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**NATIONALIST THOUGHT
IN PREWAR JAPAN**

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to clarify the nature and political effect of nationalist political thought in prewar Japan (1800-1941). There exists a persistent belief about Japanese nationalism that it is of a particular nature unique to Japan, and anti-modern in the sense that it is anti-liberal-democratic, feudal, hierarchical, and militaristic. This broad image of Japanese nationalism has been believed and is shared until today both by Japanese and foreigners at large. Furthermore, this image was shared both by right-wing advocates who praise it and left-wing critics of it. However, both groups have perpetuated the debate over Japanese nationalism based on this misinterpretation of Japanese nationalism. This study will try to correct the record and end these misguided and therefore vain debates.

As this article shows, this type of Japanese nationalism was first developed in the period of oligarchic government in the Meiji era as a convenient way for procuring the loyalty and war spirit of the Japanese people by inculcating the virtue of obedience to the Ten-nō and hence to the Meiji

government. It was promulgated more energetically in wartime in the 1930s and 1940s by the army to encourage a war spirit amongst the people. Then, after 1945, this type of nationalism in Japan were viewed as the unified image of the Japanese nationalism, in a flipped mirror image, via its interpretation by the old New Dealers in the General Headquarters (GHQ) office who led the Occupation Revolution ⁱⁱ and by those of the postwar-democratic intelligentsia in Japan who welcomed the democratization policy by the GHQ and the establishment of the present Japan Constitution.

Due to the tacit agreement among these two groups, the Japanese people at large came to be represented as uneducated in what it meant to be independent and democratic people, and sunk in feudal and militaristic sentiment. Even compared with the cases of German Nazism or Italian fascism, where militarism and totalitarianism emerged from formerly democratic polities without an imperial system, the putative backwardness of the Japanese society and the consciousness of the Japanese people was considered salient, and viewed as the fundamental driving force behind the military dictatorship that was established in the 1930s and behind Japanese aggression abroad before 1945.ⁱⁱⁱ

There were several dominant intellectuals who are regarded as belonging to the group named *postwar-democratic intelligentsia*. They shared the view on the prewar Japanese society and the consciousness as seriously backward and emphasized the importance of the democratization of Japan both in social institution and in the consciousness of the people. Among the group of intelligentsia, Masao Maruyama was dominant in the area of political science and especially the history of political thought.^{iv} He named this innate mentality supposedly shared among the Japanese public and the prewar political leaders 'Ultra-Nationalism' (Maruyama 1969).

This view is far from outmoded; it is still firmly ensconced among many Americans and Europeans, and even more so among the Asian peoples who experienced military occupation or intrusion by the Japanese military or incorporation into the Japanese empire. It also became the basis of the attitude that any nationalism developing in Japan is egregiously dangerous and threatening to the peace in the East Asian region. Therefore, among other reasons to get a clear picture of the real danger of the recent rightward trend in Japanese politics, I must start my argument by re-examining the thesis that the aggression of the Japanese military in the prewar and war periods

was essentially motivated by near-feudal sentiment and some 'Ultra-National' social system particular to the Japanese nation and people.

In this article, I refute this idea and argue that Japanese nationalism has a much more multilateral nature, and that its dominant aspect was neither feudal nor anti-modern. Although not completely identical with Western nationalism(s), Japanese nationalism was highly modern in the flexible way it maintained substantial influence throughout the Meiji-to-1945 period, whether the ruling power and order were more liberal-democratic or more totalitarian-militaristic at a given time.

Before beginning our investigation of this aspect of political thought in prewar Japan, we remark on one reservation. First, I mean to study nationalism in Japan as a social fact, intentionally avoiding value judgement. Second, nor do I make any value judgement on Japanese imperial-colonial policy and actions. This is not because I reject Japanese war responsibility, but only because I want to avoid adding another ideological dimension and making the discussion unmanageable, as I hope to provide a definitive picture of Japanese nationalism as a basis for the (re-)evaluation of past injustices and present developments.

The next section surveys the development of nationalism in relation to liberalism and democracy in modern Japan up to the establishment of the Imperial Constitution in 1890, giving an overview of the premodern roots of Japanese nationalism and its reconciliation with modern liberal democracy, culminating in the establishment of the constitutional monarchy through the Imperial Constitution.

Section 3 studies the development of democracy under the constitutional regime up to 1920, emphasizing the development and transformation of nationalism in Japan accompanying its excessive democratization and the assimilation to the populism and state socialism.

Section 4 reconsiders the landscape of political thought in Pre–Second World War and wartime Japan, 1920–1945, in relation to the political transition from party democracy to military dictatorship and the evolution of the militarism until the final defeat.

Section 5 concludes, summarizing the study and sketching the difference between nationalism in present-day Japan and the militaristic nationalism which assumed political power in the war period. It outlines the shortcomings of the argument that the recent growth of Japanese nationalism presages the

resurrection of militarism and foreign aggressionism in Japan.^v

2 The Development of Nationalism in Modern Japan until 1890

2.1 Early Modern Foundations

Before modernization in the late 19th century, Japan experienced a highly distinctive pre-modern stage in the Edo era (1603–1868), under the regime of the Tokugawa *bakufu* (military bureaucracy). Not only Marxist historians who were constrained by their views of the material stages of social development, but also dominant part of the historians have mistakenly identified the Tokugawa-regime as a feudalistic historical stage corresponding roughly to that of Medieval Europe. They argued that the putative feudalistic economy and society then carried over even after the Meiji Restoration.^{vi}

Recent historical research, however, has revealed that the Edo era was characterized by completely different features from those of Medieval Europe. The ruling warrior class (bushi, or samurai) in the Edo era were not landowners like in Medieval Europe but more akin to bureaucrats drawing salaries in *koku* of rice which served as a medium of exchange from a daimyō,

the local head of the warriors in his domain or *han*. The daimyōs collected tax from landless farmers within his *han* and paid salaries to his vassal warriors. Nationwide, daimyōs themselves were under the rule of the Shōgun (military generalissimo).

What this means is that the social division between farmers and warrior-class bureaucracy system was already accomplished in the Edo period, and the level of productivity within Japan was already high enough to make this social division possible. Within the Edo era, Japan's borders were largely closed, both to trade and immigration (*Sakoku*), but steady domestic economic growth occurred and the division of labor was extended from agriculture to industry and commerce. Manufacturers and merchants left the land and gathered in urban centres. The division of labor and economic development were far above that in Medieval Europe, more comparable to early-modern European countries.

Under this stable regime, steady economic growth, and peaceful social circumstances during its isolation, Japan extended education to the general public and built social infrastructure in transportation and communication all over the country, binding Japan together as a socially unified polity.

Simultaneously, a sense of nationalism developed among Japanese, as reflected by political thinkers of the Edo era.

The overwhelming influence on political thought in the Edo era was (Chinese) Confucianism, but reinterpreted with 'Japanese characteristics' to justify the Tokugawa regime (the Bakuhau Taisei) or even establish its superiority to China itself.

Japanese Confucianism developed through contributions from political thinkers such as Ansai Yamazaki (1618-82), Sokō Yamaga (1622-85), Jinsai Itō (1627-1705), and especially Sorai Ogyū (1666-1728).^{vii} Though each of them have original, distinctive features to their philosophy, they also shared a common theoretical basis distinct from Chinese Confucianism. Based on studies of the philosophers above mentioned, Bitō (2014) distinguished the special character of Japanese Confucianism in terms of three features. First, the nation and its geographical boundaries are naturally determined, contrastingly with the idea of Chinese Confucianism where the concept of nation hinges critically on the moral virtue of the governor. Second, the independence of the nation and the prosperity of the people are the most important value separated from its moral content, and they are protected

more by policies, promoting the safety of the nation, and advancing the secular welfare of the people than the virtue of the governor. Third, people in Japan have an absolute obligation to their nation and its hierarchical class system. This obligation is rooted in the traditional festival rite made by the Ten-nō (emperor), who prays for the unification of the nation and the welfare of the people. Therefore, the Japanese Ten-nō is the supreme political component within Japan, but lacks any political power or responsibility, and exists only to conduct the festival rite to secure the people's sense of obligation to the Bakuhan Taisei system.

These characteristics within Japanese Confucianism culminated in purest form within the late Mito-Gaku (Mito Studies), a school of Japanese Confucianism developed in the 19th century in Mito-Han (the domain of Mito).^{viii} Within this school, Seishisai Aizawa wrote *Shin-Ron* (*A New Treatise*) in 1825. At this period, some foreign countries visited Japanese coast with military equipment, and there arose debates if Japan should keep the Sakoku policy by excluding foreign countries using the military power, or it should start trade with other countries. Aizawa proposed that Japan should discard the Sakoku policy and open the country to the world. However, he

argued that Japan must at the same time recognize itself as a unified nation-state, politically controlled by the Tokugawa *bakufu* but under the Ten-nō as supreme organ and guarantor of unification as above—by recognizing the binding or unifying role of the festival rite so that they would not be tempted by Western civilization if the country is opened. Aizawa named this entity—with the Ten-nō on top as symbol of unification, Bakuhan Taisei for political control, warrior class working for the security and safety of the state, and the common people working for their own welfare, the Kokutai ‘national polity’ or ‘nationality’, the first time the term was used this way. After the contribution, his theory which clarified the unity of Japan and its intrinsic nature was named Kokutai-Ron and has exerted strong influence in the vision of nationalism in Japan through all the prewar period and even until today.

Though Aizawa supported the Tokugawa regime when he wrote *Shin-Ron*, this treatise was passionately read by many revolutionists in Japan in the final stage of the Edo era as they considered the establishment of a new political system in Japan which unifies Japan as a modern nation state. Though Aizawa first labelled Japan as a unified nation with the word Kokutai, the treatise had revolutionary implications, subverting the existing

Tokugawa-regime to establish Japan as a modern nation-state.

2.2 The Constitutional Monarchy as the Harmonization of Kokutai and Western Statecraft: 1868–1890

I noted in the last subsection that the Edo era, contrary to stereotype, was closer to the early-modern stage of socioeconomic development in Europe than the medieval stage. However, it could not enter true modernity, as the security of property right and the enforcement of contracts were not legally protected, but were instead delegated to custom and convention. Freedom to choose one's occupation was non-existent. The property right to land was not well-defined, and both farmers and daimyōs had their overlapping interests in land which were inalienably fixed by the conventional norm, and hence the sale of land was not only prohibited but also impossible. (See Kawaguchi (1998: 95-98)). Leadership was purely hereditary. Addressing these issues was key to the agenda of the political leaders who accomplished the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

Within the Restoration, conducted by political leaders such as Toshimichi Ōkubo, Hirofumi Itō, and Aritomo Yamagata, the abolishment of the Bakuhan

Taisei and the centralization of the administrative system were accomplished by the mandatory return of the various *han* from the daimyōs to the new Meiji government. The power of taxation was also concentrated in the central government (and not the local daimyōs). The warrior class lost its position by receiving some fixed amount of pecuniary compensation, and was replaced by a universal draft. Caste differentiation was abolished, and freedom of choice of occupation was guaranteed. Private right to property, especially to land, was more securely protected by law, and sale of land became legally allowed.

These reforms by the Meiji oligarchy correspond to the aspects of securing civil rights among the people. From the Meiji Restoration to the late 1870s, the great political philosopher Yukichi Fukuzawa wrote two important books making an argument for modernization aimed at a mass audience. In the first book (Fukuzawa 1872–1876), which a best-seller, he made a thoroughgoing criticism of the hierarchical ethics of Confucianism, and emphasized the importance of the equality of the people under the law, freedom of choice, and personal effort at education to become a modern, independent person. In the second book (Fukuzawa 1875), he made somewhat more academic observations on the significance of introducing Western civilization into

Japan while renouncing the Confucian moral ethics that, in his argument had barred the development of civilization in Japan.^{ix}

Alongside these arguments by Fukuzawa, we should note that, for Fukuzawa, Western civilization and Western values were not the final goal of Japanese modernization. For example, civil rights, especially freedoms of religion, conscience, speech, and expression, are generally seen in the West as having absolutely indispensable value and therefore are strictly protected by constitutions or basic law. For Fukuzawa, in contrast, civil rights were only a mechanism for making Japan wealthier and more powerful by encouraging effort and competition among people, and thus protecting the independence of Japan from the threat of Western imperialism. That is, protection of the Kokutai was the final objective for Fukuzawa and the introduction of the Western civilization was the instrument for attaining his objective. In this way, Fukuzawa made an elegant theoretical reconciliation between the traditional Kokutai-Ron and the Westernization project of Meiji Japan.

Beginning in the late 1870s, the Jiyū-Minken Undō (Movement for Civil Rights and Freedom) flared up all over the country. In the framework of Marxist history, it has long been interpreted that this movement represented

the development of bourgeoisie class in Japan countering to the absolute monarchy by the Ten-nō system. In truth, it was more a political movement of the ex-oligarchy leaders who were expelled from the power, such as Taisuke Itagaki and Shigenobu Ōkuma. To rerurn to the power, they started the movement allied with some class of rich farmers and merchants to establish the system of diet so that they can join the power again within legislation countering to the oligarchy government that had monopolized the political power.^x

Inasmuch, the politicians and people who joined the movement had no antagonism toward the Ten-nō system itself. They instead argued that establishing the institution of the diet strengthens the Ten-nō system by deleting the political monopoly of the oligarchy leaders and reflecting the public opinion into the government so that the unification of Japan as nation state would be strengthened. In this sense, this movement was an alternative way to reconcile the traditional Kokutai and the Western political institution.

The oligarchy government declared it would introduce constitution and limited democracy to sooth the movement through reasonable compromise. Before 1889, when the Imperial Constitution was promulgated, many models

for a constitution were proposed and published by various political associations, that is, would-be political parties under the promised representative system. The political association the Kōjunsha, which was under the direction of Fukuzawa, proposed one such plan, promising to introduce representative democracy on the contemporary British model, dominated by two political parties generally alternating power at elections. The Ten-nō was supposed to appoint the leader of the party which won the election as prime minister, with substantial power and responsibility for concrete politics; the role of the Ten-nō was highly limited.

The plan by Fukuzawa and the Kōjunsha faced a quick counter-response by Japan's most powerful political leader, Hirofumi Itō, and his adviser Kowashi Inoue, who were opposed with the introduction of party democracy into Japan. The Imperial Constitution written under their direction rejected party democracy and stipulated that various ministers would have responsibility directly to the Ten-nō, surpassing the cabinet. Especially, the ministers of army and navy had strictly independent political power to veto the decision of the cabinet, so that they had strong political power to control the decision of the cabinet. The function of the diet was limited to deliberation

of the budget and supporting legislation without explicit power to reject them.

Thus, the Imperial Constitution was often regarded as a reactionary, near-feudal document and not a modern constitution, especially from a postwar-democratic perspective. Masao Maruyama emphasized that the prewar Japanese political system based on the Imperial Constitution did not create a modern European state based on the key component of the neutrality of the state to the internal value of the people, such as religion, conscience and so on.^{xi} According to Maruyama, the prewar Japanese nation-state was instead best characterized as a nationalist state, or what he called an ‘Ultra-Nationalist’ state based on the state’s stance not of neutrality but of forcing substantial moral precepts, especially the absolute duty of the subject to Ten-nō, with the consequence that freedom of religion or even of art and scientific research were not allowed until the Ten-nō’s *Ningen-Sengen (Humanity Declaration)* just after the Pacific War.

Although Maruyama’s argument was not an exclusive consensus, it was a highly influential view shared among the Japanese people, especially the intelligent class and the foreign researchers on the Japanese politics and society.

However, I think Maruyama's evaluation is totally false. In truth, as the next section points out, the political trend toward democracy constantly advanced after the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution. More importantly, the level of protection of human right such as the freedom of people and their basic human rights were securely protected by the Imperial Constitution at the similar level of other European countries under the constitutional monarchy.

It is especially noteworthy that Kowashi Inoue attributed the basic significance of the Imperial Constitution to the ancient way of political governance through the Ten-nō. Inoue argued as follows: the monarchy in Europe and China was characterized by the privatization of people and land, as if they were the private property of the monarch, but the ancient way of political governance through the Ten-nō was exclusively based on the 'virtue' of the emperor, who had no private interest in the property of the people. In this tradition, Inoue argued, that the sovereignty of the emperor and the right of the subjects to the private property were strictly separated in Japan, and therefore the logic of the constitutional monarchy had already been embedded within this ancient Japanese political system, and hence he advocated

codifying the Kokutai in the written Constitution and constitutional monarchy in Japan, established without any ideological factors such as civil revolution or social contract.

This may not be the factual historical truth per se but was regarded as a fictitious construction; more important is that Inoue wanted to establish a highly modernized constitutional monarchy while reflecting a tradition pertinent to Japan, even to the extent of referring back to a mythical argument on the tradition of Ten-nō system started at its ancient period.

Inoue was strictly against Fukuzawa's stance on democracy, but both made serious effort to reconcile traditional Japanese convention, the Kokutai, and the modern values and legal institutions which were meant to make Japan a modern nation-state capable of strong economic and social development. Their effort was disseminated among the Japanese people as 'modern moral values' through political and journalistic activities and even built into the constitutional system.

3 The Development and Transformation of Democracy: 1890–1920

3.1 The Development of the Democratic Ideology

Despite the careful deliberations of Itō and Inoue, the oligarchic leadership could not survive the establishment of the constitution. The right to deliberate the budget that was granted to the House of Representatives was a powerful weapon reducing the power of administration and the oligarchs. The constitutional system was structured so that the increase of tax by the administration was de facto impossible without the assent of the diet. ^{xiii}In 1900, Itō himself became the leader of the political party Rikken-Seiyūkai (The Friends Club for the Constitutional Politics), which became the serious starting point for Japanese party democracy. At first, party leaders shared political power cooperatively with oligarchs, who controlled the administration, especially the army; however, this cooperative system was repeatedly criticized by various influential politicians outside this cooperative regime, and liberal opinion leaders in academics and journalism, as party politicians discarded the ideal for establishing democracy and instead had chosen the compromise with government oligarchy leaders. As early as the end of the Russo-Japanese War, in 1905, the call for party democracy, or what became 'Taishō democracy', was heard.

In the Taishō period (1912–1926) a two-party political system took form

and Kei Hara, the leader of Rikken-Seiyūkai, held power as the first prime minister not formerly a Meiji oligarch. In the first stage of Taishō democracy, two scholars proposed important political doctrines. The first was Tatsukichi Minobe, a professor of public law at the University of Tokyo.

Minobe proposed a theory of the constitution called Ten-nō Kikan-Setzu (Emperor Organ Theory), which argues that the Ten-nō is the supreme organ of government, but the sovereignty of the state belongs to the state as a public corporation consisting of all the people in Japan. His argument, built on the theory developed by the Prussian public lawyer Georg Jellinek of the state as corporation, argued that the Imperial Constitution is not just a concrete description of the government as dictated by the Ten-nō; even if the Ten-nō is regarded as occupying the highest position, his political power is limited by the collective will of the state as corporation, where sovereignty resides. In particular, the stipulation in the Constitution that the Lower House consists of citizens selected by election, representing the will of the people, reflects that all Japanese people potentially share a part in sovereignty. This restriction of political power by the rule of law and acceptance of sharing political power among an extensive swathe of the nation, Minobe argued,

made the Imperial Constitution a ‘modern’ constitution.^{xiii}

Minobe’s democratically oriented theory made him a target of terrorist attacks in the prewar Shōwa era, but his theory was praised by the postwar democratic intelligentsia as a pioneering doctrine that prepared the way for the democratic postwar Constitution. He rejected the idea of any rebellious intent within his theory, asserting that it was instead the most appropriate interpretation of the Imperial Constitution. As discussed in subsection 2.1 above, the Japanese traditional polity (Kokutai) is characterized by the unity of the nation from Ten-nō down. For Minobe, the Imperial Constitution restated the traditional Kokutai in a universally recognizable way—as a constitutional monarchy comparable with the Western modern constitutional monarchies.

At first, the Ten-nō Shukensha-Setsu (Emperor Sovereign Theory), Minobe’s competing doctrine proposed by his rival theorist Shinkichi Uesugi, which argued that Ten-nō has unlimited political power as sovereign, was supported by the oligarchs in the government bureaucracy and regarded as a more standard interpretation of the Constitution. However, it was incompatible with the political system under the Imperial Constitution,

where party politics under the constitutional monarchy was steadily developed.

Because of this, Minobe's *Kikan-Setsu* had been the standard interpretation of the Constitution in prewar Shōwa Japan, not only for liberal politicians and academics but also within the ruling administration and even some groups in the army. In this sense, as he himself asserted, his theory had no anti-regime implications. It may not be totally consistent with the ideas of the constitution writers, such as Hirofumi Itō and Kowashi Inoue. However, both Minobe and the constitution writers made common efforts to reconcile Japanese tradition and the modern political and legal system.

If Minobe is regarded as the proper successor of Inoue, we find Sakuzō Yoshino to be the successor of Yukichi Fukuzawa in the Taishō era, extending the conception of representative democracy under the two-party political system. A professor of political science at the University of Tokyo, Yoshino called his ideological position *Minpon-Shugi* (the theory of government for the people). According to Yoshino, it is not democracy which is defined by the sovereignty of the people. Instead, *Minpon-Shugi* is concerned with the maximization of the welfare of the people as the objective of government. In

this sense, Minpon-Shugi is closely aligned with democracy but also compatible with the supremacy of the Ten-nō in the government.

From this political position, Yoshino argued for realizing a representative democracy with universal suffrage in Japan. As a devout Christian and follower of Kantian moral philosophy, he strictly denied Marxism and any radical political action based on direct democracy, he also evaluated the importance of democratic socialism such as Fabianism positively for promoting the welfare and equality among people, and expected that full suffrage would become the basis for socialism in Japan within the electoral system.

3.2 The Advent of the Taishō Radicals

Yoshino's two interests, universal suffrage and the resolution of labour problems, were shared by an extensive group of intelligentsia, politicians, and even people at large. They created a large social movement called Kaizō Undō (Remodeling Movement) which purported to remodel Japanese politics and society to make Japan a more democratic country. However, the meaning of democracy among this group and the purposes of its members were very

diverse. Yoshino himself considered the role of Kaizō to be to work toward establishing representative democracy, but more radical members intended to introduce direct democracy and socialism. More interestingly, various right-winger elements also joined the Kaizō in order to resolve the election and workers' rights issues, to make Japan a more powerful state by creating stronger ties among people in Japan.

Furthermore, these two radical groups, left and right, were not necessarily against each other, but in many aspects shared interests.^{xiv} This tendency became more explicit after the First World War, with the subsequent rise of pacifism and isolationism in international politics. The prominent argument was that of President Woodrow Wilson, named Wilsonian idealism or Wilsonianism. Wilson criticized the international power politics that caused the world war, and achieved the establishment of a League of Nations where equal sovereign states could come together and work out their differences; he also supported the gradual development of democracy within those states.

In Japan, two conflicting views appeared with respect to the Wilsonian ideal and the new international regime based on the governance of the League. The first was represented, again, by Sakuzō Yoshino, who regarded the

League, as representing universal ideals of democracy and pacifism. He argued that Japan should follow Wilson and support the League and (what he saw as) the dominant tendency of world politics. From this point of view, Yoshino began to support the democratization and prospective independence of the Japanese colonies in Korea and Taiwan.^{xv}

The rival argument with respect to Wilsonianism regarded it as reflecting the vested interests of Western countries and fixing those interests as an international status quo. This argument was based on the sense of impending crisis in Japan after the war, based in turn on the expectation that the next war would require total mobilization. Within the Kaizō Undō this argument was supported by right-wing groups who wanted not only to establish democracy per se but also to prepare for total mobilization in Japan by strengthening the integration of the state.

Such attitudes were aggravated by Washington Naval Conference (1921–1922), where Japan was seriously criticized for its colonization of Asian countries and its interests in the Chinese continent were severely limited. In reaction, Japanese right-wing groups started to take a stance of *Ajia-shugi*, (could be translated as ‘Asianism’) to combat Western imperialism. It is

crucially important to note that this kind of nationalism was quite alien to the traditional Kokutai-Ron, as it emerged quickly after the First World War as a reaction to the new international political situation.

This international political shift caused the Taishō democracy movement (Kaizō Undō among others) to split into two groups. The first, represented by Yoshino and supported by the liberal intelligentsia and politicians, intended to establish representative party democracy in Japan, emphasized cooperation with Western countries in international politics, and respected the new international regime in East Asia fixed by the Washington Naval Conference. In contrast, the radical groups wanted to remodel Japan as a more directly democratic country, including socialism, and to introduce total mobilization; they started to believe that Japan had a special destiny to combat Western and especially Anglo-Saxon countries and expel them from Asia, to protect Asian peoples from them.

In this sense, the common-sense view held by postwar-democratic historians that Shōwa militarism was built up by subverting the movement for democracy in Taishō era has made a fatal misunderstanding. In truth, the so-called 'Japanese Fascism' emerged at the periphery of Taishō democracy,

as Mitani (1995: 27) rightly commented. Mitani (1995: 329-30) also made the crucially important point that the democracy factor, which justifies the participation of people in political power, was not weak within the political tradition of modern Japan as seen above, and that democracy need not contradict nationalism in this sense. In contrast, he argued, the factor of liberalism, which emphasizes freedom from political power, was far weaker. Notwithstanding, these two political aspects are often opposed to each other, when democracy approaches to populism, and he argued that this contradiction reached its peak in the prewar Shōwa era.^{xvi}

To add to Mitani's remarks, the traditional Kokutai-Ron, which formed the basis of democracy without liberalism, was much less harmful to international peace as long as it purported to serve only for the independence of Japan. It was when the Kokutai-Ron was combined with direct democracy or populism and Asia-centered regionalism countering Western imperialism that militarism in Shōwa Japan expressed its most brutal face.

4 Political Thought Underlying the Emergence of Militarism from late-Taishō to prewar-Shōwa Japan (1920–1941)

This section reconsiders the structure of political thought in relation to the political process that militarism in Pre–Second World War Japan, that is, 1920–1941. Accounts of this are often oversimplified or ideologically biased, asserting a linear development of militarism right back to the Imperial Constitution in 1889. In fact, we need forty more years, until the Manchurian Incident and the intrusion of Japan into China in 1931, and the assassination of the Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai at the 15 May Incident in 1932, for militarism to germinate.

It is true that the colonization of Korea, Taiwan, and many Pacific Islands, and the capture of interests in Northern China, occurred before 1930s. This, however, is best not regarded as militaristic aggression of the 1930s type but as a part of the imperialism which prevailed around the world, driven by Western countries, at that time. The imperialistic behavior of Japan at that historical stage is certainly blameworthy, especially from the perspective of the Asian countries colonized by Japan, but this criticism can equally be made of Western countries which had imperial interests in the region.^{xvii}

Japanese intrusion into China beginning in the late 1920s was a completely different matter: a unilateral revision of the status quo by means

of militaristic violence, disrupting the international order made after the First World War, which Japan had also committed to protect. Within Japan, it was mirrored by the destruction of the democracy which had developed after the establishment of the Imperial Constitution, ended up in dictatorship by the military until 1945.

To consider the process of development of the militarism in prewar Japan, it is convenient to divide it into three periods: 1920–1932, 1932–1937, and 1937–1941. The first stage, 1920–1932, which I discuss in subsection 4.1 below, shows the brief achievement of Taishō democracy and its subsequent sudden decomposition in prewar Shōwa Japan.

4.1 The Close of Democracy in Prewar Japan: 1920–1932

The foundation of Japanese militarism was laid in the structure of the Imperial Constitution, which guaranteed the independence of the military from control by the cabinet. However, it is not true that militarism developed beginning as early as the establishment of the Constitution; rather, it was democracy that developed steadily from the promulgation of the Constitution to the end of the 1920s. During the period, the army was under the control of

an oligarch leader, Aritomo Yamagata, and his group of militants and politicians. Though Yamagata was an imperialist who promoted the expansion of Japanese colonies, his careful choices always avoided militaristic adventurism, and the army never deviated from political prudence and civilian political decisions.

The tables were turned when Yamagata passed away in 1922, in the era of burgeoning pacifism after the First World War. The military underwent severe budget cuts with the advent of greater democracy, and generals felt a serious sense of crisis and lack of *raison d'être* in the new environment.

In the 1920s, the young elite officers who did not belong to Yamagata's faction and resisted against its monopoly of power within the army got together under the leadership of Tetsuzan Nagata and formed the group called the 'military reformists' today. The chief purposes of the group were personnel reform within the army and the resolution of the Manchurian conflict to protect the interests of Japan there. Later on, Kanji Ishihara, Hideki Tōjō, and other soldiers who achieved strong power in the Japanese military dictatorship more or less belonged to or were connected with this group. (See Nakamura (1998: 60-63)).

Ideologically, there were few interesting views in the arguments of the military reformists. They were militaristic technocrats rather than ideological leaders, and their chief interest lay in the expansion of the (perceived) national interest of Japan particularly in East Asia, and in extending the political influence of the army in Japan. However, they also believed that the introduction of a general mobilization system into Japan was a vital need to attain their objective, and hence they were highly sympathetic to the state socialism and planning economy, even though communist ideology itself was their direct enemy. This anti-capitalist strain within them merged with the state socialist ideology I discuss below to spur the collapse of democracy in prewar Japan. (See Nakamura (1998: 59-60))

Within the same period, civil society in Japan also experienced serious shocks unrelated to the military. When the Shōwa era started, the Minseitō party held power and promoted a democratic, pacifist policy. The government of Osachi Hamaguchi in particular proposed a social-democratic policy generous to the working class and a pacifist foreign policy based on the protection of the Washington Naval Treaty. Hamaguchi's peaceful and democratic policy and his clean and honest image were strongly supported by

the Japanese people at first. However, Minseitō made major economic mistakes to Japan's return to the gold standard, and Japan was in a serious depression by the early 1930s, alongside the worldwide economic crisis. ^{xviii} Furthermore, Minseitō declined a proposal from the rival party Seiyūkai to form a coalition cabinet, conditional on dropping its depressive economic policy (Banno (2014: 199-201). This decision by Minseitō had weakened the political basis of the cabinet system.

It was in this period when the Manchurian Incident and the coups, 15 May Incident occurred, and Japanese people looked to the army to step in because of their discouragement with economic depression and political dysfunction of the party politics. They hoped that the army would realize better politics and find a way out of the depression. In the next subsection, I survey the landscape of ideological thought in the early 1930s to support the argument above

4.2 The Structure of the Right-Wing Movement in Prewar Shōwa Japan

When we consider prewar Shōwa history from an ideological perspective, it is important to focus on the contribution of radicals, both left and right,

after the First World War and the Russian Revolution—a new political perspective different from either the traditional right-wing ideology dating back before the Meiji Restoration or the constitutional democracy developed through the Jiyū-Minken Undo and the establishment of the Imperial Constitution.

Among these radicals, a leftist group represented by the Japan Communist Party wished to make Japan a communist country under the influence of the Soviet Union. However, this movement was only supported within the intelligentsia and university students, and did not penetrate into the working class as expected, partly because communism was severely suppressed by the state and partly because textbook Marxism and the orders of the Comintern neglected the reality of the working class in Japan and were unworkable in the Japanese context.^{xix} Finally, the *Safety Protection Law* promulgated in 1928 completely eliminated the freedom of movement of members of banned left-wing groups, and many Marxists converted (*tenkō*) to state socialism. I therefore ignore the Marxists and start my argument by distinguishing the ‘two right wings’ below.^{xx}

[Table 1 about here]

Surprising enough, however, the influence of the Soviet communism was not at all innocuous in prewar Japan, but was transformed into the state socialism which I call Right-A, for many people who were would-be politician or bureaucrats learned Marxism in their university period and believed that the risk of socialist revolution was high enough to subvert the capitalist system. To cope with this risk of socialist revolution, they believed that introducing socialist planning economy and general mobilization system were indispensable to rectify the shortcomings of the free market economy.

In this sense, this radical group is essentially different from the traditional right wing, which I call Right-B. To clarify the meaning of Right-A, I compare its ideology with that of Right-B. The latter consisted of the Kokutai-Ron mentioned above, in which Japanese nationhood is the supreme value, to be protected from the influence of Western countries, by maintaining the independence of Japan. In the prewar Shōwa era, representative ideologues within Right-B included Kiichirō Hiranuma, a member of the House of Lords, who led the right-wing association, Kokuhonsha, and Mitsuru Tōyama, who led the most powerful right-wing activist association, Gen'yōsha.

In comparison, the Right-A ideology was developed far later than Right-B.

It started no earlier than 1900, and grew quickly after the First World War and the Russian Revolution as a reaction to the development of Soviet socialism and international Wilsonianism, symbolized in Japan by the Washington system. The representative ideologues of Right-A included Kamejiro Mitsugawa and Shūmei Ōkawa (who gathered the right-wing group Yūzonsha), but the charismatic leader within them was definitely Ikki Kita. As Osamu Kuno, an important successor to Masao Maruyama's theory on the Japanese political thought, clearly states (Kuno and Tsurumi (1956: 139)), it was Ikki Kita who was the ideological origin of Shōwa Ultra-Nationalism, strictly separate from the traditional nationalism of the Meiji era.

Table 1 compares difference in ideological position between Right-A and Right-B. Regarding the political regime, traditionalist Right-B naturally asserted the sovereignty of Ten-nō, as emperor. In contrast, Kita applied Tatsukichi Minobe's Ten-nō Kikan-Setsu and argued that sovereignty exists over the people in Japan as unity. Under this interpretation of the Ten-nō system, Kita deduced a justification for Japan to become a state-socialistic country. He argued for the radical redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor, from capitalists to working class, and so on. Any kind of

discriminatory institutions by birth and gender he argued should be drastically reformed. All these changes should be implemented by the power of the army, for the interests of all the people in Japan, who were the seat of its sovereignty.

Compared with Kita's program for reforming Japan, Right-B's arguments for the ideal political regime and economic system were always vague: Japanese nationhood is most important, but its precise meaning is undefined; socialism and communism are bad because anti-nationalistic, but Right-B also often criticizes capitalism and praised premodern agrarian society as the basis of Japanese nationhood. Fundamentally, its conceptions of social institutions are built on nostalgia toward premodern Japanese society, which can never be effectively reproduced in modern society.

Let us now compare the foreign policy positions of the two kinds of right-wingers. Kita, who represents Right-A, asserted that Japan should occupy Asia by depriving the Western states of their colonies and imperialistic interests. According to Kita, this intrusion is justifiable in the same way as the domestic redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor to establish distributive justice and because it can help Asian nations become

independent from colonization by Western countries.

In contrast, from the viewpoint of the Right-B, the superiority of Japanese nationhood within Asia was regarded as self-evident, and this simple belief was sufficient to permit Japan to intrude into the Asian continent. However, for them, the intrusion itself was not manifest destiny; what was essential was the protection of Japanese nationhood, and so the independence of Japan itself was far more important than any expansion, colonies, or interests outside. This division between types of right-wing thought will help clarify the complicated situation of political and ideological struggle in the intermediate period, 1932–1937. The next subsection is devoted to this task.

4.3 Political and Ideological Situation in the Intermediate Period: 1932–1937

The period 1932–1937, until the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, was a transition period from democracy to militarism. The postwar-democratic view argued that crazy fascist movements suffused Japan during the time, threatening and carrying out coups, terrorism, and provoking suppression of free speech by the military, finally subverting liberal democracy and established military fascism in Japan.

Masao Maruyama's article *Nihon Fashizumu no shisō to Undō*^{xxi} is a representative argument on this line. With his concept *Nihon Fashizumu* (I follow its translation 'Japanese Fascism' below) which connected his basic concept Ultra-Nationalism to the characteristics of the fascist movement particular to Japan, Maruyama argued that it reflected the historical backwardness compared not only with liberal democracy but also the European fascism. Because of its backwardness, it is characterized as ideology the family-system tendency and agrarianism, and its social support was founded not by the urban citizens with high education such as salaried employees, journalists, university students, but the class of people with lower-education who formed the public opinion at the agrarian area such as small factory owners, landowners, or elementary school teachers. Maruyama (1969: 62) denoted these types of local opinion leaders as 'Pseudo-intelligentia'. Although the fascist element common to Germany and Italy was recognized, the social basis of Japanese Fascism which induced military fascism in the next period (1937-1941) was developed from its near-feudal and agrarian origin pointed out above. In this sense, Maruyama's concept of Japanese Fascism corresponds with Right-B in my term, and he identified the essential

nature of fascism in Japan as the movement by the group belonging to Right-B.

Unsurprisingly, the basic ideology of soldiers in Japan was based on the traditional Kokutai-Ron, Right-B in my term and a series of attempted coups by these young soldiers occurred during the 1930s such as the 15 May Incident in 1932 and the 26 February Incident in 1936. However, these young officers who conducted the coups were not supported by their peers, in general, and were severely punished by the top leaders of the army. Indeed, in the largest such incident, the 26 February Incident, the involved soldiers were sentenced to death, and the leaders in the army who had expected the plan to succeed took responsibility and left politics. Note also that the officers who caused the Manchurian Incident and established the state of Manchukuo in 1932 belonged to the senior officer class and hence had no direct relationships with the young soldiers who sparked coups within Japan. It is therefore highly doubtful that the coups by the young officers were the core incident(s) that established military fascism in Japan.

To clarify this point further, I will review the political situation after the 15 May Incident, putting special focus on the Ten-nō Kikan-Settsu Jiken (the

Emperor Organ Theory), in 1935. The basic political situation and shift from the 15 May Incident until 1937 were as follows.^{xxii} If the election had been held after the incident, Seiyūkai would have won, because Minister of Finance Korekiyo Takahashi's inflationary fiscal policy was strongly supported by the people. However, it was highly likely that Seiyūkai, as a pro-army party, would have chosen a right-wing army leader as next prime minister. Instead, under the leadership of Kin-mochi Saionji, the last Genrō (elder statesman who advises Ten-nō in his political decision), first Minoru Saitō and then Keisuke Okada were chosen as prime minister without election, to bar Seiyūkai from power.

Both ex-navy leaders, Saitō and Okada belonged to the liberal group who had contributed to the cooperative international policy in the Taishō period. In this sense, the Japanese cabinet system was neither democratic nor military at that point, until the 26 February Incident, when Okada was attacked and had only a narrow escape from assassination. On the whole, theirs was a non-democratic but civilian politics. Korekiyo Takahashi continued to hold the position of Minister of Finance, as he was trusted to keep propelling the economy out of the depression, but he was also

assassinated in the 26 February Incident, along with now-ex-prime-minister Saitō. At the same time, the bureaucracy improved its position due to the decline of the power of the politicians, and for rehabilitating the Japanese economy with the advent of the 'New Bureaucrats' or 'Reformist Bureaucrats', who had strong sympathy toward socialism and antipathy toward the free market economy.

Under the Okada cabinet in 1935, Tatsukichi Minobe, the leading theorist of Taishō democracy and at that time a member of the House of Lords, was targeted for his legal theory of Ten-nō Kikan-Setsu, which it was asserted disgraced the dignity of the Ten-nō.^{xxiii} The criticism was first voiced by a right-wing member of the House of Lords, and Minobe responded (plausibly, as seen) that this criticism was based on a fundamental misinterpretation of his theory. However, the misconception became a widespread one, and the Okada cabinet denied that it followed Ten-nō Kikan-Setsu. The army, veterans' associations and private right-wing groups joined the outrage, and Minobe was attacked by a right-wing terrorist and had a narrow escape from death.

Looking back at all this, the postwar-democratic view (see Maruyama

(1969: 61-62)) argued that the Kikan-Setzu Jiken symbolized a surge of Japanese Fascism led by the opinion formed at the local area by the influence of the 'quasi-intelligentia'. However, this argument, I believe, blurs the real picture and the real development of Japanese militarism.

That is, I believe that what really occurred in Japan in this period was not a struggle between democracy and fascism. Democracy itself had been terminated in 1932, when the Saitō and then the Okada cabinet were formed without election. By this point, the real struggle instead consisted in the one between right radicals and right conservatives, whom I have called Right-A and Right-B. The two cabinets focused on here were both supported by Minseitō as a party-base and by reformist bureaucrats in the concrete administration of the state. Therefore, the government's overall position was close to the Right-A program. However, it did not have a firm political foundation, for it was not legitimized by a democratic election or empowered by explicit dictatorship.

Despite its defects, most conscientious pro-democratic politicians and intelligentsia gathered around this group. Minobe himself proposed a 'Round-Table Top-Level Conference' where top leaders of the parties, military,

business, and workers would get together to make final political decisions, instead of the cabinet. (Banno (2014: 208-209) The representative liberalist ideologue Jozekan Hasegawa also proposed a similar conception, the ‘Constitutional Dictatorship’ at this period. (See Mitani (1995: 220-250)). Surprisingly enough, the dominant ideologues of Taishō democracy had come far closer to state socialism at that stage, in order to support the Saitō and Okada cabinets, to reform the corruption of party politics and to limit the access of the army to civilian politics.

Note that the Kikan-Setsu Jiken occurred in this period. The pro-army Seiyūkai took the majority of the Diet seats, and so democratic due process have it power to pursue its pro-army policy. In conclusion, the real struggle within the Kikan-Setsu Jiken was not between the democracy and the urban intelligentsia on the one hand and Japanese Fascism and an unenlightened public led by the ‘pseudo-intelligentsia’. The real ideological struggle was much more singular: on one side, the elitist, Right-A intelligentsia connected to liberal politicians close to the Ten-nō, such as Saionji, Saitō, and Okada, reformist bureaucrats, and in party terms, Minseitō and the still-legal socialist parties (who had reconciled themselves to the egalitarian state

socialism), versus the more conservative Right-B concept held by the traditional right-wing army group, right-wingers and its political associations, and in party terms, the Seiyūkai, which exploited the political illegitimacy of the Right-A group and advocated a prompt return to party democracy so that it could hold power again, and at the same time, criticized Minobe's Kikan-Setsu, with its innate state-socialist nature, as fascist (See Banno (2014: 211-216)).

Contrary to the logic of Maruyama, the Right-B group failed in the struggle. The election just after the Kikan-Setsu Jiken was an overwhelming victory for Minseitō, despite the fact that Seiyūkai was a rural-based political party. Though the 26 February Incident occurred one week after the election, it led only to a further decrease in the political power of the Right-B group in the army and of the Seiyūkai, which had lost credibility among the Japanese people at large.

4.4 Summary of the Section

In this section, I have followed the development of nationalist ideologies in prewar Shōwa Japan. The postwar-democratic view argued that Japanese

'fascism' was based on an ideology (which I have called Right-B) among uneducated people and 'quasi-intelligentia' connected with the rural area as its social support, in contrast with a liberal and intelligent urban bourgeoisie. In fact, this genteel intelligentsia had also become discouraged with democracy and the free market system in the 1930s, and had come around to something more like a state socialism under a command economy led by reformist bureaucrats. The legal socialist parties and labor unions also got together behind this Right-A program, as did even some young soldiers of an originally Right-B mentality.

Note that various groups with different levels of political power were attracted to the idea of state socialism, as per Right-A, for a range of reasons. Young soldiers perhaps simply dreamed of a Shōwa-Ishin. Liberals wanted to reform the democratic system whose corruption was represented in particular by Seiyūkai and to limit the intervention of the army in politics. Socialist parties expected the redistribution of wealth through the socialist management of the economy. The leaders of the army, the most powerful political power at this stage, were also interested in the Right-A program because they saw it as useful for the establishment of a general mobilization

system in Japan. An army pamphlet published in 1934 coupled the promotion of the general mobilization system with that of large-scale egalitarian redistribution of wealth, using social welfare programming to attract working-class people to the general mobilization policy.

In summary, what occurred was not the oppression of liberal democracy by Japanese Fascism or on Right-B ideology. Broad groups within Japan, including in the army, party politics, the bureaucracy, labour unions, and academia and the intelligentsia, all were attracted to state socialism, Right-A—with rather different reasons, but sharing a common antagonistic feeling toward capitalism and discouragement about party politics.

Finally, the 26 February Incident occurred, in 1936, and the Right-B leaders within the army who were connected to the young soldiers that had planned the incident were expelled by the Right-A leaders. The ‘Shin-Taisei’ (‘New Regime’) established under Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe in 1937, right before the start of the second Sino-Japanese War, incorporated all players, including the army, under a national framework based on the Right-A ideology.

As this new regime was a mixture of various interest groups with many

contradictory agendas, there was no real power to make responsible political decisions. In particular, no one was really able to control or quash the intrusion of the army onto the Asian continent, and hence war with China erupted and compounded the muddle. Just before the Pacific War with the Western Allies also began, in 1941, Konoe stepped down from power, for his new regime was unworkable and had degenerated to a support system of the dictatorship by the army. Hideki Tōjō, who led the army at that time, succeeded Konoe and oversaw the war effort under the general mobilization system thus established.

5 Concluding Remarks

Let me now summarize the content of this study. Despite the conventional belief since the last world war that Japanese nationalism is particular to Japan—feudal, hierarchical, and anti-liberal-democratic—my study has clarified that included various types, and that some types of Japanese nationalism are strictly modern, including the dominant type consistent with liberal democracy.

More concretely stated, the prototype of Japanese nationalism was built

up in the early modern Edo period, where consciousness of the unity and independence of Japan as nation-state was established through the Kokutai-Ron. Then, after the Meiji Restoration, the Kokutai-Ron was harmonized with social institutions introduced from the West, such as private property right, a competitive market economy, and party democracy, by the efforts of constitution writers including Yukichi Fukuzawa, Kowashi Inoue, and Hirofumi Itō, which culminated in the establishment of the constitutional monarchy by the adoption of the Imperial Constitution.

After 1910s, the democratic trend was deepened as the Taishō democracy movement, and the Japanese political system also came closer to representative democracy, as symbolized by the establishment of full male suffrage in election and the two-party political system in the early 1930s. The movements of pacifism and international cooperation were also dominant during the same period.

However, the Taishō era movement also saw the introduction of an alternative model of democracy—direct democracy, like anarcho-syndicalism or Soviet-type socialism. Furthermore, some right-wing groups had a strong sense of crisis in relation to international movements after the First World

War, the exclusion of Japan from the imperialistic interests of Western countries, and the threat of communism due to the emergence of the USSR. Surprisingly enough, these two groups, left and right, amalgamated with each other in early Shōwa era as the state socialist movement, and gathered with military and bureaucratic reformists and became a new rights group promoting the establishment of a general mobilization system and Asia-centered regionalism.

In the 1930s, when democracy collapsed in Japan, two groups held power in the military, the Right-A group and the more traditional right-wing groups I called Right-B here, which was strictly anti-socialist, struggled to obtain political power; the consolidation of power by Right-A in the late 1930s led to the full penetration of Japan into East Asia. It is this nationalism of Right-A that largely justified and promoted the militarism and foreign aggression in the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War.

In summary, Japanese nationalism as it emerged from the Kokutai-Ron had at least three types over the Meiji–1945 period: nationalism consistent with constitutional monarchy and international cooperation, nationalism assimilated with state socialism and Asia-centered regionalism, and the

movement to re-erect the traditional Kokutai in the modern world.

To close, I would suggest a lesson this study provides in relation to recent political issues. It is sometimes argued that recent rightward trend in Japan and the resurgence of nationalism are signs of the impending remilitarization of Japan. Despite this fear among some people in other countries, nationalism in Japan as it exists at present is the descendent of assimilated liberal-democratic nationalism or the simply nostalgic Kokutai-Ron. I agree that some elements of the latter group, who for example repeat hate speech to non-Japanese Asian people, are shameful, but in any case, they have no concrete political conception of themselves as Right-A did before the last World War, without which they will find it difficult to become the source of any political movement for militarism or otherwise.

	Mainstream Political Position (1889–1932)	Right wing (1919–1936)		Militarism (1928–1945)
		Right-A (radicals)	Right-B (traditionalists)	
Political regime	Constitutional monarchy	State's sovereignty	Emperor's sovereignty	Dictatorship by the military
Economic system	Capitalism	State socialism	N/A	Bureaucratic planning economy
International political position toward Western countries	Cooperation	Liberalization of Asia from Western imperialism	'Gaullisme'	Expulsion of Western countries from Asia
International position toward Asia	Preservation of the status quo set at the Washington Naval Conference	Support of the Asian nation and people from Western imperialism	Superiority of Japanese nation to other Asian ones	Aggressive policy toward Asia under the pretext of helping its liberation from Western imperialism

Table 1: Structure of political ideologies in Japan before and during the Second World

War

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ⁱⁱ After the defeat of Japan at the Pacific War, General Douglas MacArthur arrived in Japan as head of the Allied Occupation Force. MacArthur's office was named GHQ, where it

executed the radical reform for democratizing Japan both politically and economically. As the series of reforms were so drastic, it is often named as the Occupation Revolution.

iii See Maruyama (1969), pp.1-24, and pp. pp. 34-65 as typical argument.

iv In social science, Toshiyoshi Miyazawa (constitutional law), Takeyoshi Kawashima (civil law), Hisao Ōtsuka (economic history), Chie Nakane (anthropology) are representative. My study will denote this type of argument represented by Maruyama in the area of political thought sometimes as the *postwar-democratic view*, considering the fact that Maruyama's view was not particular to his own, but more extensively shared among the group of the scholars above and their followers.

v For political analysis of the 'New Nationalism' in contemporary Japan, see Rosenbluth et al. (2009).

vi See Norman (1940) which argued the feudal nature of Edo era and its persistent effects in modern Japan. Norman's contribution had strong influence on the liberal intelligentsia both in Japan, Asia and the West.

vii Sorai Ogyū's philosophy and its enormous influence as the basis of nationalism in Japan was eloquently explained in Bitō (2014: 167-221).

viii The nature and significance of the late Mito-Gaku are clearly explained by Bitō (2014: 239-266).

ix See for example, Fukuzawa (2008), pp. 17-20. Note here that the concept of civilization by Fukuzawa exclusively meant Western civilization and evaluated the civilization of both Edo Japan and China as less developed ones.

x See Ramserer and Rosenbluth (1996: 15-40).

xi Maruyama's argument here was first made by his monumental article 'Chō-Kokkashugi no Ronri to Shinri' ('The Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism'), first published right after the war in 1946. This article is incorporated in Maruyama (1969: 1-24). Here, he draws his concept of the neutrality of the state from the argument of the German public lawyer Carl Schmidt. He characterized the essential nature of the modern state as *ein neutraler Staat* where the basis of national sovereignty is laid in a purely formal legal structure separated from the personal value of the people.

xii See Banno (2014: 129-130).

xiii Minobe's argument is presented plainly in Minobe (1912). For the doctrine by Jellinek, see Jellinek (1905).

xiv See Itō (1978), who proves this fact with careful research.

xv See Mitani (1995: 79-82).

xvi As he admitted in Mitani (1995: 330), his argument is built on the classical dichotomy by Tocqueville (1835/40). More modern treatment is presented in Hayek (1973,1976, 1979).

^{xvii} For a balanced view on the nature and development of colonial policy in prewar Japan, refer to Peattie (1996).

^{xviii} See Nakamura (1998: 68-73) for analysis of the consequences of the economic policy by Minseitō at this period.

^{xix} This situation was not changed after the war, despite the appearance of the strong influence of Marxism. Its influence was limited to the class of intelligent people, within academism, journalism and university students. After the high-growth period that started in 1960s, labor union and left-wing political parties more or less discarded the thesis of Marxism.

^{xx} Itō (1969) pioneered the study of political history in prewar Shōwa Japan and articulated the crucial importance of the struggle between the two types of right-wingers within the military, political parties, and privy council. His framework was used for the general survey of the history in prewar Shōwa Japan by Nakamura (1998: 1-255). Banno (2016: 174-231) is also a useful survey of the period.

^{xxi} This article was originally given as lecture in 1947 and translated in Maruyama (1969: 25-83) as “The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism”.

^{xxii} See Banno (2016: 204-216).

^{xxiii} See Nakamura (1998: 98-100) for the broad review of the case.