Chapter Fifteen: The Configuration of Orient and Occident in the Global Chain of

National Histories: Writing National Histories in Northeast Asia

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Encapsulating National History in Eurocentric 'Tunnel History'

Modern historiography has often been a tool to legitimate the nation-state 'objectively

and scientifically.' Despite its proclamation of objectivity and scientific inquiry, modern

historiography has promoted the political project of constructing national history. Its

underlying logic was to find the course of historical development that led to the nation-

state. Thus, national history has made the nation-state both the subject and the object of

its own discipline. The 'Prussian school' provides a typical example. Not only was Ranke

the official historiographer of the Prussian state, Droysen's distinction between 'History'

(die Geschichte) and 'private transactions' (Geschäfte) also reveals the hidden politics

that is inherent in modern historiography. While 'History' referred to the state of the

elites and the powerful, 'private transactions' were assigned to the various aspects of the

lives of the powerless who did not matter in the narrative of 'History.' The people's

history was to be subordinate to the history of the nation-state in this scheme.

Therefore, 'History' became the scientific apologia for the nation-state and the

people looked to national history to illuminate the course of human progress culminated

in the nation-state. It invoked the desire of the ordinary people to be positioned in the

course of national history and subjected them to the hegemony of state power. When

Michelet defined the historian as an Oedipus who teaches the dead how to interpret and

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decipher the meaning of their own language and deeds not known to themselves, he exposed the historian's professional secret to appropriate the dead for the cause of the nation-state. This explains why the present historical order of national history is 'a curious inversion of conventional genealogy' by starting from the 'originary present.' The nation's biography cannot but be written 'up time' because there is no Originator. The present nation-state became the real ancestor of all historical precedents.

The 'originary present' as the firm footing of national history or a nation's biography justifies Eurocentrism in an intrinsic way, because it reviews the past retroactively from the present world order, which has been overwhelmed by European modernity. The demise of national histories with an increasing Europeanisation of historical writing in Western Europe after 1945 does not mean the end of the national history paradigm. Rather, 'it brings also a danger of new ideological closures, of erecting new borders and building new boundaries' between Europe and non-Europe and constructs 'a homogenised European path' superior to other non-European experiences. What one finds in Richard von Weizsäcker's address that 'Europe itself is a *raison d'etat*' is a broadened scope of the national history paradigm from individual nation-state to the European Union. The national history encapsulated in the Eurocentric tunnel history during the imperialist age remains unshaken in this postcolonial era, leaving the *episteme* of the national history paradigm intact.

The Eurocentric 'tunnel history' within the walls of the spatial boundaries of the EU brings the myth of the European miracle, whose core is the set of arguments about ancient and medieval Europe and the unique historical conditions for its self-generating modernisation in comparison with the 'Rest.' Europe, as a self-contained historical

entity, implies European exceptionalism. It asserts that rationalism, science, equality, freedom, human rights and industrialism promulgated by the European Enlightenment are the unique phenomena of European civilisation. The Eurocentric mode of historical thought inherent in this exceptionalism is endorsed by an evolutionary historicism that comprehends both the narrative and the concept of development in a homogenous and unified time of history. Citing Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'historicism is what made modernity or capitalism look not simply global but rather as something that became global *over time*, by originating in one place (Europe) and then spreading outside it. This 'first in Europe, then elsewhere' structure of global historicist time was historicist.'<sup>8</sup>

The 'first in Europe, then elsewhere' structure of evolutionary historicism gave rise to Eurocentric diffusionism. It is believed that culture, civilisation, and innovations flowed out from the European to the non-European sector. <sup>9</sup> Thus, European history became the hegemonic mirror with which non-Europeans reflect themselves. The Eurocentric mode of historical thought brought an illusion that, if there is progress and development in Europe, there ought to be its equivalent in the peripheries. The historian's task in the peripheries has been to find the symmetrical equivalents to European history. As Sakai Naoki remarked succinctly, 'the attempt to posit the identity of one's own ethnicity or nationality in terms of the gap between it and the putative West, that is, to create the history of one's own nation through the dynamics of attraction to and repulsion from the West, has, almost without exception, been adopted as a historical mission by non-Western intellectuals.' <sup>10</sup>

The Eurocentric national history paradigm consigned the less developed nations to 'an imaginary waiting room of history' in this way. They saw their indigenous history

as a history of 'lack' in comparison with Europe. <sup>11</sup> Both the nationalist and Marxist non-European historians have tried to overcome this sense of 'lack' by finding the missing ingredients such as middle class, cities, political rights, rationalism and, above all, the capitalist mode of production in their own history. They have been very keen to prove that they belong to historical nations by finding European elements, which led them to an endeavour to make their histories intelligible to a Western readership. In order to achieve this goal, the East and West, and the Orient and Occident had to be configured in a way that satisfies the expectation of Western readers in the modern historiography of the peripheries. The result was misery for the East because the configuration of East and West in the Eurocentirc historical scheme affirmed once again Occidental superiority and Oriental inferiority.

Neither nationalist nor Marxist historians of the peripheries broke free from the Eurocentric discourse of historicism that projected the 'West' as 'History.' They both have been entangled by the stagist theory of history, which views the European path as the sole universal model. The key concept of modern historiography that European colonialism and third-world nationalism had in common was the universalisation of the nation-state as the most desirable and natural form of political community. This mode of thought forms a global chain that ties together national histories on a worldwide scale, which feeds Eurocentrism and Orientalism. The upshot is that the non-European national histories became the epistemological twins of the Eurocentric national histories of the West by sharing the Orientalist value-code in the form of 'anti-Western Orientalism.' Fernand Braudel's remark that Europe invented historians and then made good use of

them to promote their own interests at home and elsewhere in the world demonstrates this phenomenon in a very convenient way. <sup>14</sup>

## 'Japan': Inventing Orient in an Invented Orient

It was at the request of the Paris international exposition bureau that the first national history of Japan, A Brief History of Japan (日本史略), appeared in 1878. Its final revised version of 1888, View of National History (國史眼), was adopted as the official history textbook in the newly created history department of Tokyo Imperial University. Thus, the first Japanese national history and official history textbook had 'Western readers' as its primary target. Its main purpose was to present the unbroken imperial line as the chief source of Japan's assumed political sovereignty and legitimacy to the West. It was in tune with the revived interest in ancient history and the growing emphasis on the legitimacy of the imperial lineage at home. Itō Hirobumi, the architect of the modern Japanese constitution, demanded to discover the scattered and forgotten tombs of the emperors and keep them in good order. The imperial house's historical legitimacy invented or rediscovered, he believed, would provide the grounds for his struggle to revise the unequal treaties with the Western powers. If

With the establishment of a legitimate imperial genealogy, the Japanese national 'geo-body' took shape as a natural and organically integrated territorial unit that extended back throughout historical time, and its contours were firmly established in the second half of the nineteenth century. A comprehensive effort to 'Japanise' the periphery and construct a Japanese organic geo-body began with the first Japanese national history, which was designed to create the official image of a united and centralised nation-state.<sup>17</sup>

A legitimate imperial genealogy and the organic geo-body of the Japanese nation, however, was not enough to construct Japan's national history. The Japanese 'own, indigenous, and peculiar' cultural tradition had to be invented to make national history more convincing and appealing to Western readers.

That explains why Kume Kunitake, a co-author of *View of National History*, kissed the 'sleeping beauty' of 'No(É)' - a mask dance drama - and made it a national heritage. The old practices of the Japanese imperial rituals had been selected and reinvented too by Iwakura Domomi, who wanted to make use of them for the diplomatic protocols with the Western powers. He left the invented imperial rituals open to any change for diplomatic considerations, if necessary. It is not a coincidence that the trio - Itō Hirobumi, Kume Kunitake and Iwakura Domomi - who contributed to the making of Japan's national history and tradition were members of the forty-eight delegates who visited the United States and several European countries in 1871-73. Based on the models that they saw in the United States and Europe, they invented their own national history and tradition. Thus, Japanese history was intelligible to Western readers.

It is no wonder then that the first book on the history of Japanese art, *Histoire de L'art Japon*, was also published originally in French upon the request of the Paris international exposition bureau in 1900. <sup>19</sup> The motivation to write this book was to glorify the Japanese state by highlighting its national heritage and encouraging 'our own artistic spirit' to keep abreast with the European standard. Around the same year, Okakura Tenshin lectured on the history of Japanese art in the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy. He structured today's Japanese art historiography. He categorised cultural properties into a hierarchical order with national treasure at its top and classified them

into sculptures, paintings, crafts etc. according to the European classifications of art. Suddenly, Buddhist statues shifted from religious objects to objects of artistic appreciation. They then became the equivalents of classic Greece sculptures when Okakura compared Buddhist statues in the Nara period with the classic Greek sculptures.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, Okakura defined 'Suiko' art as the starting point of Japanese national art history, which was mostly either imported from mainland China and the Korean peninsula or created by migrants from Paikje, the ancient Kingdom that had been located in the southwestern part of the Korean peninsula. Thus, he appropriated the fine arts either created by alien migrants or brought back from neighbours for Japanese national history. He was not reluctant to make a Buddhist statue that had been imported from Tang China in Kyoto's Toji Temple as one of Japan's most cherished national treasures. Behind Okakura, however, there stood Ernest Fenollosa, a converted American Buddhist. He helped found the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy and the Imperial Museum by acting as its director in 1888, and he made the first inventory of Japan's national treasures. Later he became the curator of the Oriental arts in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and founded the Japan Society in Boston.

In a sense, Okakura summarised what Fenollosa had discovered and defined as Japanese art. While the first Japanese national history supposed the Europeans as its readership, the first Japanese art history was formulated by an American Orientalist. It implies that Japan's self-image at its starting point had been confined by either explicit or implicit references to the West. The configuration of East and West, Orient and Occident was inevitable in either case. Once tied to the global chain of national histories by

mimetic desire, the historical writings of the peripheries cannot but be discursive prisoners of Eurocentrism and Orientalism. If 'Orientalism is better grasped as a set of constraints upon and limitation of thought than it is simply a positive doctrine,'21 it is not difficult to imagine how this Orientalist set of constraints had influenced the construction of the first Japanese national history and art history. In short, these two books indicate the self-subjection of the Japanese to the putative West because of their desire for Western recognition of their own cultural and national authenticity.

It was a historical event in Japanese modern historiography when Tokyo Imperial University hired twenty-six year old Ludwig Riess in 1887, a student of Leopold von Ranke. He taught history and historical methodology in the newly established history department. According to Tsuda's reminiscence, Riess taught a scientific and rationalistic methodology and emphasised the 'objectivity' of Rankean history. <sup>22</sup> It is not clear if he conveyed the Rankean defence of Prussian authority as part of God's design, but Rankean historical methods were not wholly new to some Japanese scholars, trained especially in the tradition of the textual analysis school (*koshogaku*). Their rigorous textual criticism and devotion to gathering facts and compiling chronologies could match well with the Rankean methodology.

However, Rankean history never meant apolitical historiography. Japanese modern historians tried to modernise and renovate Japanese history so that the Japanese nation could be understood in terms of Western history. The political commitment was rampant among them. Kuroita Katsumi, contrary to today's estimation of him as a true founder of the positivist history school in 1880s and 1890s, was not reluctant to say that if some historical sites can stimulate the people's emotion, then they deserve to be

protected as historically important sites regardless of their historical value. It was just as important for him to encourage national sentiments and patriotism as it was to promote objective historical studies. What impressed him most during his visit to Europe was the story and historical sites of Wilhelm Tell, not because it was the historical truth, but because it invoked patriotism among the common people in Switzerland by providing a model patriot. <sup>23</sup> The Japanese positivistic historiography, influenced by Rankean methods, would develop in parallel with the political commitment to the nation state.

Japanese modern historiography has tried to prove Japan's equivalence with Europe, while simultaneously highlighting its differences from the rest of Asia. It aimed at removing the Japanese image of the invented Orient by capturing European elements in Japanese history and inventing its own Orient of China and Chosŏn (Korea). The more they became familiar with European history, the wider the gap grew between Japan and Europe. The more they tried to find a symmetrical equivalent to the history of the West, the more they had to suffer from the sense of a lack. Inventing the Orient of Asian neighbours was designed to make up for that sense of a lack as the invented Orient. When historicism changed the vertical evolutionary time into the horizontal space of an 'imaginative geography,' Japan discovered that it lagged behind the unilinear development scheme of world history, and it had to be placed in the Orient in comparison with Europe. By inventing Japan's own Orient, however, Japanese historians could let China and Chosŏn take the place of Japan and allow Japan to join the West in the imaginative geography.

Japanese Orientalism or sub-Orientalism towards its neighbours can be summed up in a new geopolitical entity called 'toyo'(東洋). It means literally 'Eastern Sea,' but it

was Japan's own formulation of the 'Orient.' The establishment of *toyoshi* (Oriental history) as a separate academic field gave the historical and scientific authenticity to the new entity of 'toyo.' It was in 1894 that Naka Michiyo proposed a division of world history into Occidental and Oriental history in the middle school curriculum, and the Ministry of Education accepted his proposal in 1896. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the establishment of *toyoshi* had the Sino-Japanese war as its historical background, which served to enhance Japanese national pride due to the victory over a Great Power. It was during and after the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 that the position of *toyoshi* was elevated once again. Later Japanese Orientalism was reinforced by acquiring the colonies of Taiwan (1894) and Korea (1910) and thus joining the Western imperialist block.

In the discourse of *toyoshi* the Japanese term for China changed from *chugoku* (literally meaning a central state) to *shina*. Japanese nativist scholars in the nineteenth century used *shina* to separate Japan from the traditional Sino-centric world-view of the barbarian/civilised duality implied in the term of *chugoku*. In early twentieth-century Japan, *shina* emerged as a word to signify China as a troubled place in contrast to Japan-a modernised nation-state. <sup>24</sup> If *chugoku* represents the Sino-centric China, *shina* has the Orientalist implication of making china a periphery nation. It is noteworthy that *shinajin* (China-man), together with *chosenjin* (Korean), has a connotation of an oppressed and victimized people in contemporary Japanese usage. It is no more an ethnic term, but serves as an allegory for the alienated Japanese as shown in a contemporary popular musical.

Japanese historians of *toyoshi* borrowed the conceptual tools from the West to make their arguments sound reasonable. For example, Shiratori Kurakichi, the principal

architect of *toyoshi*, argued that China reached the most advanced level of fetishism, the first stage in the Comtean framework of the three stages of fetishism, theology and positivism. However, his attempt to work within the Comtean framework and European Orientalism never signalled that he shared the same purpose with them. By placing Japan in a position that developed higher than China, he tried to remove Japan from the object of European Orientalism. He was also keenly aware that 'Occidentals are apt to fall into self-indulgent arrogance and conceit.' 25 Toyoshi had an implication not only for Japanese Orientalism but also for Occidentalism in his works. It became increasingly antagonistic towards the West, while retaining the modernist approach to history. Equipped with the Rankean scientific methods, toyoshi has been deployed as a disciplinary strategy to distance Japan from both the dark parts of Asia and an atomised Western modernity, and place it in betweens. It was not only China and Chosŏn but also the West that was stamped as the 'Other' by toyoshi'

'Studies of Colonial Policies' represented the vulgar version of Orientalist *toyoshi* discourse. Its main purpose was to draw a line between Japan as the civilised state and China and Chŏsun as barbarian states. If *toyoshi* was focused mainly on China, the main target of 'Studies of Colonial Policies' was Chosŏn-Korea. While historians elaborated on *toyoshi*, social scientists led the 'studies of colonial policies.' Fukuta Tokujo, a pioneer of social policies in Japan, argued that Japan had developed along a historical path formulated by Karl Bücher and had reached the stage of national economy as the final stage of economic progress. In order to make the image of Japanese development more salient, he needed a mirror to reflect Japanese superiority. Chosŏn with its backward economy provided an ideal mirror for reflecting Japanese superiority. Like

European Orientalists, Fukuta's 'strategic location' in his text is that of an expert on the economic history of Asia, who resides outside of Asia when he stressed the contrast between East and West with a presupposition that Japan is outside the East.<sup>26</sup>

The Japanese approach to Asian history was simply a copy of the European Orientalist view of Asia. What one finds among the works of Japanese scholars of 'Studies of Colonial Policies' is a representation of Asia spoken in the language of the European Orientalists. The negative images of Chosŏn represented in the works of these Japanese scholars are strikingly similar to the national attributes of Chosŏn that Isabella Bird Bishop enumerated in her account of travel to Chosŏn in the late nineteenth century: obstinate, narrow-minded, suspicious, lazy, shameless, brutal, childish and etc. These studies provided the historical ground to justify the Japanese mission to civilise Korea. It is based on Orientalist generalisations of the role of colonialism to destroy stagnant elements and modernise the colonies by introducing civilisation or the capitalist mode of production in Marxist terms. The discourse on Korea is a typical example of inventing the Orient in an invented Orient.

This Orientalist strategy for writing colonial histories led to the establishment of Japanese exceptionalism. The discursive location of Japanese exceptionalism in the thought of Japanese Orientalists was a convergence point between Orientalism and Occidentalism to conceal an inferiority complex toward the West and exalt a sense of superiority over other Asian neighbours. Japan's non-Asian exceptionalist road to modernisation has been evidenced by the discourse on Japanese feudalism. It asserts that the historical experience of European feudalism is a Japanese peculiarity in comparison with other Asian countries, which made it possible for Japan to succeed in its rapid

modernisation. The discourse of Japanese feudalism was constructed just after the Russo-Japanese war as an ideology to support the modern nation-building process.

However, once established, it became regarded as 'normal' and some mainstream historians still adhere to Japanese feudalism as a historical peculiarity. The most widely read East Asian history book among English readers, *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*' dedicates a chapter on this topic under the title of 'Feudal Japan: A Departure from the Chinese Pattern.' This title provides a vivid demonstration of the important role that the discourse of Japanese feudalism played in making Japan a member of the Occident and distancing it from the Orient. This line of historical inquiry expresses the Japanese aspiration to be identified with the West.

The Japanese intellectuals' strategy of inventing their own Orient to escape from the European invention of the Orient is reminiscent of Poles who tried to define their national identity by the invented images of West and East. Polish intellectuals tried to justify their Western aspirations by Orientalising Russia. When a German soldier, stationed in Poland, wrote in his war diary in 1939 that 'the soul of an Eastern man is mysterious,' it suggests that the Polish strategy of becoming incorporated into the West by Orientalising Russia was not so effective. <sup>28</sup> In this sense, it may be a pity for nationalist Japanese intellectuals that Pucchini's 'Madame Butterfly' is more popular among the 'Westerners' than Fairbank and Reischauer's *East Asia*. Perhaps their strategy of inventing the Orient to escape from the European-invented Orient has been most successful among the Japanese, less successful among other Asians, and least successful among Western readers.

It is more striking that Marxist historians also deployed the discourse of Japanese feudalism. The famous Marxist controversy over the 'Meiji Restoration' of 1868 between the Koza-ha (Lecture's faction) and the Rono-ha (Labour-Peasant faction) is based on the assumption that established the existence of Japanese feudalism. While the Koza-ha saw the 'Meiji Restoration' as the completion of the absolutist state, the Rono-ha interpreted it as a bourgeois revolution. Despite this discord, their arguments were based on the same grounds as the European Marxists' analysis of feudalism, absolutism and the bourgeois revolution and thus tainted with 'red Orientalism.' <sup>29</sup> The Japanese Marxists' primary concern with the 'Asiatic mode of production' can be viewed in the same context. The implicit goal of Marxist Japanese historians was to contrast Japan's normal development in the path of European capitalism with the abnormal development or stagnancy of other Asian nations, which was supposed to be peculiar to the Asiatic mode of production. The Japanese Marxists' argument of the Asiatic mode of production was not a deviation at all, but rather true to Marx's analysis of India and China in the 1850s. 30 Moreover, this Marxist historiographical direction could be resonant with the civilising mission of the Japanese colonialism.

It is hard to generalise about post-war Japanese historiography. However, it is not difficult to assert that post-war historiography has maintained a strong continuity with pre-war historiography, especially regarding the discourse of the Orient and the Occident. Little has changed in the production of the historical images of Japan invented by the West and for the West. In critical reviews of the total war system or Japanese fascism in the past, both liberal and Marxist historians continue to blame 'pre-modern' residues and Japan's 'deviated modernity' for the Japanese catastrophe. This approach is pre-mised on

the assumption that the Japanese catastrophe could be attributed to 'pathological factors peculiar to Japan, usually interpreted via a theory of pre-modern particularism versus modern universalism.' In a word, it was the Japanese version of the German *Sonderweg* thesis. It signalled a move of Japan's imaginative location in world history from the West to the East, while the West remains the authentic reference.

## 'Korea': Inventing Nation in an Invented Nation

In the winter of 1999, a Japanese neo-nationalist group published *The History of Nation*' as a pilot edition of the forthcoming *A New History Textbook*, which was soon authorised as one of the texts approved for use in Japan's Junior High Schools. This authorisation evoked criticism and furious responses in Japan and abroad because of its historical affirmation of Japanese colonialism, its shameless nationalism, and its comfortable negligence of wartime atrocities such as the 1939 Nanjing massacre and Korean 'comfort women' or 'sexual slaves.' In the midst of these tumultuous debates, the *Sankei Shimbun*, a conservative Japanese daily newspaper in the full support of *A New History Textbook*, published a series of articles dedicated to the analysis of East Asian history textbooks in that it urged the Japanese revisionist historians to adopt official Korean history textbooks, according to the *Sankei Shimbun*, is not their Korea-centric interpretation but rather their narrative strategy that have a firm footing in national history and ethno-centrism.

This farcical episode is highly useful for understanding the topography of competing national histories in the Northeast Asia. Leaving aside some of the

contemporary issues, the historical controversy over finding a common past in Northeast Asia is not a question of 'right or wrong' concerning historical facts, but the inevitable collision of the conflicting nation-centred interpretations. Behind the conflicting scenes, however, the national histories of Korea and Japan have formed a relationship of 'antagonistic complicity.' It is not hard to find the cultural transfers and antagonistic acculturation in the century-long history of competing historiographies in this region. Indeed the basic concepts that anti-colonial movements have adopted were very often the discursive products of imperialist cultures. <sup>33</sup>

It is in 1895 that one can find a significant paradigm shift in Korean historical writings. The concept of national history and national language appeared for the first time among the reformist government policies of 1895 in the aftermath of the modernist reform of 1894. The reforms emphasised the necessity of teaching national history and national language. Korean history textbooks for primary and junior high school were produced according to the government instruction. The most salient point of these history textbooks is the change in the names of neighbouring countries. The name of China was changed from *Hwa* (華: literally meaning 'splendour') to *Jina* (支那: Korean equivalent of *shina*).' On the other hand, Koreans changed the name of Japan from *Wae* (倭) with the nuance of contempt to *Ilbon* (日本: Korean equivalent of Nippon that the Japanese prefer).' <sup>34</sup> It is noteworthy that this reversal in the signified position of China and Japan occurred in the aftermath of Sino-Japanese War. It signalled a departure from the traditional Sino-centric world order and indicated a political and discursive realignment of the East.

Soon the repositioning went so far as to Orientalise China in the journalistic writings of Korean reformers. A decentered and provincialised China was described as a barbarous nation full of negative attributes such as laziness, idleness, corruptions, and pre-modern obstinacy, etc. Orientalising China was a process of making boundaries of inside/outside and inclusion/exclusion. The Chinese immigrants in Korea were to be blamed, because they had done considerable harm to the Korean people. Even rumours of Chinese cannibalism that accused the Chinese of kidnapping a Korean baby and eating human flesh began to spread among the Korean masses. As shown by the claim that China would soon be shamed by even Denmark, contrasts with the West were inherent in these representations of China. <sup>35</sup> Later, this trend developed into an expansionist argument to justify *Drang nach Manchuria*.

The configuration of China and the West in the thought of Korean nationalists led to a new national awakening. It was a way of decentering and provincialising China for Korean Enlightenment intellectuals to adopt the Japanese way of inventing the Orient of China. It satisfied somewhat their burgeoning national aspiration to break away from the traditional Sino-centric world order. This way of inventing the Orient in an invented Orient was a means of appropriating the Western concept of civilisation. <sup>36</sup> A dozen world history books including general histories like *A History of the Independence Movement in Italy, A History of the Fall of Poland,* The *Modern History of Egypt* and biographies of national heroes such as Napoleon Bonaparte, George Washington, and Bismarck were published during this period, which were intended to spur a national awakening and encourage the formation of national consciousness. <sup>37</sup>

Except for these books, it was mostly Japan that represented the putative West in Korean historical discourse. Due to the influence of social Darwinism, a form of racial Pan-Asianism emerged as the dominant discourse among the Korean Enlightenment intellectuals by the early twentieth century. It argued that the opposition between the yellow peoples and the white peoples is the true historical struggle. Interpreting Japanese concept of *toyo* (Orient) in an Occidentalist way, it stressed the ideal of regional solidarity and Japanese leadership. After Japan imposed a protectorate on Korea in 1905, the Pan-Asianism became a weapon of criticism of Japanese colonialism for violating the ideals of Asian solidarity and shirking Japan's leadership responsibilities. Despite such criticism, the strategic position of Japan as the representation of Western civilisation remained unchanged.

The despair with the Pan-Asianism led to the increasing emphasis on the national soul, national essence and national spirit, and the ethnic concept of the nation began to prevail in Korean historiography. The ethno-linguistic preoccupation of Korean historians led them to generate images of an authentic Korean culture and pure ethnic identities formed from a unilinear bloodline that purportedly existed for about five thousand years descending from the mythic figure, Tan'gun. Of course, this invention was not a unique phenomenon to Korea. Rather it is found broadly in the peripherial historiographies; the nineteenth-century German advocacy of 'culture' against the Anglo-French 'civilisation'; Russian Slavophiles' assertion that 'inner truth' based on religion, culture and moral convictions is much more important than 'external truth' expressed by law and state; Indian nationalist discourse of the superiority of the spiritual domain over the material domain.<sup>39</sup>

This implies that the nation is already sovereign and can maintain its own national spirit - the essential domain of the spiritual - even when the state is in the hands of a colonial power. Very often nationalist historians created an organic concept of the nation, which views the nation as the eternal reality and collective destiny that constrains every individual. Staying true to the nation-state demands a total subordination of the individual to the national community. Perhaps this collectivist orientation explains the presence of populist or communalist elements in many post-colonial states regardless of their constitutional order. It may be noteworthy also that there is no serious tension between individual and community, individualism and communalism in Polish sociology, where the organic concept of nation has been dominant.<sup>40</sup>

The primordialist view of the nation has prevailed over the constructivist concept of nation in Korean historiography until recently. It tends to essentialise the nation in historical writings and thus reduce all historical events to the development of national history. It presupposes the nation as the major historical subject. The pronouns that appear most frequently in Korean official history textbooks are 'we', 'our nation', and 'our country.' Even in references to ancient history, 'our nation' and 'our country' remains anachronistically the subject of history. National history is described as the history of challenge and response, in which the nation is the supposed subject that overcame national crisis even before the era of nation-states. It is a highly effective narrative strategy to make the nation and state an eternal reality in the nationalist imagination. Combined with the discourse of the 'fatherland' and 'national legitimacy,' this narrative replaces various historical communities with the imagined nation. Once the imagined nation is established as the major historical agent, an individual's fealty such as

loyalty, subjection, contribution and self-sacrifice for nation unity becomes the yardstick and the primary focus for historical judgment. <sup>41</sup> It is no wonder that the *Sankei Shinbun* envies Korean history textbooks.

It may be astonishing that the author of *A New History of Korea*<sup>3,42</sup>, the most widely read Korean history book for university students and general readers both at home and abroad, claimed that 'love for the nation and belief in the truth is the head and tail of the same coin. Considering that Ki-baik Lee has stressed the Rankean approach to history, which is labelled as 'positivist historiography' in Korea and Japan, it is even more astounding. Such statements are not new, however, if we consider how Ranke could manage an oxymoron of scientific method and Prussian statism. During his study in colonial Japan, Ki-baik Lee must have recognised how the Japanese Rankean disciples of the 'positivistic historiography' could go well with the political commitment to the nation-state.

It is not a surprise that Korean self-knowledge in the modernist national form has been influenced by the Japanese production of knowledge about Korea. If Korean national identity was partly a product of a reaction against Japanese aggression, it is also true that it was closely intertwined with Japanese writings about Korean culture and history. 'Inventing the nation' in Korea owes much to the 'invented nation' of the Japanese Orientalists. <sup>44</sup> In particular, the survey of habitual practices in Korea, conducted by the Japanese Government-General just after the annexation of Korea in 1910, was an ideal opportunity to invent Korean traditions by adjusting and deforming realities for the convenience of colonial policies. The details of inventing traditions during this survey are

not yet explored because many Korean historians have made use of this survey to find their own traditional practices.

Even before these surveys, Sekino Tadashi who was an assistant professor in the engineering department of Tokyo Imperial University carried out archaeological and historical research on Korea in 1902 at the request of the Japanese government. In his survey reports, Sekino classified and graded his discoveries of Korean art according to the European model applied to Japanese art history. By evaluating the art of Unified Silla period (A.D. 676-918) very highly, he contrasted the remarkable development of art in Silla with the decline of art in the Chosŏn period (A.D. 1392-1910). A major contrast between the blossoming of Japanese art and the decline of Korean art in contemporary history was implicit in his report on Korean art. This contrast functioned to justify the Japanese annexation of the Korean peninsula and its civilising mission from the viewpoint of art history, because the decline of art signified the degeneration of the Chosŏn dynasty.

Since then, the typical Orientalist image of contrasting 'ancient glory and present misery' has been reiterated in various writings on Korean art history. The image of flourishing art represented at its finest by the pagodas at Pulguk-sa temple and the Buddhist sculptures in the nearby Sŏkkuram grotto built in the year 751 made a deep impression on post-colonial contemporary Korean historiography, including history textbooks. It is noteworthy that the big archaeological excavation projects of Kyŏngju, the capital of the Silla Kingdom, sponsored by the state in the early 1970s aimed to discover the glorious indigenous artistic heritage in tune with the *Zeitgeist* of national subjectivity and the 'Korean way of democracy' advocated by the dictatorship. The

indigenous style of Korean art invented and discovered by the Japanese colonisers remained a useful tool for inventing national art in post-colonial Korea.

It was Yanagi Muneyoshi who discovered the artistic value of white porcelains in the Chosŏn dynasty. Despite his sympathy for Korean art and criticism of Japanese colonialism, his description of Chosŏn dynasty's white porcelains is full of tropes that feminise Korean culture. It was the coloniser's masculine view of feminised colonies that provides the undercurrents of his definition of Korean traditional colour as the 'innocent white' and of the quintessence of Korean culture as 'her' melancholy of tears and regrets. His discourse was based on the contrast between 'the youthful, dynamic and colourful' Japanese art and 'natural, irrational and monochromatic' Korean art. He posited a masculinised Japan as the subject of estimation and a feminised Korea as the object of observation. It shows the hierarchical relations and construction of gendered cultural forms between the masculinised colonial powers and the feminised powerless colonies. Considering that 'support for a particular kind of gender relations was used as a justification for colonial domination,' 46 Yanagi's sympathy toward Korean art cannot be free from the charge of Orientalism.

Amusingly enough, one can find Yanagi's discourse of 'tears and regrets' conjured up by the people involved in contemporary Korean mass culture like cinema whenever it is presented to the Western audience. The practice of discovering the native Korean culture by configuring East and West is also found in the folklore and modern literature. The some of the most successful short stories that reflect the nativism of colonial Korea have been produced not by nativist novelists, but by modernist novelists. For example, Yi Hyosŏk, who produced the best nativist short story, was a representative

'modern boy.' He could find and describe the beauty of native Korea, not because he was familiar with native culture, but because he was preoccupied with Western culture.<sup>47</sup> Lyrical nativism was possible only in comparison with the West. It fits well with Prasenjit Duara's definition of tradition as 'a reconstructed image that is organised under the new categories and assumptions of the modernist discourse.' Moreover, the tradition reconstructed by the colonisers' modernist discourse was imbued with Orientalism.

Marxist historiography has never been an exception to the practice of configuring East and West in historical thinking and writing. When Marx said that the 'country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future', <sup>49</sup> he proclaimed the manifesto of Marxist historicism. It changed the spatial difference between East and West into the evolutionary time difference between backwardness and forwardness of the unilinear scheme of human history. It is proven also by his frequent use of the prefix *pre* such as 'pre-capitalist mode of production.' In cases where it is applied to the peripheries, Marxist historical narrative has definitely been inclined to historicism. By way of Marxist historicism, the revolutionary nationalists adopted Marxism as an ideological weapon for the 'follow and catch up' strategy of the peripheries.<sup>50</sup> They looked at Marx as a theorist of modernity.

It is not surprising that the dominant Marxist historical narrative in Korea is the thesis of 'the sprouts of capitalist' and 'endogenous development of capitalism.' It tried very hard to find the polarization of the rural population and the emergence of 'enlarged scale farming,' a historical process that they argued produced an agrarian bourgeoisie and proletariat. They then sought a blueprint for utopia in historical phenomena such as the development of commercial production of specialised crops, development of wholesale

commerce, handcraft industries that relied on merchant capital in the putting-out system, mercantilism, and modernist thought. Along with emerging capitalist relations of production, this line of historical inquiry traces back to ancient and medieval history to find a slave and feudal society.

It provides a familiar landscape and spectacle to those who have read the Marxist economic histories of Europe. <sup>51</sup> However, it is far from any creative application of Marxism, and is more closely associated with the mechanical application of Marxist narratives of European history to Korean history. Those who promoted a discourse that ran contrary to this Eurocentric scheme of Korean history and insist on a different path, such as arguing that state landownership may have been an obstacle for economic development, are labelled as the theorists of the 'Asiatic mode of production' and, thus proponents of the stagnation thesis of Korea. It is a vivid example that 'Marx's theory of mode of production goes in parallel with the nation-state's ideology of modernity and progress. <sup>52</sup>

If one views Marx as a theorist of modernity, one may easily find that 'Marx's account of modernisation was inextricably a description of Westernisation, and therefore that his view of global history was a general history of the West'. 53 At the moment when Korean Marxists and Japanese Marxists began to stress universal history or the universal laws of world history, they became dependent on the Eurocentric historical narratives and plunged into the discursive pool of 'red Orientalism.' On the other hand, it should be noted that the location of Korean history in Marx's Eurocentric universalist scheme was the result of a desperate effort to deny the stagnancy of the 'Asiatic mode of production.' It is a genuine paradox of Korean Marxist historians to deny Marx's own prognosis of

colonialism 'to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other generating-the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.' <sup>54</sup> They preferred the Marxian universalist scheme to the Asiatic mode of production to avoid justifying Japanese colonialism. However, neither the 'Asiatic mode of production' nor the Eurocentric universalist scheme could escape from the charge of 'red Orientalism'.

## Toward a Reconfiguration

The configuration of East and West has had an ambiguous effect on historical writings. This ambiguity resulted from different locations of the 'imaginative geography' in the global chain of national histories. Its location in the East used to lead to a history of 'lack' whilst its location in the West would exalt the feeling of national superiority. The Japanese discourse intended to dislocate its past from Asia by inventing the Orient of China and Korea and simultaneously positioning Japan in the West so that it would overcome a sense of lack in its national history. It stood on the modified configuration of China-Korea-Orient and Japan-Occident via Japanese exceptionalism, which dislocated Japan from the East. The idea of an exceptional Japan to Asia presupposed the existence of a Japanese historical peculiarity that was close to European history. Thus, Japanese exceptionalism served as the equivalent of European exceptionalism in world history.

Korean contemporary historiography has been also very keen to discover its own equivalents to European history and thus expressed a strong desire to be located in the putative West. It could escape from the Sino-centric world view dominating the traditional historiography by riding on the coat-tails of the Japanese discourse of *toyoshi* 

and constructing its own national history based on the Eurocentric model. But neither the Japanese nor Korean historians could find symmetrical equivalents to European history. It would be an impossible mission. The closer they came to Europe, the deeper their frustration became. The periphery's desire for a stable location in the putative West has never been satisfied. As long as the historians of the peripheries are entangled in the Eurocentric model of history, they must depend on the configuration of East and West that has been outlined by the Orientalist discourse. Combined with the historicist scheme, this trap would necessarily lead them to the recognition of a gap between East and West. The location of the national history in the structure of the 'imaginative geography' has been always in flux, but the gap between East and West can never be closed.

The impossibility of overcoming the East and West binary opposition explains why the global chain of national history that feeds on Eurocentrism must be deconstructed. Without untying that chain, the national history of the peripheries will continue to encourage its own Eurocentric nationalism or anti-Western Orientalism. Most importantly, the configuration of East and West needs be reconfigured. Yet I am somewhat sceptical that the critical historiography in Europe can contribute to this reconfiguration in a manner that is entirely free from the Eurocentric national history paradigm. The self-criticism of the British 'people's history' by Raphael Samuel may deserve to be mentioned: 'people's history or history from below in particular was part of what we were attacking... It treats 'the common people' as a collective subject, transposing the national epic from the field of high politics to that of everyday life. The 'peculiarities of the English'... has also helped to foster its own version of 'Little Englandism'.'55 Perhaps the reconfiguration of the world's geo-history demands more

radical politics that can articulate the need for deconstructing national histories and the global chain. An alternative narrative to national history should be found not only in the local, but also in the global.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> G. Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert*, Korean trans. S.W. Lim and G.B. Kim, Seoul, 1998: 216.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> S. Berger, M. Donovan and K. Passmore, 'Apologias for the nation-state in Western Europe since 1800', in *Writing National Histories: Western Europe Since 1800*, eds. Stefan Berger et. al., London, 1999: 3-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised ed., London, 1991: 198.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Berger et al., 'Apologias', 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> N. Nagao, Kokuminkokkaron No Satei, Korean trans, D.Y. Yoon (1998; Seoul, 2002), 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> J.M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*, New York, 1993: 5-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, 2000: 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Blaut, The Colonizer's Model, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> N. Sakai, Translation and Subjectivity: On 'Japan' and Cultural Nationalism, Minneapolis, 1997: 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, 1993: 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> G. Prakash, 'AHR Forum: Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism', American Historical Review 99, 1994: 1475.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> I. Wallerstein, The End of World We Know It: Social Science for the Twenty-First Century, Korean trans.
S.W. Baik, Seoul, 2001: 248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> A.G. Frank, ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age, Berkeley, 1998: 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Sung-si Lee, *Mandlojin Godai* (The Ancient Invented), Korean trans. K.H. Park, Seoul, 2001: 197-98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> T. Morris-Suzuki, Reinventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation, Armonk, N.Y., 1998: 23.

<sup>18</sup> Lee, *Mandlojin*, 199-203.

- <sup>20</sup> T. Hiroshi, 'Ilbon Misulsa wa Chosun Misulsa ui Songlip' (Formation of Japanese history of art and Korean history of art), in *Guksa ui Sinhwa rul Nomuseo* (Beyond the myth of national history), eds. Jie-Hyun Lim and Sung-si Lee, Seoul, 2004: 169-70.
- <sup>21</sup> E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1979, 42.
- <sup>22</sup> T. Sokochi, 'Shiratori hakushi shoden', cited in S. Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, Berkeley, 1993: 26.
- <sup>23</sup> Sung-si Lee, 'Shokuminchi bunka seisaku no kachi wo tsuujite mita rekishi ninsiki' (Historical consciousness represented by colonial cultural policies), a paper presented to Kyoto Forum of Public Philosophy, March 13, 2004.
- <sup>24</sup> Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 4.
- <sup>25</sup> Shiratori, 'Shina jodaishi,' in Ibid., 60.
- <sup>26</sup> Kang Sang-jung, *Orientalism No Kanatae* (Beyond Orientalism), Korean trans. S.M. Lim, Seoul, 1997: 94-5.
- <sup>27</sup> J. K. Fairbank, E.O. Reischauer and A.M. Craig, *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*, Boston, 1976: 358-91.
- <sup>28</sup> B. Lagowski, 'Ideologia Polska. Zachodnie aspiracje i wschodnie sklonnosci' (Polish Ideology: Westem Aspirations and Eastern Inclinations), in *Polska i Korea: Proces modernizacji w perspektywie historycznej*, eds. Jie-Hyun Lim and Michal Sliwa, Cracow, 1997: 88-97.
- <sup>29</sup> T. Tibebu, 'On the Question of Feudalism, Absolutism and the Bourgeois Revolution', *Review* 13, 1990: 49-152.
- <sup>30</sup> See *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, ed. S. Avineri, Garden City, N.Y., 1968. Isn't it wrong to ask that this collection can be used to justify Israeli's occupation of Palestine from the Marxist perspective?
- <sup>31</sup> J.V. Koschmann, 'Introduction to the English Edition,' in *Total War and "Modernization"*, eds. Y. Yamanouchi et. al., Ithaca, 1998: xi-xii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> T. Hiroshi, 'Nihon bijutsushi no seiritsu/Shiron' (A sketch of the formation of the Japanese art history), *Nihonshi Kenkyu*, 320, 1989: 74.

<sup>32</sup> For the antagonistic complicity of conflicting nationalism in the North-East Asia, see Jie-Hyun Lim, 'Chosenhantono Minzokushugido Kenryokuno Gensetsu' (Korean nationalism and the power discourse), Japanese trans. I. Ryuta, in *Gendai Shiso* 28, 2000: 126-44.

- <sup>34</sup> M.H. Do, 'Hanmal yŏksahak ŭi kŭndaesŏng chaeiron' (Reconsidering the modernity in the historiogarphy of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century)', a paper presented to the 6th Korean-Japanese workshop organised bythe 'East Asian History Forum for Criticism and Solidarity, Kyoto, 14-17 May, 2004.
- 35 A. Schmid, Korea Between Empires 1895-1919, New York, 2002: 56-59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> See A. Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, Delhi, 1983.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> B.C. Kim, 'Han'guk kŭndae pŏnyŏkmunhaksa yŏn'gu' (A study of translations of modern literature in Korea), Seoul, 1975: 171-72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Sch mid, *Korea Between*, 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> See N. Elias, *Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation*, Korean trans. H.S. Yoo, Seoul, 1996: 33-75; A. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford, 1979: 93-106; P. Chatterjee, *The Nation*, 3-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> J. Kurczewska, 'Nation in Polish Sociology', *The Polish Sociological Bulletin* 15, 1-2, 1976: 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Su-gul Gee, 'Minjokkwa kŭndae ŭi ijungju' (Duality of nation and modernity), *Contemporary Criticism*, special issue of history report 1, 2002: 58-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ki-baik Lee, A New History of Korea. Eng. trans. E.W. Wagner and E.J. Shulz, Cambridge, MA., 1984.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Ki-baik Lee, 'To readers', in *Han'kuksa simin'gangjwa* (Korean history lecture for citizens), 20, 1997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> For the cultural transfer between Japanese imperialist historians and Korean nationalist historians in the colonial period, see H.M. Park, 'Cheguk ilbon'gwa min'kuk han'guk ŭi yŏksahakchŏk kyoch'aro' (Historiographical Crossroads of Imperial Japan and Colonial Korea), a paper presented at the Seminar of Korean committee of the East Asian History Forum for Criticis mand Solidarity, May 19, 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Hiroshi, 'Ilbon Misulsa', 180, 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> S. Walby, 'Woman and Nation', in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. G. Balakrishnan, London, 1996: 241.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> See Hyung-ki Shin, 'Yi Hyosŏk kwa singminji kŭndae' (Yi Hyosŏk and colonial modernity), in *Beyond the Myth*, eds. Lim and Lee. 329-54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> P. Duara, 'Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity', *Journal of Asian Studies* 50, 1991: 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> K. Marx, 'Preface to the First Edition', in *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. B. Fowkes, Harmondsworth, 1990: 91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> See Jie-Hyun Lim, 'Befreiung oder Modernisierung? Sozialismus als ein Weg der anti-westlichen Modernisierung in unterwickelten Ländern', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 43, 2, 2001: 5-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> I have to confess that, in my twenties as a young Marxist historian, I planned to study Korean economic history to find the sprouts of capitalism after reading Marx, Maurice Dobb, Rodney Hilton and especially the controversy over the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Although I no longer agree with this dominant Marxist historical narrative in Korea, the persuading power of Marxist historicism is still in my vivid memory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> G. Prakash, 'AHR Forum', 1477.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> B.S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, London, 1994: 140.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization, 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> R. Samuel, 'Preface', in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol. 1, London, 1989: xi.