of different peoples, attempts to account for different temporalities, recognizes the separation between nation and nation-state, and does not shy away from the centralizing and homogenizing tendencies of modernity as well as its contradictions.

Tōyama's work is not a panacea, but he reminds us that history is both a discourse and a practice. He points us in a direction that will help us recover experience, the human that was written out of modernization theory in the name of objectivity. It is that area of which Michel de Certeau warns us, "we have to stay out of the virgin forest of History, a region of 'rich fuzziness' in which ideologies proliferate and where we will never find our way. Perhaps, too, by holding to the idea of discourse and to its fabrication, we can better apprehend the nature of the relations that it holds with its other, the real."[58] We would be well served to exhume an important body of writings that has been occulted beginning in the 1960s.

Notes

1. See for example, Carol Gluck, "The Past in the Present," in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 64–95.
2. Ogura Yoshihiko, *Ware Ryūmon ni ari* (Tokyo: Rōkei shoten, 1974), 55.
3. Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 1992), 146.
4. For a discussion on problematics of history, see Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
5. United States Education Mission to Japan, *Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 15.
6. Tōyama Shigeki, *Sengo no rekishigaku to rekishi ishiki* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1968), 15.
7. Kimura Shigemitsu and Konno Hideharu, "Rekishi kyōiku to jidai kubun," *Nihonshi kenkyū* 400 (1995): 101–4.
8. Tokutake Toshio, *Kyōkasho no sengoshi* (Tokyo: Shin nihon shuppansha, 1995), 46.
9. For an overview of this period as well as other groups involved, see Gluck, "The Past in the Present." She refers to this group as the progressive historians. For an account of debates on subjectivity, see J. Victor Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
10. "Shihonsei seisan ni senkō suru shōkeitai," *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 129 (1947). Selected portions were translated into English in 1971; *The Grundrisse*, trans. David McLellan (New York: Harper, 1971).
11. Inoue Kiyoshi, "Sengo no rekiken no ayumi ni tsuite," *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 212 (1957): 50.
12. I have learned much from Kevin Doak's work on *minzoku*, which he translates as ethnic nationalism: "What Is a Nation and Who Belongs? National Narratives and the Ethnic Imagination in Twentieth-Century Japan," *American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 283–309; and "Ethnic Nationalism and Romanticism in Early Twentieth-Century Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 22(1) (1996): 77–103.
13. See for example, Ōta Hidemichi for a criticism of the overly general categories, "Shisō to shite no sekaishizō," in *Minzoku no mondai*, ed. Rekishi kagaku kyōgikai (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 1976), 261–87.
14. Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Boston: MIT Press, 1985), 31.
15. Tōyama Shigeki, "Sekaishi ni okeru chiikishi no mondai," in *Minzoku no mondai*, ed. Rekishi kagaku kyōgikai (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 1976), 250–51.
16. This version of progress drew from philosophers, such as Condorcet and Comte, and historians, such as Guizot. See for example Keith Michael Baker, *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).
17. For analyses of the use of *minzoku* by these historians in the postwar period, see Doak, "What Is a Nation."
18. See Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 59.
19. Tōyama, "Sekaishi ni okeru chiikishi no mondai," 247.
20. Koselleck, *Futures Past*, xxiv.
21. Quoted in Doak, "What Is a Nation," 303–4.
22. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 95, for a discussion in this interaction between time and space.
23. Ibid., 247.
24. Tōyama Shigeki, "Sen kyuhyaku gojūsan nendo taikai no kekkan wa naze umareta ka?" in *Tōyama Shigeki chōsakushū*, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 111–18.
25. Tōyama Shigeki, "Jidai kubunron," in *Nihon rekishi, bekkan I* (Tokyo: Iwanami kōza, 1963), 213.
26. Tōyama, "Sekaishi ni okeru chiikishi no mondai," and "Sen kyuhyaku gojūsan nendo taikai no kekkan wa naze umareta ka?"
27. Wada Sei and Yamanaka Kenji, *Sekaishi* (Tokyo: Nihon shoin, 1954), 1.
28. Ibid., 2.
29. Quoted from Ogura, *Ware Ryūmon ni ari*, 48–49.
30. Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 117.
31. According to Kimura and Konno, 1956 marked the beginning of a gradual erosion of this framework into a more nation-state-centered history. "Rekishi kyōiku to jidai kubun," 104–5.
32. See, for example, the comparison in Edwin Reischauer, *Japan Quarterly* 10 (July-Sept. 1963): 298–307.
33. For example, in a special issue devoted to modernization theory, Eguchi Bokurō stated that *sekaishi* is at a crossroads. "Sekaishi ni okeru 'kindaika' no mondaiten," *Shisō* 473 (1963): 1521.
34. Ōta Hidemichi, "Shisō to shite no sekaishizō," 271. See also Inoue Kiyoshi, "'Kindaika' e no hitotsu no apurōchi," *Shisō* 473 (1963): 1455–63.
35. See John Whitney Hall, "Changing Conceptions of the Modernization of Japan," and Masao Maruyama, "Patterns of Individuation and the Case of Japan: A Conceptual Scheme," in the first volume of the Conference on Modern Japan, in *Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Modernization*, ed. Marius Jansen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965). For a rather different account in Japanese see Kawashima Takeyoshi, "Kindai nihon no shakai kagakuteki kenkyū," *Shisō* 442 (1961): 483–88.
36. Essays by Tōyama and Dore were part of a series entitled "Kokusai kaigi no muzukashisa," *Mainichi shinbun*, 8 and 10 Sept. 1960; the individual titles were "Genjitsu to dentō wa chigau mo gakusha no kyōroku wa kanō" and "Mondai ishiki no sōi: seikaiteki na kenchi to minzokuteki na kenchi to"; and Reischauer, "Tōsai 'kangaekata' no kōkan," *Asahi shinbun*, 11 Sept. 1960.
37. I recognize that there were many differences among the American and Japanese "groups," yet all summaries concur that debate generally divided among these groups.
38. Tōyama mentions the limited understanding of the contextual and discursive meaning of words. "Kokusai kaigi no muzukashisa."
39. Memo, John W. Hall to Participants in the Hakone Conference on Modernization. A copy of preconference memos and preliminary papers are bound in the International House of Japan library.