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CHINA, JAPAN, AND THE JANUS-FACED EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

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I declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and all sources have been acknowledged.



Shogo Suzuki

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GLOSSARY

The biographies are of the main individuals who appear in this study, and are by no means exhaustive. They are based on the following works: Kokushi Daijiten Henshū linkai hen, *Kokuishi daijiten* (various volumes). (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1979-1993); Arthur W. Hummel (ed), *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (vol. I, II). (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1944, 1945); Ssu-Yü Teng and John King Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982; Paul Bailey, 'Introduction' in Ma Jianzhong, *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People: The Reform Writings of Ma Jianzhong (1845-1900)* (Durham East Asia Series, no. 2) (Paul Bailey, trans.). (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998); Yen-P'ing Hao, 'Chan Kuan-ying: The Comprador as Reformer', *Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 29, no. 1, November 1969, pp. 15-22) and Nakamura Masanori, Ishii Kanji, Kasuga Yutaka (eds) *Nihon kindai shisō taikai* (vol. 8): *keizei kōsō*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988)

Chinese names

- Cai E Cai E (1882-1916) was a disciple of Liang Qichao. He led the Yunnan Army and rebelled against Yuan Shikai, the then president of the Republic of China, 1916, contributing to the latter's downfall.
- Dong Xun Dong (1807-1892) was an official from Jiangsu. He first served in the Board of Revenue. He was appointed to the *zongli yamen* in 1861, where he served until 1880. He was experienced in negotiations with European diplomats, and strongly called for Chinese diplomats to be posted overseas. Dong was also an acquaintance of W. A. P. Martin, and wrote the preface to his translation of Wheaton's *Elements of International Law*, the *Wanguo gongfa*.
- Feng Guifen Feng Guifen (1809-1874) was a scholar from Suzhou. He was director of local academies in Shanghai and Suzhou, but also served as assistant to both Lin Zexu and Li Hongzhang. His celebrated work, the *Jiaobinlu kangyi*, was compiled in 1861 and published

posthumously. It was presented to the Guangxu emperor in 1893, when concerted efforts were been taken to strengthen the country.

- Guo Songtao Guo (1818-1891) was a scholar, official and diplomat from Hunan. He opposed aggressive anti-foreign behaviour, which was extremely rare for his time. He worked as a local administrator, administering the salt monopoly. In 1863, he was appointed as acting governor of Guangdong. He was appointed as Chinese Minister to Britain in 1876.
- He Ruzhang He (1838-1891) served as China's Minister to Japan.
- Kang Youwei Kang (1858-1927) was a Confucian scholar and reformist. His memorials came to the attention of the Guangxu emperor in 1898, which culminated in the 'Hundred Days of Reform' which began on June that year. The reforms were crushed by the empress dowager Cixi, and Kang was forced to go into exile. Although he eventually returned to China after the collapse of the Qing, he never wielded the political significance that he had during the brief period of reforms of 1898.
- Li Hongzhang Li (1823-1901) was one of most influential officials and Chinese diplomats of his time. His climb to the highest levels of official dome came in the backdrop of his role in organising local militia to fight and Taiping Rebellion. Thereafter, he served as acting governor of Jiangsu. He became governor-general of Hunan and Hubei. He was charged with a number of political duties, including those of governor general of Zhili, a position he held on for 25 years. Li also had considerable experience of diplomatic negotiations with the European powers, and his power was such that many matters of foreign affairs would (in addition to the *zongli yamen*) come to his attention because foreign dignitaries often visit his headquarters in Tianjin for his consent or advise. Li is also famous for being a leading reformist official, and sponsored many initiatives that aimed to make China 'rich and strong'.
- Ma Jianzhong Ma (1845-1900) was from Jiangsu province. His family was Catholic, and Ma studied at a French Catholic school. He served as a

diplomatic attaché accompanying students sent overseas from the Fuzhou Naval Dockyard. While in France, Ma studied international law, commercial law, and political systems. He served as Li Hongzhang's personal staff from 1880. He assisted in the drawing up of the U.S.-Korea treaty of 1882, and helped consolidate Sino-Korean ties. Ma Jianzhong was also assistant manager of the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company from 1884 to 1891.

Prince Gong

Prince Gong (1833-1898) was a Manchu prince with the name of Yixin. He was the younger brother of the Xianfeng emperor. Although he was initially unfavourably disposed towards the European powers, military defeat and increased interaction with their diplomats gradually brought about a change in his attitude. He was instrumental in the establishment of the *zongli yamen* in 1860. Prince Gong also served as co-regent to the Tongzhi emperor from 1861. Prince Gong was probably at the height of powers around this time, holding additional offices in the *zongli yamen* and Grand Council. However, his growing power brought about the suspicion of the empress dowager, who demoted him from time to time curb his powers and ambitions. He gradually faded from the scene, returning briefly to participate (albeit ineffectively) in the Sino-Japanese negotiations which led to the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895.

Shen Baozhen

Shen (1820-1879) was an official from Fujian. Famed for his strict, incorruptible personality, he is best known as Imperial Commissioner and Director General of the Fuzhou Naval Dockyard, which had originally been established by Zuo Zongtang. He served this post until 1874, and during this time the shipyard produced fifteen vessels and trained students in English, French, and other technical studies. Shen also played a part in implementing a number of institutional reforms in Taiwan following the Japanese invasion of the island in 1873.

Wang Tao

Wang Tao (1828-1897) was one of the earliest Chinese journalists. He worked in Shanghai for the missionary press in the 1840s. He briefly flirted with the Taiping rebels, which landed him in trouble

with the Qing authorities after the rebellion was crushed. He spent his time as a refugee in the British consulate in Shanghai, and eventually escaped to Hong Kong. There, he spent his time assisting Briton James Legge in translating Chinese classics into English. Wang travelled to Britain in 1867, and returned to Hong Kong in 1870. Back in Hong Kong, Wang established his own publishing house. By translating passages from foreign periodicals, he published an account of the Franco-Prussian War, which was reprinted by the Japanese army in 1878. He established a newspaper, the *Xunhuan ribao*. He wrote and published widely on contemporary and foreign affairs. He eventually returned to Shanghai in 1884, where he continued to write articles for newspapers. Wang's writings are wide-ranging, including fiction, European technology, and the history of Western political institutions.

Wei Yuan

Wei Yuan (1794-1856) was a historian and geographer from Hunan. He served as a magistrate in Jiangsu, and was also an adviser to the governor there. He is noted for several volumes of work, among them the *Shengwuji*, an account of the Qing military campaigns, and the *Haiguo tuzhi*, which first appeared in 1844 and was hugely influential in both China and Japan.

Wenxiang

Wenxiang (1818-1876) was a Manchu official. He served as an official in various capacities before taking up a post in the *zongli yamen*, which he had helped establish with Prince Gong. He also served in the Board of War and Board of Civil office. In 1871 he became Associate Grand Secretary, and Grand Secretary the following year. His honest character earned him the respect of the European diplomats, and he was one of the more reformist officials of his time. He also helped establish the *Tongwenguan*, the school for Western languages and studies.

Woren

Woren (?-1871) was a Mongol official. He was appointed imperial tutor in 1855. In 1862 he was appointed as president of the Board of Works and Grand Secretary. He was a powerful official and seen as an expert on Song Neo-Confucianism. He was one of the leading

officials who opposed Prince Gong and Wenxiang's institutional reforms.

Xu JiYu

Xu (1795-1873) was an official and geographer from Shanxi. He served various posts including governor of Guangxi and Fujian. At Fujian he had the opportunity to come into contact with European nationals, and he tried to foster mutual confidence between them. This made him popular with the European powers, but not among his own people. His most famous work, the *Yinghuan zhilüe* was first published in 1850.

Xue Fucheng

Xue (1838-1894) was an official from Jiangsu. He came to Zeng Guofan's attention during the pacification of the Nian Rebellion, and served as a secretary to Zeng's staff. In 1875, he joined Li Hongzhang's staff. He was instrumental in providing Li Hongzhang with advice to send troops to Korea following the 1882 mutiny. Xue was appointed Minister to Britain, France, Italy and Belgium in 1889, and stayed in Europe for four years.

Yuan Shikai

Yuan (1859-1916) was a military leader and official of the Qing. He served as the Chinese Resident of Korea between until 1894. He later became the president of the Republic of China in 1912.

Zeng Guofan

Zeng Guofan (1811-1872) was born in Hunan. Noted for his morality, he was in charge of pacifying the Taiping Rebellion and some of the Nian Rebellion. He was one of the Qing's top officials of his time, and played a significant role in China's dealing with the Western powers, and displayed a great interest in Western military technology. He also established an arsenal in Jiangxi and Shanghai. He was also a patron of Li Hongzhang.

Zhang Zhidong

Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) was born in Zhili province (present day Hebei). He was a high-ranking official who enjoyed appointments to the posts of tutor to the Imperial Academy, governor-general of Liangguang, Huguang and Liangjiang. He also became a Grand Councillor (*Junji dachen*). He was noted for his honest and vigorous leadership. Zhang often supported strong, military measures against the European powers, particularly during the Sino-Russian dispute

during 1879-1880, and the Sino-French conflict over Vietnam, but neither was he a xenophobic 'diehard'. He was a strong advocate of 'self-strengthening' and learning superior techniques from the West and established military schools and arsenals, as well as sending students to Japan for study. Zhang later also proposed the establishment of a school system based on Japanese models. His most famous work, the *Quanxue bian* was written in the backdrop of Kang Youwei's sweeping reforms, and called for moderate change based on Confucian learning and Chinese institutions.

Zheng Guanying

Zheng (1842-1923) was a comprador who served as director of Li Hongzhang's Shanghai Cotton Cloth mill and China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, as well as foreign enterprises operating in China. Born in Guangdong province, he received a classical education as a child. After failing to get an official post, he moved to Shanghai and worked as a merchant. He studied English, and his sustained contact with foreigners in the Treaty Ports profoundly influenced him, and led to the emergence of his reformist ideas.

Zuo Zongtang

Zuo Zongtang (1812-1885) was born in Hunan. An able and incorruptible official, his career was often associated with military campaigns. He took part in battles against the Taiping rebels, the Nian rebels, and the Muslim uprising. He served as governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang from 1862, and was then appointed governor-general of Shaanxi and Gansu in 1866. During his tenure as governor-general, he did much to assist the rehabilitation of areas devastated by rebellions, encouraging agriculture and establishing local industry. He maintained a high level of interest in Western technology, particularly weapons. He was an able administrator and was instrumental in setting up modern Western factories and arsenals, such as the famous Fuzhou Naval Dockyard and a gunpowder factory in Lanzhou, Gansu.

Japanese names

- Abe Masahiro Abe (1819-1857) was the *rōjū* when Perry arrived in Japan in 1853. He was instrumental in the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Amity in 1854. He introduced Western arms and culture through the establishment of a naval school (*Kaigun denshūjo*) and a school of Western learning (the *Yōgakusho*).
- Aizawa Seishisai Aizawa Seishisai (1782-1863) was a *samurai* and Confucian scholar of the Mito fiefdom. He eventually became the head of the Kōdōkan, the Mito fiefdom's school in 1840. He interviewed British sailors in 1824. His influential work, *Shinron* was written the next year. It was originally intended for the Mito lord but was later disseminated widely and influenced many *samurai* opposed to the signing of the unequal treaties with the West.
- Dazai Shundai (1680-1747). Tokugawa Confucian. His political thought was based on strong discipline and pragmatism.
- Etō Shinpei Etō (1834-1874) was a politician of the late-Tokugawa and Meiji periods. In the Meiji government he played a role in centralising the new government's power, while also calling for a British and American-style of division of the judiciary, executive and legislative. He served in the ministry of education and ministry of justice. He clashed with Inoue Kaoru and Yamagata Aritomo during his tenure as justice minister. He left the government following the debate over sending troops to Korea, and later took part in a *samurai* rebellion. He was executed for this in 1874.
- Fukuzawa Yukichi Fukuzawa (1834-1901) was one of the leading intellectuals of the Meiji period. His educational background was in Confucian and Dutch studies, but he began studying English. In 1860, he sailed to the United States. He published numerous works, among them *Seiyō jijō* (1868), which introduced its Japanese audience to Western institutions and thought. He was influenced by de Tocqueville, Spencer,

- Buckle, and Guizot. In 1882, he founded a newspaper, the *Jiji shinpō*.
- Hanabusa Yoshimoto Hanabusa (1842-1917) was a Meiji diplomat. He received a Confucian education as a child. In 1867 he travelled to France, Britain and the United States. He joined the foreign ministry in 1869. He served as Minister to Korea and Russia. In 1887, he worked in agricultural and commercial policy, and also served as imperial adviser in 1889.
- Hirosawa Saneomi Hirosawa Saneomi (1833-1871) was a *samurai* from the Chōshū fiefdom. He was involved in the anti-foreign movements, and was in charge of the peace talks with the European powers following their bombardment of the fiefdom in 1866. He held important appointments in the *dajōkan* government, including that of Imperial Councillor (*Sangi*). He was assassinated in 1871.
- Hotta Masayoshi Hotta Masayoshi (1810-1864) was the *rōjū* at the time of the signing of the 1858 Treaty of Amity and Commerce Between the United States and Japan.
- Ii Naosuke Ii (1815-1860) became *tairō* in 1858 and was instrumental in the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce Between the United States and Japan the same year. He was assassinated two year later.
- Iwakura Tomomi Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883) was one of the key officials of the early Meiji government. He served as vice president of the *dajōkan* government, and was also foreign minister for a brief period in 1871. From 1871-73 he served as ambassador to Japan's fact-finding mission to the West. Suspicious of popular political participation, he played a part in introducing the Prussian-styled Meiji Constitution.
- Inoue Kaoru Inoue (1835-1915) was from the Chōshū fiefdom. He took part in the 1862 burning of the British legation. He travelled to Britain the next year, and became a supporter of opening up

to the West. Under the Meiji government, he served in the fields of finance, agriculture, and home and foreign policy, and pushed forward with Japan's 'Europeanisation' policies. He attempted to reform the unequal treaties under Itō Hirobumi's cabinet, but had to resign following criticisms of excessive concessions to the European powers. He maintained his political influence through serving as elder statesman.

Inoue Kakugorō

Inoue Kakugorō (1860-1938) was a politician and businessman of the Meiji to early Shōwa period. He studied with Fukuzawa Yukichi, and helped establish a newspaper in Korea (the *Kanjō junpō*). He became a member of the House of Representatives in 1889, and also served as executive on several enterprises.

Inoue Kowashi

Inoue Kowashi (1843-1895) was a politician and bureaucrat of the early Meiji period. He is most famous for his contributions in drafting the Meiji Constitution and Rescript on Education. He travelled to Europe in 1872. He assisted the Meiji leaders in various capacities, and also became minister of education in 1893.

Itō Hirobumi

Itō (1841-1909) was one of the most powerful politicians of the Meiji period. He took part in the anti-foreign demonstrations, participating in the burning of the British legation in 1862. In 1863 he travelled to Britain with Inoue Kaoru. In 1871, he travelled to Europe and the United States again with the Iwakura Mission. He served in the *dajōkan* government in various capacities, and played key role in promoting Japan's modernisation. He travelled to Europe again 1882 to study constitutionalism, and became Japan's first prime minister in 1885. In 1905, he became the first governor general of Korea, and was assassinated in 1909.

Kabayama Sukenori

Kabayama (1837-1922) was a politician and army officer of the Meiji and Taishō periods. He served in the army and

accompanied the 1873 Soejima mission to China, taking part in the negotiations over the murder of the Ryūkyū islanders in Taiwan. He participated in the Taiwan expedition the following year. He later served the navy, and commanded the naval battles in the Sino-Japanese war. He became the first governor general of Taiwan, and played a key role in the pacification of the island.

Katō Hiroyuki

(1836-1916) Political scientist of the Meiji period. A pioneer of German studies. He served the Meiji government in various capacities, and was a member of the House of Lords. In his earlier works, he had advocated the need for establishing a constitutional government, but when the calls for mass political participation grew, he criticised the movement as premature. In his later years, he turned his attention to criticising Christianity and the protection of the national interest.

Kido Takayoshi

Kido Takayoshi (1833-1877) was a *samurai* from the Chōshū fiefdom. He was one of the leading Meiji statesmen of the time, holding the office of Imperial Councillor from 1869-1874 and 1875-1876. He was a member of the Iwakura mission. Although he had previously called for the invasion of Korea to divert *samurai* dissent, he opposed such plans in 1873, calling for the need to resolve domestic issues before venturing on overseas expeditions. He advocated the adoption of a constitutional government.

Kume Kunitake

Kume (1839-1931) was a historian. He came from a *samurai* family, and was the secretary for the Iwakura mission. He taught Japanese history, geography and Chinese history at Tokyo Imperial University.

Kudō Heisuke

Kudō (1734-1800) was a doctor who served the Sendai fiefdom. He befriended the leading scholars of Dutch studies and learnt of foreign affairs. He wrote of the necessity to prepare for a Russian advance into Ezo (present day

Hokkaidō), and called for the development of the island. His ideas were presented to the then *rōjū* Tanuma Okitsugu in 1783.

Kuroda Kiyotaka

Kuroda (1840-1900) was a Meiji politician from the Satsuma fiefdom. He took part in the anti-Tokugawa military campaigns, and in the Meiji government he was primarily responsible for the development of Hokkaidō. In 1876 he was appointed minister plenipotentiary for the negotiations of the Kanhwa Treaty. As a leading member of the Satsuma faction, his influence was considerable: in 1887 he was minister of agriculture and commerce and became prime minister the following year. He later became minister for communications and head of the Privy Council.

Kuroda Narihiro (also known as Kuroda Nagahiro)

Kuroda (1811-1887) was born to a *daimyō* family. He had strong interests in Dutch studies, and was one of the few to actively advocate the opening of Japan following the arrival of Perry.

Maeda Masana

Maeda (1850-1921) was a bureaucrat and advocate of industrial affairs. He studied in France from 1868-1877. He is noted for persuading Ōkubo Toshimichi that Japan should be represented in the Paris Exhibition. He served in various capacities in the ministries of finance and agriculture and commerce. He resigned from the government in 1890, and travelled Japan encouraging local industrialisation.

Matsuda Michiyuki

Matsuda (1839-1882) was a bureaucrat. He worked primarily in home affairs. In 1879, he became the governor of Tokyo.

Matsudaira Yoshinaga

(1828-1890) A *daimyō*, he was noted for his enlightened rule in his fiefdom. Although he originally called for anti-foreign movements, he began advocating the opening up of Japan in 1857. He became assistant to the *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi. In the Meiji government, he briefly served as home and finance minister from 1869-1870.

Matsukata Masayoshi

Matsukata (1835-1924) was a politician of the Meiji and

Taishō (1912-1926) period. He was from the Satsuma fiefdom. He served in the home ministry and later entered the ministry of finance. He was a noted specialist on fiscal affairs, and a strong promoter of industry. In 1881 he became finance minister, and successfully curbed the rampant inflation. He was also instrumental in establishing the central bank. In 1885, he became finance minister of the Itō cabinet, a post he continued to hold for more than six years under different cabinets. He continued to wield influence as elder statesman, particularly in economic and fiscal affairs.

Mineta Fūkō

Mineta (1817-1883) was a *samurai* and later became an educator in the Meiji period. He studied Dutch studies, and advocated protecting Japan's northern borders prior to Perry's arrival. He wrote on the Opium War and European invasions, but was imprisoned by the Tokugawa shogunate. Although he served the shogunate in the final years of its rule, he spent most of his time educating.

Mutsu Munemitsu

Mutsu (1844-1897) was a Meiji politician and foreign minister of the second Itō cabinet. He served as governor of Kanagawa prefecture and as an official in the ministry of finance. He took part in a plot to overthrow the Meiji government in 1877, and was imprisoned. After his release, he studied in Austria and Britain from 1884. Upon his return to Japan, he served as Minister to the United States in from 1881, and played a key role in Japan's signing of its first equal treaty with Mexico. Later, he served as Minister of Agriculture and member of the House of Representatives. In 1892, he became foreign minister and was in charge of Japan's negotiations with China following the Sino-Japanese war.

Mori Arinori

Mori (1847-1889) was from the Satsuma fiefdom. In 1865, he studied at University College, University of London. He also visited Russia. He was profoundly influenced by

Christianity. Upon his return to Japan, he served the Meiji government in various capacities. In 1869, he was posted to the United States, and later served as Minister to China and Britain. During his time as Japanese Minister to Britain, he befriended Herbert Spencer. Returning to Japan in 1884, he served in the ministry of education, and contributed to establishing a modern education system in Japan. He was known as an advocate of 'Westernisation'.

Motoda Eifu

(1818-1891) Also known as Motoda Nagazane, Motoda was a Confucian scholar and a close aide of the Meiji emperor. He campaigned for direct imperial rule. He campaigned for the introduction of national ethics in education. He also had interests in the revision of unequal treaties, and opposed Inoue Kaoru and Ōkuma Shigenobu's attempts revise them.

Nishi Amane

Nishi (1829-1897) was an academic and bureaucrat of the Meiji government. Although he began with a Confucian education, he studied Dutch and English, and began studying Western philosophy, politics and economics. He from 1863-1865, he studied in the Netherlands with Simon Vissering, and published his lectures as *Bankoku kōhō*. Member of the influential liberal intellectual group, the *Meirokeisha*. He also served in the ministry of war.

Ogiwara Ryōtarō

Ogiwara (1843-1916) was of rich peasant background from present day Gunma prefecture. He helped establish one of Japan's leading sericulture cooperatives, the *Usuisha*.

Okakura Tenshin

Okakura (1862-1913) was an intellectual and art critic of the Meiji period. He played a role in promoting oriental art, as well as holding posts at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.

Ogyū Sorai

Ogyū (1666-1728) was a Confucian scholar

Ōkubo Toshimichi

Ōkubo (1830-1878) was a *samurai* from the Satsuma fiefdom. He played a key part in ousting the Tokugawa shogunate. He was instrumental in the abolition of the fiefdoms, and served as minister of finance and home minister. He was a promoter

of industry, and was strongly influenced by German Chancellor Bismarck. In 1874, he took part in the negotiations with the Qing over Japan's sending of troops to Taiwan. Often seen as a cold-minded autocrat, he was nevertheless one of the earliest Meiji leaders to utilise bureaucratic government institutions for political decision-making.

Ōkuma Shigenobu

Ōkuma (1838-1922) was a politician of the Meiji and Taishō periods. He studied English with Guido Verbeck. He was experienced in negotiations with foreign diplomats, and took part in negotiations to revise the unequal treaties. He advocated the establishment of parliamentary and cabinet systems, but clashed with other Meiji leaders and was ousted from the government in 1881. He founded a political party, the *Rikken kaishintō* the following year. He became foreign minister in 1888, and held the position again in 1896. In 1898 he became prime minister and held the position again in 1914.

Saigō Takamori

Saigō (1827-1877) was a leading figure of the Meiji Restoration. In the Meiji government, he was instrumental in abolishing the fiefdoms, and while the Iwakura mission remained overseas, he helped in the implementation of compulsory education, conscription, and the new land tax system. He resigned following the 1873 controversy over sending troops to Korea, and historians remain divided over whether Saigō was attempting to avoid war or initiate hostilities with Korea to divert *samurai* dissent. He took part in the *samurai* rebellion of 1877 and committed suicide.

Saigō Tsugumichi

Saigō Tsugumichi (1843-1902) was Takamori's younger brother. He took part in anti-foreign activities, and participated in the battles against the British when the latter bombarded Kagoshima in retaliation for the Satsuma fiefdom's attacks on foreign ships. He also travelled to Europe in 1869 and 1870. Under the Meiji government, he

- served in the Ministry of War. He was instrumental in sending troops to Taiwan in 1874. In the wake of the failed coup of 1884 in Korea, he travelled to China in 1885 with Itō Hirobumi and participated in the negotiations with Li Hongzhang. He served as home, army, agriculture and commerce minister, but served longest as navy minister.
- Sanjō Sanetomi Sanjō (1837-1891) was a politician of the Meiji period. A court noble, he originally opposed Japan's opening to the European powers. He became the prime minister of the *dajōkan* government in 1868, and held the position until 1886.
- Sakuma Shōzan Sakuma (1811-1864) was a Confucian scholar and *samurai*. Upon hearing of China's defeat in the Opium War, he advocated the necessity to strengthen Japan's maritime defence. He studied the Western cannon and taught the subject. His students included Katō Hiroyuki. In 1862, he argued that resisting the Western powers was futile, and Japan needed to open her borders to the European powers and engage in trade. He criticised traditional views of Europeans as 'barbarians', claiming that such prejudices hindered Japan's learning from the West.
- Soejima Taneomi Soejima (1828-1905) was a bureaucrat and politician. He studied English and the American constitution under Verbeck. In 1872 he became foreign minister, and was ambassador to China in 1873, where he discussed the Ryūkyū and Taiwan issues and the ratification of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Amity. Following the controversy over sending troops to Korea, he resigned the Meiji government in 1873. He later served as home minister and member of the Privy Council.
- Takashima Shūhan Takashima (1798-1866) was a military scientist of the late Tokugawa period. He was born in Nagasaki, and learnt about Western cannon from the Dutch. He advocated the adoption

of Western military methods upon hearing of China's defeat in the Opium War, and contributed to the modernisation of Tokugawa forces.

Takezoe Shin'ichirō

Takezoe (1842-1917) was a Meiji diplomat and scholar of Chinese studies. He accompanied Mori Arinori to China in 1875. In 1878, he worked in the ministry of finance. From 1880 he became the Japanese consul in Tianjin, and negotiated with Li Hongzhang over the Ryūkyū issue. In 1882, he became Japanese Minister to Korea, but was relieved of his post in 1885. He later taught at Tokyo Imperial University.

Terashima Munenori

Terashima Munenori (1833-1893) was from the Satsuma fiefdom. He studied *rangaku*, or Western studies, and travelled to Britain in 1865. He was able to converse in English, German and French, and was at the forefront of Meiji diplomacy. He played an important part in the newly established Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Terashima was Japan's Minister to Britain in 1873. In 1882, he was Minister to the United States. Terashima also contributed to Japan's attempts to revise the unequal treaties, and also accepted posts in the Privy Council.

Torii Yōzō

Torii (1769-1873) was a high-ranking bureaucrat of the late Tokugawa period. He is known for his opposition to scholars of Dutch studies, whom he persecuted. He was instrumental in imprisoning Takashima Shūhan, whose Western military science he opposed.

Tsuda Shin'ichirō

Tsuda (1829-1903) was a scholar of Western studies and later became a bureaucrat of the Meiji government. Studied in the Netherlands under Simon Vissering in 1862. Translated his lectures as *Taisei kokuhōron*. He assisted in the signing of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Amity. He also became a member of the House of Representatives and House of Lords.

Wakayama Norikazu

Wakayama (1840-1891) was an economist. He accompanied

the 1871 Iwakura mission to the West, and remained there to study fiscal policy. Upon his return to Japan, he served in various capacities as a bureaucrat with the Meiji government. He introduced many Western works on economics, agriculture and law, and is particularly noted for advocating a protectionist trade policy.

Yamagata Aritomo

Yamagata (1838-1922) was one of the highest-ranking Meiji oligarchs, with particular influence in military affairs. He was born as a son of a lower-ranking *samurai* family. He participated in anti-foreign activities and battled the American and French troops. He was an active member of anti-Tokugawa militia, and after the Meiji Restoration became responsible for military affairs. He travelled to Europe in 1869, and was profoundly influenced by Western civilisation. Yamagata was responsible for the introduction of conscription, and also Japan's military build-up. He was participated in the drafting of the Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors and Rescript on Education. In the *dajōkan* government, he was Army Minister (1873) and Councillor (1874). He became Prime Minister in 1889 and 1898. He continued to wield influence even after his official retirement well into the 1920s.

Yanagiwara Sakimitsu

Yanagiwara (1850-1894) was from a noble family in Kyoto. He joined the Foreign Ministry in 1869. He participated in negotiations over the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Amity (concluded 1870) with China from 1870-1872, and also accompanied the Soejima Taneomi mission to China in 1873. In 1874, he assisted Ōkubo Toshimichi in the negotiations with China in the aftermath of the Taiwan Expedition. He also served as Minister to Russia, as well as other government administrations, where he played a role in establishing legislation which governed the imperial household.

Yokoi Shōnan

Yokoi Shōnan (1809-1869) was a low-ranking *samurai* and Confucian scholar from Kumamoto. He acted as an adviser to the Echizen fiefdom lord, Matsudaira Yoshinaga, and also served as a councillor in the Meiji government. His ideas of reform were influential among anti-Tokugawa activists.

Korean names

Kim Ok-kyun

(1851-1894) A reformist Korean official. He formed a reformist political faction in the early 1870s. He advocated full independence and the repudiation of Sino-Korean tributary relations and reforms based on the Meiji restoration model. He had contacts with Inoue Kaoru and Fukuzawa Yukichi. After the abortive coup to rid the Korean court of conservatives and the Min faction, he escaped again to Japan. He was assassinated soon afterwards.

Pak Yōng-hyo

Pak (1861-1939) was a reformist politician from Korea. He formed the reformist faction with Kim Ok-kyun and others. He visited Japan in 1882, and established contacts with Fukuzawa Yukichi. In 1883, he began political reforms, but his efforts were thwarted by the Min faction. After the failed coup of 1884, he escaped to Japan. He served as a cabinet minister in the Korean government shortly after the Sino-Japanese war, but was accused of plotting against the royal family, and became an exile in Japan again. From 1932-1939, he was a member of the Japanese House of Lords.

Ō Yun-jung

(1848-1896): a pro-Japanese Korean politician. He toured Japan as a member of the 'gentleman's tour' group in 1881. On his way back to Korea, he met Li Hongzhang and advocated opening Korea to the European powers upon his return. He played a role in the signing of the U.S.-Korean Treaty of Friendship and the Sino-Korean trade agreement in 1882.

ABSTRACT

This thesis advances the debate on the entry of China and Japan into European International Society. Conventional accounts by the English School have conceptualised membership of the Society primarily in terms of adherence to the 'standard of civilisation' and the adoption of the Society's institutions, particularly international law and diplomatic institutions, both of which are seen as developed to facilitate orderly, cooperative relations among states.

This thesis argues that these accounts are inadequate; by extrapolating from European international relations, the English School concentrate on the cooperative, progressive aspects of the Society. They fail to adequately theorise the relations between European and non-European entities, and down play the fact that there existed a more intolerant, coercive side of the Society that aimed to 'civilise' 'barbarous' entities. They ignore that the identity of a 'civilised' member entailed the capacity and political will to introduce the trappings of 'civilisation' to 'barbarous' communities.

The thesis contributes to the theoretical debates of the English School by arguing that China and Japan were socialised into a Janus-faced International Society. This interpretation provides a rich, more nuanced account of Chinese and Japanese engagements with the Society by bringing out both its progressive and regressive features into sharper focus. Utilising primary Chinese and Japanese sources, it demonstrates that the Chinese and Japanese elites were aware of the dualities of the Society. It goes on to examine how both states' elites interacted with both faces of the Society, and how this affected their socialisation.

The thesis also makes an empirical contribution by forwarding an international social explanation of early Meiji imperialism. It argues that Japan's socialisation into European International Society involved the adoption of an identity of a 'civilised' power that would introduce the trappings of 'civilisation' to its 'backward neighbours'. To this end, Japan's imperialist ventures in the 1870-1890s also took on the role of demonstrating Japan's 'civilised' identity and facilitating its acceptance as a legitimate member of 'civilised' International Society.

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Over the course of writing and studying for this thesis, I have received much assistance from many individuals and institutions. It is my pleasure to be able to thank them here.

I gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Department of Education, Science and Training, Australian Government, the Australian National University, the Department of International Relations, and ultimately the Australian taxpayers for my doctoral studies for four years. My scholarship was ostensibly for research that would ‘serve Australia’s national interest’; how a study on nineteenth-century East Asian international politics will serve the Australian national interest, I have no idea. I do, however, take comfort from the fact that ‘knowledge is power’, and if this thesis serves to enrich someone’s understanding of East Asia, the money spent on this project will not have been spent in vain.

I should also like to thank my two principal supervisors, Yongjin Zhang and Kathy Morton. Yongjin was my first supervisor, and had the unenviable task of having to guide a new student who had never studied International Relations, and ‘socialising’ him into actually enjoying it – this he did by utilising his so-called ‘Oxford method’ of education, and taking me under his wing and talking about theory and my project over a glass of beer or a Chinese dinner. He continued to help me after he left the ANU, and I am profoundly grateful for his kindness. Kathy, who took over Yongjin, had the equally unenviable task of having to guide a notoriously stubborn student whose research interests were quite different from her own. This she did with amazing dedication to duty, which I have come to admire over the years. She also pushed me to sharpen my arguments to a level I would have never dreamt of, and I am deeply indebted to her for all the contributions she has made to my academic development. I hope this study will do both my supervisors’ help and commitment justice.

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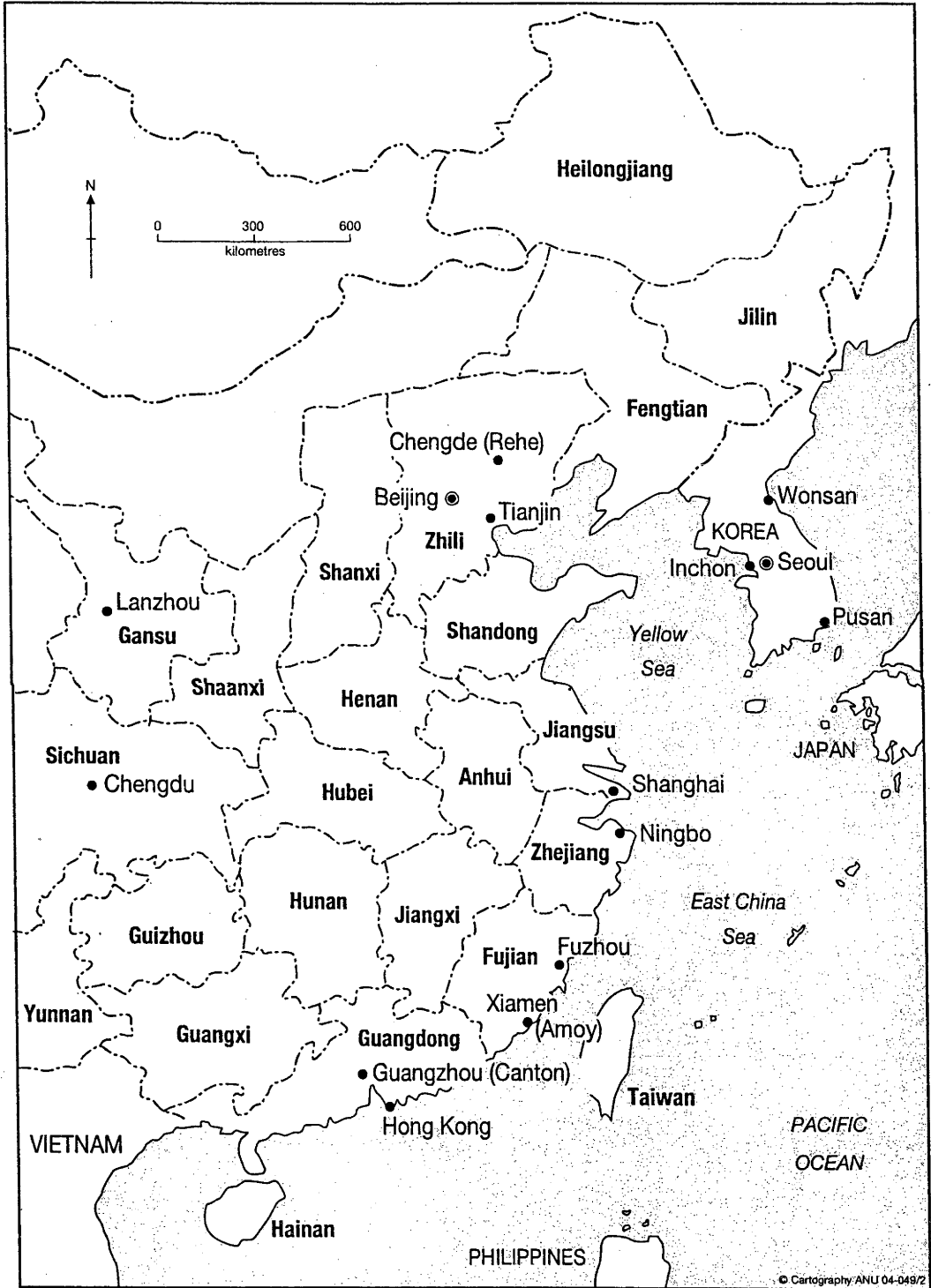
I count myself extraordinarily lucky to have had such warm-hearted colleagues to share ideas and friendship. My thanks go to Joel Quirk (who shared an office with me for nearly four years, an amazing feat), Mike Boyle, André Broome, Michelle Burgis, Malcolm Cook (who gave me a room to live and work in during the final phase of my studies), Thuy Do (who shared a house with me for two years), Nicole George, Sarah Graham, Miwa Hirono, Craig Meer, Gavin Mount, Wynne Russell (who proof-read the thesis), Taylor Speed, Reiko Take, and Darshan Vigneswaran. Thank you all so much for your kindness and generous friendship – I feel as though I have taken so much from you and given back so little. Being an overseas student can sometimes be a lonely existence, but your presence made my time here one of the happiest of my life.

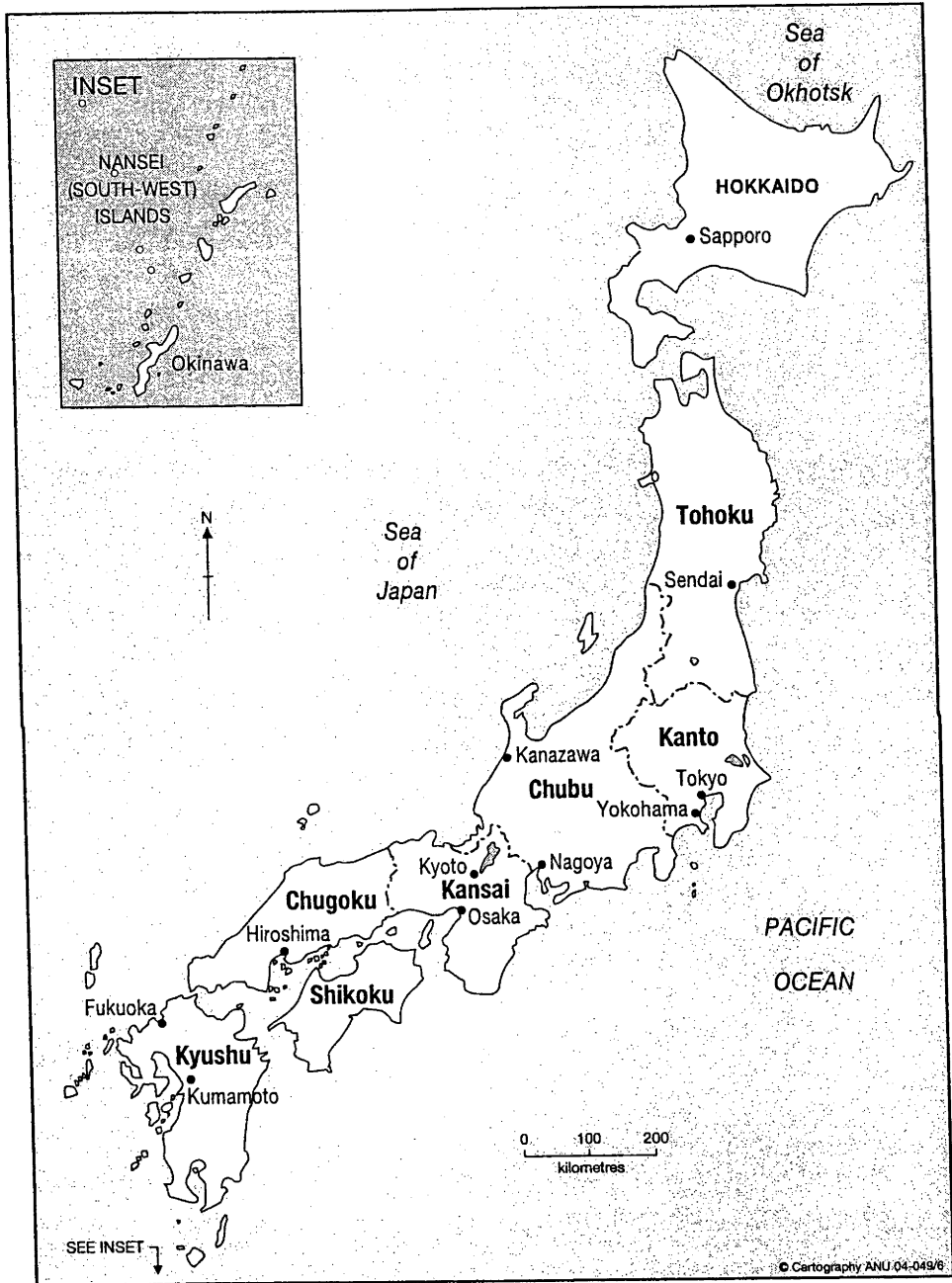
Studying East Asia, I incurred debts (though not financial) overseas as well. My thanks go to Peking University, the Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Tokyo, and Musashi University for their institutional support. I would like to thank Professors Xu Kai and Wang Xiaoqiu (Department of History, Peking University), Professors Hamashita Takeshi and Tanaka Akihiko (Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Tokyo) for taking the time to share their knowledge with me.

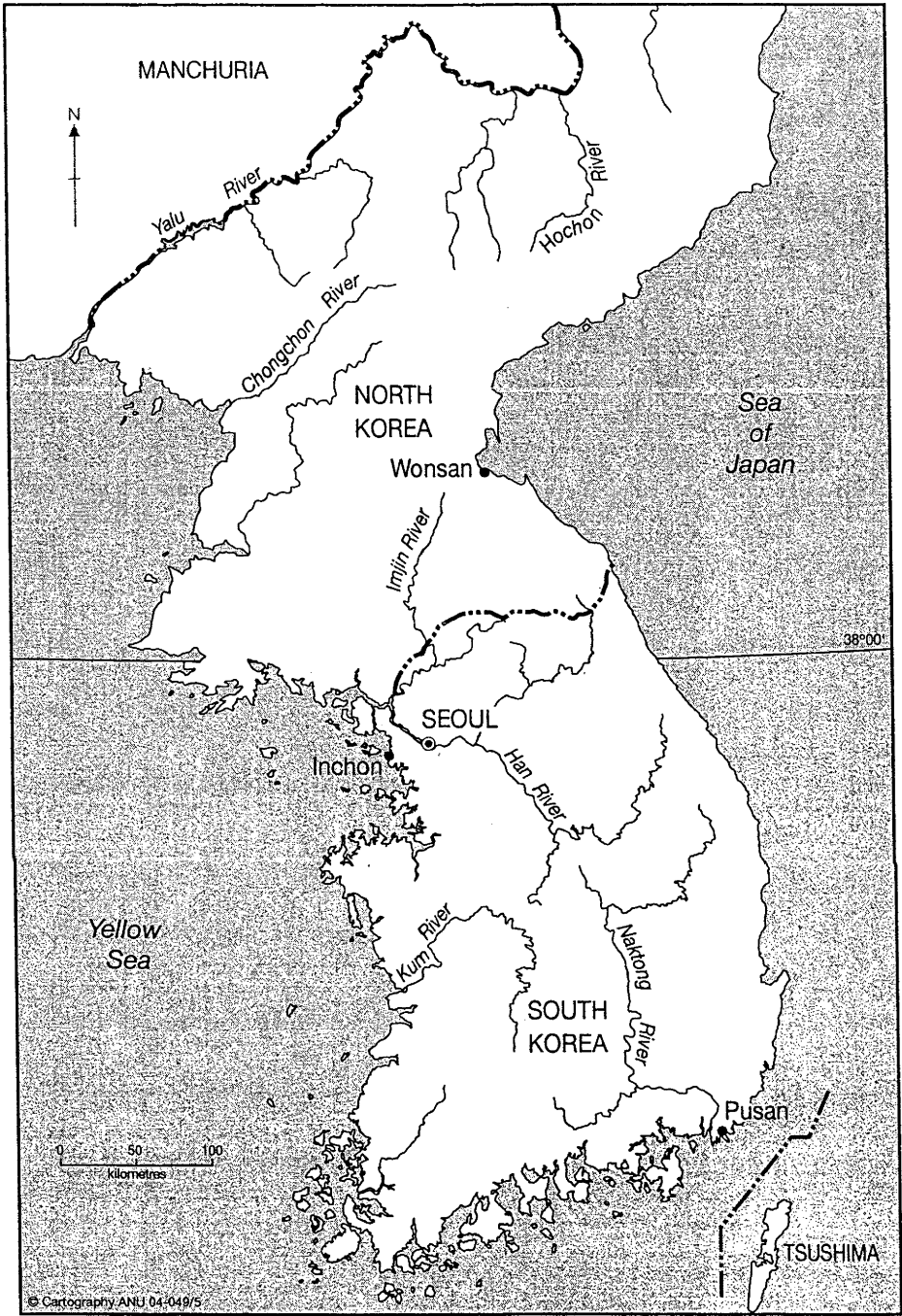
I was also lucky to have friends outside the halls of universities, and all of them played a part (much greater than they would have imagined) in reminding me that there is life to be enjoyed outside the academy. I should like to thank in particular Lyma Balderama, who not only cheerfully prodded me to finish on time, but also gave me a greater sense of life beyond the thesis; Josie Braddick, who adopted me for Christmas and made sure I would not be lonely during the festive season; Izumi and Kizaki Braddick, for helping me forget about the thesis by dragging me off to play cricket; my aunt and uncle, Fujimori Hideyo and Fujimori Sadayoshi, who housed, fed, and put up with their rather strange half-Western nephew during his time in Tokyo; Iwase Misako; the night watchmen of Coombs, Peter Adams, Grant Rebbeck, the late Joe Wigham; and Stefan Knollmayer. My warmest thanks to all of these individuals, and apologies for the many people I have probably forgotten to mention.

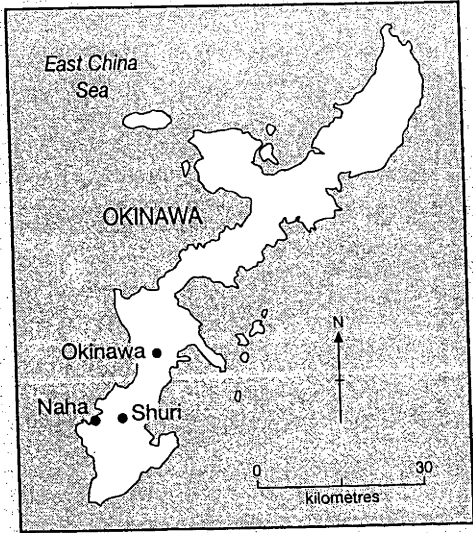
Last, but not least, I should like to thank my parents. Both provided moral (and to a great extent, financial) support for my extremely long student career, which has taken me to different continents across the globe. They must have surely wondered from their home in Yorkshire what their son was doing across the globe in the southern hemisphere, but they never once complained about my long years of absence and lack of full-time employment. I marvel at their patience and faith in me. It is with love and gratitude that I acknowledge my debt to them – the further away from home I have been, the more grateful I have become.

Shogo Suzuki
Canberra, February 2005









Ōsumi-shotō

AMAMIŌSHIMA

KIKAI-JIMA

KAGOSHIMA

Amami-shotō

OKINOERABU-JIMA

Wadomari

East China Sea

KUME-JIMA

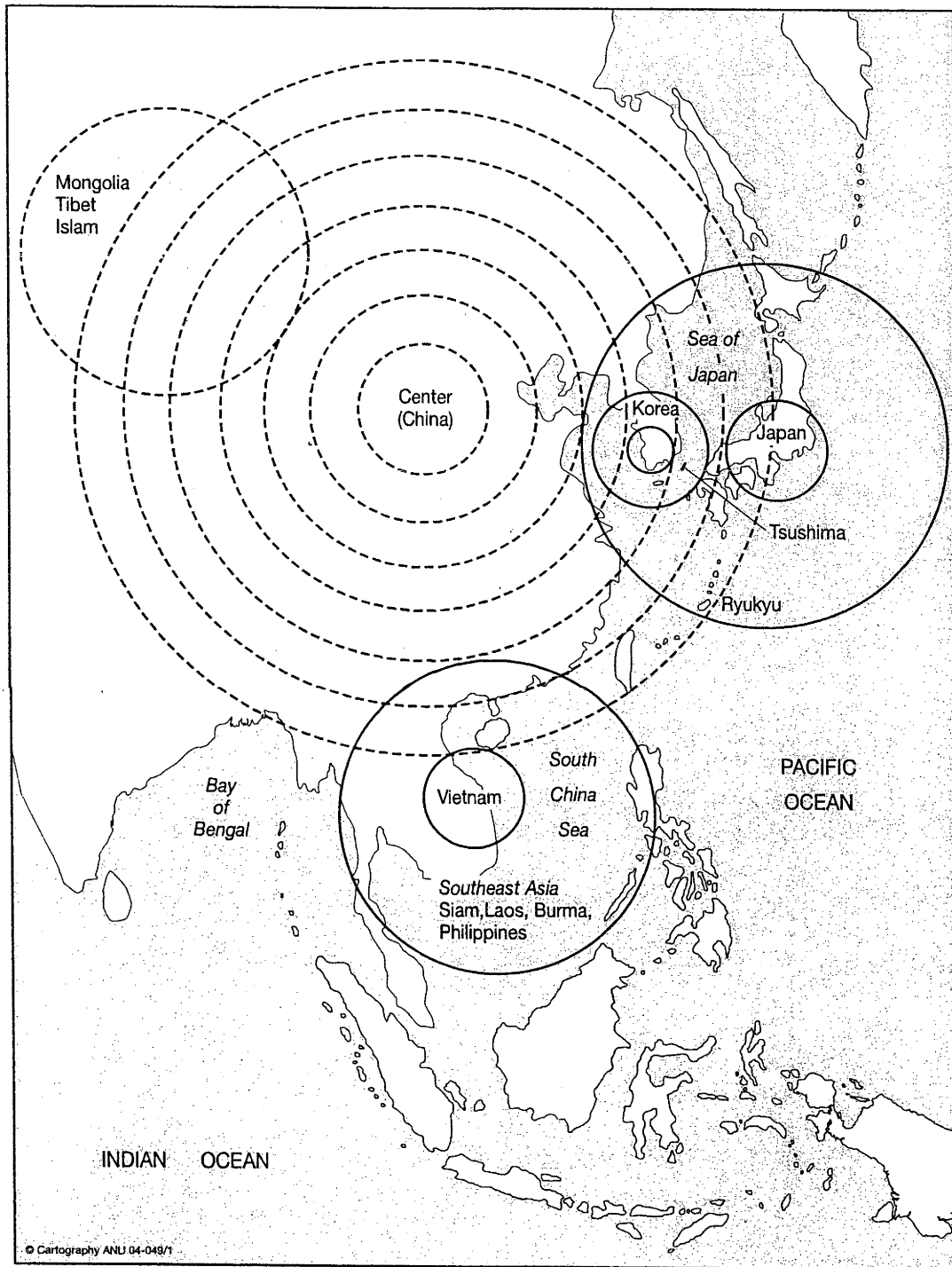
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OKINAWA-JIMA

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0 100 kilometres

Sakishima-shotō



INTRODUCTION

In the pre-war era there was a period of conflict between Japan and China, but that was only a short period. Japan and China have a history of friendship and exchange covering 2,000 years. (Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō)

Japan and China are neighbouring countries divided by only a narrow stretch of water. We have a long history of friendship and exchange going back more than 2,000 years. There was an unfortunate period between us in the past, but good neighborliness and friendship are the mainstream. (Chinese President Hu Jintao)¹

Such were the seemingly friendly words exchanged between Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō and Chinese President Hu Jintao at the Sino-Japanese summit in St. Petersburg in 2003. In recent years, however, relations between the two great powers have not been as good as the diplomatic niceties between Hu and Koizumi may suggest: disputes over issues such as the interpretation of history² or the ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands³ have all led to a period of cool relations between the two great powers of Northeast Asia in recent years. Both states seem to be unable to overcome their mutual distrust and antipathy, leading one commentator to argue that 'China's relations with Japan over the past several decades have been cyclical, with periods of relative cordiality interspersed with episodes of contention.'⁴

'Cyclical' though *contemporary* Sino-Japanese relations may be, what is interesting is that relations between the two states appear remarkably stable until the end of the nineteenth century. While we should not interpret Sino-Japanese relations in this period as uniquely benign, military conflict between the two states was certainly not a normal occurrence. There were clashes in 668 when China crushed a coalition of Japanese and Korean forces and helped instate the Silla (新羅) dynasty; 1274 and 1281, when the Yuan (元) emperor Khubilai Khaan sent his fleet to conquer Japan; and finally in 1592-1598, when the Japanese (under the rule of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉)

¹ Both quotes from Koizumi and Hu are taken from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan website, 'Japan-China Summit Meeting in St. Petersburg (Overview)', (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2003/china.html>), consulted on 29th November 2004

² For detailed studies on this issue, see Tanaka Akihiko '“Kyōkasho mondai” o meguru Chūgoku no seisaku kettei' in Okabe Tatsumi (ed) *Chūgoku gaikō – seisaku kettei no kōzō*. (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai mondai kenkyūjo, 1983); Hidenori Ijiri, 'Sino-Japanese Controversy Since the 1972 Diplomatic Normalisation' in Christopher Howe (ed), *China and Japan: History, Trends and Prospects*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and Caroline Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations: a case study in political decision-making*. (London: Routledge, 1998)

³ An excellent study on this issue is provided by Erica Strecker Downs and Phillip C. Saunders, 'Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism', *International Security* (vol. 23, no. 3, 1998-1999, pp. 114-146)

⁴ June Teufel Dreyer, 'Sino-Japanese Relations', *Journal of Contemporary China* (vol. 10, no. 28, 2001, pp. 373-385), p. 373

invaded Korea. From the late-nineteenth century onwards, however, a change took place. Japan and China clashed over their interests in Korea in 1894-1895; in the twentieth century, Japan invaded China in 1914, followed by an invasion on an even larger scale in 1931, which only ended when the World War II was brought to an end in 1945 after both sides (particularly the Chinese) had suffered horrific losses of human life.

The late-nineteenth century thus appears to be an important turning point in Sino-Japanese relations, and indeed continues to weigh heavily on the minds of both the Japanese and Chinese.⁵ Statesmen from the two sides regularly make references to the ‘history of friendship and exchange covering 2,000 years’, and it is this ‘juxtaposition of a two thousand-year, predominantly peaceful relationship on the one hand, and a fifty-year relationship of acrimony on the other, [which] appears to have set the tone of postwar Sino-Japanese relations.’⁶ These statements are based on the assumption that Sino-Japanese relations were of a peaceful nature for a remarkable period of time, and became conflictual from 1895 onwards. This acrimonious relationship only came to an end fifty years later in 1945, when Japan was defeated by the Allies.

Why, then, did this turning point take place in the late-nineteenth century? Historians of Japan, attempting to explain Japanese aggression during this period, have attributed the changes in China and Japan’s bilateral relations to Japan’s ‘modernisation’, or more accurately, its entry and socialisation into the European-dominated international order. Christopher Howe, for instance, notes that following its encounter with the European order, ‘Japan first came to terms with a Western political and economic order that it was powerless to resist but then, having done this,

⁵ This can be seen by the fact that the teaching of Japan’s imperialist history is an extremely divisive issue which generates heated discussions in Japanese domestic society. It is often argued by ‘historical revisionists’ that the teaching of Japan’s negative past results in a lack of patriotic sentiment among its populace. A typical view of this is expounded in the *Atarashii kyōkasho o tsukurukai* (Japanese Society for Textbook Reform)’s webpage at (http://www.tsukurukai.com/02_about_us/01_opinion.html), consulted on 29th November 2004. For a critical discussion of these views, see Eguchi Keiichi, ‘Nihon no shinryaku to nihonjin no sensō kan’, *Iwanami bukkuretto* (no. 365, 1995) and Lee Sun Ae, ‘Sengo sedai no sensō sekinin ron’, *Iwanami bukkuretto* (no. 467, 1998). Another divisive issue is Japanese cabinet ministers’ visits to the Yasukuni shrine, where Japan’s war dead (including those of class-A war criminals) are enshrined. For its part, the Chinese government has often used the history of Japanese aggression to whip up patriotic fervour within China to bolster its legitimacy. While the extent to which the Chinese leadership is actually ‘detached’ from their own perceptions of Japan (in that they can ‘rationally’ manipulate historical experiences to serve their self-interests) is debatable, its behaviour does serve to remind us that historical perceptions do matter: after all, a receptive audience is required for these anti-Japanese campaigns to be effective. For a study in the use of history in Sino-Japanese relations, see Tanaka Akihiko ‘“Kyōkasho mondai” o meguru Chūgoku no seisaku kettei’ and Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations*.

⁶ Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations*, p. 17

subordinated China by the same Western methods.⁷ Similarly, in his authoritative study of Japanese colonialism in Korea, Peter Duus also states:

The adoption of an expansionist policy was intimately linked to the timing of Japan's decision to modernize. The Japanese chose to tread the path toward 'civilization' and 'enlightenment' at precisely the moment in history when the nation-states of Western Europe were in the midst of frenzied territorial expansion across the globe...The global reach of Western imperialism could not help but influence both the character of Meiji modernization and the thrust of Meiji foreign policy. It provided the context in which the Meiji leaders acted and a model for them to follow.⁸

But these arguments raise further questions. Duus' claim that the Western powers provided a 'model' for Japan to follow suggests that something was 'learned'. But what exactly was learned from the European international order and its members to cause the hostilities that would overshadow such a long period of 'friendship and exchange'? It is also worth considering the Chinese case as well; as the European-dominated international order had also expanded to China *before* Japan, it is equally plausible that the Chinese were subjected to similar forces that caused Japan to emulate the European powers. Did the Chinese also 'learn' similar lessons from the Japanese? If so, did this also contribute to the deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations? If not, why?

International factors and the evolution of Sino-Japanese relations

The existing literature on contemporary Sino-Japanese relations, however, does not offer us many clues. One obvious reason is that most of these studies take the post-World War II period as a starting point; while the importance of the nineteenth century is acknowledged to a certain extent, the 'historical' animosity between the two states is a given, and is neither problematised or historicised.⁹ Historical studies have, as discussed above, provided us with some explanations, but they remain somewhat vague. In order to locate what international factors accounted for Japan's 'learning' of expansionism and how this contributed to the destabilisation of Sino-Japanese relations, we need a nuanced account of the European dominated international order and its social structures

⁷ Christopher Howe, 'Introduction: The Changing Political Economy of Sino-Japanese Relations: A Long Term View' in Howe (ed) *China and Japan: History, Trends and Prospects.*, p. 6

⁸ Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 2-3. See also Akira Iriye, *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations.* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), pp. 65-66.

⁹ Teufel Dreyer, 'Sino-Japanese Relations'; Jian Yang, 'Sino-Japanese Relations: Implications for Southeast Asia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (vol. 25, no. 2, August 2003, pp. 306-327); Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Thomas J. Christensen, 'China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia', *International Security* (vol. 23, no. 4, Spring 1999, pp. 49-89)

to assist us in understanding what Japan and China learnt, and how this contributed to war between the two countries in the late-nineteenth century.

It is at this point that the literature of International Relations becomes relevant to our questions. It is of course a truism to suggest that international factors alone cannot explain a state's political behaviour; with reference to the study of Chinese foreign policy, James N. Rosenau reminds us that 'the most important task involves a readiness to acknowledge that no single perspective has cornered the truth on China, that several theoretical perspectives are available for sorting out its enormous complexities'.¹⁰ However, given the fact that numerous historical studies suggest that international factors – in this specific case, the European international order and its expansion – *did* indeed play a part in the rise of conflict between China and Japan in the late-nineteenth century,¹¹ it seems worthwhile to proceed with our analysis from 'the premise that the foreign policy behavior of states is shaped in varying degrees by external/systemic factors'.¹² We begin by examining realism, which has long been the dominant theoretical perspective in International Relations, and has traditionally had an interest in explaining international conflict.

Realist perspectives

Realism has often been divided into two broad strands, classical realism and neorealism. Neorealism assumes that the anarchic structure of international relations produces an insecure world in which states are constantly fearful for their survival. In a classic statement of this claim, Kenneth N. Waltz argues that under anarchy

[n]o appeal can be made to a higher entity clothed with the authority and equipped with the ability to act on its own initiative. Under such conditions the possibility that force will be used by one or another of the parties looms always as a threat in the background.¹³

¹⁰ James N. Rosenau, 'China in a Bifurcated World: Competing Theoretical Perspectives' in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (eds), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 527

¹¹ In addition to the works of Howe and Duus cited above, see Akira Iriye, 'Imperialism in East Asia' in James B. Crowley (ed), *Modern East Asia: Essays in Interpretation*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970), especially pp. 133-137, and Marius B. Jansen, 'Japanese Imperialism: Late Meiji Perspectives', in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds), *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 64

¹² Samuel S. Kim, 'Chinese Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice' in Samuel S. Kim (ed), *China and the World: Chinese foreign policy faces the new millennium*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), p. 17

¹³ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. (Boston, Massachusetts: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 113

This structure shapes a state's interest. As the potential threat of an attack by another state constantly looms, a state is assumed to be primarily interested in its survival, and rationally pursues this self-interest. 'Learning' (or 'socialisation') also takes place in this context. The anarchic international structure and the perpetual insecurities it produces means that most states will adopt any efficacious means to maximise their power and ensure their survival. Failure to do so will risk their demise. Neorealists argue that as a consequence we see that states all display similar qualities and are 'like units'. This homogeneity occurs because weak states that did not 'learn' the best means to survive have already been weeded out through an almost Darwinian selection of the 'the fittest'.¹⁴

There are two problems with this argument. The first problem stems from neorealism's ahistorical assumption of a constantly competitive, anarchical international realm, which 'presents the whole of international history as a static, monolithic entity that operates according to a constant and timeless logic, such that structural change becomes entirely obscured.'¹⁵ The presupposition of a static international environment makes it difficult to account for historical changes within it, and this is one reason which makes neorealism unsuitable for this study. The Sino-Japanese clash of the late-nineteenth century could potentially be explained as a result of a 'security dilemma', where Japan's attempts to protect itself from the European powers through 'Europeanisation' and the adoption of European weaponry inadvertently threatened the Chinese, who saw these 'defensively motivated measures...as offensive threats' because of the insecurities generated by anarchy.¹⁶ This is precisely the argument Thomas J. Christensen forwards as one of the key factors that causes instabilities in East Asia today. The application of the Realist security dilemma argument, however, is problematic in that the argument again (necessarily) relies on the assumption of the international milieu as an anarchic one of constant suspicion and conflict. However, the international environment is clearly not necessarily coloured by suspicion and fear: after all, the United States is hardly going to perceive a danger from a British arms build-up; it will only feel threatened if it believes its relations with Britain to be inherently

¹⁴ *ibid*, pp. 127-128

¹⁵ John M. Hobson, 'What's at stake in "bringing historical sociology *back* into international relations? Transcending "chronofetishism" and "tempocentrism" in international relations' in Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson (eds), *Historical Sociology of International Relations*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 10

¹⁶ Christensen, 'China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia', p. 50. For a discussion on the security dilemma, also see Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics* (vol. 30, no. 2, January 1978, pp. 167-214), pp. 169-170

coercive and insecure. This argument also downplays the significance of the long period of stable relations between China and Japan. Furthermore, it ignores the fact that distrust between China and Japan was not a *constant* feature, but really began to matter *after* the late-nineteenth century; a point Christensen himself notes when he states that China's 'natural aversion to Japan' actually originates in the early-twentieth century.¹⁷

It thus seems somewhat simplistic to assume that the international environment China and Japan inhabited prior to and after the expansion of the European international order was the same, and produced similar outcomes in state behaviour. While it is possible that an anarchical international structure produces a competitive, insecure international environment, this cannot be assumed *a priori*. Anarchy amongst friends need not necessarily be a competitive one, and similarly the nature of the international realm depends very much on the intersubjective meanings actors attach to them.¹⁸

The second shortcoming for neorealism is that its theory for learning is too thin. While neorealists allow for some 'learning', they still assume that states are rational actors that aim to maximise their utility. Anarchy reinforces interest in survival, and states are thus assumed to 'have acquired "selfish" identities' which are interested in attaining survival, and this is characterised by self-help behaviour.¹⁹ Here, actors *already know* what they want; 'learning' here merely changes the means by which they obtain them.²⁰ Actors' interests and identities are in this sense fixed. Because of the ahistorical quality neorealists attach to anarchy, state identities and interests are presupposed to be static and do not allow for the possibility for them to change.

If, however, we adopt Alexander Wendt's definition of identities as 'certain ideas about who one is in a given situation',²¹ Duus' aforementioned statement that Japan *modelled* itself on the West clearly indicates that its identity had been transformed (from traditional Japanese state to *Europeanised* Japanese state) after its encounter with the

¹⁷ Christensen, 'China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia', p. 52

¹⁸ Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics' *International Organization* (vol. 46, no. 2, Spring 1992, pp. 391-425), pp. 396-397. Interestingly, this point has been explored by Stephen M. Walt in his 'balance of threat' theory, which takes account of how perceptions affect balancing behaviour, rather than just the distribution of material capabilities. However, Walt does not problematise the Realist assumption of an anarchic and competitive international environment, and his insights into threat perception sit somewhat uncomfortably with his theoretical orientations. See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)

¹⁹ Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics', *International Organization* (vol. 46, no. 2, Spring 1992, pp. 391-425), p. 402

²⁰ Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 11; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 326-327

²¹ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 170

European-dominated international order. Why, for instance, did Japan behave like a ‘civilised’ member of the European-dominated international order in its relations with its Asian neighbours, despite the relative lack of social pressures to do so? Similarly, if a state’s identity changes, so will its interests,²² and this posits the distinct possibility that Japan’s interests changed following its ‘learning’ from the European states, and this contributed to increased tensions and eventually war with China. Because it assumes that states’ interests and identities are constant, however, neorealism does not allow for us to empirically examine this possibility, and this is another reason why it is of limited utility for this study.

It is worth noting in this context that Classical Realism has a much more nuanced answer to these questions. Hans J. Morgenthau’s brand of Classical Realism posits that the domineering nature of humankind and anarchy produce a competitive international realm,²³ where states each pursue ‘interest defined in terms of power’.²⁴ Unlike neorealism, Morgenthau is sensitive to the fact that both ‘interest’ and ‘power’ will differ depending on the particular social context a state finds itself in, and may not be contingent on anarchy and human nature alone.²⁵ He states that ‘the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated...The same observations apply to the concept of power. Its content and the manner of its use are determined by the political and cultural environment.’²⁶ Morgenthau’s Classical Realism thus shows a high degree of sensitivity to historical and social contingencies, and his arguments deserve to be taken seriously. However, there are certain unresolvable tensions in Morgenthau’s work, which in part seem to reflect a commitment to ‘the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects...objective laws.’²⁷ The result is a series of statements that point to a somewhat universal, ahistorical description of a competitive,

²² The connection between identity and interest can be demonstrated from real life examples: for instance, if I identify myself as a member of academia, I will have strong incentives to have an article published by a top-tier journal if I wish to acquire prestige; if I identify myself as a young urban professional, however, I may be more interested in buying an expensive house in Chelsea and driving a German luxury car to demonstrate my ‘success’ and acquire the prestige of my peers.

²³ For a discussion of the nature of humankind, see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 34-36

²⁴ *ibid*, p. 5

²⁵ John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 47

²⁶ Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 9

²⁷ *ibid*, p. 4. For this point, I am indebted to John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, p. 47

coercive international realm.²⁸ While his argument that social factors can shape an actor's interests should be taken into account, the inherent contradictions within his theory cannot be resolved here, and this renders Morgenthau's Classical Realism unsuitable for this study. While we cannot discount the possibility that the international environment of the late-nineteenth century *was* a competitive one, this should be problematised and open to empirical investigation, rather than assumed.

Theoretical framework of the study: the English School and constructivist approaches

The discussions above demonstrate that realist theoretical perspectives are not suited to explaining the process of learning that China and (particularly) Japan appear to have experienced following their encounter and incorporation into the European-dominated international order. Any theoretical explanation of this case needs to account for the possibility that actors' identities and interests can be shaped by social pressures, rather than assuming *a priori* a rational actor with fixed interests. What is needed for this study is thus a more sociologically-informed theoretical approach that can adequately capture the complexities of the socialisation process. Here, we discuss two such theories, the English School and constructivist approaches, which seem to offer us a promising starting point.

The English School approach is organised around the concept of an 'international system'²⁹ and of a 'society of states'. It has taken its critique of the Realist depiction of international politics as its starting point. In particular, the English School approach has argued that the depiction of international politics as a competitive and lawless realm does not seem to fit reality, as demonstrated by the existence of evidence that states *do* follow some rules and procedures, rather than engage in behaviour stemming from pure self-interest. English School scholars have also elucidated the existence of shared

²⁸ For example, Morgenthau states: 'All history shows that nations active in international politics are continuously preparing for, actively involved in, or recovering from organized violence in the form of war' or 'the struggle for power is universal in time and space and is an undeniable fact of experience.' See Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 40, 34 respectively. Emphasis added. A similar tension can be said to exist within recent 'Neoclassical' Realism. See Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy' *World Politics* (vol. 51, no. 1, 1998, pp. 144-172); Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, 'Is Anybody Still a Realist?', *International Security* (vol. 24, no. 2, Fall 1999, pp. 5-55)

²⁹ An international system is deemed to exist when 'two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions, to cause them to behave – at least in some measure – as parts of a whole.' Note, however, that an international system does not assume the existence of common goals among the states in the system. Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 9

norms which they argue offers the most compelling evidence for the existence of an *International Society*. Hedley Bull and Adam Watson defined such a Society as follows:

By an international society we mean a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.³⁰

As evidence of the existence of a Society, Martin Wight forwards the following argument:

International society...is manifest in the diplomatic system; in the conscious maintenance of the balance of power to preserve the independence of the member-communities; in the regular operations of international law, whose binding force is accepted over a wide though politically unimportant range of subjects; in economic, social and technical interdependence and the functional international institutions established latterly to regulate it. All these presuppose an international social consciousness, a world-wide community-sentiment.³¹

These arguments point to a number of important assumptions for the English School. First, as argued above, the very concept of 'society' indicates that international politics is an inherently social arena consisting of *members* who share common norms and goals.³² Second, 'membership' points to the strong possibility that members of the Society are required to undergo some sort of 'socialisation or contractual process',³³ and social expectations exert powerful influences on states' behaviour. As an International Society entails states 'form[ing] a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another',³⁴ states must be judged against these rules in order to be accepted as legitimate members of this Society.³⁵ To attain this legitimacy, a state must satisfy 'the collective judgment of

³⁰ Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, 'Introduction' in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 1

³¹ Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations' in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), pp. 96-97. Also see R. J. Vincent, 'Hedley Bull and Order in International Politics', *Millennium* (vol. 17, no. 1, 1988, pp. 195-213), p. 205

³² Although not associated with the English School, Thomas Franck also notes: 'the international community more closely resembles a *membership club* with house rules....Membership is reinforced by valid governance, shared experience, reciprocal gestures or deference and recognition, common rituals, mature common expectations and the successful pursuit of shared goals.' See Thomas M. Franck, 'Legitimacy in the International System', *American Journal of International Law* (vol. 82, no. 4, October 1988, pp. 705-759), p. 711

³³ Yongjin Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949: Alienation and Beyond*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 4

³⁴ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p. 13

³⁵ See Ian Clark, 'Legitimacy in a Global Order', *Review of International Studies* (Special Issue, 2003, pp. 75-95), p. 84-85. From a sociological point of view, Theodore E. Long and Jeffrey K. Hadden argue that a member has '(1) to be competent and compliant with the cultural rules of the group and

international society about rightful membership of the family of nations'.³⁶ Indeed, 'mutual recognition' is crucial. Societies cannot exist without mutually recognised members, and the society of states is no exception.

The English School's interpretivist approach enables us to examine Chinese and Japanese engagements with the European international order and the subsequent evolution of their relations within a more nuanced, sociologically-informed analytical framework. For its utility in studying this phenomenon, this study adopts the English School approach as its central theoretical framework. In addition to the value of its interpretive approach, English School scholars are, as Richard Little argues, 'interested in world history because it can help us differentiate international systems/societies and, in doing so, provide the basis for a comparative framework that can help to reveal what is distinctive about contemporary international relations.'³⁷ The English School approach's idea of an 'International Society' opens up the possibility that 'international units within an empire or an anarchic arena can be constrained by a common ideology or set of beliefs about appropriate norms and rules of behaviour'.³⁸ It allows us to compare different historical international orders and their normative structures.³⁹ It also historicises the process by which the current dominant international order (International Society) expanded across the globe. For these reasons, the adoption of the approach gives us a theoretical template for a systematic analysis of the process of interaction between the East Asian international order and the European International Society in the late-nineteenth century.

(2) to occupy a specific position within the group and carry out its responsibilities and functions.' See Theodore E. Long and Jeffrey K. Hadden, 'A Reconception of Socialization', *Sociological Theory* (vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1985, pp. 39-49), p. 42

³⁶ Martin Wight, *Systems of States*. (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 153.

³⁷ Richard Little, 'The English School and World History' in Alex J. Bellamy (ed) *International Society and its Critics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 63. See also Stephen Hobden, 'Historical sociology: back to the future of international relations?' in Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson (eds), *Historical Sociology of International Relations*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 51-53

³⁸ Bary Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 12. It would also be worth noting that this particular strength of the English School approach is augmented by its long-standing interest in history. See Hedley Bull, 'International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach', *World Politics* (vol. 18, no. 3, April 1966, pp. 361-377) and Andrew Hurrell, 'Keeping history, law and political philosophy firmly within the English School', *Review of International Studies* (vol. 27, no. 3, 2001, pp. 489-494).

³⁹ Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), pp. 124-129; Hobden, 'Historical sociology: back to the future of international relations?', pp. 52-53. Examples of such works include Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A comparative historical analysis*. (London: Routledge, 1992); and Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*.

Most importantly, however, the approach's sensitivity to socialisation processes is heuristically powerful: the very notion of *society* implies that in order to obtain membership (something which arguably most sovereign states have, to a certain extent, done in the present day), states must be recognised as adhering to the rules of the society and fulfilling their social obligations to be deemed 'legitimate' members by their peers. Hedley Bull certainly alludes to this when he points out that this global expansion of European International Society has come about through its acceptance by the non-European states. In entering the society, 'they themselves have sought the rights of membership of it, and the protection of its rules, both *vis-à-vis* the dominant European powers and in relation to one another.'⁴⁰ While the cases of China and Japan highlight the need to problematise what aspects of the Society which China and/or Japan 'accepted' or internalised, the approach's sociologically-informed analytical framework remains useful.

This approach can be augmented by adopting some of the theoretical findings from constructivism.⁴¹ Simply put, we can distinguish three core constructivist theoretical claims. First, the importance of ideational factors in shaping international political behaviour; second, that '[a]gent interests are derived from identity-

⁴⁰ Hedley Bull, 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society' in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 124. Although not working within the English School approach, G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan have also suggested the concept of hegemonic socialisation which is much more sensitive to the concept of socialisation. Here, socialisation occurs when the hegemonic power utilises a variety of material and normative incentives to socialise secondary states into internalising 'the hegemon's norms and move to adopt new state policies which are compatible with those of the hegemon and which produce cooperative outcomes.' (G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, 'Socialization and Hegemonic Power', *International Organization* (vol. 44, no. 3, Summer 1990, pp. 283-315), p. 290.) However, their conceptualisation of socialisation is somewhat narrow, due to its structuralist/functionalist bias, as will become clearer below.

⁴¹ This means that I am closer agreement with Dunne's assertion that the English School is characterised by an interpretivist approach. It should also be noted that Richard Little has argued that the English School is characterised by methodological pluralism, with positivism, interpretivism and critical theory employed to study (respectively) international systems, International Society, and world society. Setting aside the difficulty in determining when precisely an 'International System' becomes an 'International Society', I do so as I am unsure of employing positivist methodology – defined here as 'any method that opens up the possibility of analysing the recurrent and repetitious patterns that occur in International Relations' (Little, 'The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations', p. 404) – to studying international history. I conceive history to be neither repetitive nor cyclical, and each epoch needs to be historicised in its specific social, cultural and temporal context. I am concerned that a 'positivist' approach could potentially lead to an ahistorical interpretation of world history. See Timothy Dunne, 'The Social Construction of International Society', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 1, no. 3, 1995, pp. 367-389) and Richard Little, 'The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 6, no. 3, 2000, pp. 395-422). Cf. Christian Reus-Smit, 'The Constructivist Challenge after September 11' in Alex J. Bellamy (ed) *International Society and its Critics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 87

construction, which is constituted in the course of social interaction',⁴² and finally 'that agents and structures are mutually constituted.'⁴³ Constructivists share many commonalities with the English School approach, 'particularly interests in the cultural bases of state identity, the rule-governed nature of international society, and the variable forms of life under anarchy'.⁴⁴ The similarities between the two approaches' have led Timothy Dunne to argue that the English School was a pioneering form of constructivism.⁴⁵ In the specific context of this thesis, the constructivist approach is attractive for its theoretical rigour. Although the English School has forwarded a valuable analytical framework for understanding international politics, their theoretical assumptions have often been under-specified. The utilisation of constructivist theoretical insights results in a much clearer analytical framework for analysis.

This study integrates the constructivist insight that identity shapes interests and action. While English School scholars have noted that states form a society on the basis of 'universal' 'goals of social life' (to ensure the protection of life, property, and guarantee adherence to agreements),⁴⁶ the fact that states need to become a 'member of International Society' indicates that a state's interests and actions will be accordingly shaped by this 'identity'. Most English School studies, however, tend to see the norms of the Society in 'regulative' terms (such as adherence to international law), and have not explored how these rules shape and define state interests and action in sufficient depth. The adoption of this particular constructivist assumption allows us to fully explore the deeper constitutive rules and norms – the 'social consciousness' – of International Society that shapes its members' behaviour.

⁴² John M. Hobson, 'What's at stake in "bringing historical sociology *back* into international relations?', p. 24, also see Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 4, no. 3, 1998, pp. 259-294), p. 267

⁴³ Price and Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous Liaisons?', p. 267

⁴⁴ Christian Reus-Smit, 'Imagining society: constructivism and the English School', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (vol. 4, no. 3, October 2002, pp. 487-509), p. 489

⁴⁵ Dunne, 'The Social Construction of International Society', p. 372. Dunne identifies the English School approach with a particular strand of constructivism forwarded by Alexander Wendt, who forwards a state-centric, structural argument. There are, however, different strands of constructivism that do not necessarily adopt a state-centric focus. Such works include Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) and Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995). A critique of English School scholars' views of constructivism is provided by Reus-Smit, 'Imagining society'. See also Price and Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous Liaisons?', for an overview of different strands of constructivist approaches.

⁴⁶ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp. 4-6

This study also adopts constructivist insights drawn from ‘logics of appropriateness’,⁴⁷ where actors’ actions are conditioned by what they believe to be ‘socially appropriate’. Furthermore, in order to demonstrate their conformity with social norms, ‘they justify their behaviour by appealing to established codes of social conduct in the “linguistic court of appeal”’.⁴⁸ The existence of social norms in international politics has often been ‘proven’ through analysing how actors behave, and whether this corresponds to these norms: this is the approach adopted by Wight in the aforementioned passage above. This approach, however, has difficulty in demonstrating the existence of social norms when they are broken. But a violation of a norm does not necessarily mean the absence of a norm,⁴⁹ and an action-centred approach may give us a somewhat impoverished account of international social life. By adopting a constructivist of focus on actors’ speech patterns and arguments, we are able to provide an empirically rich and more nuanced accounts of China and Japan’s socialisation into European International Society.⁵⁰

Interpretivist explanations of China and Japan’s entry into the European order

How then, have these interpretivist theories accounted for China and Japan’s incorporation into the European-dominated international order?

English School scholars have argued that International Society – which can trace its origins to seventeenth century Europe – has expanded across the globe to the extent

⁴⁷ The ‘logic of appropriateness’ is defined as a situation when ‘[a]ction stems from a conception of necessity, rather than preference. Within a logic of appropriateness, a sane person is one who is “in touch with identity” in the sense of maintaining consistency between behavior and a conception of self in a social role.’ See James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*. (New York: The Free Press, 1989), p. 161

⁴⁸ John M. Hobson, ‘What’s at stake in “bringing historical sociology back into international relations?” This approach is also derived from ‘communicative action theory’ forwarded by Jürgen Habermas. Also see Paul Kowert and Jeffery Legro, ‘Norms, Identity, and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise’, in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 485; Reus-Smit, ‘Imagining society’, pp. 493-494; and Thomas Risse, “‘Let’s Argue!’: Communicative Action in World Politics’, *International Organization* (vol. 54, no. 1, Winter 2000, pp. 1-39)

⁴⁹ For instance, the fact that fraud is ubiquitous does not mean that fraudulent behaviour is condoned in society.

⁵⁰ We must note, however, that the insights provided by the ‘logic of appropriateness’ argument have been criticised as overtly structural, thus undermining constructivism’s claim that agents and structures are mutually constitutive. Ole Jacob Sending argues that the ‘logic of appropriateness’ assumes ‘a homogenous political community, characterized by a set of shared interpretations and conceptions of the common good’ which ‘substantially reduces the degree to which the process of interpretation can enable individuals to interpret things differently.’ His argument serve as a powerful reminder to maintain a balance between structural and agent-centric analysis, and will be incorporated into this study to the extent possible. Ole Jacob Sending, ‘Constitution, Choice and Change: Problems with the “Logic of Appropriateness” and its Use in Constructivist Theory’, *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 8, no. 4, 2002, pp. 443-470), p. 451

that it can now be called a ‘universal international society’ in the sense that there exist shared rules and norms which states adhere to. The expansion of International Society into East Asia have been considered from this perspective.⁵¹ Evidence of the expansion, they claim, can be found in the adoption of the key institutions of international law and diplomacy throughout the world. Further evidence is provided by the fact that the sovereign state system, which emerged from the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), has also come to be accepted as the sole legitimate form of statehood.⁵²

English School scholars have approached the specific cases of China and Japan’s entry into European International Society primarily through examining both states’ adoption of two particular institutions, international law and European-styled diplomatic institutions, both of which developed alongside and can be attributed as unique to the Society. Another ‘hallmark’ of China and Japan’s entry (or socialisation) into the Society is their adoption of the ‘standard of civilisation’, which has been studied by Gerrit Gong.⁵³ The ‘standard’ is broader in scope than the introduction of international law and Western diplomatic institutions, and subsequently Gong’s analyses go further than China and Japan’s adoption of international law and Western-styled diplomacy. The ‘standard’ not only required that ‘civilised’ states adopt international law, but also (among others) demanded the protection of foreigners’ property and the implementation of a legal code capable of delivering justice.

This ‘standard’ constituted the social criteria that had to be fulfilled to gain legitimate membership of the Society as a ‘civilised’ entity. Hence, Gong examines both states’ domestic reforms aimed at satisfying this ‘standard’ and entering the Society as a legitimate member. China and Japan’s attempts to conform to this ‘standard’ reflect both states’ desires to assume ‘civilised’ status on the Society’s terms, as well as the existence of social pressures that shaped China and Japan’s interests and identities. It strongly suggests the existence of a process of socialisation where actors attempt to

⁵¹ The key works on this particular topic include Gerrit W. Gong, ‘China’s Entry into International Society’ and Hidemi Suganami, ‘Japan’s Entry into International Society’, both in Bull and Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*; Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of ‘Civilization’ in International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Yongjin Zhang ‘China’s Entry into International Society: Beyond the Standard of “Civilisation”’ *Review of International Studies* (vol. 17, no. 1, 1991, pp. 3-16). Other studies of state socialisation into International Society – with specific reference to revolutionary states – are undertaken by David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) and Yongjin Zhang, *China in International Society since 1949: Alienation and Beyond*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998).

⁵² Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p. 40

⁵³ The most important work on this aspect of the expansion of European International Society is Gong, *The Standard of ‘Civilization’ in International Society*.

shape a new member to conform to the norms of the social group, and is also compatible with the English School's fundamental assumption that state interests and identities are socially constructed.

Further examinations of English School works with reference to the Sino-Japanese case, however, quickly leads to some intellectual frustrations. In particular, these accounts downplay the intertwined nature between the expansion of European International Society and imperialism. The European powers at the end of the nineteenth century were industrial and military powers with colonies, and there is evidence that China and Japan attempted, to different degrees, to emulate these aspects as well. However, existing accounts by the English School do not offer us satisfactory explanations. To be fair, the English School scholars are certainly not unaware of the intertwined nature of imperialism and the expansion of the Society, but their references to it are somewhat perfunctory and weak. With reference to Japan's coercive diplomatic conduct towards its Asian neighbours following its encounter with the Society, Hidemi Suganami states:

Meiji Japan's intercourse with these countries closely resembled that between the Western Powers and the Tokugawa authorities in both form and substance: in form, it was based on treaty obligations; in substance, it was an exercise in power politics...this...stage of Japan's foreign relations is one in which she began to apply what she had learnt from the West in her external affairs.⁵⁴

In similar fashion to arguments forwarded by some historians, Suganami's statement again opens up the possibility that it may be more appropriate to hypothesise that China and/or Japan were in fact *socialised* into a new social environment in which their interests and identities were framed in a particular way in that it precipitated a military clash between the two states. However, Suganami does not develop his argument any further. As it stands, we are again left with no clear idea of what exactly Japan had 'learnt' from European International Society to make them behave in a coercive manner towards China and Korea.

Gong provides another account. He notes that the Japanese used international law to further its imperialistic ambitions in East Asia. 'Recognizing an advantage in employing international law in Korea', he writes, 'Japan modelled the "unequal treaty" it imposed on Korea after the "unequal treaties" the West had imposed on Japan.'⁵⁵ This

⁵⁴ Suganami, 'Japan's Entry into International Society', p. 192

⁵⁵ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilisation' in International Society*, p. 183

raises the question of why Japan decided to impose 'unequal treaties' which it appears to have 'learnt' from the West, and to this, Gong states:

...one senses that Japan followed the other treaty powers in exacting concessions from China and Korea simply for selfish purposes. On the other hand, Japan seems to have felt that part of its mission was to lead the rest of Asia in becoming strong enough through reform and modernization to hold off the predatory Western powers.⁵⁶

Gong's answers do not go far enough either. This is particularly the case with regard to historical contingencies and problematising Japan's 'interests'. Why do Japanese 'selfish' interests in forcing its Asian neighbours to sign unequal treaties appear *after* its encounter with the Western international order? Where did these interests come from? Why did the Japanese pursue these interests in a *particular form* of imitating the Western states?

Aims of the study

This study aims to advance our understanding of the expansion of European International Society into East Asia through the case studies of the socialisation of China and Japan. Building on existing works by English School scholars, it asks questions about the international social dynamics of the late-nineteenth century, as well as China and Japan's interactions with them. This study will pay particular attention to the nature of European International Society in the context of the late-nineteenth century, and Chinese and Japanese perceptions of this Society. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the following questions.

1. What was the relationship between European International Society and imperialism in the late-nineteenth century?
2. How did this shape the relations between the Society and China and Japan?
3. Did the engagement between European International Society and China and Japan involve a process of socialisation that produces a fundamental shift in both states' identities and interests? If such transformations did take place, how did they affect subsequent domestic and foreign policies? How

⁵⁶ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilisation' in International Society*, p. 184

significant were these socialisation processes in accounting for the military conflict between China and Japan in the late-nineteenth century?

4. Finally, what are the implications of these findings for the English School approach?

Central arguments and contributions

In order to give a better account for the complex socialisation process of China and Japan, this study compares both states' perceptions of and engagement with European International Society in a systematic manner. If European International Society and/or its expansion is to be conceptualised as the extension of a form of social structure, there needs to be a more detailed examination of different actors and the ways in which they made choices within a given set of structures. The comparative case study approach adopted in this study will serve to highlight the differences between China and Japan's engagement with the Society, and thus attempt to provide a richer account of their socialisation.

The thesis contends that nineteenth-century European International Society was a Janus-faced one which was characterised by starkly contrasting normative foundations. One face governed the relations between 'civilised' states, and aimed to promote order and coexistence among them.⁵⁷ 'Civilised' members were generally (and theoretically) accorded the protection of international law, diplomacy, and the institution of the balance of power, and their sovereign prerogatives were by and large respected.

The other face represented a much less tolerant, coercive side of the Society. It governed the Society's relations with 'uncivilised' entities, and was charged with the task of promoting and propagating the trappings of 'civilisation' towards 'barbarous' polities. A very different mode of interaction applied in this relationship. The sovereign rights of 'uncivilised' peoples and their political communities were not recognised. Rather than protect their sovereignty, international law and diplomacy in fact played a crucial role in justifying European 'civilising' missions. Furthermore, a great power possessed the prerogative to lead the way in enlightening 'uncivilised' entities. They were given the paternalistic mandate to guide the 'uncivilised' polities and peoples towards 'civilisation' – by force if necessary – until the latter were deemed

⁵⁷ Needless to say, these are theoretical 'ideal types': the existence of historical events that do not fit this conceptualisation should be readily acknowledged.

to have become ‘civilised’ enough and capable of self-rule. Naturally, the European powers did not usually bother to ask the ‘uncivilised’ peoples for their permission to do this; they encountered much resistance, which they put down with force. Furthermore, it was the ‘civilised’ members of the Society that decided the level of a polity’s ‘civilisation’ on the basis of a state’s capacity to fulfil an alien ‘standard of civilisation’. Their decisions of what and who was ‘civilised’ was a subjective one, and demanded civilisational homogeneity. From today’s perspective, the ‘civilising’ face of the Society was undoubtedly an imperialistic one.

This thesis forwards the central argument that China and Japan were socialised into this Janus-faced European International Society, and that this process involved a complex engagement with the Society’s two different faces. It make two claims: first, it argues that conventional English School accounts have mistakenly conceptualised China and Japan as encountering and engaging with a Society through a *single* mode of action that aimed for order and coexistence, thus downplaying the darker face of the Society. Second, conventional English School accounts of the expansion of European International Society into East Asia are inadequate because they do not sufficiently explore the effects that the Society’s ‘civilising’ mode of interaction had on China and Japan. I also suggest that in order to provide a more comprehensive account of socialisation, it is necessary to study the process of Chinese and Japanese interactions with the Society, rather than simply focus on the outcomes (such as the adoption of international law).

By focussing on the agents that were on the ‘receiving end’ of European International Society’s dual modes of interaction, this thesis serves to highlight the darker face of the Society and bring its effects into sharper focus. In the context of this thesis, Japan’s attempts to reproduce the social structures of European International Society actually resulted in imperialistic ventures and increased hostility in Northeast Asia. This does not necessarily mean that we need only focus exclusively on imperialism and its relations with the Society. This has been carried out elsewhere,⁵⁸ and an exclusive focus on the darker sides alone (while well worth further exploration) does not necessarily give us the full picture of China and Japan’s engagement with the

⁵⁸ Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), c.f. Sanjay Seth, ‘A “Postcolonial World”?’ in Greg Fry and Jacinta O’Hagan (eds), *Contending Images of World Politics*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 218-220

Society. Rather, what we are in need of is a more nuanced account of the darker and lighter faces of the Society, which coexisted side by side.

This thesis' emphasis on Chinese and Japanese experiences of engaging with a *dualistic* European International Society will give us a better account of how the *agents* interpreted the dualisms in the Society, and thus fill an empirical gap that will provide us with a more complete picture of the interaction between the Society and the Northeast Asian regional order in the late-nineteenth century. Drawing on primary sources of the late-nineteenth century, this thesis highlights a serious weakness in conventional conceptualisations of International Society. Existing works have suggested that China and (particularly) Japan envisaged a Society that aimed for equality and order; the discovery of discrepancies led the Japanese to conclude that the international environment was an anarchic one where power mattered. I argue that this interpretation is overly simplistic: the fact is that Chinese and Japanese elites were much more aware of the dualities inherent in European International Society than they have previously been given credit for. While they certainly understood that the mode of interaction that governed 'civilised' states did not apply to them, they were also aware that some form of societal relations that aimed for order *did* exist between the European powers, and that these states all seemed to share a common identity.

I further contend that the recognition amongst Chinese and Japanese elites that the international environment was not simply that of anarchy and power but of differentiated modes of interaction, had in fact opened up *two possible paths* that China and Japan could follow in adapting to European International Society: one was to build up military power and ward off the 'civilising' forces of the Society. Another possibility was to join the 'family of nations' by attaining the same 'civilised' identity as the European powers, and thus be subjected to the more cooperative mode of interaction. China chose the former path, while Japan chose the latter. Both states' attempts to become 'rich and powerful' thus acquired different meanings, and the study highlights this by interpreting these series of reforms as a process of socialisation into European International Society. Unlike China, Japan's attempts to become 'rich and strong' also acquired the *additional* purpose of demonstrating its acquisition of the trappings of modernity and attainment of 'civilised' status.

The thesis also makes an empirical contribution by providing an international explanation for Japanese imperialism in the late-nineteenth century.⁵⁹ It is not intended to be a definitive study of Japanese imperialism. Neither does it suggest a monocausal explanation for Japanese imperialism. My interest is primarily in the ideational shifts which took place in Japan and (to a lesser extent) China during this period, and in how these were a contributing factor to the lead up to war in 1894-1895, within the broader context of the international social dynamics of the time.

It should be noted here that while Japanese imperialism has been studied from many different angles,⁶⁰ there have been relatively few studies which have explicitly and systematically examined early Meiji Japanese imperialism and its connection with European International Society.⁶¹ Some reasons for this neglect can be forwarded. First, many studies begin their analysis from 1895, when Japan acquired its first colony, Taiwan, from China in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese war. The second is the strong influence of historical studies conducted by Western scholars that implicitly adopt modernisation theory to explain Japan's engagement with the European-dominated international order. These studies were formulated, in part, in the context of the Cold War, when there was a perceived need to counter the influence of Marxist studies of Japanese history by portraying pre-World War II Japanese society and Japanese modernisation efforts in a more positive light. The result is, however, an excessively affirmative depiction of the imperialist 'European powers' which Japan modelled itself on. Japan's imperialism and its connection with European imperialism is thus downplayed; Japan's imperialism is instead either reduced to a product of 'strategic interests' or treated as an aberration of modernisation whose roots could be traced back to Japanese society. The result of this, in the words of John Dower, is that

⁵⁹ This means that the thesis does not offer any explanations for Japanese imperialism in the 1930s and 1940s. Japanese imperialism was dynamic, and it is impossible to ignore how Japanese thinking on European International Society and imperialism evolved during this time, and analyse Meiji imperialism and Shōwa imperialism in the same light.

⁶⁰ For non-Marxist approaches, see Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea 1868-1910: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960); W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Ramon Myers and Mark Peattie (eds), *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). A classic Marxist account has been provided by Inoue Kiyoshi, *Nihon teikokushugi no keisei*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001)

⁶¹ Some notable exceptions include Robert Eskildsen, 'Meiji nana nen taiwan shuppei no shokuminchiteki sokumen' in Meiji ishinshi gakkai (eds) *Meiji ishin to ajia*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2001). Another classic study by Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea 1868-1910*, explores the 'idealist' Japanese drives to reform Korea, but their connections with the *international* social context remain, at best, implicit.

...many recent interpretations of Japanese external behavior...turns attention away from the *similarity* of this behavior to that of countries which (1) lacked Japan's peculiar cultural heritage, (2) were early and 'gradual' modernizers, and (3) presumably did attain a higher level of bureaucratic rationalization, bourgeois democracy and 'individualism' than Japan.⁶²

This thesis argues that Japan's attempts to attain the identity of a 'civilised' member of European International Society entailed reconfiguring its bilateral relations with its Asian neighbours and embarking on imperialistic missions. In order to be recognised as a 'civilised' member of the Society, Japan needed to eradicate the vestiges of the East Asian international order: it thus forcibly absorbed the Ryūkyū Kingdom, which had been a tributary state to both China and Japan, causing considerable alarm in China.

Demonstration of 'civilised' identity also entailed showing the capacity and political will to pacify and introduce the trappings of 'civilisation' into 'barbarous' entities. I contend that Japan's decision to be judged by the normative standards of European International Society entailed accepting the Society's hierarchical differentiation between 'civilised' and 'barbarous' entities. Consequently, China and Korea, both of which had yet to become members of the Society, were labelled as 'uncivilised'. Japan sent troops to Taiwan to punish its 'savage' aborigines to escape its 'semi-civilised' status. The Japanese elites not only began pushing for domestic political reforms in Korea, but also sought to reconfigure Korea's international relations along European International Society's lines by encouraging the Koreans to repudiate their tributary relations with China. Japan's actions resulted in deepening tensions with the China, and this eventually culminated in war between the two countries over their interests in Korea in 1894. By interpreting China and Japan's entry into the European-dominated international order as a process of socialisation into a Janus-faced European International Society, this thesis provides a theoretically-informed, nuanced international explanation for the (increased) hostilities between China and Japan, which culminated in the Sino-Japanese war in 1894. I highlight and demonstrate that the coercive side of European International Society manifested itself in Japan's imperialistic external behaviour, and thus challenge conventional English School accounts which implicitly see International Society as a 'progressive' force for the promotion of order in an anarchic realm.

⁶² John W. Dower, 'E. H. Norman, Japan and the Uses of History' in Dower, John W. (ed) *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), p. 83

Structure of the study

The period under examination in this study starts from the 1860s and ends in 1895. In the chapter exploring Chinese and Japanese perceptions of European International Society, earlier encounters with the Society before 1860 will be included to account for any continuities or changes. It is, of course, possible to extend the time period of our enquiry to later periods, as a socialisation process does not suddenly end at a certain point in time. However, the year 1895 is a useful point in which to conclude our enquiry. As the chapters below will attempt to demonstrate, while this war was at one level a result of Sino-Japanese rivalry, it was also a clash of two competing international orders. By 1894, Japan was strongly committed to becoming and gaining recognition as a 'civilised' member of European International Society, while the Chinese continued to operate within the East Asian international order. Japan's attempts to demonstrate its new identity as a 'civilised' member in the Society entailed attempts to dismantle the vestiges of the Tribute System. This caused alarm in China, which had yet to seek full membership of the Society. Japan's actions were seen as a fundamental challenge to China, and resulted in increased tensions over Korea.

The resulting war was an important milestone for the expansion of European International Society. It not only ended in the defeat of China; the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki also put an end to China's last remaining tributary relations with Korea, signalling the final collapse of the tribute system. After this, China had few options but to engage more fully with European International Society. The Sino-Japanese war marked the final collapse of the East Asian international order and the ultimate triumph of European International Society.

The study will proceed as follows. Chapter 1 will give a more detailed account of the study's theoretical assumptions and framework. It provides a critical discussion of the existing conceptualisation of International Society and its expansion, and reviews previous English School works on the socialisation of China and Japan. Following from this, the chapter suggests that European International Society in the late-nineteenth century was in fact a dualistic one. Here, the differences in the constitutive norms and institutions of the Society which governed Western and non-Western states will be elucidated. Following from this, the chapter provides a brief survey of the study of socialisation processes and forwards an alternative analytical framework for understanding the socialisation of China and Japan into the Society.

Chapter 2 seeks to explore the East Asian international order before the expansion of European International Society. In similar fashion to the preceding chapter, the constitutive norms and institutions of this international order will be examined, and Sino-Japanese relations will be briefly examined in this context.

Chapter 3 will examine both Chinese and Japanese perceptions of European International Society. This chapter, in a sense, is an account of the 'social structures' as seen by the elites of the two states.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the socialisation process, and shift the emphasis more on the 'agents'. Here, changes in both states' domestic and international policies will be examined. The two chapters are divided according to the continuum of socialisation forwarded in chapter 1, although it must be acknowledged that this is primarily for analytical purposes, and in reality the two processes overlapped.

Chapter 4 concerns the domestic reforms undertaken by states following their encounter with European International Society. It will give a detailed account of how the elites of both states redefined their state interests and identities. This chapter represents the earlier stage of socialisation into European International Society. The domestic reforms undertaken in both states were initially based on both Chinese and Japanese interactions with the Society's coercive face, as well as their observations that its members were military powers. As a result, both Chinese and Japanese elites embarked on a programme of making their respective countries 'rich and strong'. However, as their interaction with the Society increased, we begin to see divergences in both states' behaviour. China attempted to 'self-strengthen' without joining the Society and remained largely within the stage of socialisation labelled in the study as 'strategic learning'. Meanwhile Japan chose to become a 'civilised' member of the Society, and moved into a deeper stage of socialisation which is termed 'emulative learning'.

Chapter 5 will explore how these processes led to changes within the East Asian international order. Japan's deeper level of socialisation into European International Society meant that it not only had to reinvent its state: it also had to restructure its diplomatic relations with its Asian neighbours on the lines of 'civilised' European International Society. China for its part had not reached a deeper level of socialisation at this stage, and viewed Japan's actions as a challenge to its international order. The consequence was increasing Sino-Japanese rivalry and eventually war. The study concludes by summarising its central arguments and discusses their implications for the English School approach.

Finally, a number of qualifications are needed. The adoption of the English School theoretical approach means that the concept and existence of an (European) International Society is assumed. It should, however, be noted that in the case of Japan, which was socialised into the Society before China, the term ‘international society (*kokusai shakai*) did not appear until after the Versailles Treaty of 1919, amid considerable scepticism. In spite of this, we do see evidence of Japan’s socialisation into the norms of European International Society in the nineteenth century. Japan accepted the institutions of international law and the European diplomatic system to govern its foreign relations. It also adopted the sovereign state system, thereby ‘reject[ing] the traditional East Asian concept of hierarchical relations among states and peoples’.⁶³ The social structures of European International Society certainly had discernible effects on China and Japan’s foreign policy behaviour, although to different degrees. Although European International Society was not an ontological being until the twentieth century, it can be assumed within the scope of this study that both China and Japan did encounter a European International Society by the late-nineteenth century, and had been subjected to its ‘pressures’ of socialisation.

By European International Society, I also include the United States, and this definition also applies for the term ‘European powers’, unless specified otherwise. It may be objected that the United States, in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, did not fully participate in European politics at this time and cannot be considered to have been a member of European International Society. While accepting the controversial position of the United States in the Society, this study regards the United States as a member of the Society and is thus in agreement with Adam Watson’s assertion that while maintaining a somewhat separate identity,

the American states were in much the same position as the lesser European powers. Both groups played minor but real parts in the elaboration of the society’s rules, institutions, and codes of conduct. The United States also played an active part in the expansion of “European” or “Western” dominance....The originally anti-imperial United States acquired dependent territories of its own in the Caribbean and the Pacific, and the European powers co-opted it as a quasi-equal partner in formulating agreed policies towards Eastern Asia.⁶⁴

⁶³ Key-Hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 156

⁶⁴ Adam Watson, ‘European International Society and Its Expansion’ in Bull and Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*, p. 28

THE JANUS-FACED EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Its first aim is to explore the relationship between imperialism and European International Society, and in particular its relationship with European imperialism. As noted above, standard studies of the expansion of the Society have often described this process 'as a success story of states in which a society of initially European states expanded "across the rest of the globe" to eventually become the "global international society of today."' ¹ Accordingly, the socialisation of China and Japan is described primarily in terms of both states adopting international law and European-style diplomacy and fulfilling the 'standard of civilisation' to be eventually accorded full membership status.

However, a cursory survey of the literature of Chinese and Japanese history indicates that there was more to China and Japan's socialisation than these works suggest. Both China and Japan were coerced into European International Society as a result of European powers' 'gunboat diplomacy'. Furthermore, there is evidence that Japan's subsequent imperialism in the late-nineteenth century was partly, if not fully, a result of its 'learning' process that followed its engagement with the Society.

This chapter argues that conventional studies cannot provide us with a satisfactory explanation of this process because of their downplaying of the intertwined nature of European imperialism and the expansion of European International Society. They do not sufficiently acknowledge the fact that European imperialism was at its height when the Society expanded to East Asia, and to date they have not adequately considered the possibility that both states may have been exposed to the darker aspects of the Society. This chapter seeks to address this lacuna by exploring the relationship between European International Society and imperialism. It begins by reviewing conventional works which study the entry of China and Japan into European International Society. An examination of the Society in the context of the late-nineteenth century follows, and a dualistic mode of interaction within the Society is identified.

The second aim of the chapter is to build on these findings and forward a more flexible analytical framework that can account for the multifaceted process of China and Japan's socialisation. To this end, previous conceptualisations of non-European states'

¹ Paul Keal, 'An "International Society"?' in Greg Fry and Jacinta O'Hagan (eds), *Contending Images of World Politics*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 64

entry into European International Society are critically examined. It is argued that the English School scholars' normative commitments resulted in empirically impoverished accounts of this complex process. I then forward an alternative framework that is characterised by two points. First, it takes the role imperialism played in China and Japan's engagement seriously. Second, rather than an outcome-based conceptualisation, this framework emphasises a more *process*-based account for socialisation. It is argued that this framework generates a more agent-centred depiction of this complex phenomenon, and goes beyond the 'thin' accounts of non-European states' socialisation that have characterised conventional studies by English School scholars.

China and Japan's socialisation into International Society: review of previous works

One of the most important works that have examined the topic of China and Japan's socialisation into European International Society is *The Expansion of International Society*, edited by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson. In this study, the expansion of European International Society and the incorporation of non-European states are depicted in a somewhat linear fashion, sharing a broad resemblance with the structural/functionalist conceptualisation of socialisation.²

It is claimed the expansion of European International Society took place primarily between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, usually in the wake of imperialist expansion by the European powers. Supported by overwhelming military strength, the Western powers were able to impose their codes of diplomatic conduct and standards of viable statehood on the non-Western states. This normative 'code of conduct' was known as the 'standard of civilisation'. According to Gerrit W. Gong's classic study, a 'civilised state' was expected to protect the life, rights and property of foreign nationals; possess an 'organized political bureaucracy with some efficiency in running the state

² Curiously, the structuralist/functionalist approach has also been adopted by Kenneth N. Waltz, who states that the anarchical structures and the resultant competitive behaviour within the international system *compel* states to become similar units: 'Socialization and competition are two aspects of a process by which the variety of behaviors and of outcomes is reduced.' Failure to do so would result in the possibility of the 'deviant' state to be 'punished', mainly in the form of elimination from the international system. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 77. There are some problems with Waltz's conceptualisation of 'socialization', however: the socialisation process as conceived by the English School approach implicitly assumes that member states of the society serve as role models or dispensers of sanctions. Socialisation takes place as a result of member and non-member *interaction*, and is inherently social. However, Waltz's version of 'socialization' is through the interaction between actors and material pressures, and, as Alexander Wendt correctly argues, '[c]alling the production of behavioral conformity "socialization" says little if the structure that actors are being socialized to has no "social" content.' A simple example can illustrate this point: I may eat at least one meal every day: but this is due to my feeling hungry (material pressures), and not because I have been 'socialised' into eating a meal every day. See Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 101

machinery, and with some capacity to organize for self-defence'; adhere to international law; provide channels for diplomacy; and conform 'to the accepted norms and practices of the "civilized" international society'.³ In addition to protecting the lives and properties of Western nationals overseas, the 'standard of civilisation', it is argued, was a 'response to the philosophical problem of determining which countries deserved legal recognition and legal personality in international law' and 'provided a doctrinal rationale for limiting recognition in international law to candidate countries'.⁴ In order to qualify for the protection of the norms and institutions of European International Society, non-European states were required to pass the test laid down by the 'standard of civilisation' and thus be judged as 'civilised' by its member states.⁵

Empirical case studies which examine China and Japan's entry into the Society focus primarily on the processes by which these states fulfilled the 'standard of civilisation' by accepting the institutions of international law and European style diplomacy and reconfiguring their domestic political organisational structures along Western lines. Such processes were inextricably linked to the modernisation of non-European states, and as a consequence functionalist undertones also permeate English School scholars' accounts of the acceptance of European International Society across the world. Barry Buzan, for instance, has forwarded the argument that the expansion of International Society can take place as a result of a functional necessity to introduce a degree of order in increasingly complex interactions among states.⁶ With regard to the

³ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, pp. 14-15

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 24

⁵ This aspect of the 'standard of civilisation' playing a crucial part in defining what it means to be a 'legitimate' actor in international politics can be seen today: some authors have suggested that universal human rights constitutes the new 'standard of civilisation' in international politics today. See Jack Donnelly, 'Human rights: a new standard of civilization?', *International Affairs* (vol. 74, no. 1, 1998, pp. 1-24). It is also interesting to note that any 'standard of civilisation' continues to carry with it considerable historical baggage: while not necessarily dissenting to human rights, there are some views that are suspicious of (and indeed question) this new 'standard', which is sometimes seen as an imposition of an alien normative standard and – understandably, to my mind – smacks of the cultural imperialism which took place in the nineteenth century. For a thoughtful treatment of these views, see Peter Van Ness, 'Introduction', Chandra Muzaffar 'From human rights to human dignity', and Nikhil Aziz, 'The human rights debate in an era of globalization: hegemony of discourse', all in Peter Van Ness (ed), *Debating Human Rights: Critical essays from the United States and Asia*. (London: Routledge, 1999)

⁶ See Barry Buzan, 'From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School', *International Organization* (vol. 47, no. 3, Summer 1993, pp. 327-352). Although not working within the English School approach, Ikenberry and Kupchan have also suggested the concept of hegemonic socialisation. Note, however, that while Ikenberry and Kupchan do cautiously posit the possibility that socialisation can happen through 'normative persuasion', their bias is towards materialist explanations. Socialisation, in their view, is extremely difficult to achieve in the absence of some form of coercion. Similarly, socialisation is greatly facilitated when domestic actors of the secondary states accept the norms forwarded by the hegemon to further their own myopic interests. However, such views, while highly plausible, do run into difficulties when faced with empirical anomalies – while acknowledging the role of non-state actors, Audie Klotz, for instance, has convincingly demonstrated the global internalisation of the anti-

adoption of Western political institutions by non-European states that took place in the wake of this expansion, Adam Watson also adopts a functionalist explanation:

...the nineteenth century is notable for the creation throughout Asia, Africa, and Oceania of Europeanized or Westernized élites. The Europeans and the Americans offered the instruction, and usually met with an enthusiastic response...The mastery of Western governmental practice and military technology enabled these élites to run a modern state...⁷

This linear approach is visible in the specific case studies which examine China and Japan's entry into European International Society. The most important works examining Japan's introduction to the Society are Hidemi Suganami's contribution in *The Expansion of International Society* and Gerrit Gong's case study of Japan in *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*.⁸ Here, the metamorphosis of Japan after its entry into the Society is examined almost exclusively in terms of domestic modernisation, the adoption of European diplomatic practices and international law, and Japan's participation in international conferences. Gong and Yongjin Zhang adopt a similar approach in their studies of China's entry into European International Society.⁹ Their accounts of non-European states' entry into European International Society again concentrate on the process of China's modernisation, particularly the adoption of modern diplomacy, international law and the political structures of Western states. Zhang does move away from an exclusive focus on non-European states' fulfilling of the 'standard of civilisation', and differs with Gong on the dates at which China could be considered to have entered the Society, claiming that China's entry took place in the late 1920s, rather than the 1940s. He argues that Gong places undue attention on China's efforts to fulfil the 'standard of civilisation' and consequently ignores the 'democratization of the post-war international system' which took place after World War I. The dissemination of Wilsonian collective security (as embodied in the establishment of the League of Nations) 'accentuated the need to involve all the states in an enduring peace',¹⁰ thus facilitating China's entry into International Society. However, Zhang, in similar fashion to Suganami and Gong, is in broad agreement that

Apartheid norm, even though this norm was initially articulated by Third World states, rather than the hegemonic powers. See Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995)

⁷ Adam Watson, 'European International Society and its Expansion', p. 31

⁸ Suganami, 'Japan's Entry into International Society' and Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*.

⁹ See Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*; 'China's Entry into International Society' in Bull and Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*; and Yongjin Zhang, 'China's Entry into International Society: Beyond the Standard of "Civilisation"'

¹⁰ Zhang, 'China's Entry into International Society: Beyond the Standard of "Civilisation"', p. 15

efforts at modernisation played an important part in facilitating China's recognition as a 'civilized' state and attaining full membership of the Society.

Shortcomings of previous works

While such accounts certainly do illuminate certain aspects of the expansion of European International Society, they are not without their problems. One is of an empirical nature: this Society is often conceptualised as one which recognises 'the existence of different political systems and cultures in the world, and attempts to facilitate their peaceful coexistence with one another by promoting toleration. It tries to achieve this goal through the normative principle of the reciprocal recognition of sovereignty'.¹¹ This approach seems to reflect closely Bull's assertion that members of International Society should consider themselves to be bound by a commitment to maintaining the 'structure of coexistence and co-operation.'¹² However, this account downplays the role imperialism – and violence – played in the expansion of European International Society, and thus does not always stand up to historical realities.¹³ If we take European imperialistic expansion into account, it is somewhat problematic to assume that the norms of 'toleration and coexistence' played a crucial role with European states' relations vis-à-vis the non-European states, particularly in the nineteenth century.

Second, because English School scholars have not adequately investigated the Society's relations between non-European 'outsiders' who were not subjected to the norms of coexistence, conventional studies undertaken by English School scholars result in implicitly assuming is that there exists an International Society with a *single* set of norms which applies equally to all its members, and that non-European states were socialised into this. This depiction of the expansion of European International Society assumes that the normative structure of European International Society, with its goals of promoting order and coexistence, was transmitted to the non-European states, and this is

¹¹ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 12. Furthermore, these cooperative norms are argued to stem from European civilisation.

¹² Hedley Bull, 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society' in Bull and Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*, p. 120

¹³ See Hidemi Suganami, 'British Institutionalists, or the English School, 20 Years on', *International Relations* (vol. 17, no. 3, 2003, pp. 253-271) and Paul Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The Moral Backwardness of International Society*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), for a sensitive treatment of this matter. Note, however, that Keal is primarily concerned with the plight of indigenous peoples who were deprived of their human rights in the course of the expansion of International Society, and is highly critical of the statist bias of the English School approach.

reinforced by 'their firm confidence in western civilization' which is seen as almost uniquely concerned with promoting international order.¹⁴

This is not to imply that English School scholars were unaware of the connection between power politics and European International Society. Seán Molloy, for instance, argues that Martin Wight was sensitive to the 'paradoxical situation of a Grotian international structure based upon the institution of diplomacy and alliances operating a realist logic based upon the principle of competition in international anarchy'. Hence Wight saw 'international anarchy and the struggle for power as the foundation of international society'.¹⁵ With regard to the expansion of European International Society, Hedley Bull was keenly aware of the connection between imperialism and the expansion of the Society, stating that the trading relations between the European and non-European states prior to the age of imperialism failed to facilitate the entry of the latter into the European society of states. It was only at the age of imperialism when the expansion of European International Society finally came about.¹⁶

However, these particular aspects of International Society discussed above curiously seem to drop out in the English School approach's portrayal of the expansion of European International Society and relations between Western states and China and Japan. Even when the existence of imperialism is acknowledged, how this may have affected the latter's socialisation remains underexplored, as our previous survey of studies of Japan's entry into the Society has demonstrated. The analyses thus often give a somewhat teleological impression. The 'achievements of the West' (including the institutions of International Society) and the English School's implicit confidence in them 'supply a universal yardstick by which to assess the degree of development of other societies' within English School accounts,¹⁷ and this results in depicting the expansion of the Society as a global spread of 'progressive' elements of International

¹⁴ See Suganami, 'British Institutionalists, or the English School, 20 Years on', p. 264. This point is most eloquently put forward by Martin Wight, who stated with regard to the 'Grotian' tradition which promotes order within the states system: '[t]he cultivation of this middle ground [between realism and idealism/revolutionism], and the discovery of political morality, seem peculiarly related to Western values'. See Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', p. 128

¹⁵ Seán Molloy, 'The Realist Logic of International Society', *Cooperation and Conflict* (vol. 38, no. 2, 2003, pp. 83-99), p. 91. I do not agree, however, with Molloy's assertion that the balance of power as conceptualised by Wight is necessarily a product of the logic of anarchy: in 'Western Values in International Relations', Martin Wight refers to the balance of power as something more '*conscious*' which serves 'to preserve the independence of the member-communities'. Here the balance of power is seen as rather as a *social* product which enjoys some legitimacy within international society as a guiding norm. It is not necessarily a fortuitous product of anarchy. Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', p. 96. Emphasis added.

¹⁶ See Bull, 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society', p. 118

¹⁷ Hidemi Suganami, 'British Institutionalists, or the English School, 20 Years on', *International Relations* (vol. 17, no. 3, 2003, pp. 253-271), p. 265

Society (particularly international law and European-style diplomacy) that promote order and coexistence.¹⁸

The consequences are an unresolved tension between the approach's sensitivity to historical realities and the assumed 'aspects of the universalization of the West's identity...[which exercises] a progressive influence over the broader history of mankind.'¹⁹ Hedley Bull's conceptualisation of the expansion of European International Society has been described succinctly by Jacinta O'Hagan: 'Universalist overtones surface in Bull's discussion of international society. While there is no strong thread of progressive history in Bull's work...he does imply that development and progress have been linked to the expansion of the European system.'²⁰

There appears to be two main reasons for this rather lopsided depiction of the expansion of European International Society. First, based on an empirical observation that the institutions of the Society had spread across the world, the British Committee concentrated on exploring 'whether a common culture was a necessary condition for the existence of a states system'.²¹ This may account for the fact that English School scholars devoted most of their intellectual efforts to explaining how the Society's institutions came to be accepted by 'alien' polities and led to the emergence of a

¹⁸ William A. Callahan provides a telling example with reference to China. Whereas foreign intervention (such as the imposition of unequal treaties, treaty ports and the sacking of the Yuanmingyuan Summer Palace in 1860 following the Qing's failure to adhere to the Treaty of Tianjin) in China is seen as national humiliation, this is treated by Adam Watson as 'the most impressive overseas achievement of the international Concert: a sustained and developing collective action on behalf of international society as a whole.' See William A. Callahan, 'Nationalizing International Theory: The Emergence of the English School and IR Theory with Chinese Characteristics' (Paper presented at International Studies Association annual conference, Portland Oregon, February 2003), pp. 11-12. Watson's quote cited here can be found in Watson, 'European International Society and its Expansion', p. 31

¹⁹ Jacinta O'Hagan, *Conceptualizing the West in International Relations: From Spengler to Said*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 126. Also see Suganami, 'British Institutionalists, or the English School, 20 Years on'

²⁰ O'Hagan, *Conceptualizing the West in International Relations*, p. 129. O'Hagan also contends that Wight did not share Bull's somewhat teleological vision, rather seeing international politics as repetitious. However, he did 'admit limited possibilities for change, as is demonstrated by his faith in the existence of international society as a set of institutions and norms which can help to modify international conflict.' See p. 129 There are similar tenets visible in Buzan and Little. While they do accept the existence of a core and periphery in international society, they seem to argue that International Society is moving towards increased 'progressive' homogeneity, claiming that 'the core of international society creates pressures (coercive and persuasive) on the periphery to follow the core's path towards a deeper and wider understanding of what "like unit" means.' (Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 338) For evidence of this, they cite the increasing acceptance of 'Westernistic' ideas such as 'the...universal norm of human equality'. (p. 340)

²¹ Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, pp. 124-125. For this point, I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer for the *European Journal of International Relations*.

'global' International Society, despite a lack of cultural unity.²² To this end, Edward Keene suggests, they incorporated the 'standard of civilization' as a factor which facilitated the sharing of the fundamental norms of International Society, rather than shared culture.²³ Furthermore, the 'standard' could, Gerrit W. Gong states, 'define the legal requirements necessary for a non-European country...to gain full and "civilized" status in "civilized" international society',²⁴ and was a useful empirical benchmark for the English School scholars to ascertain when non-European entities joined the Society. For them, the central question was on the acceptance of the Society, and questions of how imperialist expansion may have affected non-European states' interpretations of the Society, or whether or not the norms of 'coexistence' were actually transmitted to non-European states, were secondary. Their inherent belief in the progressive nature of the Society led them to implicitly assume that the Society and its institutions would ultimately gain acceptance.

Second, the English School scholars were committed to a particular notion of International Society forwarded by A. H. L. Heeren, which downplays imperialism and paints an excessively benign picture of the Society. Heeren noted in his *Manual of the History of the Political System of Europe and its Colonies* that the European international system was characterised by

...its internal freedom, or, in other words, the mutual independence of its members, however disproportionate they may otherwise be in regard to physical power. It is this feature which distinguishes such a system from one of an opposite class, that is, where an unacknowledged preponderance of one of the members exists.²⁵

The English School scholars appear to have decided that this depiction of International Society most matched their theoretical conceptualisation. In the words of Adam Watson, 'the European system since Westphalia – that is, during most of its existence – has theoretically been a society of independent states which all recognize each other as such. The [British] committee accepted the theory.'²⁶

²² This by no means implies that there were no disagreements among members of the British Committee over whether or not a common culture was necessary for an 'International Society'. See *ibid.*, pp. 124-129

²³ See Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, pp. 23-24. A. H. L. Heeren, who provided the starting point for English School scholars' conceptualisation of International Society, had stated that the European state system shared similar 'manners, religion and degree of social improvement' and was 'cemented together by a reciprocity of interests.' See Adam Watson, 'Hedley Bull, state systems and international societies', *Review of International Studies* (vol. 13, no. 2, 1987, pp. 147-153), p. 150.

²⁴ Gong, 'China's Entry into International Society', p. 179

²⁵ A. H. L. Heeren, *A Manual of the History of the Political System of Europe and its Colonies*. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), pp. vii-viii. C.f. Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 21

²⁶ Adam Watson, 'Systems of states', *Review of International Studies* (vol. 16, no. 2, 1990, pp. 99-109), p. 103. Also see Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 22

In addition, another reason for the English School's adoption of Heeren's concept of the society of states appears to be its scholars' normative commitment to demonstrate that a degree of order (and morality), rather than rampant power politics, was possible in an anarchic world. The English School scholars were of course fully aware that the existence of International Society itself would not necessarily result in the mitigation of the insecurities of anarchy and order. They knew that any order brought about by the Society was a precarious one, and could be subjected to challenges. However, it was this very acknowledgement which seems to strengthen their commitment to forwarding the Society as a progressive concept that should – provided the states system existed – be something worth defending and promoting. Martin Wight, for instance, 'was the first theorist to reject the bifurcation of international thought into realism and idealism, as he believed it to be "the reflection of a diseased situation."²⁷ Consequently, as Chris Brown has noted:

[English School] theory characteristically uses the same terminology or rules and norms to describe both the ways in which states *actually* behave (a matter for empirical observation) and the way in which they *ought* to behave (the product of a moral discourse)...norms are assumed to be both the product of the interaction of states and regulative of those interactions.²⁸

As a result, some historical works by English School scholars analysing the evolution of European International Society have been coloured by this agenda, leading to problematic, uncritical depictions of history designed to demonstrate that a *via media* between realism and 'revolutionism' could exist. In particular, Keene argues, their embracing of Heeren's version of international society committed the English School

...to a particular theory of modern history that had been developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by scholars who were 'apologists or protagonists' for the European states-system at a time when it was facing a mortal threat from the French Revolution. The idea of a states-system was originally developed as part of the attempt to justify certain normative principles as the authentic basis for order in modern world politics²⁹

This particular version of history was noteworthy for its heralding of the cooperative nature of International Society which promoted coexistence. Its aim was 'to stigmatize

²⁷ Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, p. 54. Dunne argues that Bull also noted the fact that states *did* conform to international law and asserted (implicitly) 'that states should act...in a way which strengthens the normative principles of international society. It is at this point that Bull clearly departs from the core principles of political realism. In short, by strengthening the institutions of international society, the logic of anarchy can be mitigated.' Dunne, *Inventing International society*, pp. 143-144

²⁸ Chris Brown, 'World Society and the English School: An "International Society" Perspective on World Society', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 7, no. 4, 2001, pp. 423-441), p. 438

²⁹ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, pp. 15-16

the French Revolution, and especially the Napoleonic imperial system as unlawful in terms of the “traditional” principles of European public law and order.’³⁰

While the English School scholars themselves certainly did not accept this conceptualisation uncritically, Keene argues that Heeren’s account of International Society contains two serious weaknesses which may have been missed by English School scholars: first, because of its opposition to the French Revolution, republicanism features very little. Second – and more importantly for our discussion here – there is a ‘lack of a proper account of the development of international political and legal order beyond Europe’ which frequently came about in the wake of violence – imperialism.³¹ The reason for this omission should be understood in its historical context. As Heeren ‘was trying to stigmatize the Napoleonic imperial system within Europe,’ argues Keene, ‘it would hardly have suited that purpose to call attention to the increasingly consolidated British imperial system in the world beyond Europe.’

The Janus-faced International Society

Despite these shortcomings, conventional English School scholarship has continued to depict the expansion of European International Society as one in which the non-European states were incorporated into a Society where the power politics associated with imperialism are relegated to the background. Instead, there is heavy emphasis on the acceptance of its ‘progressive’ institutions. However, the historical record of European imperialism which accompanied the expansion of European International Society suggests that the norms of ‘coexistence’ did not apply to non-European polities. It seems more plausible to suggest that a different mode of interaction applied to non-Europeans at this time.

This possibility has been explored to a certain degree by scholars associated with the English School, who forwarded compelling evidence that point to a more heterogeneous International Society. Wight stated that there ‘is an outer circle that embraces all mankind, under natural law, and an inner circle, the *corpus Christianorum* bound by the laws of Christ. The inner circle is unique.’³² A more contemporary example of this can be found in the increasing integration taking place among the ‘industrialised states’. Observing this development, Barry Buzan and Richard Little argue that there exists a ‘more intense’ social structure between the ‘Western states’,

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.16

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 25

³² Wight, *Systems of States*, p. 128

which effectively constitutes a 'core' and 'periphery' within international society.³³ A similar point is made by Ole Wæver in his study of the European 'security community'. Wæver argues: 'Since the end of the Cold War, the international society is marked by a relatively high degree of homogeneity organized as concentric circles around a dominant "westernistic" centre....The trend is towards redefining sovereignty in operational terms as a relationship collectively between insiders (the international society) and outsiders – not primarily an attribute of individual countries within international society.'³⁴

The possibility of a much more diverse Society also leads to the empirical question of whether or not there exists different modes of interaction within it. With regard to the age of imperialist expansion, Wight, in his *International Theory*, offers one of the most perceptive insights into relations between Europeans and non-Europeans within the society of states, and implicitly suggests the existence of a different way in which the European states dealt with their relations with 'uncivilised' or 'barbarous' polities.³⁵ 'The question of relations with barbarians', Wight states, 'was a political problem forming a bridge between international relations and colonial administrations. Non-self-governing peoples, colonial populations, were barbarians who had been absorbed into international society but not yet been digested'.³⁶ Wight argued that towards these peoples and their political communities, the 'Rationalist' (or Grotian) theory stipulated three principles. First, 'barbarians' were granted rights as accorded by natural law. Second, treaties with them were to be honoured. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, it was claimed 'that international society ha[d] a "dual mandate".... Colonial powers [were] seen as trustees both for the advancement of the subject races,

³³ Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*, p. 338.

³⁴ Ole Wæver, 'European Security Identities', *Journal of Common Market Studies* (vol. 34, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 103-132), p. 118. A similar notion of the existence of a 'dual' international society could also be discerned from recent assertions of the existence of a 'democratic peace', in which it is argued that the increase in shared values among liberal democratic states has rendered them more inclined to believe that other liberal democratic states are less likely to resort to force. This, coupled with institutional checks and balances of liberal democracies which makes it harder for leaders to resort to war, tends to make relations between liberal democracies more likely to be solved using non-violent means. See John M. Owen, 'How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace' in Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds), *Debating the Democratic Peace*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996), and Bruce Russett's hypotheses on the democratic peace argument in 'Why Democratic Peace?' in Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds), *Debating the Democratic Peace*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996), pp. 96-97. See also Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*, p. 338.

³⁵ For a discussion of Martin Wight, colonialism and his 'Theory of Mankind', see Timothy Dunne, 'Colonial Encounters in International Relations: Reading Wight, Writing Australia' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (vol. 51, no. 3, 1997, pp. 309-323)

³⁶ Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1992), p. 50

and for the development of their material resources for the benefit of mankind.’³⁷ Furthermore, barbarians were not accorded ‘full rights, not equal rights, but appropriate rights.’³⁸

Gerrit W. Gong’s work, *The Standard of ‘Civilization’ in International Society*, also points to a duality within the Society. In his case study of Japan, he argues that the Western powers’ reluctance to accept Japan as an equal partner in European International Society ultimately led the Japanese to rebel against this international order. In particular, Gong mentions the Western powers’ reluctance to abrogate the unequal treaties with Japan and the ‘Triple Intervention’ of 1895, where Russia, France and Germany coerced Japan to return the Liaodong peninsula (which the latter had acquired following the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895) to China, only to then demand territorial concessions from the Chinese themselves. The latter episode aroused particular bitterness among the Japanese, who, ‘[a]fter conforming wholeheartedly to the spirit and letter of international law and diplomacy...conclude[d] that, in the end, only force mattered in international relations’.³⁹ He also claims: ‘If anything, Japan took the standard [of civilization] too seriously and naively, on face value, not understanding that even “civilized” international society was characterised by anarchy (the absence of a monopoly of legitimate violence) and hierarchy (because without civil society, rights depend largely on might)’.⁴⁰ The implication here is that Japan initially envisaged a Society characterised by sovereign equality, but later found out that in fact there existed a Society characterised by a very different, hierarchical ordering principle of states. Setting aside Gong’s problematic exaggeration of Japanese naiveté (the Japanese were in fact quite aware of dualities in the Society, as we shall see in the chapters that follow), this further suggests that there may have existed a different mode of interaction towards ‘uncivilized’ states. However, apart from his passing acknowledgement of hypocrisy and highly differential treatment of non-European states by the Western powers, Gong does not offer us many clues.

This mode of interaction which governed relations between European powers and ‘barbarous’ non-European polities has recently been elaborated further by Edward Keene. He argues that European International Society operated under very different principles from the one which governed the relations among ‘civilised’ states. One of the most important constitutive norms of sovereign integrity did not apply to the non-

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 78

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 79

³⁹ Gong, *The Standard of ‘Civilisation’ in International Society*, p. 196

European 'barbarians'. Rather than tolerating political difference (which was frequently interpreted as 'backward' or 'uncivilised'), the intellectual climate of the late-nineteenth century advocated that European International Society and its members had the duty to promote good governance until they were deemed ready to 'join international society'.⁴¹ However, because of the English School's alignment to one particular conceptualisation of International Society, theoretical explorations of norms governing European states' relations with non-European states (particularly in the age of imperialism) still remain scarce.⁴²

The ideology of the Janus-Faced European International Society

The works discussed above imply that there existed two separate modes of interaction within European International Society in the late-nineteenth century. The fact that the expansion of the Society all too often took place under coercive imperialism could mean that its cooperative institutions and norms may not have played the prominent role they are purported to. Furthermore, the sense of racial superiority which heavily coloured European interactions with non-Europeans also seems to indicate the existence of a *hierarchical* International Society where dominance, rather than coexistence and cooperation, was the norm.

What, then, was this mode of interaction? At this point it is worth spending some time in exploring the social structures of European International Society which applied to non-European states in the nineteenth century. As mentioned above, the expansion of European International Society was strongly connected to the imperialist expansion of the West. The explanations for this are manifold. One of the standard, and indeed most influential explanations for the emergence of imperialism points to the importance of economic factors.⁴³ Here, it is argued that imperialism originated from European states'

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 165

⁴¹ Wight, *International Theory*, p. 79. Wight labels such principles 'paternalism'. At the same time, he notes that the Rationalist principles towards the 'barbarians' argued that 'barbarous' entities are destined to eventually disappear as they were gradually accorded recognition as full members of international society in their own right. '[I]t was already acknowledged in theory', Wight states, 'that the function of the Rationalist tutelage of barbarians was to work for its own extinction, to make itself unnecessary; this was the liberal side of the Rationalist theory.' See *International Theory*, p. 81.

⁴² Exceptions to this include Dunne, 'Colonial Encounters in International Relations' and Paul Keal, 'Just Backward Children': International Law and the Conquest of Non-European Peoples' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (vol. 49, no. 2, November 1995, pp. 191- 206) and *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The Moral Backwardness of International Society*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

⁴³ Important works include John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968) and Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Teikokushugi* (Udaka Motosuke, trans). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998). A useful review and critique of Marxist explanations of imperialism can be found in Tom Kemp, 'The Marxist theory of imperialism' and Michael Barratt Brown, 'A Critique of Marxist

desire to maximise 'the power and profits of the mother country by monopolizing trade.'⁴⁴ John A. Hobson argues that the rapid growth of manufacturing and the consequent emergence of surplus produce furthered imperialism through the search for 'outlets for the investment of...surplus capital.'⁴⁵ The result was an aggressive series of imperialist drives aimed at securing raw materials and markets for surplus produce from overseas. This search for overseas markets took an increasingly competitive edge in the nineteenth century. Again, Hobson explains how this process took place in Britain as follows:

So long as England held a virtual monopoly of the world markets for important classes of manufactured goods, Imperialism was unnecessary. After 1870 this manufacturing and trading supremacy was greatly impaired: other nations, especially Germany, the United States, and Belgium, advanced with great rapidity...The encroachments made by these nations upon our old markets, even in our own possessions, made it most urgent that we should take energetic means to secure new markets.⁴⁶

However, it would be wrong to assume that European expansion in the nineteenth century was driven by economic considerations alone. Although this is not to deny the importance of material explanations, we must be equally aware of the fact that European imperialism was accompanied and supported by an imperialist discourse which wielded considerable influence. While it is true that 'economic, political and military interest groups undoubtedly benefited from imperialism, it would be wrong to assume that the discourse was created simply for them or at their behest...[and] reduce imperialism to any one particular interest group',⁴⁷ and it is necessary 'to take seriously the normative and legal environment within which imperial forms of governance were constructed and maintained'.⁴⁸

theories of imperialism', both in in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*. (London: Longman, 1972)

⁴⁴ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 78

⁴⁵ John A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, p. 71.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 72

⁴⁷ John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 223

⁴⁸ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 77. Furthermore, it should be noted that despite the fact that economic arguments have elucidated an important element of imperialism, there are several important empirical shortcomings in their explanatory power. As Jan P. Nederveen Pieterse points out, the biggest problem is that because of its emphasis on economic factors, it excludes any forms of imperialism which do not fit into this category. Consequently, it cannot explain imperialism which predates the development of capitalism: by implication, neither can it explain 'the continuities of the expansion of European social formations *within* Europe which preceded and formed the basis for expansion outside of Europe.' Similarly, it has trouble accounting for imperialistic behaviour which took place when there was a disjuncture between economic and political interests, which was fairly ubiquitous. See Jan P. Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation: Power and Liberation on a World Scale*. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), p. 7

Within the context of the nineteenth century, in addition to the explosive growth in the economic power of Europe, it is important to note the growing confidence in European civilisation. The term 'civilisation', which originated in France, had initially connoted sound governance. However, it gradually 'denoted more than just a specific form of government; it referred to a process that moved people from customs (*moeurs*), institutions, and a material existence that was identified as primitive, to one that was more sophisticated or "civilized."⁴⁹ In his discussion of Norbert Elias, John Keane states that this process of 'civilisation' was also inextricably linked to the process of state-building where 'uncivilised' violence was taken out of individuals into the hands of the modern nation-state. While this may have had the effect of reducing arbitrary violence among the people, it also meant a potentially dangerous concentration of violence in the hands of the state, which consequently became capable of inflicting this on an unprecedented scale. In the not too distant past, the mass murder of the Jews by the German state served to vividly remind humanity of this less palatable aspect of so-called 'civilisation'.⁵⁰

By the time of the nineteenth century, remarkable technological advances had increased the confidence in the progressive nature of European civilisation, to the extent that progress was seen very much as an inevitable process. The influence of this thinking can be discerned from the writings of political theorists such as Marx and Hegel, who both forwarded teleological theories of dialectical progress. As Arthur Herman argues:

...the nineteenth-century version of progress made explicit an issue that had been only implicit in the Enlightenment. This was that the lone individual did not have much choice in these matters. The social and economic processes that make up civil society are large, complex, and inexorable. Those processes are themselves governed by hidden but inevitable laws, including that of Progress itself. The civilized individual is their product, rather than the other way around....Human beings have become cogs in the wheels of history as they inevitably grind forward.⁵¹

Furthermore, this comfortable assurance with European progress manifested itself in a propensity to adopt dismissive attitudes towards non-European societies and their

⁴⁹ Arthur Herman, *The Idea of Decline in Western History*. (New York: The Free Press, 1997), pp. 21-22.

⁵⁰ See John Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), particularly pp. 116-130.

⁵¹ See Arthur Herman, *The Idea of Decline in Western History*. (New York: The Free Press, 1997), p. 31. Such notions, of course, did not match reality. John Keane reminds us of this when he states that even advanced civil societies can display 'patterns of incivility or behaviour prone to violence than can and do threaten to accumulate synergetically to the point where the occasional violence of some

peoples. Although these sentiments originated from political, religious and cultural differences, as the nineteenth century progressed, Michael Adas notes, 'technological and scientific standards' were increasingly forwarded 'as the most reliable basis for comparisons between societies and civilizations.'⁵² Material comparisons also seemed to provide a more objective standard of comparing European and non-European societies.

This belief in the inevitable progress of humankind led by the White/European race had important ramifications for international politics. First, it generated an increasing sentiment of superiority among Europeans and the dehumanisation of non-Europeans. The Europeans, Adas states, lumped 'Africans and Melanesians together indiscriminately as savages or primitives. The term "barbarian" was reserved for peoples who, like the Chinese and Indians, had advanced somewhat and then stagnated and declined.'⁵³ An anonymous reviewer of a Missionary's account of his travels in China noted the stagnation of China by describing them as 'childish', thus participating in the creation of what John M. Hobson calls the 'Peter Pan theory' of the East, which 'conjured up a romantic image of the Other as more helpless than cruel, as well as being alluring, promiscuous and exotic. In effect it imagined the East as an innocent child who would never grow up of his/her own accord.'⁵⁴ Such writings reflect typical attitudes held by Europeans in the context of the late-nineteenth century, and a passage from the *Edinburgh Review* published in 1855 is worth citing in length:

If we look at savage nations, we still see amidst them the rude germs of what, by instruction from *without*, may be readily developed into the ordinary and normal forms of civilisation. Among the Chinese, we see not only much that is *defective*, but more that is *abnormal*; and to complete the contrast, we find, in many respects, the *extremes* of civilisation and barbarism side by side; – the most refined culture and the most artificial civilisation in combination with astounding ignorance, prejudice, and childishness....Another not less striking peculiarity of this singular nation, and another proof of extreme dissimilarity to the rest of the world, is the contrast it presents with other nations in point of progress...[h]aving carried several species of arts and manufactures to a great pitch of refinement...not only do these remain much as they have been for ages, but they have led on to no proportionate *general* progress in the arts of social life.⁵⁵

against some within a civil society degenerates into the constant violence of all against all.' See Keane, *Civil Society*, p. 136

⁵² Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 144

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 195. See also John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, pp. 228-231

⁵⁴ John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, p. 228

⁵⁵ Anonymous, 'The Chinese Empire: forming a Sequel to the Work entitled "Recollections of a Journey through Tartary and Thibet" By M. Huc, formerly Missionary Apostolic in China. In 2 vols. London: 1855', *Edinburgh Review* (vol. 101, April 1855), pp. 422-424

Second, there also emerged an increasing belief that Europe had a manifest destiny 'to civilize the peoples under their imperial rule, encouraging economic and technological progress and giving them the best possible government, at the expense of the authority of indigenous rulers if necessary',⁵⁶ giving imperialist expansion an additional impetus. Theories of 'oriental despotism' readily supplied justifications for extending the trappings of European civilisation and governance. It was claimed 'that Europe was the birthplace of democracy and hence the carrier of economic and political progress, while Asia was dismissed as the home of despotism and hence the victim of stagnation.'⁵⁷ The 'civilised' European powers had the duty to ensure the 'uncivilised' polities conformed to the 'standard of civilisation' and followed the path to progress. In this sense, 'the standard became a stimulus for reform and a guideline for the changes, adjustments, and adaptations needed to fulfil its requirements.'⁵⁸ There are of course dangers in overemphasising this aspect of imperialism, as the 'civilising mission' was cited as a justification for what could be interpreted as sheer territorial aggrandizement. However, as Adas persuasively argues:

Undoubtedly, claims that colonial conquests had been undertaken in order to uplift African or Asian peoples could be little more than cynical camouflage for brutal exploitation, as the Belgian King Leopold II and his rapacious agents demonstrated in Congo in the late nineteenth century. But many of those who justified imperial expansion or colonial policies in the name of higher purposes linked to the civilizing mission were firmly convinced that they were acting in the long-term interests of the peoples brought under European rule.⁵⁹

Furthermore, it should also be noted that this 'standard of civilisation' was also applied to European states. The increasing differentiation between 'civilised' European and 'uncivilised' non-European polities served to enhance the identity of the former, thus facilitating their differentiation through an elaborate development of rules and institutions which governed relations between European states.⁶⁰ The 'standard of civilisation' thus evolved into 'represent[ing] a code of expected "civilized" behaviour which Europe imposed upon itself', rather than simply some kind of fig-leaf for its territorial aggression.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 83. See also Watson, 'European International Society and its Expansion', p. 27

⁵⁷ John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, p. 224

⁵⁸ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, p. 8

⁵⁹ Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, p. 200.

⁶⁰ For this use of the 'other', see Iver B. Neumann and Jennifer M. Welsh, 'The Other in European self-definition: an addendum to the literature on international society', *Review of International Studies* (vol. 17, no. 4, 1991, pp. 327-348).

⁶¹ Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 6

The 'civilising' mode of interaction in European International Society

This European belief in a manifest destiny to introduce the trappings of 'civilisation' translated into the emergence of two separate modes of interaction within European International Society. On the one hand, there existed the international order based on the Westphalian system within Europe. The purpose of this order was to promote the coexistence of sovereign states. Accordingly, Edward Keene argues, its norms stipulated

...that each state should recognize the territorial sovereignty of the others, and therefore that states should respect each other's equality and independence. The logic of this norm implied that the institutions that maintained order in the society of states had to be extremely decentralized and voluntaristic, both of which criteria were fulfilled by the balance of power, diplomacy and positive international law.⁶²

Relations between European states and non-European states, however, were based on fundamentally different constitutional structures. According to Christian Reus-Smit's conceptualisation, constitutional structures of an International Society are made up of three normative beliefs, namely the 'moral purpose of the state', the 'organizing principle of sovereignty', and the 'norm of procedural justice.' These norms are important in that they decide 'what constitutes a legitimate actor, entitled to all the rights and privileges of statehood; and they define the basic parameters of rightful state action', thus playing a crucial part in the shaping of the fundamental institutions of societies of states.⁶³ Reus-Smit argues that of these three normative elements, the 'moral purpose of the state' – the reasons for forming some form of political association (here, the state) to serve a common good – plays a crucial role in 'providing the justificatory foundations for the principle of sovereignty and the prevailing norm of pure procedural justice'.⁶⁴ In the case of the modern society of states we see today, the legitimate state was expected to provide 'the institutional climate necessary for human flowering', based on popular consent.⁶⁵ This spawned the belief that a state's sovereignty with regard to its internal affairs was, provided it enjoyed popular legitimacy, to be respected. The organizing principle of liberal sovereignty was thus born. Accordingly, institutions such as international law and multilateralism were devised to further the implementation of these principles, giving rise to the norm of procedural justice based on legislation.

⁶² Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 98

⁶³ Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 30

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 31

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 128

The mode of interaction which the Europeans applied in their relations between non-European polities in the nineteenth century was, however, based on the belief that the moral purpose of the state (which, in reality, meant the ‘civilized’ European powers) and, by extension, that of European International Society, was to disseminate civilisation to all corners of the world. Even commentators who were critical of imperialism did, to a certain extent, accept this argument. John A. Hobson stated:

...all interference on the part of civilized white nations with ‘lower races’ is not prima facie illegitimate...such interference cannot safely be left to private enterprise of individual whites. If these principles be admitted, it follows that civilized Governments *may* undertake the political and economic control of lower races – in a word, that the characteristic form of modern imperialism is not under all conditions illegitimate.⁶⁶

While this Society and its constitutive structures shared the same systemic norm of procedural justice (based on international law and the ‘standard of civilisation’), it was fundamentally different in that it was ‘more centralized and more hierarchical than the Westphalian system’.⁶⁷ The organizing principle of sovereignty was not that of liberal sovereignty. Instead, the organising principle of sovereignty was of a hierarchical nature where states were differentiated on the basis of the degree to which they were deemed ‘civilised.’ Liberal sovereignty was deemed to be applicable to ‘civilised’ states only. John Stuart Mill, for instance, wrote that ‘ “[t]he sacred duties which civilized nations owe to the independence and nationality of each other are not binding towards those to whom nationality and independence are either a certain evil or at best a questionable good.”’⁶⁸ Towards those polities deemed ‘uncivilised’, the ‘civilised’ states had the duty to promote the trappings of ‘civilisation’. In this sense, the European society of states as applied to non-European states was ‘a non-social community’. The non-European states were deemed as lacking the political capacity to enter reciprocal relations with the ‘civilised’ society of states by free will. Instead, a ‘trustee [had to] act on behalf of a ward because he [could not] act for himself.

⁶⁶ John A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, p. 232. Note, however, that Hobson laid down strict conditions that imperialism had to fulfil specific conditions to be deemed legitimate: first, imperialism had to be directed primarily to advance civilisation, rather than serving the interests of the imperialist power; second, the subjugated peoples had to experience ‘improvement and elevation of [their] character’; lastly, the above two conditions had to be deemed to have been fulfilled by the civilised international community. (Hobson, *Imperialism*, p. 232) Hobson himself was extremely critical of imperialism by the European powers, as he considered them to have not fulfilled these conditions. Furthermore, he showed considerable sensitivity to the colonised peoples, claiming that the imperial powers paid scant attention to their local traditions. However, as Paul Keal argues, his awareness of what may be termed today as ‘cultural imperialism’ had yet to be shared by his contemporaries. See Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, p. 40

⁶⁷ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 98

⁶⁸ Cited in Eileen P. Sullivan, ‘Liberalism and Imperialism: J. S. Mill’s Defense of the British Empire’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* (vol. 44, no. 4, October-December 1983, pp. 599-617), p. 610

Immaturity may hinder full use of reason, ...or passion may obliterate the discipline, moderation, and foresight required of orderly public intercourse.⁶⁹

Whether or not this 'guidance' was required was often decided on the basis of the degree of 'progress' a certain polity had achieved. This was classified in three stages, as the publicist James Lorimer stated:

As a political phenomenon, humanity, in its present condition, divides itself into three concentric zones or spheres – that of civilised humanity, that of barbarous humanity, and that of savage humanity. To these, whether arising from peculiarities of race or from various stages of development in the same race, belong, *of right*, at the hands of civilised nations, three stages of recognition – plenary political recognition, partial political recognition, and natural or mere human recognition.⁷⁰

This concept of political recognition has been termed 'positive sovereignty' by Robert Jackson, and assumes that a 'positively sovereign government is one which not only enjoys rights of non-intervention and other international immunities but also possesses the wherewithal to provide political goods for its citizens...Since states are never at rest owing to cultural transformation, scientific and technological innovation, and ultimately the passage of time positive sovereignty is a relative and changing rather than an absolute condition'.⁷¹ This implied that those *unable* to fulfil the conditions of legitimate statehood (based on the European models) were judged as not have achieved sufficient political and economic development, and needed to be guided to 'civilisation', primarily by the great powers of Europe who had the material preponderance to do so. The paternalistic and hierarchical nature of the Society was also aptly captured by J. Scott Keltie, who claimed in 1893:

Let those European Powers then, which have thrust themselves upon the native, look upon it as both their interest and their duty to train him to habits of industry, so that his continent may be prepared in time to take its place alongside of the other continents in the general economy of the world....Without pretending to treat the African as the equal of the white man in any way, let us, for our own sakes and his,

⁶⁹ William Bain, 'The Political Theory of Trusteeship and the Twilight of International Equality', *International Relations* (vol. 17, no. 1, 2003, pp. 59-77), p. 70. Bain's use of 'non-social social community' is based on R. G. Collingwood's conceptualisation. 'Non-social community' is contrasted with an International Society that is comprised of members who joined by an act of free will. Because this society 'is created and sustained by an act of free will, its members must be universally equal in respect of authority to declare intent to form a partnership and to grant recognition of the sanctity of that partnership.' See Bain, 'The Political Theory of Trusteeship and the Twilight of International Equality', p. 70.

⁷⁰ James Lorimer, *The Institutes of the Law of Nations: A Treatise of the Jural Relations of Separate Political Communities* (vol. 1). (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1883), p. 101: Under this classification, European states and states led by people of European descent (such as the United States) qualified as 'civilised' states. 'Partial recognition' extended to Persia, China, Siam, and Japan, while the remainder were lumped under the category of 'savage humanity'.

⁷¹ Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 29

deal with him humanely; let us give him fair play; let us not sink ourselves to his level of brutality.⁷²

Historical realities are of course often more complex, and late-nineteenth century European International Society was no exception. Despite the fact that the mode of interaction that governed the 'civilised' European states aimed for some form of coexistence, by the time of the late nineteenth century when China and Japan's socialisation into European International Society was taking place, the system of maintaining the balance of power through a great power Concert had been seriously eroded. France, once considered a threat to stability within Europe (particularly by monarchist states), no longer sought to 'export' revolutions, depriving Austria, Russia and, to a lesser extent, Britain of a common cause for unity in maintaining a balance of power. Furthermore, the ascendancy of Prussia (later Germany) served to further the decline of the concert. Prussian unification of Germany not only alienated France, but also caused a rift between Austria and Russia, the two former allies in the Concert.⁷³ By the 1870s, argues Henry Kissinger, '[w]hen the Great Powers viewed each other, they no longer saw partners in a common cause but dangerous, even mortal, rivals. Confrontation emerged as the standard diplomatic method.'⁷⁴ Although the European powers were certainly able to keep their rivalries in check through the institutions of European International Society, tensions often emerged in the form of imperial rivalries, and mutual suspicions were never far from the surface.⁷⁵

However, the general point still holds. While 'coexistence' was not absolute, the European states did treat non-European polities and peoples in a fundamentally different manner. Their 'civilised' identity relied upon the existence and differentiation of 'barbarous' others,⁷⁶ and the patently racist intellectual climate under which European imperialism often operated meant that many non-European peoples and polities were 'imagined as savages at best and animals at worst and were, therefore, not entitled to claim a sovereign space',⁷⁷ while those deemed as 'semi-civilised' 'were conceived of as

⁷² J. Scott Keltie, *The Partition of Africa*. (London: Edward Stanford, 1893), pp. 456-457

⁷³ For excellent, accessible accounts for this period, see Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994) and John Lowe, *The Great Powers, Imperialism and the German Problem, 1865-1925*. (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁷⁴ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 145

⁷⁵ This competitive international environment has been captured by Stephen Van Evera's article which argues that European strategic culture was permeated by the 'Cult of the Offensive' which places strong emphasis on the efficacy of offensive strategies. Such beliefs were strengthened by the pervasive influence of social Darwinism. See 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', *International Security* (vol. 9, no. 1, Summer 1984, pp. 58-107)

⁷⁶ See Neumann and Welsh, 'The Other in European self-definition'.

⁷⁷ John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, p. 238

the “fallen peoples” and their lands were imagined as “borderless spaces”. Thus, given their so-called moral degeneration, it was only appropriate that the Europeans go in and regenerate them along civilised Western lines.⁷⁸ Mistrust among the European states did not stop them from adopting separate forms of interaction vis-à-vis the ‘uncivilised’ non-European entities. While the concept of sovereignty did, to a certain extent, restrain European states from outright territorial conquest within Europe, non-European polities were seldom accorded this restraint. The institutions for coexistence, no matter how precarious, existed among the European states; for the ‘uncivilised’, it did not. As the discussions below will show, the ‘civilised’ members of European International Society were accorded the prerogative of introducing the trappings of ‘progress’ into ‘barbarous’ lands, and this was certainly not seen as something the latter should be protected from. If restraint was shown by the European powers in the course of their imperialist expansion, this was usually related to material constraints or the result of a necessity to manage imperial rivalries with their ‘civilised’ peers.

Table 2-1: Constitutional Structures and the Fundamental Institutions of the Dual International Societies in the Nineteenth Century

<i>Societies of States</i>	<i>International Society for European States</i>	<i>International Society for European States and Non-European States</i>
Constitutional Structures		
1. Moral Purpose of State	Augmentation of Individuals’ Purposes and Potentialities	Promotion of ‘Civilization’, i.e. Good Government and Economic Progress
2. Organizing Principle of Sovereignty	Sovereign Equality, Liberal Sovereignty	Hierarchy (based on degree of ‘civilisation’), Divisible Sovereignty
3. Systemic Norm of Procedural Justice	Legislative Justice (based on positive law)	Legislative Justice (based on natural law)
Fundamental Institutions		
	a. Contractual International law	a. Paramountcy (British Empire)
	b. Multilateralism	b. Federal Union (United States)

(Sources: Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p. 7, Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 98)

The institutions of European International Society as applied to non-European states

If we are to accept the existence of a dualistic mode of interaction in nineteenth century European International Society, the task then becomes one of examining how the ‘civilising’ side shaped the Society’s institutions in its relations between European and non-European relations.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 238-239

⁷⁹ The discussion which follows departs somewhat from the argument forwarded by Reus-Smit in that it not only includes the institutions of diplomacy and international law, but also the balance of power, war and the role of the great powers. Although Reus-Smit’s primarily constructivist account is informed by the English School, his interest lies primarily in cooperative systemic institutions and the latter three institutions lie beyond the scope of his study.

The roles that war, the great powers, and the balance of power played are perhaps relatively straightforward to explain. War was primarily aimed at pacifying rebellions directed by the non-European polities towards the European powers. Any insurgencies against the European powers often came as a genuine 'shock to those who had hoped that Western civilization would be adopted by indigenous populations almost automatically', who often called for strong measures to quell such behaviour.⁸⁰ Moreover, such warfare frequently went unregulated by international law, and resulted in heavy losses of lives, usually on the side of the native peoples.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the primary role of the great powers in their relations with non-European 'uncivilised' polities was to lead the way in introducing the trappings of civilisation. While the balance of power functioned primarily to protect the interests of the 'civilised' members of European International Society, Non-European states were hardly accorded the protection from other states through a power balance. Rather, it functioned as an extension of European politics: the European powers made use of this institution to prevent their imperial rivalries from escalating into open conflict.⁸² As conflicts over the control of non-European states and 'scrambles' for territorial and economic concessions became more acute, European states' interests were carefully balanced through the establishment of 'spheres of influence', thus, in Martti Koskenniemi's words with reference to Africa, directing 'the scramble...into pacific channels.'⁸³

International law and diplomacy also played a crucial role in providing the justification for imperialism, rather than protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the non-European peoples and their political entities. Diplomacy served

⁸⁰ Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870-1960*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 147. We must be careful not to take this assertion too far, however. European public opinion certainly did not assume that all imperialism was some form of benign paternalism, a fact highlighted by the large-scale revulsion at the highly exploitative colonial system adopted by the Belgians in the Congo.

⁸¹ Indeed, it was even argued that towards 'savage tribes' who did not understand international law that governed the conduct of war, the commander of the 'civilised' state could take any action as he saw fit. Elbridge Colby, captain of the United States army, argued 'that devastation and annihilation is the principal method of warfare that savage tribes know. Excessive humanitarian ideas should not prevent harshness against those who use harsh methods, for in being overkind to one's enemies, a commander is simply being unkind to his own people.' See Elbridge Colby, 'How to Fight Savage Tribes', *The American Journal of International Law* (vol. 21, no. 2, April 1927, pp. 279-288), p. 285. See also Dan Stone, 'White men with low moral standards? German anthropology and the Herero genocide', *Patterns of Prejudice* (vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, pp. 33-46). But note that despite the fact that colonial paternalism often did entail imperialistic expansion and the disregard for non-European states/political entities' sovereignty or right to self-determination, many colonial officials themselves were often sympathetic to the indigenous populace.

⁸² It is interesting to note that as early as 1877, publicists had stated that spats among European states over African territory 'would give "a sad image of our antagonisms to the Negroes whom we seek to civilize."' Cited in Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, p. 148

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 123. J. D. Hargreaves, 'Towards a History of the Partition of Africa', *Journal of African History*, (vol. 1, no. 1, 1960, pp. 97-109), p. 98, supports this assertion.

three primary functions. First, it played a crucial role in containing imperial rivalry among the European powers; multilateral forums such as the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 are typical examples. Second, it could also be used as a tool in which to legitimate any colonial gains. It is certainly true that the European powers 'tended to doubt and ridicule the propriety of the "treaty game"', and frequently resorted to duplicitous diplomatic tactics.⁸⁴ They often failed to explain to the non-European rulers the full implications of the treaties. With reference to a treaty with a Kikuyu chief, Lord Lugard admitted:

This Company's treaty is an utter fraud. No man if he understood would sign it, and to say that a savage chief has been told that he cedes all rights to the Company in exchange for nothing is an obvious untruth. If he has been told that the Company will protect him against his enemies, and share his wars as an Ally, he has been told a lie, for the Comp. have no idea of doing any such thing and no force to do it with if they wished.⁸⁵

However, many European states and their agents were at the same time often extremely anxious to obtain diplomatic agreements from the non-European polities by following what was considered the proper procedural norms. Failure to do so would often render that particular treaty as legally invalid, substantially undermining the territorial claims of that particular state.⁸⁶ Third, and most importantly, diplomacy also played a key role in furthering European penetration. Diplomacy conducted between the European and non-European states varied widely. Whereas some states (such as China and Japan) were more successful in establishing stable diplomatic channels, often enforcing their own systems of diplomacy over the European states, other states were not. In the case of African states, Charles Henry Alexandrowicz claims:

African Rulers (with a few exceptions) failed to set up a diplomatic service which could have carried out negotiations with colonial officers on more favourable terms for the Rulers....on the whole the quality of the African diplomatic service was at its lowest when it was most needed i.e. during the period of the European-African confrontation when it could have set up a barrier to the 'scramble' which proved to be an episode of power politics conducted with unconcern for the rules of diplomacy.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Saadia Touval, 'Treaties, Borders, and the Partition of Africa', *Journal of African History* (vol. 7, no. 2, 1966, pp. 279-293), p. 282

⁸⁵ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 283

⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 280-282.

⁸⁷ Charles Henry Alexandrowicz, *The European-African Confrontation: A Study in Treaty Making*. (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1973), p. 109

Figure 2-1: 'Die Südsee ist das Mittelmeer der Zukunft (The South Sea is the Mediterranean of the Future)', Kladderadatsch, Berlin, 13th July 1884



Here, Bismarck is criticised for complacently engaging in domestic social reforms while the other powers are carving up the world for themselves. (Source: Roy Douglas, 'Great Nations Still Enchained: The Cartoonists' Vision of Empire 1848-1914. London: Routledge, 1993, p. 77)

While Alexandrowicz's assertion may be correct in the sense that many non-European polities (in this case, in Africa) did not possess a 'diplomatic service' similar to that of the Europeans, his assertion gives an impression that these states had a limited understanding of the concept of diplomacy. It is no doubt true that many states were annexed under both the explicit and implicit threat of force. Nevertheless, it is also true that the expansion of European power took place through regular diplomatic procedures,⁸⁸ and that the non-European rulers often took an active part in the negotiations. While not entirely acquainted with European diplomatic practices, the non-European rulers were not ignorant of diplomatic intercourse. Consequently, 'when European emissaries came and offered various inducements in return for treaties, their offers often fell upon politically sensitised ears.'⁸⁹ In many instances, non-European leaders signed treaties with the European powers with the hope of obtaining some form of benefit, such as military assistance in the event of local disputes. This does not imply

⁸⁸ However, we should take care to note that this 'diplomacy' was not always carried out by diplomats: private individuals (such as employees of chartered companies) would often obtain treaties for territorial/sovereign secession and present a *fait accompli* to the home government for approval. Furthermore, there was also the possibility that the latter would refuse to accept these agreements.

that this form of diplomacy was carried out with the full and willing consent of the former, however. Many non-European rulers were aware of the imperial ambitions of the European powers, often hidden behind the various treaties the latter requested to sign. Philip Mason gives an interesting anecdote which aptly illustrates this point:

‘Did you ever see a chameleon catch a fly?’ Lobengula, King of the Matabele, asked of the missionary Helm. ‘The chameleon gets behind the fly and remains motionless for some time, then he advances very slowly and gently, first putting forward one leg and then another. At last, when well within reach, he darts his tongue and the fly disappears. England is the chameleon and I am that fly.’⁹⁰

International law provided little protection against these colonial ‘chameleons.’ This had not always been the case. As A. Claire Cutler argues, Grotius ‘accord[ed] to individuals a particular status in international relations and under international law’.⁹¹ Under these premises, *all* individuals, as an essential component of the state, were entitled to the protection of international law.⁹² There were arguments that called for the protection of non-Europeans which were grounded on the philosophy of natural law. A significant number of individuals also argued that under the law of nations all political entities were equal.⁹³ Francisco de Vitoria, for instance, famously argued that with regard to sovereignty, non-European states/individuals were entitled to the same protection as the Christian states.

However, by the nineteenth century the referents of the protection of international law shrank. Paul Keal identifies three factors which gave rise to this. First, he argues that in the age of imperialism, the norms of international law were shelved to make way for political and economical interests.⁹⁴ Second, as discussed briefly above, with the growth of European pride and confidence in the wake of the industrial revolution, there

⁸⁹ Touval, ‘Treaties, Borders, and the Partition of Africa’, p. 285. A similar point is made by Hargreaves, ‘Towards a History of the Partition of Africa’, p. 108

⁹⁰ Philip Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 105

⁹¹ A. Claire Cutler, ‘The “Grotian tradition” in international relations’, *Review of International Studies* (vol. 17, no. 1, 1991, pp. 41-65), p. 45. Cutler argues that this ‘is attributable to his theory of the essential identity of the individual and the state, which in turn reflects a “patrimonial” conception of the state and the influence of natural law theory.’ The former is a reflection of the historical context in which Grotius wrote his *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (*The Law of War and Peace*), when dynastic states, regarded ‘to be “the creature of personal rule”, formed the prevailing view’ in Europe. European international relations were still under the influence of dynasties and the ‘abstraction and personification of the state and the doctrine of exclusive state personality were only to take root firmly later, in the eighteenth century.’ (Cutler, ‘The “Grotian tradition” in international relations’, p. 45) Also see Keal, ‘“Just Backward Children”’, p. 202.

⁹² See Cutler, ‘The “Grotian tradition” in international relations’, p. 45.

⁹³ For a discussion of this, see M. F. Lindley, *The Acquisition and Government of Backward Territory in International Law: Being a Treatise on the Law and Practice Relating to Colonial Expansion*. (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 12

⁹⁴ Keal, ‘“Just Backward Children”’, p. 203

appeared an increasing disdain for non-European peoples and political entities. As a result, the non-European states were increasingly labelled as 'not fundamentally pagan, savage, and demonic from a Christian frame of reference, nor fundamentally ignorant and superstitious from an Enlightenment frame of reference; rather the other...now [became] *fundamentally primitive* from a progress and evolution frame of reference.'⁹⁵ This led to an increasing inability to recognise and respect any non-European concepts of political rights and morality.

Finally, Keal notes that natural law interpretations of international law were replaced by legal positivism by the nineteenth century. This aspect of the evolution of international law was made quite explicit in the writings of the publicists of the West, who clearly contended that 'international law was not the law applicable among all the nations of the world, but applied only amongst the Christian States of Europe and America.'⁹⁶ As Henry Wheaton remarked in *Elements of International Law*:

Is there a uniform law of nations? There certainly is not the same one for all the nations and states of the world. The public law, with slight exceptions, has always been, and still is, limited to the civilized and Christian people of Europe or those of European origin.⁹⁷

The consequence of this was, as Alexandrowicz argues, that '[p]ositivism discarded some of the fundamental qualities of the classic law [natural law] of nations, particularly the principle of universality of the Family of Nations irrespective of creed, race, colour and continent'.⁹⁸

It should be noted that Bull himself was not particularly convinced by this view. He argued that at best, natural law had existed within International Society only at the theoretical level, and had never enjoyed 'the will or consent of political communities throughout the world' and were not applied to in European and non-European intercourse.⁹⁹ However, there are several weaknesses which seem to fundamentally undermine this counterargument. Keene points out the following important points; first,

⁹⁵ *ibid.* Although a detailed treatment of the subject is impossible here, it should also be noted that the demarcation of the 'self' and 'other', as well as the resulting behaviour towards the 'other' has been explored in considerable depth. Such works include James A. Aho, 'Heroism, the Construction of Evil, and Violence', in Vilho Harle, (ed) *European Values in International Relations*. (London: Pinter, 1990); and Jonathan Mercer, 'Anarchy and Identity', *International Organization* (vol. 49, no. 2, Spring 1995, pp. 229-252).

⁹⁶ R. P. Anand, 'Family of "Civilized" States and Japan: A Story of Humiliation, Assimilation, Defiance and Confrontation', *Journal of the History of International Law* (vol. 5, no. 1, 2003, pp. 1-75), p. 20

⁹⁷ Henry Wheaton, *Elements of International Law* (The literal reproduction of the edition of 1866, By Richard Henry Dana Jr., edited with notes by George Grafton Wilson). (New York: Oceana Publications, 1964), p. 15

⁹⁸ Henry Alexandrowicz, *The European-African Confrontation*, p. 6.

⁹⁹ Bull, 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society', p. 120

Bull's observation that there had existed no common consent or agreements between the two is empirically debatable. Second, Bull's notion that there is no evidence of consent to account for the use of natural law is problematic in that this argument is only applicable to positive law. Keene argues that Bull's

...observation...that European and non-European peoples were not united by common interests, a structure of "generally agreed rules" and collective participation in common institutions, could hardly be of interest to a natural lawyer, who would see a *societas gentium* arising...from the already binding force of a normative and legal code that is a given feature of the natural order of things, and applies to all peoples and rulers whether they agree to it or not.¹⁰⁰

In fact, both positivist and natural international law continued to serve several important functions in the 'civilised' European states' relations with non-European entities. First, positivist international law provided certain guidelines for the conduct of states, both European and non-European. It provided legal guidelines for legitimate statehood for non-Europeans to follow and attain 'civilisation'; from our vantage point today this often reflected 'the normative order of the European states that made it and, by expecting non-Europeans to conform to it, it was a form of cultural imperialism.'¹⁰¹ Second, and perhaps more importantly, rather than playing the purported role of protecting the territorial and sovereign integrity of states, international law provided various legal justifications for imperialism or intervention by European powers in non-European states. While Alexandrowicz's analysis gives the impression that natural law could have provided some protection for the non-European polities, this was not always true. In the famous case of the Spanish conquest of South America in the sixteenth century, Vitoria, while stating that the natives were entitled to the protection of natural law, also argued that 'civilized peoples when among barbarians are under the law, and enjoy rights too....There is a natural society and fellowship between the Spaniards and the Indians, and the Spaniards have the right to travel freely, to enter and to settle.'¹⁰² Of course, what this meant was the 'death-knell of the indigenous civilisations.'¹⁰³ Tzvetan Todorov argues, Vitoria's 'role [as defender of the South American Indians] is quite different: under cover of an international law based on reciprocity, he in reality supplies a legal basis to the wars of colonization'.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 27

¹⁰¹ Keal, ' "Just Backward Children" ', p. 192

¹⁰² Wight, *International Theory*, p. 70

¹⁰³ Dunne, 'Colonial Encounters in International Relations', p. 315

¹⁰⁴ Cited in Dunne, 'Colonial Encounters in International Relations', p. 315. It should also be noted that Martin Wight also acknowledges this more negative side to international law, stating that 'the protection of barbarian societies has normally involved the segregation in reserves, that is, pushing

In the more specific context of the nineteenth century, the rise of positive law meant that international law was becoming increasingly applicable to relations between European states only. Natural law continued to be used to govern relations between European and non-European polities, but again it did not always protect non-European polities. As Koskenniemi argues,

‘[l]ate nineteenth-century textbooks normally affirmed international law’s non-applicability in non-civilized territory – but not without provision made for the universal validity of humanitarian and natural law principles or human rights....But if all lawyers accepted that individual non-Europeans enjoyed natural rights, only a few extended such rights to non-European *communities*.’¹⁰⁵

International law’s role as the handmaiden of imperialist expansion can also be traced back to Grotius. As Keene’s work has shown, as regards territorial appropriation, Grotius provided two legal justifications for appropriating territory. First, he advocated that while all members of humankind were entitled to possession of private property under natural law, if they failed to exercise these rights by ‘exhaust[ing] all the possibilities for appropriation, and perhaps even formulated their own civil societal institution of *dominium* [ownership],’¹⁰⁶ their land would become available for appropriation. Second, contrary to Bull’s claim that the Grotian tradition advocated the indivisibility of sovereignty (at least between states),¹⁰⁷ Keene has highlighted that Grotius did in fact provide the concept of divisible sovereignty.¹⁰⁸ This translated into a

the barbarians into a corner and leaving the greater part of the land free for the settlers.’ See his *International Theory*, p. 70

¹⁰⁵ Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations*, pp. 128-129. Emphasis added. In this sense, Hedley Bull was correct in his observation that European International Society and its norms were ‘asserted unilaterally by the expanding Europeans’, and...the natural law doctrine of a universal international society existing by right provided a rationale for forcing non-European peoples into commercial and diplomatic intercourse against their will...the assumption of universal rights to trade and diplomacy conferred by nature was menacing to those whose consent to such rights had not been given. Bull, ‘The Emergence of a Universal International Society’, p. 120

¹⁰⁶ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 57. Also see pp. 52-59 for discussions on Grotius on property rights. Other conditions attached for land to be considered ‘appropriated’ for included cultivation or the ‘making [of] “improvements”’ to the land (p. 102).

¹⁰⁷ Although Bull is careful to qualify his assertion by stating, ‘[i]n Grotius’ time neither the sovereign state nor the conventions defining its role in European or world politics were by any means yet fully matured’, he does claim that ‘Grotius’ discussion of sovereignty, which he defines as not being subject in one’s actions to the legal control of the another’ furthered the process of the concept of a sovereign state system where such norms were to be respected. Furthermore, Bull also argues that Grotius claimed that sovereign prerogatives could not be divided among actors who did not enjoy the support of the sovereign. See Hedley Bull, ‘The Importance of Grotius in the Study of International Relations’ in Hedley Bull, Benedict Kingsbury, and Adam Roberts (eds), *Hugo Grotius and International Relations*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 84-85

¹⁰⁸ Grotius gave three examples of the division of sovereignty: First, ‘a ruler might hold all the prerogatives of sovereignty, but with the qualifications attached that he or she remained “responsible to the people”’; second, ‘sometimes...’sovereign power is held in part by the king, in part by the people or the senate’; and third, ‘“in the conferring of authority it has been stated that in a particular case the king can be resisted”.’ See Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 45.

series of legal justifications for acts which reduced another state's sovereign prerogatives.

Moreover, Grotius allowed for such 'usurpation' of sovereignty. While acknowledging that unequal treaties 'very often lead to some division of the sovereign power, to the benefit of the superior party', 'if the people in question, or their rulers, do not offer resistance, in time "the part of the weaker passes over into the right of ruling on the part of the stronger...then either those who had been allies become subjects, or there is at any rate a division of sovereignty (*partitio fir summi imperii*).'¹⁰⁹

The two key concepts of property rights and divisible sovereignty furnished the European powers with the legitimacy to implement policies common to imperialist expansion. The law of property rights enabled European states to acquire foreign land – frequently without any prior consultation with the indigenous peoples – for securing raw materials and establishing concessions or colonies. Supported by Grotius' arguments on divisible sovereignty, the European states saw no wrong in violating non-European states' sovereignty to promote the 'civilised' way of governance, and even saw it fit to resort to force, if necessary. Accordingly, the norms of this order dictated 'that sovereignty should be divided across national and territorial borders as required to develop commerce and to promote what Europeans and Americans saw as good government'¹¹⁰

Socialisation into a Janus-faced European International Society

The discussions above suggest that English School studies which examine the expansion of European International Society are somewhat simplistic. Given the existence of a 'civilising' mode of interaction, the socialisation of non-European polities may have involved a complex interaction with the two modes of interaction inherent in the late-nineteenth century, rather than a simple, holistic adoption of the institutions and norms of the Society which applied to European states.

Of course, the 'civilising' pressures from the Society differed from region to region, primarily because their degree of 'barbarity' was subjectively decided by the European powers, often on racist grounds. Unlike some polities in Africa, both China and Japan escaped outright imperial conquest, largely due to the fact that they were accorded semi-civilised status, rather than 'savage' status, and the pressures from the 'civilising' drive of the European society of states may not have applied as strongly.

¹⁰⁹ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p. 49

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 98

This, coupled with great power rivalry and geographical fortune meant that both states did not suffer outright colonisation at the hands of the Western powers. Furthermore, as their interactions with the European powers increased, both the Chinese and Japanese began to develop an awareness and understanding of the mode of interaction that applied to 'civilised' entities.

As will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters, however, this does not mean that the Chinese and Japanese did not feel the pressures from the 'civilising' mode of interaction. The fact that they were equally (if not more) aware of the more coercive face of the dualistic European International Society is evident from both states' eventual efforts to fulfil the 'standard of civilisation'. Furthermore, through various channels, the Chinese and Japanese elites became aware of European imperialism and began to develop an awareness of how the members of European International Society could rob them of their rule. It can thus be surmised that the interpretations of the institutions of European International Society would have been coloured by their exposure to both modes of interaction, and shaped their interpretation of and socialisation into the Society accordingly.

The question thus becomes one of *how* this particular aspect of European International Society affected China and Japan's socialisation. As the discussions above show, it would be disingenuous to presume that non-European states could uncomplicatedly commit themselves to the norms of the Society in such a short period of time. Although it is probably correct that even improvised rules, 'if and when they are observed for long enough, come to be reflected in common "modes of thought, patterns of behaviour and preferred norms and values"',¹¹¹ this can take longer than generally assumed by English School scholars. Even the norms that govern the institutions of International Society had to evolve over a considerable period of time in Europe. Non-European states' outlook on international politics and the reconfigurations of their domestic structures were likely to have reflected the different norms which governed their relations with European powers, as well as their *own* interpretations, rather than simply reflecting 'the dominant European standard of "civilization"'.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Hedley Bull, 'The European International Order' in Kai Alderson and Andrew Hurrell (eds), *Hedley Bull on International Society*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 184

¹¹² Gong, 'China's Entry into International Society', p. 172

Conventional accounts of socialisation into European International Society

Conventional studies by English School scholars, however, are poorly equipped to elucidate this multifaceted socialisation of China and Japan into European International Society. This is due to their linear depiction of the socialisation of non-European states, which implicitly draws from functionalist conceptualisations of the socialisation process.

According to this approach, a social system is depicted as arising from actors' minimum needs which 'may be said to begin with the biological prerequisites of individual life, like nutrition and physical safety.'¹¹³ Its maintenance is dependent on actors' willingness to participate 'adequately to the performances which may be necessary if the social system in question is to persist or develop.'¹¹⁴ Socialisation plays an integral part in this process. Defined as 'the integration of ego into a role complementary to that of alter(s) in such a way that the common values are internalised in ego's personality',¹¹⁵ its ultimate goal (and indeed the anticipated outcome in functionalist arguments) is the reproduction of actors who will function to maintain the social structures already in place. Accordingly, the socialisation process follows a generally determinist path. Senior or authoritative members of a society aim to socialise junior members' (or candidates for membership to a society) into conforming to societal rules and norms by serving as role models and controlling deviance through a variety of sanctions. A junior member's socialisation can be considered successful when she 'internalises' such norms by coming to identify her interests with conforming to these social expectations.

There appear to be two reasons why English School studies of the expansion of International Society have adopted this approach. The first, as argued above, was the British Committee's interest and normative commitment to demonstrating that an International Society was possible in the absence of a common culture. The second reason is perhaps a result of legal positivism adopted by scholars such as Wight or Hedley Bull, who believe that entry into European International Society implied an almost automatic and reciprocal commitment to its institutions and practices.¹¹⁶

However, this approach tends to result in explanations which lack agency, a weakness which is common to many structuralist approaches. As Theodore E. Long and Jeffrey K. Hadden point out, the entire process is described as 'the production of

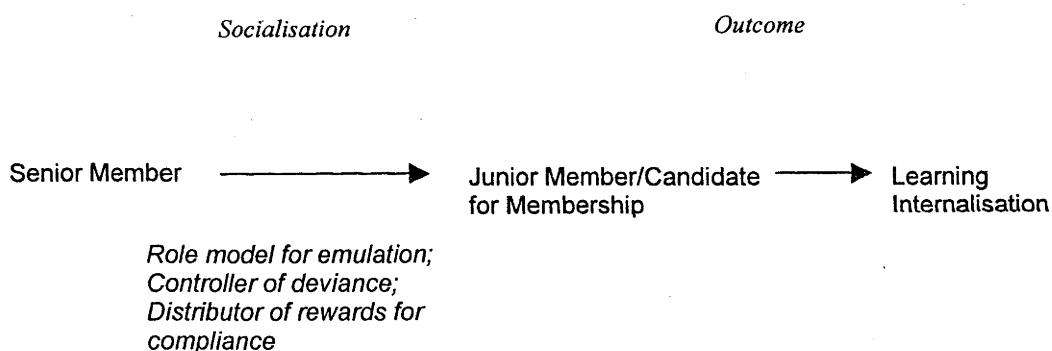
¹¹³ Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*. (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 28

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 29

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 211

desired *results*...[there] is no...ambiguity, permitting the choice of one meaning or the other...the novice's fitness results *naturally* and *inevitably* from members' training activity.'¹¹⁷ In the case of states' socialisation, it 'assume[s] that agents at the systemic level have relatively unobstructed access to states and substate actors from which to diffuse new normative understandings.'¹¹⁸ While the English School scholars' central question regarding the expansion of European International Society was indeed an interesting and perfectly legitimate one, it did mean that any subtle differences in non-European states' perceptions and acceptance of the norms and institutions of the Society would be downplayed. Because of the nature of the questions asked by the approach, the 'outcomes' of non-European states' socialisation were already pre-determined in terms of the adoption of the institutions and norms of the Society (which applied to 'civilised' entities) and the fulfilling of the 'standard of civilisation'.

Figure 2-2: Functionalist/Structuralist concept of Socialisation



(Adapted from Parsons, The Social System)

The result is a 'thin' account of the socialisation process, which hardly seems to do justice to the complexities inherent within nineteenth-century European International Society. Consequently, such studies can only study 'successful' cases, and any disparities are either downplayed or ignored. To an extent, the English School scholars were aware of this. Gerrit W. Gong, for instance, shows considerable sensitivity towards Japanese perspectives when he notes the bitterness felt by the Japanese towards the discrimination of non-European states and the discrepancies between the theory and practice of diplomacy by the 'civilised' Western powers. However, he does not deviate

¹¹⁶ See Cutler, 'The "Grotian tradition" in international relations', pp. 49-58

¹¹⁷ Long and Hadden, 'A Reconceptation of Socialization', p. 39. Emphases added.

¹¹⁸ Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Treating International Institutions as Social Environments', *International Studies Quarterly* (vol. 45, no. 4, 2001, pp. 487-515), p. 492

radically from the linear depiction of Japan's socialisation or the somewhat rigid use of the 'standard of civilisation' as a marker of Japan's entry in to the Society, thereby ending up with an inadequate examination of whether or not the Society had attained legitimacy among the Japanese. Gong argues:

Whether because Japan's conceptions of "civilization" and "civilized international society" were incongruous with what it actually discovered, or whether because its innate sense of racial distinctiveness and of inferiority prevented it from feeling fully part of a European-dominated international community, it is easier to date Japan's entry into international society from the perspective of the other powers than it is from its own.¹¹⁹

Another problem with this approach is that it fails to take account of the possibility that a socialisation process *can* take place even though the outcomes are not successful. In the case of China and Japan's incorporation into European International Society, existing English School accounts thus cannot fully explain why Japan appears to have 'learned' imperialistic behaviour following its encounter with the Society or why China took a longer time to socialise itself into the norms of European International Society in comparison to Japan, despite the fact that 'societal pressures' (in terms of Western interest in China) for it to do so were much stronger than the latter.¹²⁰

The narrow confines of legal positivism also serve to impoverish the accounts of China and Japan's entry into the Society. The signing of treaties alone does not necessarily constitute an acceptance of the culture and norms of European International Society. Furthermore, while it is certainly true that the reproduction of the institutions of European International Society has taken place, the process was not a simple one. For a start, as the Chinese and Japanese cases will demonstrate, entry into the Society involved a complex engagement with the Society's dual modes of interaction. Furthermore, there exists a distinct (and underexplored) possibility that the motives behind establishing these institutions may have been quite different. The norms and rules which governed the institutions of international society had their origins in Europe. International law gained recognition by the nineteenth century, while the concept of maintaining a balance of power (as a conscious policy) and the diplomatic system came into being through the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the Congress of Vienna in 1815, respectively. European states' frequent interactions with one another, and their subsequent 'development of a degree of recognition and accommodation

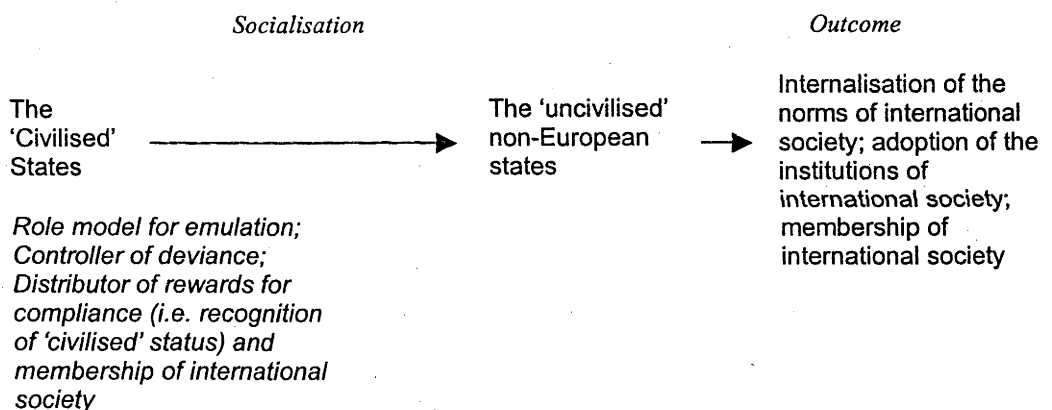
¹¹⁹ See Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, p. 200

¹²⁰ The need to account for variances in socialisation is also pointed out by Johnston, 'Treating International Institutions as Social Environments', p. 495

among them' resulted in the emergence of international society.¹²¹ A degree of cultural affinity and familiarity may also have helped facilitate this sense of commitment to shared norms. In contrast, many of the non-European states did not participate in the founding of international society. A lack of geographical proximity meant that both sides had insufficient contact with one another, and neither did they share a common culture or god. Bull himself agrees that prior to European imperialism which resulted in the expansion of European International Society,

...neither the Europeans nor the non-Europeans in their dealing with one another can be said to have moved by common interests they perceived in maintaining an enduring structure of coexistence and co-operation among independent political communities over the world as a whole. They were not able to invoke a common and agreed set of rules to this end, such as came later to be assumed as the basis of international intercourse over the world as a whole.¹²²

Figure2-3: Socialisation into European International Society – Conventional Works



It is therefore highly likely that a simplistic adoption and interpretation of the Society's norms which governed relations between 'civilised' states did not occur. Although the English School scholars are correct in their claims that the institutions of European International Society have found widespread recognition, this does not mean that their adoption by non-Western states was somehow an unproblematic process.

It should be pointed out here that this weakness is not unique to the English School alone. A similar tendency to concentrate excessively on outcomes to demonstrate evidence of socialisation can be seen in some liberal institutional works.¹²³

¹²¹ Buzan, 'From International System to International Society', p. 334

¹²² Bull, 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society', p. 118

¹²³ Ikenberry and Kupchan, for instance, define socialisation as 'a process of learning in which norms and ideals are transmitted to another' and where 'national leaders internalize the norms and value

This problem has also been pointed out in works by constructivists (for whom the socialisation process is a crucial concept) where the ‘macrohistorical diffusion of values and practices’ are ‘measured by correlations between the presence of a global norm and the presence of corresponding local practices...Once actors are interacting inside [social] institutions, the diffusion and homogenisation of values in the “world polity” seems virtually automatic, even, and predictable.’¹²⁴ In a recent effort to sharpen the conceptual tools of socialisation theory and offer ‘a much-needed focal point around which various perspectives on state socialization can coalesce’, Kai Alderson has defined socialisation ‘as an *outcome*’ ‘by which states internalise norms originating elsewhere in the international system.’¹²⁵ However, Alderson also makes the same mistake by choosing to focus on the outcome as evidence that socialisation has taken place. His definition does not really go beyond that of conventional studies,¹²⁶ and results in an implicit assumption that any process of socialisation is *inevitably* going to result in a particular, expected form of internalisation and behavioural outcome on the part of the new entrant. In reality, socialisation is a more complex process, and its success cannot be guaranteed: for instance, while it is obvious that most children go through a process of socialisation (e.g. do not steal, do not indulge in drugs, etc), some do persistently deviate from these norms and subsequently get labelled as ‘delinquents’. As Sharon Hays observes, while ‘social life is fundamentally structured...[t]hat reproduction process, however, is never fully stable or absolute and, under particular

orientations espoused by the hegemon and, as a consequence, become socialized into the community formed by the hegemon and other nations accepting its leadership position.’ Internalisation here indicates behavioural outcomes which are ‘compatible with the hegemon’. This assumption again can only examine ‘successful’ cases, allowing little variation in the outcome of socialisation. Socialisation is an *outcome*, not a *process*. See Ikenberry and Kupchan, ‘Socialization and Hegemonic Power’, pp. 289-290.

¹²⁴ See Johnston, ‘Treating International Institutions as Social Environments’, p. 492. Johnston does, however, claim that such tendencies may be a result of the earlier constructivist agenda to demonstrate the importance of norms in international politics.

¹²⁵ Kai Alderson, ‘Making sense of state socialization’, *Review of International Studies* (vol. 27, no. 3, 2001, pp. 415-433), p. 417

¹²⁶ This is somewhat curious, as Alderson does correctly note elsewhere that ‘state socialization in no way compromises agency. Indeed, ...state socialization is always the *project* of domestic social and political actors: it is never the direct impression of external imperatives upon a passive and plastic national society.’ (p. 428) However, in his attempt to provide a strict definition he again reiterates a rather restrictive notion that ‘[t]he content of state socialization is limited to the durable option of “public norms”: explicit beliefs or implicit assumptions about what actions are possible, permissible, or advisable for state authorities’ (p. 422). By only focussing on *durable* norms, logically he can only analyse successful socialisation where the dominant social structures are reproduced, which again has difficulty in accounting for varying patterns of outcomes of socialisation. See Alderson, ‘Making sense of state socialization’. In his critique of Alderson, Cameron G. Thies points out, ‘since socialisation is often seen as an ongoing, “lifelong” process by most constructivists in international relations, and many scholars in the interdisciplinary field of social psychology, viewing it as an outcome is probably not going to pique much interest.’ See Thies, ‘Sense and sensibility in the study of state socialisation: a reply to Kai Alderson’, *Review of International Studies* (vol. 29, no. 4, 2003, pp. 543-550), p. 544

circumstances, the structured choices that agents make can have a more or less transformative impact on the nature of the structures themselves.¹²⁷

A new approach to the socialisation process

To address these shortcomings, this study forwards an alternative analytical framework that will help enrich our understanding of China and Japan's entry and socialisation into European International Society. The first step taken is a simple one that is informed by the historical context of the late-nineteenth century. In light of the dualities inherent within the Society, it is more fruitful to conceptualise China and Japan's socialisation process as an engagement with a Janus-faced European International Society. As 'semi-civilised' entities, both states encountered the modes of interaction that aimed for coexistence among 'civilised' states and 'civilising' the 'backward' polities. Chinese and Japanese attempts to gain admission to the Society (provided that they sought to do so) are most likely to have involved the adoption of certain characteristics of both faces of the Society. By taking the Society's dualities into account, we will be able to come one step closer to a better understanding of the multifaceted, complex process of the expansion of European International Society and the socialisation of non-European states.

The second step is taken by forwarding a more process-oriented account for socialisation. This requires taking into account the importance of agency and moving beyond structuralist and functionalist approaches. This is not to suggest that the focus should be exclusively on the agents: an exclusive agent-centred approach is equally problematic as an overly structural one, as 'some causal mechanisms exist only on a macro-level, even though they depend on instantiations at the micro-level for their operation.'¹²⁸ Moreover, although it is possible to explain events by relying on an agent-centric approach, there is a possibility that this would generate a 'laundry list' of possible causalities which can only explain *specific events*, rather than a *general trend* of events.¹²⁹ Although debates over the primacy one should accord with regard to structure and agency have frequently tended to be somewhat dichotomised between the

¹²⁷ Sharon Hays, 'Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture', *Sociological Theory* (vol. 12, no. 1, March 1994, pp. 57-72), p. 65

¹²⁸ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 154

¹²⁹ For instance, I may behave in a bad-tempered way to Tom, Dick and Harry within the same week: my irritable disposition towards them can be explained in an issue-specific manner, such as Tom pulled a face at me on Tuesday and Dick failed to say hello to me on Wednesday, and so on. However, such explanations may not be able to locate the reason of my bad temper to overarching factors: for example, I may have been behaving irately because I had been suffering from immense psychological depression.

two camps (as can be seen in the agent-structure debate),¹³⁰ it is clear that a theoretical approach which synthesises both approaches is of most explanatory value.

The socialisation concept applied in this study adopts Long and Hadden's model. Socialisation is defined as '*the process of creating and incorporating new members of a group from a pool of newcomers, carried out by members and their allies.*'¹³¹ Within this concept, the socialisation process is led by the senior members of the community, whose goal is to 'create persons who can sustain confidence that they meet the requisites of membership and to incorporate them into membership.'¹³² To achieve this end, senior members assume the identity of role model (*showing*) and dispense positive and negative sanctions to encourage conformity (*shaping*). They are also responsible for conferring 'member status' to newcomers (*certification*) and encouraging the participation of new/junior members in the activities of the collective.

While the ultimate goal and the roles of the senior members remain broadly similar to that of the aforementioned Parsonian conceptualisation of socialisation, in this study socialisation is treated as a *process*, rather than an outcome. The main difference of this conceptualisation from functionalist accounts is that *the outcome of the process remains open-ended, and leaves the possibility for variations in outcome*. Successful, wholesale socialisation is by no means guaranteed. This is because, Long and Hadden point out,

All...participants [in a social group] – members, novices, and allies – are entangled in additional social worlds beyond those of socialization and group membership. Ties to the wider society, loyalties to families and friends, and other associations

¹³⁰ One of the most famous discussions of the agent-structure debate is by J. David Singer, 'The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations', *World Politics* (vol. 14, no. 1, October 1961, pp. 77-92). See also Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 7-9, 210-214. Hollis and Smith claim that structure-oriented approaches are suited for 'explaining' the cause and effect of regular behavioural patterns in international politics, while agent- (or unit) level approaches are more useful for 'understanding' how such patterns of behaviour were generated in the first place. However, their somewhat dichotomous presentation of the two approaches has been subject to criticism: Hidemi Suganami, for instance, has argued that ' "causal" (in the sense of "mechanistic") accounts of events, on the one hand, and accounts of actions in terms of the actors' processes of reasoning, on the other...are both subsumable as elements in the overall "causal"...narrative of the event or phenomenon in question.' See 'Agents, Structures, Narratives', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 5, no. 3, 1999, pp. 365-386), p. 371. Other works on the agent-structure debate include Alexander E. Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization* (vol. 41, no. 3, Summer 1987, pp. 335-370).

¹³¹ Long and Hadden, 'A Reconceptualization of Socialization', p. 42

¹³² *ibid.*, p. 45. See also Stephen Walker, 'Symbolic Interactionism and International Politics: Role Theory's Contribution to International Organization' in Martha L. Cottam and Chih-yu Shih (eds), *Contending Dramas: A Cognitive Approach to International Organizations*. (New York: Praeger, 1992), p. 22. Here, the equivalent process is defined as 'an *exchange* process [which] expresses the allocation of values among participants in the political process' and 'an *authorization* process [which] refers to a shared set of expectations established and maintained regarding the terms of allocation among the participants in the exchange process'.

engage the commitment and time of members and novices to varying degrees. Their precise influence on socialization will differ by the degree to which they are segregated or integrated with socialization, the degree to which their commitments complete [sic] with socialization, and the particular aspects of socialization with which they intersect.¹³³

Furthermore, even though the novice is deemed 'successful' in her socialisation and becomes a full member of a society, it is also likely that the end result of the socialisation process does not exactly replicate the patterns of 'socially sanctioned behaviour' as advocated by the senior members. Norms of a new social environment are not mechanically accepted: rather, as Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink point out, they are subject to 'communication, argumentation, and persuasion', where the legitimacy of the new social environment and its norms are discussed. The degree to which the novice accepts her socialisation is likely to depend significantly on the outcome of this interpretive, negotiating process.¹³⁴ Similarly, what is deemed as 'legitimate' by the senior members can also be fluid. Ian Clark further argues that 'the emergence of legitimacy within the global order is likely to be no more and no less the result of political processes' which involve 'shifting compromises and tentative adjustments'.¹³⁵

The focus of this study is precisely this negotiation process which took place in China and Japan.¹³⁶ It moves beyond the 'thin' description of non-European states' entry into European International Society, and forwards a multifaceted analysis which can account for variations in the outcomes of socialisation which have been subject to much neglect. Accordingly, the resulting behavioural outcomes following socialisation are not predetermined in this study. The degree to which socialisation is 'successful'

¹³³ Long and Hadden, 'A Reconceptualisation of Socialization', p. 44. For further discussion in avoiding conceptualisations of socialisation processes with predetermined outcomes, see Jack S. Levy, 'Learning and foreign policy: sweeping a conceptual minefield', *International Organization* (vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 279-312), p. 290

¹³⁴ Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink, 'The Socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: introduction' in Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink (eds), *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 13.

¹³⁵ Clark, 'Legitimacy in a Global Order', p. 93

¹³⁶ It can also be said that this study is a story of the legitimation process the Chinese and Japanese elites may/may not have undertaken. In this sense, it is more interested in what Ian Clark calls legitimacy 'pertaining to order (and largely focused on issues of community).' Clark argues that studies of legitimacy in international relations has been divided into those which study the acceptance of authority, and those which study issues involving 'principles governing admission to, and recognition by, international society' (Clark, 'Legitimacy in a Global Order', p. 84), with the latter remaining relatively underexplored. I agree with Clark that this neglect needs to be addressed, as studies of the legitimacy of authority cannot be prior to deciding on the community where this authority exists. Clark himself seems to point to this when he states: 'We cannot know what rule-making structures are suitable to be put in place until we have settled the primary issues of who is to count for membership, within what context, and for what purpose.' See Clark, 'Legitimacy in a Global Order', p. 92

will be contingent on the novices' interpretations of their new social environment, as well as their negotiation between the norms of their pre-existing (and possibly competing) social worlds. This, however, does not mean that the novice is doomed never to be accepted as a full member of the society. Socialisation is not only a process of learning social rules; it is also a 'confidence-building process [which] directs attention to the *audiences of socialization*, those who rely on it as a basis for making attributions of membership.'¹³⁷ What is important here is that the novice is capable of *convincing* her peers that she has attained the attributes necessary to qualify for full membership.¹³⁸

In order to systematically conceptualise the degree to which a novice is successful in her socialisation and account for any variations among novices in the degrees of success, this study follows Long and Hadden's framework and identifies three 'drivers' which motivate the socialisation process. These consist of 'knowledge', 'competence and skill', and 'commitment', and the empirical enquiry is divided into these three stages, although it is acknowledged that in practice the three processes frequently overlap. Acquiring 'knowledge' can be seen as the first steps in the development of an awareness for the social rules of the environment in which the novice finds herself. It is 'an obvious condition for...social reproduction', as knowledge of these rules indicates, at the minimum, a 'mental readiness to use them as needed.'¹³⁹ The learning of 'competence and skill' takes the socialisation process one step further. This stage of socialisation can be seen as a stage in which the novice is able to comply with the procedural norms of her social environment. Here, not only is the novice assumed to possess knowledge of the social rules, she is also considered to be able to apply these rules in her interactions. However, this does not indicate a 'commitment' to the novice's social environment. The novice has yet to accept her environment as legitimate, and has not yet fully developed the desire to have her actions defined by its norms. The novice will consequently (whether intentionally or not) violate the behavioural standards as stipulated by the society on occasion. A deeper form of socialisation is more likely to result when 'commitment' occurs. Here, the novice commits herself to her new social environment by '(putatively) tak[ing] the members' social world as the definitive guideline for action'; 'faithfully orient[ing] personal action

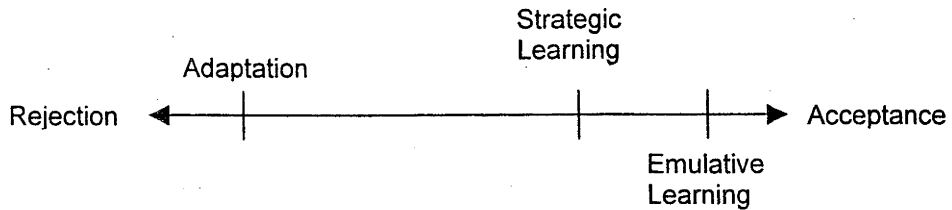
¹³⁷ Long and Hadden, 'A Reconciliation of Socialization', p. 43

¹³⁸ See also Walker's discussion of 'self-role congruence' in 'Symbolic Interactionism and International Politics', p. 27

¹³⁹ Long and Hadden, 'A Reconciliation of Socialization', *Sociological Theory* (vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1985, pp. 39-49), p. 43

to conform to its principles and to achieve its reproduction'; and 'willingly [being] held accountable to its requirements should something go awry.'¹⁴⁰

Figure 2-4: Stages of Socialisation



The degree to which a state is deemed as having been 'socialised' into its new social environment by its peers will depend on whether or not the novice state possesses these three 'drivers' of socialisation. Here, the degree to which a state is 'socialised' has been divided into three stages; 'adaptation', 'strategic learning' and 'emulative learning', as shown in Figure 4. Here, I treat 'strategic learning' and 'emulative learning' as processes of socialisation, as they involve some degree of changes in state interests and identities as well as the internalisation of new social norms, while 'adaptation' consists only of changes in behavioural patterns but no change in the state's identity and interests.

'Adaptation' is treated as a level at which a state (and its leaders) possesses only the 'knowledge' of its social environment, and is similar to what Joseph S. Nye Jr. has labelled 'simple learning'.¹⁴¹ A state's response to changes in its external environment is likely to be highly superficial.¹⁴² There will be no changes to state identities and interests, and 'rigid operating procedures are not adjusted to recognize a changed task domain.'¹⁴³ Any institutional changes which take place in response to new environments

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 43-44. See also Klotz, *Norms in International Relations*, p. 31

¹⁴¹ Joseph S. Nye Jr., 'Nuclear Learning and U.S.-Soviet Security Regimes', *International Organization* (vol. 41, no. 3, Summer 1987, pp. 371-402), p. 380

¹⁴² Here I use the word 'environment' primarily to mean 'external environment'. It is of course highly likely that a similar process can take place within the domestic realm, however, and my emphasis on the international realm should not be seen as denying domestic influences.

¹⁴³ Peter M. Haas and Ernst B. Haas, 'Learning to Learn: Improving International Governance', *Global Governance* (vol. 1, no. 2, September-December 1995, pp. 255-285), p. 262. Haas and Haas also maintain that in the process of adaptation, '[n]o effective scan of the technical and scientific communities for new ideas is undertaken to muster political support for organizational reforms' (p. 262). This definition seems somewhat narrow in that it implies that autocratic states (such as the People's Republic of China) with a weaker civil society are incapable of learning, even though this is clearly not the case. This point has also been made by Jack S. Levy, 'Learning and foreign policy: sweeping a conceptual minefield', *International Organization* (vol. 48, no. 2, Spring 1994, pp. 279-312), p. 284. For an empirical examination, see Stuart Harris, 'China's role in the WTO and APEC' in David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal (eds), *China Rising: Nationalism and interdependence*. (London: Routledge, 1997). Also see Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'Institutional Dynamics in Collapsing Empires: Domestic Change in the USSR, Post-Soviet Russia, and Independent Ukraine' in Andrew P. Cortell and Susan Peterson (eds), *Altered States: International Relations, Domestic Politics, and*

are likely to be of a short-term nature: well-entrenched, conventional institutions are likely to re-emerge once the external pressures are perceived to have subsided.

'*Strategic learning*' is a higher level of socialisation.¹⁴⁴ Here, the state not only possesses the knowledge of the social rules of its international environment, but also adopts them in its dealings with other states to a certain extent. This results in some limited attempts to undertake institutional reforms to respond to the new social standards, as opposed to superficial reforms of an expedient nature. These broadly correspond with the attainment of 'competence and skill'.

An '*emulative learning*' process results in a change in national identities and interests, and wide-ranging institutional changes are undertaken to achieve this. This form of socialisation often takes the form of imitating other actors who are seen as thriving within this new social environment. Although emulation in itself often takes the form of imitating more 'successful' practices by others, this process can in fact further the socialisation process. As Alexander Wendt argues, the measurement of 'success' itself is decided socially and has never been static. Standards of success 'are...always constituted by shared understandings that vary by cultural context.'¹⁴⁵ In order to be judged as successful by other members of the new social environment,

Institutional Change. (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2002), pp. 145-168 and Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink, 'The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: introduction' in Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), especially p. 12.

¹⁴⁴ I acknowledge that there may be different competing conceptualisations of 'learning'. Perhaps one reason for this is that within the literature of 'learning' theory in international relations, there are also a variety of definitions. Dan Reiter, defines learning as 'the application of information derived from past experiences to facilitate understanding of a particular policy question' (Dan Reiter, *Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances and World Wars*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 19-20). Peter M. Haas and Ernst B. Haas define learning as 'a process whereby "consensual knowledge" is applied by policymakers to change their policy projects.' (Haas and Haas, 'Learning to Learn: Improving International Governance', p. 259) Again, Haas and Haas assume that 'learning' can only take place when a strong civil society (in the form of epistemic communities) exists and wields considerable influence in the political decision-making process – 'consensual knowledge' is thus defined as 'structured information about causes and effects among physical and social phenomena that enjoys general acceptance as true and accurate among the members of the relevant professional community' (Haas and Haas, 'Learning to Learn', p. 259). Alastair Iain Johnston, meanwhile, considers learning to take place when 'new information about the external environment is internalised by decision-makers' (Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Learning Versus Adaptation: Explaining Change in Chinese Arms Control Policy in the 1980s and 1990s', *The China Journal* (no. 31, January 1996, pp. 27-61), p. 31) and results in a change of interests, goals, and, (in the case of security policy) the 'fundamental evaluation of the strategic environment' (Johnston, 'Learning Versus Adaptation', p. 33). My own conceptualisation is closer to Johnston's: Reiter's definition of learning is mainly restricted to the using of past experiences to guide current political decision-making, and is not the same as the creation and acquiring of membership of a social group. I also find the Haas and Haas model too restrictive for reasons cited above. For an overview of the various definitions of the learning process, see also George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, 'Introduction' in George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, *Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991)

¹⁴⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 325

actors must often transform their identities and interests in order ‘to be associated with and evaluated through the framework of the community’s shared values by emphasising desirable traits’.¹⁴⁶ This act in itself indicates a willingness to be judged by an actor’s peers, and indicates a high degree of internalisation of the norms of the new social environment associated with ‘commitment’.

Table 2-2: The Processes of Socialisation

	Stages of Socialisation	Adaptation	Strategic Learning	Emulative Learning
<i>Drivers of Socialisation</i>				
<i>Knowledge</i>		Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Competence and Skill</i>		No	Yes	Yes
<i>Commitment</i>		No	No	Yes

Conclusion

This chapter has forwarded two basic claims: first, conventional accounts of the expansion of European International Society by the English School are based on selective history which conceives the society as a progressive force which promotes some form of coexistence among its members. This conceptualisation ignores the fact that such norms were generally limited to govern relations between European states only, and that there were separate norms which aimed at promoting ‘civilisation’ towards non-European states.

Second, conventional English School studies of the socialisation of China and Japan into European International Society generally mirror linear, functionalist accounts of socialisation, and do not sufficiently account for the perspectives of the agents. The net result of these accounts is a ‘thin’ account of the socialisation process which downplays the role of imperialism and dualities inherent within European International Society in the late-nineteenth century. Furthermore, owing to the normative commitments of the English School approach, conventional studies have been interested in how International Society came to be accepted by non-European states. Consequently, the focus of these studies is exclusively on outcomes – usually in terms of non-European states’ adoption of international law and European-style diplomacy. Any ambiguities and complexities, which are part and parcel of the socialisation process, are not accorded sufficiently examination.

¹⁴⁶ Klotz, *Norms in International Relations*, p. 31

By forwarding a more flexible framework for examining the process by which China and Japan were socialised into European International Society, this section has augmented the English School approach in at least two ways. First, by interpreting China and Japan's entry into the Society as a multifaceted phenomenon which involved an engagement with two different modes of interactions, it pays greater attention to the more imperialistic European International Society and non-European states' socialisation into it, moving beyond the 'progressive' interpretations of the expansion of international society. Second, by forwarding a new conceptual framework for understanding the expansion of European International Society and the socialisation of China and Japan, it undertakes a more nuanced examination of this complex process, and strengthens the English School approach's theoretical utility as a framework for socialisation.

The following chapters will utilise this analytical framework and systematically chart the historical process of China and Japan's engagement with the Society. The empirical discussions will be divided, for organisational purposes, in accordance with the three 'drivers' of socialisation of 'gaining knowledge', 'learning the competence and skill' and 'demonstration of commitment'. Before this is undertaken, however, one task remains. As this study is concerned with the *evolution* of China and Japan's identities and interests following their encounter with the Society, it is necessary to examine in some detail what these were *prior* to the expansion of European International Society. Accordingly, the following chapter will analyse the international order of East Asia by applying the theoretical framework utilised in this chapter. The constitutive structures of the East Asian international order and China and Japan's identities and interests will be examined in this context.

THE ANCIENT EAST ASIAN INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Introduction

This chapter aims to explore Chinese and Japanese identities and interests within the East Asian international order prior to the mid-nineteenth century. Here, identity is defined in collective terms, and is understood to be formed through membership of an international order and interaction with its members. It is, in Alexander Wendt's words, 'sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object.'¹ Members' interests are derived from their international social environment, and are shared collectively throughout members of the order. As elaborated below, the 'moral purpose of the state' within the East Asian international order derived from Confucianism, and aimed for 'the support and maintenance of the moral, social, and cultural order of social peace and harmony.'² Accordingly, the fundamental interests of states within the order became those of enhancing and demonstrating the ability to maintain the appropriate social hierarchies that would promote cosmic harmony. In the Confucian order, those who stood at the apex of the order were charged with the role of maintaining the social hierarchy, a prerogative of the virtuous that carried substantial prestige. Member states of the East Asian international order thus competed to place themselves in the highest social position possible. This was also reflected in the hierarchical 'organizing principle of sovereignty' of the order.

The 'international environment' under investigation here has been termed the 'East Asian international order'. This has often been known as the 'Chinese world order',³ and there is certainly some justification for use of this particular term. The constitutive norms of the East Asian international order were hegemonic constructs that originated from China, and were premised on Confucianism and the assumption of Chinese supremacy. Many states that wished to enter diplomatic relations with China often had little choice but to accept them.

However, the term 'Chinese world order' also gives the impression of a monolithic order in which China's pre-eminence was never in doubt. As will become

¹ Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *American Political Science Review* (vol. 88, no. 2, June 1994, pp. 384-396), p. 385

² Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1964), p. 10

³ The most notable study to use this term is John King Fairbank (ed), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968)

clear in the discussions below, this was hardly the case; much more contestation took place within this order than the term 'Chinese world order' implies. The Chinese were frequently forced to interact with their neighbours on equal terms, and some neighbours even engaged in acts that would usurp China's position at the apex of the East Asian international order. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that these states never challenged the *constitutive norms* of the order, indicating that they had to a certain extent internalised the normative stipulations of the Sino-centric international order. The term 'Chinese world order', however, does little justice to this complexity, as it implies that non-Chinese states were not in any position to affect these rules.

Of course, any term based on geographic location can be problematic, as the boundaries of any area are often unclear and open to varying interpretations. It is therefore worth briefly explaining the meaning of 'East Asia' here. The term is meant to imply a normative boundary, rather than a geographic one. It includes China, Japan, Korea, the Ryūkyū Kingdom and Vietnam (although Vietnam did not play a significant role in Sino-Japanese bilateral relations under the East Asian international order, and is not subject to detailed analysis). All of these states had a long history of cultural borrowing from China and had, to different degrees, internalised Confucian ideology. They also shared a 'common image of the world' derived from Sinocentrism,⁴ which formed the basis for the social structures of the East Asian international order, far more than any of China's other neighbours.

This chapter explores how the social structures of the East Asian international order informed both China and Japan's identities and interests, as well as their bilateral relations. As the East Asian international order did not collapse until the expansion of European International Society, the chapter covers a long period of time; the arguments forwarded in this chapter are thus of a general nature. The chapter is broadly divided into three sections. First, it begins by surveying the East Asian international order. The emphasis is on how the order was supposed to function in theory, and necessarily takes a somewhat Sinocentric view which represents the 'ideal type' of the order. While the historical origins of the East Asian international order are a contested issue,⁵ there

⁴ Onuma Yasuaki, 'When was the Law of International Society Born? – An Inquiry of the History of International Law from an Intercivilizational Perspective', *Journal of the History of International Law* (vol. 2, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1-66), p. 11

⁵ Various scholars have traced the order's origins to the Zhou ((周 1027 B.C.-403 B.C.), Han, and Ming dynasties. John King Fairbank traces the emergence of Chinese ethnocentrism back to the Zhou dynasty in his 'A Preliminary Framework' in John King Fairbank (ed), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 5. He Fangchuan states that Chinese historical records mention foreign entities 'presenting tribute'

appears to be some agreement that it reached its apogee around the time of the Ming (明 1368-1644) and Qing (清 1644-1911) dynasties,⁶ and this will be the historical backdrop of discussions throughout this chapter. For comparative purposes, it begins by analysing the constitutional structures of the order and proceeds to explore how these social structures shaped Chinese identity and interest. If the first section look at theory, the second section looks at practice. Here, we turn away from Sinocentrism and survey how the constitutional structures informed the behaviour of non-Chinese member states. The final section examines the specific, and discusses how Sino-Japanese interactions took place under this order.

The East Asian international order in theory: the view from China

The East Asian international order itself can trace its intellectual origins back to China. As the regional hegemon, China set the rules of diplomatic conduct with foreign polities, and also assumed normative supremacy within the order. As China's contacts with its neighbours grew, the order gradually became the dominant institutional form by which these groups conducted their diplomatic intercourse.

The constitutional structures of the East Asian international order

The constitutional structures of the East Asian international order were primarily the extension of universalist Confucian philosophy.⁷ There are two important teachings pertaining to governance in Confucianism: respect for and maintenance of the (hierarchical) social order, and ethical rule. Its emphasis on social hierarchy derived from its 'concept of the universe – the entire cosmos – as an unbroken, orderly stasis-continuum.'⁸ It was also 'the rational justification of [the hierarchical, familial social relationships within Chinese society]...or its theoretical expression.'⁹ Human society

to the Han, demonstrating an increasing Sino-centric notions of relations between China and its surrounding 'barbarians'. He Fangchuan, '“Huayi zhixu” lun', *Beijing daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* (vol. 35, no. 6, 1998, pp. 30-45), p. 32. See also James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 12.

⁶ He Fangchuan, '“Huayi zhixu” lun', p. 35

⁷ Yongjin Zhang, 'System, empire and state in Chinese international relations' *Review of International Studies* (vol. 27, Special issue, 2001, pp. 43-63), p. 56, Mark Mancall, *China at the Centre: 300 Years of Foreign Policy*. (New York: The Free Press, 1984), pp. 13-39

⁸ Mancall, *China at the Centre*, p. 21

⁹ Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 21. He Fangchuan also points to the close connection between China's agrarian background and the rise of the hierarchical nature of the order. He argues that 'the basic need for peace and stability, characteristic within agrarian societies, as well as the Confucian (normative) frameworks of "ruler-

was ordered along hierarchical lines, and '[s]tability and order...were the highest virtues in the cosmological continuum, secured through the maintenance of hierarchy and the performance of rituals.'¹⁰ Consequently, Confucianism placed great emphasis on the maintenance of hierarchically-defined social relations. This was to be achieved

...by teaching all mortals respect for the five fundamental human relationships: those between man and woman..., father and son, older and younger friend, friend and friend, sovereign and minister (or subject). When the timeless patterns of these associations were fully understood and realized, peace, order, and happiness were to prevail in the entire community'.¹¹

While Confucianism was conservative in the sense that it taught the people to respect their rulers, it was also radical in its emphasis on ethical rule. It was believed that humans 'have their full realization and development only in human relationships...Mencius maintain[ed] that "man is a political animal" and can fully develop these relationships only within state and society.'¹² Therefore, the 'state is a moral institution and the head of the state should be a moral leader.'¹³ Confucian philosophy placed great emphasis on ethical governance, and argued that a 'gentleman' – particularly a ruler – should possess the qualities of 'uprightness or inner integrity (*chih* [智 *zhi*]), righteousness (*i* [義 *yi*]), conscientiousness toward others or loyalty (*chung* [忠 *zhong*]), altruism or reciprocity (*shu* [恕]), and above all, love or human-heartedness (*jen* [仁 *ren*]).'¹⁴ Those who failed to display these moral qualities were not fit to rule, and 'the people [would] have the moral right of revolution.'¹⁵ It was this concept of morality that theoretically kept a check on despotic rule.

The 'Confucian system of government...regarded all men, including the emperor, and all communities, including the world state, as subject to the will of Heaven.'¹⁶ Provided that the ruler adhered to these principles he would command the 'mandate of heaven'. His right to rule would be divinely ordained, as it was argued that 'Heaven delegates its governing functions to a righteous ruler who thereby becomes the one and

subject", "loyalty and filial piety" naturally extended into the Chinese Empire's basic diplomatic ideals and principals.' He Fangchuan, ' "Huayi zhixu" lun', p. 37

¹⁰ Mancall, *China at the Centre*, p. 21

¹¹ Adda B. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History: From the Ancient Near East to the Opening of the Modern Age*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), p. 135. Also see Chen Jiehua, *Ershiyi shiji zhongguo waijiao zhanlüe*. (Beijing: Shishi chubanshe, 2001), p. 65

¹² Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 73

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ John King Fairbank and Edwin O Reischauer, *China: Tradition and Transformation*. (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p. 46; c.f. Cho-yun Hsu, 'Applying Confucian Ethics to International Relations', *Ethics and International Affairs* (vol. 5, 1991, pp. 15-31), p. 20

¹⁵ Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 74

¹⁶ Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History*, p. 135

only Son of Heaven.’¹⁷ Emperors (天子 *tianzi*) were considered ‘superior to ordinary mortals because of their unique function in maintaining order among mankind and maintaining harmony between human society and the rest of the cosmos.’¹⁸ The Emperor, as the Son of Heaven, had the duty to rule with benevolence, and his subjects were expected to adhere to the Heavenly will and respect his elevated role and social position.

While the degree to which China actually applied ‘benevolent’ Confucian principles in its international behaviour is highly debatable,¹⁹ the normative need to maintain ‘proper’ social hierarchies did find its expression in the constitutional structures of the East Asian international order, where the ‘moral purpose of the state...[was] to promote social and cosmic harmony.’²⁰ The organising principle of sovereignty within the tribute system was thus along hierarchical, familial lines.²¹ The principle as applied in the East Asian international order provides an interesting contrast with European International Society, where its core ‘civilised’ members all nominally enjoyed sovereign equality. As Immanuel C. Y. Hsü has argued, relations within the East Asian international order ‘were much like those between members of a family, far more so than the relations between Western nations. It is literally correct to describe them as constituting their own family of nations in East Asia.’²² China assumed (at least theoretically) its superior hierarchical position over all the other polities that surrounded

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 134

¹⁸ John King Fairbank, ‘A Preliminary Framework’, p. 6

¹⁹ Traditional studies (headed primarily by Sinologists and Chinese scholars) have argued that Chinese political thought is unique in that violence was abhorred and played only a peripheral role in the Sinocentric order. Such studies include Frank A. Kierman Jr. and John King Fairbank (eds), *Chinese Ways in Warfare* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974); Jonathan R. Adelman and Chih-yu Shih, *Symbolic War: The Chinese Use of Force, 1840-1980* (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, 1993); He Fangchuan, ‘“Huayi zhixu” lun’; and Huang Zhilian, *Yazhou de huaxia zhixu: Zhongguo yu Yazhou guojia guanxi xingtai lun.* (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 1992). One of the most powerful counter-arguments to this from an international relations viewpoint remains Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History.* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995). A more historical account of coercive Chinese foreign policy behaviour is given by Arthur Waldron in his *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

²⁰ Zhang, ‘System, empire and state in Chinese international relations’, p. 56

²¹ The term ‘sovereignty’ is used guardedly with some reservation here, as the term derives from European International Society and is commonly understood as ‘territoriality and the exclusion of external actors from domestic authority structures’. The members of the East Asian international order, however, did not always have clearly demarcated territorial boundaries, and neither was sovereign autonomy a marker of legitimate membership of the order. In the context of the East Asian international order, the ‘organising principle of sovereignty’ is perhaps better understood as how members of the order were socially organised. The definition of sovereignty in European International Society is taken from Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 20

²² Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *China's Entrance into the Family of Nations: The Diplomatic Phase 1858-1880.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 3

it. The Chinese believed that ‘the all-wise example and virtue (*te* [德 *de*]) of the Son of Heaven not only reached throughout China proper but continued outward beyond the borders of China to all mankind...albeit with gradually decreasing efficacy, as parts of a concentric hierarchy.’²³

The positions of other non-Chinese states within this order were not as clear-cut as this, however. They often depended on the degree to which the Chinese judged them to have been assimilated into Chinese culture and, to a lesser extent, their geographical proximity to China. Nomadic societies and their peoples were often treated as the more ‘barbarous’. By the time of the Qing dynasty, such peoples (such as the Tibetans and Mongols) were dealt with the *Lifanyuan* (理藩院),²⁴ which can be translated as the ‘Barbarian Control Office’.

The more ‘sinified’ China’s neighbours were, the more likely they were to be seen to be responsive to the virtue of the Chinese emperor, and to enjoy greater prestige. When presenting tribute, they would come under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rites (禮部 *libu*), ‘which was...charged with the performance of that broad spectrum of rites that transmitted Confucian culture inside China itself. Ritually, therefore, these regions were an extension of China proper beyond the immediately effective control of the emperor.’²⁵ States such as Korea and the Ryūkyū kingdom constituted the core members of this group of states. In the sense that they were seen as sharing a sufficiently similar culture to the degree that they could be called an ‘extension’ of the Middle Kingdom, they can be seen as the ‘civilised’ states within the East Asian international order, although this did not necessarily result in recognition of equality from China.

The ‘systemic norm of procedural justice’ of the tribute system corresponded closely to what Christian Reus-Smit has termed ‘ritual justice’. The concept of international law hardly had a role to play within the East Asian international order, where ‘people...understood law with enforcement mechanisms as basically domestic. The very notion of applying the law as an enforceable norm outside the territory or between independent bodies politic was foreign to them.’²⁶ Accordingly, within the East

²³ John King Fairbank ‘A Preliminary Framework’, p. 8. Fairbank’s conceptualisation of this order can be found in the table in the same essay, p. 13.

²⁴ The *Lifanyuan* was created by the Qing dynasty, originally to control the dynasty’s Mongolian affairs. It was after the Qing conquest of China proper that its role was expanded to deal with a wider range of peoples and polities.

²⁵ Mark Mancall, ‘The Ch’ing Tribute system: An Interpretive Essay’, in John King Fairbank (ed), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 74

²⁶ Onuma Yasuaki, ‘When was the Law of International Society Born?’, p. 16

Asian international order diplomacy was carried out primarily in the form of elaborate rituals which extended from Confucian norms and paid particular attention to members' social standing and its maintenance.²⁷ This hierarchical difference was based on the 'common cornerstone of the *ka-i* [華夷 *huayi* Middle Kingdom-Barbarian] edifice...[which] was the logic of difference'²⁸ designed at accentuating the differences between the centre of civilisation and peripheral 'barbarians', and reflected the core metanorm of the 'moral purpose of the state' of the East Asian international order. Within a given international order, rituals can play an important role in 'communicat[ing] to a community its unity, its values, its uniqueness in both the exclusive and the inclusive sense',²⁹ and the tribute system was no exception in this regard. Non-Chinese states were expected to demonstrate their loyalty and filiality towards the paternal state by offering tribute, which was seen as a 'ritual appropriate to the maintenance of the world order'.³⁰ While the terms 'vassal state (*chen* 臣 or *shubang/shuguo* 屬邦/屬國)' or 'suzerain', which were used in these relations often imply a form of control by the dominant power, the Chinese did not necessarily exert domestic control over the member states of the East Asian international order, and neither did they control their relations with other non-Chinese states. The tribute system and the term 'vassal state' merely signified a lower status in the social hierarchy of the East Asian international order, and only dictated their relations with the Chinese empire.³¹ This difference in the meanings of 'vassal statehood' between the East Asian international order and European International Society was to cause problems over the legal status of tributary states later on, a theme that we shall return to later.

Non-Chinese states were expected to present tribute (*gong* 貢) to the emperor. In the ceremonies hosted for the emissaries,³² the *kowtow* was performed, and hierarchical relations were confirmed. As Mark Mancall states:

²⁷ For overviews of the regulations of the Tribute system, see John King Fairbank, 'A Preliminary Framework'; Huang Zhilian, *Yazhou de huaxia zhixu*; and Hamashita Takeshi, *Kindai chūgoku no kokusaiteki keiki: chōkō bōeki shisutemu to kindai ajia*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1990)

²⁸ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, 'The Frontiers of Japanese Identity' in Stein Tønnesson and Hans Antlöv (eds), *Asian Forms of the Nation*. (Richmond: Curzon, 1996), p. 51

²⁹ Franck, 'Legitimacy in the International System', p. 726

³⁰ Mancall, *China at the Centre*, p. 22

³¹ For this point, see M. Frederick Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), p. 88, and Wang Zhenping, *Han tang zhongti guanxi lun*. (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1997), p. 28

³² For a detailed discussion of the rituals carried out during imperial receptions of the Tributary envoys, see James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 116-133

As the son of heaven, the emperor connected human society to the rest of the cosmos. Entry into the emperor's presence or court required recognition of these principles through the correct performance of the rituals and through tribute presentation. Refusal to perform the rituals was tantamount to an insult to the universal scheme of things, an unnatural act that could not be tolerated by the emperor since it was his role to maintain the harmony of the cosmos.³³

In addition to performing these various rituals, the tributary states were expected to send additional tributary missions at times of special occasions, such as the death of or the enthronement of a new emperor. They were also to send emissaries to announce the death or enthronement of their own kings. In return, they received gifts from the emperor and were granted trade privileges. They also received investiture from the Chinese emperor and were given a seal of patent which was to be used in their correspondence with China (along with the Imperial Chinese calendar). In addition to these ritualistic regulations, there were other norms. Tributary states were expected, in accordance with Confucian norms, to 'treat each other in accordance with ethics (*yi li xiangdai* 以禮相待)' and 'not invade each other (*ge bu xiangfan* 各不相犯)'.³⁴ If any violation of these norms occurred, tributary states were permitted to ask China for mediation or military assistance, and at times this was provided.³⁵

How, then, did the constitutive structures of the East Asian international order shape the identities and interests of China? Although we must exercise some caution when making broad generalisations which cut across time, two fundamental suggestions can be offered. First, China's identity within this order was that of the pinnacle of the social hierarchy of the international order. As Yongjin Zhang argues, the 'Chinese emperor, as the Son of Heaven, had the mandate of Heaven to rule *Tianxia* (天下 all-under-heaven).' This meant that it was a given that 'the Chinese world order had to be hierarchical, with the Chinese emperor sitting at the apex of this order with a heavenly mandate.'³⁶ This identity in turn informed the fundamental interests of the Chinese empire, which centred around the maintenance of appropriate social hierarchies that would reaffirm China's superior moral standing. The order's fundamental institution, the tribute system, served to maintain this by constructing a hierarchical, Sinocentric world. Foreign 'barbarians' would present tribute, demonstrating that the virtue of the

³³ Mancall, *China at the Centre: 300 Years of Foreign Policy*, p. 22

³⁴ See Huang Zhilian, *Yazhou de huaxia zhixu*, pp. 95-96.

³⁵ A primary example of this is the Ming's decision to send troops to assist the Chosŏn (朝鮮) dynasty fight of the Japanese invasion of 1592-98. The Qing also provided such assistance as well. The Sino-Vietnamese clash of 1788-89 was a result of the Qing's expedition to provide military assistance to the Lê dynasty.

³⁶ Zhang, 'System, empire and state in Chinese international relations', p. 53

Son of Heaven had reached far and wide lands. By cherishing these peoples, the Chinese emperor in turn would show his paternal, benevolent status befitting that of a superior.

Table 3-1. Constitutional structures and fundamental institutions in European International Society and the East Asian international order

<i>Societies of States</i>	<i>International Society for European States</i>	<i>East Asian International Order</i>
Constitutional Structures		
1. Moral Purpose of State	Augmentation of Individuals' Purposes and Potentialities	Promoting cosmic and social harmony
2. Organizing Principle of Sovereignty	Sovereign Equality, Liberal Sovereignty	Sovereign hierarchy (civilizational)
3. Systemic Norm of Procedural Justice	Legislative Justice (based on positive law)	Ritual justice
Fundamental Institutions	a. Contractual International law b. Multilateralism	a. Tribute system

(Sources: Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p. 7, Zhang, 'System, empire and state in international relations, p. 57)

The tribute system in practice: the view from the non-Chinese entities

A remarkable feature of the East Asian international order is its longevity. The order and its fundamental institution, the tribute system, which some scholars trace its origins back to the Han dynasty (漢 202 B.C.-220 A.D.) continued to function well into the nineteenth century. It was only in the late nineteenth century following the expansion of European International Society that the order was finally dismantled, ironically by Japan, itself a former member of the East Asian international order.

What explains the longevity of the order and the tribute system? There is no doubt that in many instances power relations were an important determining factor. While some scholars (particularly Chinese scholars) have maintained that China's behaviour towards its most Sinified neighbours was generally a peaceful one,³⁷ this ignores the fact that in many historical periods China remained the regional hegemon in East Asia, and was often in a position to enforce its norms on smaller neighbouring polities.³⁸

³⁷ See for example Adelman and Shih, *Symbolic War*. The geopolitical area where China allegedly relied primarily on non-coercive 'cultural' and 'ideological' measures has been dubbed the 'Sinic Zone' by John K. Fairbank. See John King Fairbank 'A Preliminary Framework', p. 2.

³⁸ A thoughtful discussion of power relations within the East Asian international order can be found in Inoguchi Takashi, 'Dentōteki higashi ajia sekai chitsujo ron: jūhasseiki matsu no chūgoku no betonamu kanshō o chūshin to shite', *Kokusaihō gaikō zasshi* (vol. 73, no. 5, February 1975, pp. 36-83)

Unsurprisingly, ample evidence exists that Chinese norms of the constitutional structure were transmitted to neighbouring polities. Indeed, it has been argued that sustained contact between states tends to reproduce the institutions and norms of the hegemonic ideas governing international relations. Barry Buzan, for instance, claims that as 'ruling elites recognize the permanence and importance of the economic and strategic interdependence among their states, they will begin to work out rules for avoiding unwanted conflicts and for facilitating desired exchanges' with the hegemon.³⁹ Reus-Smit also states that '[i]n a mature society of states, exhibiting an established network of fundamental institutions, states that wish to engage in stable social interaction encounter strong incentives to employ existing practices.'⁴⁰ As states become more integrated into an international system and its constitutive structure, they come 'under a strong compulsion to justify their actions in terms of the system's primary norms of coexistence.'⁴¹ The result is a stable pattern of behaviour that strongly reflects the system's constitutional structures.

The member states of the East Asian international order were no exception. The expansion of this constitutional structure that resulted in the formation of a distinctive Sinocentric regional order was primarily a result of extensive contact between China and its East Asian neighbours. States in East Asia engaged in trade and cultural exchanges with the Chinese to facilitate their own development. In their dealings with China, by far their most powerful neighbour, they often had little choice but to participate in the system if they wished to maintain their ties with the Chinese.

Legitimacy of the East Asian international order

The fact that the Chinese empire dominated East Asia for so long has given rise to a number of arguments that interpret the East Asian international order and the tribute system as based primarily on asymmetrical power relations.⁴² Indeed, Ikenberry and

³⁹ Buzan, 'From International System to International Society', p. 334

⁴⁰ Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p. 36

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 35

⁴² Note, however, that this is not the case of all power-based theories. Neorealists, for instance, are extremely sceptical that hierarchical systems can be sustained. While conceding that 'within an international order, risks may be avoided or lessened by moving from a situation of coordinate action to one of super- and subordination', Kenneth N. Waltz argues that the costs of maintaining a hierarchical order are prohibitively high. There will be conflict over 'efforts to influence or control the controllers'. Moreover, in 'a society of states with little coherence, attempts at world government would founder on the inability of an emerging central authority to mobilize the resources needed to create and maintain the unity of the system by regulating and managing its parts. The prospect of world government would be an invitation to prepare for world civil war.' Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 111-112. Also see Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*, p. 41

Kupchan argue that in a hegemonic institution, ‘the manipulation of *material incentives* – the use of threats and promises to alter the preferences of leaders in secondary nations – is the dominant form through which hegemonic power is exercised.’⁴³ Buzan and Richard Little also see tributary relations as a command model of international relations in which ‘vassal kingdoms or tribes paid tribute to imperial suzerains, or, depending on the balance of power, imperial suzerains paid appeasement bribes to supposed vassals in return for not being attacked by them.’⁴⁴ The implication here is that states paid tribute to the hegemon whenever the balance of power was in the latter’s favour, in a sense ‘buying’ their security. In this view, the East Asian international order is nothing more than an expression of China’s hegemonic desires.⁴⁵

There is no doubt that presenting tribute did serve the function of maintaining peripheral states’ security. Tributary missions presented opportunities to gather intelligence, and indeed appease the Chinese. However, it is equally important to note that despite the fact that Chinese power waxed and waned over the years, the tribute system remained intact. In some cases, member states even remained loyal to a deposed Chinese dynasty, despite it making very little sense from the point of their survival. An example from Korea further illustrates that security concerns based on fear of Chinese coercion did not exclusively constitute non-Chinese states’ participation in the tribute system. In the seventeenth century, the Chosŏn dynasty (朝鮮 1392-1910) in Korea faced increasing coercion by the newly established Qing dynasty to enter tributary relations, and was eventually forced by the Qing to do so in 1627. However, the Koreans remained loyal to the Ming dynasty. Despite the fact that they had reluctantly entered ‘tributary’ relations with the Qing, as long as the Ming survived they ‘refused to perform even the duties agreed upon toward the “elder brother” nation, the Manchus [i.e. the Qing dynasty],’⁴⁶ despite the fact that Korea shared a border with the Qing and the latter posed a much larger threat to its survival than the Ming.

⁴³ Ikenberry and Kupchan, ‘Socialization and hegemonic power’, p. 283

⁴⁴ Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*, p. 234

⁴⁵ For a more journalistic account of similar views, see Ogura Kazuo, *Chūgoku no ishin nihon no kyōji*. (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2001). In the context of Sino-Vietnamese relations, Ōsawa Kazuo believes that China did not necessarily abandon the idea of dominating the region by military force when the balance of power suited was in its favour, as the Ming’s invasion and attempted colonisation of Vietnam between 1406-27 demonstrates. See Ōsawa Kazuo, ‘Reichō chūki no min, shin to no kankei (1527-1682)’ in Yamamoto Tatsuō (ed) *Betonamu chūgoku kankei shi: Kyokushi no taitō kara shin-futsu sensō made*. (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1975), p. 334. For a similar account, also see Gari Ledyard, ‘Yin and Yang in the China-Manchuria-Korea Triangle’ in Morris Rossabi (ed), *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983)

⁴⁶ See Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*, p. 80

This phenomenon is beyond the reach of purely power-based explanations of international politics. If, like the arguments above, it is only material threats and benefits that sustain a hierarchical system like the tribute system, we should expect that a ‘*process* of constantly recalculating the costs and benefits of any course of action should be an observable constant of self-interested actors’ whenever China’s power and concomitant ability to provide material carrots and sticks declined.⁴⁷ While China’s neighbours may not have ultimately been able to overthrow the tribute system and the East Asian international order, there is no evidence that they sought to do so until Japan did in the late-nineteenth century. Of course, this is not to imply that the members of the East Asian international order *never* challenged the more Sinocentric norms inherent in the order, as this did indeed take place (as the following discussions will show). Rather, the point here is that while these contestations did take place, they occurred *within* the order, and did not constitute a challenge to the order itself.⁴⁸

The problem with purely power-based explanations is that their arguments assume that any international hierarchical structure necessarily lacks *legitimacy*, and cannot be maintained for a sustained length of time without resorting to force. However, in the case of East Asia, the system seems to ‘[prevail] in times of Imperial China’s military weakness precisely because military strength on its own is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the maintenance of this order.’⁴⁹ This suggests that the constitutional structure of the East Asian international order and the tribute system, its fundamental institution, did indeed gain a significant degree of acceptance among the Sinic Zone states. As Yongjin Zhang has argued, ‘[s]o long as the hegemonic belief in the moral purpose of the state and more broadly, of the political community incarnated in Confucianism, prevails, the tribute system as a basic institutional practices [sic] is likely to stay.’⁵⁰

This appears to have been the case in the international relations in East Asia. A common culture can be cited as a primary reason for this.⁵¹ Martin Wight has noted that a ‘states-system presupposes a common culture’,⁵² and more recently Barry Buzan and

⁴⁷ Ian Hurd, ‘Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics’, *International Organization* (vol. 53, no. 2, Spring 1999, pp. 379-408), p. 396

⁴⁸ Tanaka Takeo, *Chūsei taigai kankeishi*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1975), p. 19

⁴⁹ Zhang, ‘System, empire and state in Chinese international relations’, p. 57-58

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 57

⁵¹ However, we must be aware when making such arguments that ‘one cannot distinguish peoples and regions at a particular time in an unequivocal manner’ and ‘[t]here always exists a certain degree of overlapping in a particular human’s belonging to a certain civilization.’ See Onuma, ‘When was the Law of International Society Born?’, pp. 10-11

⁵² Wight, *Systems of States*, p. 46

Richard Little have argued that a common culture can aid in furthering interaction capacity and fostering a common identity, thus facilitating the formation of international order(s).⁵³ In this sense, it does not come as a surprise that China's more immediate neighbours in East Asia (as well as Vietnam) appear to have absorbed Chinese influence the most. They all used the Chinese language to communicate with each other, had an elite who were indoctrinated in Confucianism, learnt Buddhism through China, and had, at some point in their histories, adopted centralised government structures based on the Chinese model.⁵⁴ In their correspondence with the Chinese empire they also used terms couched in Confucian hierarchy.

These practices further facilitated acceptance of the tribute system to the extent that member states' identities became strongly linked to the East Asian international order.⁵⁵ In similar fashion to the Chinese, 'the question whether one was a civilized member of the Sinocentric world according to Sinocentric cosmology was regarded as crucial',⁵⁶ and the members identified themselves in terms of their hierarchical standing in the Confucian-derived social order. Their interests also became one of maintaining or improving their positions. Legitimate statehood was defined in terms of attaining a respectable 'civilised' position within the hierarchy. To this end, investiture from China was often used as a device for legitimating a leader's rule.⁵⁷ As the likelihood of attaining a 'civilised' position within the East Asian international order was theoretically linked to being recognised as such by China, some states went as far as actively demonstrating their close ties with the Chinese empire and its civilisation. Indeed, Gari Ledyard has argued that 'acceptance by the tributary of Chinese diplomatic rhetoric is part and parcel of its general acceptance and respect for Chinese civilization itself.'⁵⁸ For

⁵³ Buzan and Little label this 'social technologies of transportation and communication', and include a common language, script, religion, diplomacy, money and bills of exchange, and trade diasporas as crucial elements. See Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*, pp. 199-215.

⁵⁴ This characterisation of the East Asian international order is based on Nishijima Sadao, *Yamataikoku to higashi ajia: kodai nippon to higashi ajia*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1994), p. 164 and Mancall, *China at the Centre*, p. 18-19. For general information on how these states adopted Confucianism in their government, see M. Frederick Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1946) and Keith W. Taylor, 'The Early Kingdoms' in Nicholas Tarling, (ed) *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia (vol. 1): From early times to c. 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

⁵⁵ See Nishijima Sadao, *Yamataikoku to higashi ajia*, pp. 164-166

⁵⁶ Onuma, 'When was the Law of International Society Born?', p. 10

⁵⁷ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 12; Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 171; and Onuma, 'When was the Law of International Society Born?', pp. 13-14.

⁵⁸ Gari Ledyard, 'Yin and Yang in the China-Manchuria-Korea Triangle' in Morris Rossabi (ed) *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 338

instance, the Lê dynasty (黎 1428-1527) of Vietnam were highly dissatisfied when they were issued with a copper seal of investiture, and protested this as not befitting their status within the tribute system. They were later issued with a silver seal.⁵⁹ In Ryūkyū-Chinese relations, we see similar evidence of socialisation into the norms of the tribute system. In 1601, the Ming proposed sending military officials to carry out the investiture ceremony for the Ryūkyū king. The kingdom protested vigorously, claiming that a military envoy would imply that Ming-Ryūkyū relations were based on enmity, and that the Ryūkyū king was a 'hostage king (*lu wang* 虜王)', which was unacceptable. They successfully insisted that civilian officials being sent, which was commensurate with the more prestigious status of Ryūkyū, a long-standing, loyal tributary of China.⁶⁰ But perhaps the most unique example of socialisation into Chinese customs which governed tributary relations comes from the writings in Chosŏn Korea, which is worth citing fully:

Our ceremonies, our enjoyments, our laws, our usages, our dress, our literature, our goods have all followed after the models of China. The (five) great relationships [of Confucianism] shine forth from those above and the teachings pass down to those below, making the grace of our customs like to that of the Flowery Land, so that Chinese themselves praise us saying 'Korea is little China.'⁶¹

While other member states may not have always identified themselves with Chinese civilisation to the extent that the Korean elites did, Chinese investiture still at times carried considerable moral authority. For instance, in the early fifteenth century, the then *shōgun* Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (足利義満) entered tributary relations not only for trade reasons but also because of 'the factor of Chinese prestige in Japan',⁶² although in what is also evidence of contestation, the move was criticised as detrimental to Japanese prestige.⁶³ But Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's seeking of Chinese investiture is an indication that this particular ritual of the order did, to a certain degree, command respect within Japanese domestic society to the extent that it could be utilised for legitimating domestic rule.

⁵⁹ See Ōsawa Kazuo, 'Reichō chūki no min, shin to no kankei (1527-1682)', p. 378

⁶⁰ See Uehara Kenzen 'Toyotomi seiken no chōsen shuppei to ryūmin kankei' in Takara Kurayoshi, Tomiyama Kazuyuki and Maehira Fusaaki (eds) *Atarashii ryūkyūshi zō: Araki Moriaki sensei tsuitō ronshū*. (Ginowan, Okinawa: Yōjusha, 1996), pp. 35-36

⁶¹ Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*, p. 85

⁶² Wang Yi-T'ung, *Official Relations between China and Japan 1368-1594* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies IX). (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 35.

⁶³ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 58.

Contestation within the East Asian international order

However, it would be mistaken to assume that the East Asian international order was a monolithic construct where no contestation took place.⁶⁴ While the fundamental systemic norms of the order were not overthrown by its members, some of the more Sinocentric assumptions of the East Asian international order came under challenges. The members of the East Asian international order showed themselves capable of contesting China's assumed supremacy within the East Asian international order, even though they did not possess the military prowess to pose a threat to Chinese hegemony.

According to Hamashita Takeshi, these contestations took primarily three forms, although the three would often overlap. First, states could claim 'Middle Kingdom' status, and usurp China's assumed claim to 'superior moral power'. They would thus take over the responsibility 'for maintaining and harmonizing [the Confucian] social order with the moral examples [they] set'.⁶⁵

Second, a state would 'place itself in the "centre" in relation to its tributary and non-tributary states, and behave like a "Middle Kingdom" in its own right'.⁶⁶ Sakayori Masashi notes that this process of sorting surrounding polities in a hierarchical order was 'modelled on Sinocentrism and was a necessary political ideology for legitimating domestic rule and, in the context of expanding territorial rule, for demonstrating dynastic legitimacy among the ruling elite'.⁶⁷ In order to demonstrate its superior social status, a challenger would take on the role of receiving tributary missions. In similar fashion to China, it would place itself at a higher echelon by requiring its own 'Tributaries' to perform appropriate rituals. The ritual confirmation of the state's 'Middle Kingdom' status had the effect of demonstrating that the ruler's 'virtue' had spread far and wide, thus confirming the challenger's superior moral status, while simultaneously highlighting its capacity to take on the role of a 'Middle Kingdom' that was able to 'cherish' those at the lower end of the social order.

The third form would be one of mutual accommodation of each other's 'superior' status. Both states 'would define themselves as the "apex" of the order while seeing the

⁶⁴ Cf. Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p. 33

⁶⁵ Zhang, 'System, empire and state in Chinese international relations', p. 53

⁶⁶ Hamashita Takeshi, 'Higashi ajiashi ni miru kai chitsujo' in Hamashita Takeshi (ed) *Higashi ajia sekai no chiiki nettowaaku*. (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1999), p. 38

⁶⁷ Sakayori Masashi, 'Kai shisō no shosō' in Arano Yasunori, Ishii Masatoshi, Murai Shōsuke (eds), *Ajia no nakano nihonshi* (vol. 5): *jiishiki to sōgo rikai*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1993), p. 53

other as a “barbarian”, while turning a blind eye to the other’s challenge and glossing over any realities [that would suggest otherwise]’.⁶⁸

Such contestation, which can be dubbed ‘mimetic challenges’, took place among several member states of the East Asian international order. For instance, Vietnam’s Lê dynasty took the opportunity to claim equal status with China in 1427. In a document sanctioned by the Vietnamese ruler, it was claimed: ‘only our Great Viet State is a “learned country”...ever since the founding of the country, our dynasties have stood on parity with the Han, Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties (惟我大越之國，實為文獻之邦...自趙丁李陳之肇造我國，與漢唐宋元而各帝一方).’ This, Sakayori Masashi comments, is indicative of ‘Vietnamese confidence in its equal status with China, as well as a Vietnamese form of “Sinocentrism” which sees its neighbouring peoples as “barbarians”’.⁶⁹

While these actions did indeed contest Chinese superiority, it would be inappropriate to assume that this constituted a fundamental rejection of the East Asian international order, since the systemic norms of the order remained intact. In a sense, it is possible to conceptualise the contestations which took place within the East Asian international order as resembling what Stephen D. Krasner has dubbed ‘organized hypocrisy’, where ‘[a]ctors violate rules in practice without at the same time challenging their legitimacy’,⁷⁰ a point also noted by Zhang.⁷¹ This suggests that the normative structures of the order were sufficiently adaptable to accommodate some ‘hypocritical’, or ambiguous realities without resulting in a complete collapse of the order. As Zhang notes:

The hypocrisy embodied in the organizing principles, norms and practices of the Chinese world order is embedded as an intended institutional feature. It may be indeed argued that it is precisely such purposive institutional ambiguities in the actual operation of the tribute system that made it a flexible system for the conduct of Imperial China’s foreign relations.⁷²

⁶⁸ Hamashita Takeshi, ‘Higashi ajiashi ni miru kai chitsujo’, p. 38

⁶⁹ Sakayori Masashi, ‘Kai shisō no shosō’ in Arano Yasunori, Ishii Masatoshi, Murai Shōsuke (eds), *Ajia no nakano nihonshi* (vol. 5): *jiishiki to sōgo rikai*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1993), pp. 52-53. The Vietnamese Nguyễn emperors also called their kingdom the ‘Middle Kingdom (*Zhongguo/Chūgoku* 中國).’ They established Tributary relations with their neighbours, and the Nguyễn rulers used the title ‘emperor’ for themselves, although this title was supposed to be only accorded to the Chinese emperor. See Sakayori Masashi, ‘Kai shisō no shosō’, pp. 48-49 and Takeda Ryōji ‘Gen chō shoki no shin to no kankei (1802-1870) in Yamamoto Tatsurō (ed) *Betonamu chūgoku kankei shi: Kyokushi no taitō kara shin-futsu sensō made*. (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1975), p. 543

⁷⁰ Stephen D. Krasner, ‘Organised hypocrisy in nineteenth-century East Asia’ *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (vol. 1, no. 2, 2001, pp. 173-197), p. 173

⁷¹ Zhang, ‘System, empire and state in Chinese international relations’, p. 54

⁷² *ibid.*

However, the constitutive rules of the East Asian international order were not rendered meaningless by these actions. While he does acknowledge the role of constitutive norms in international orders, Krasner tends to downplay their importance, claiming that 'socialization is less complete in an international environment' and violations of norms will be endemic.⁷³ This has led him to assert somewhat controversially that '[t]he international system is not like a game of chess. It does not have constitutive rules, if such rules are conceived of as making some kinds of action possible and precluding others.'⁷⁴ But Krasner does not pay sufficient attention to the fact that although rules are compromised, this does not mean that they *cease* to matter. As Daniel Philpott notes, a 'violation or compromise of the rules that constitute international relations does not make them any less constitutive...the very concept of a compromise or violation presupposes that there is an entity being compromised or violated.'⁷⁵

As regards the 'violations' of Sinocentrism which took place in the East Asian international order, it is important to note that all these took place *within* the institutional framework of the order. For instance, in usurping China's role at the 'Middle Kingdom', the members of the East Asian international order would attempt to attract tributary missions to their own countries. This action does not depart from the order's constitutional structures. By claiming to be the 'centre' of the social order, the challenger is merely taking over China's role in 'promoting cosmic and social harmony',⁷⁶ while the 'moral purpose of the state' remains the same. Similarly, the fact that the tribute system continues to be used in the process of legitimating the claims of the usurper's superior social hierarchy is an indication that the ritualistic 'systemic norm of procedural justice' has been left intact.

Here we see that the interactions of the challengers continued to be framed in terms of the East Asian international order. This corresponds to a logic of action known as the 'logic of appropriateness', where political behaviour is seen 'as a product of rules, roles, and identities that stipulate appropriate behaviour in given situations.'⁷⁷ The fact that hierarchic, ritualistic tributary diplomacy was seen as the 'appropriate' form in

⁷³ Krasner, 'Organised hypocrisy in nineteenth-century East Asia', p. 176

⁷⁴ Krasner, *Sovereignty*, p. 229

⁷⁵ Daniel Philpott, 'Usurping the Sovereignty of Sovereignty?', *World Politics* (vol. 53, no. 2, January 2001, pp. 297-324), p. 310.

⁷⁶ This term is borrowed from Zhang, 'System, empire and state in Chinese international relations', p. 56.

⁷⁷ Krasner, *Sovereignty*, p. 5

which to contest Chinese supremacy indicates that the challengers' identities as member states of the East Asian international order remained the same. This is qualitatively different from later actions by Japan in the late-nineteenth century, where it actively renounced the constitutional structures of the East Asian international order and adopted those of European International Society. Challenges to Sinocentrism prior to the expansion of the Society, then, were challenges *in* the East Asian order, not *of* it.

Sino-Japanese relations under the East Asian international order

The findings above suggest that the fundamental international identities and interests of the members of the East Asian international order underwent little fundamental changes between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, confirming Zhang's point that 'the endurance of a particular world order can...be attributed to the persistence of a dominant idea about the moral purpose of the state.'⁷⁸ Moving from the general to the specific, we can surmise that Qing China's fundamental identities and interests in the East Asian international order – an identity as the centre of civilisation and an interest in the maintenance of this hierarchy – did not change radically. Japan poses a somewhat complicated picture, as its foreign relations during the Tokugawa (徳川) period (1603-1867) are often seen as being minimal, no doubt because of the well-entrenched view that its seclusionist policy (known as *sakoku* 鎖国) precluded any meaningful diplomatic relations between Japan and foreign polities (bar China and the Netherlands), and was only changed when the expansion of European International Society forced open Japan's doors (*kaikoku* 開国). This view, however, has come under sustained criticism from historians who have focused on Japanese diplomacy within the East Asian international order. In an important essay discussing Japan's 'seclusionist' policy, Tashiro Kazui argues:

The attention of most people considering Japan's foreign relations during the Edo period is focused on Dejima and the Dutch and Chinese merchant ships that came to Nagasaki for trade...The truth is that during the Edo period Holland and China were not the only nations with whom Japan had relations, and Nagasaki was not the only window opening out on the world.⁷⁹

In fact, Japan's so-called policy of 'seclusion' should be seen in the context of Japan's continued participation in the East Asian international order. Tanaka Takeo notes the remarkable similarity of Japan's *sakoku* policy with the 'seclusionist' policies

⁷⁸ Zhang, 'System, empire and state in Chinese international relations', p. 56

(known as *haijin* 海禁 in Chinese) undertaken by the Ming and Korea. The policy, consisted of the state banning its peoples from private overseas travel and trade. It was first implemented by the Ming to prevent 'Japanese' piracy (known as *wakō* or *wokou* 倭寇) and monopolise trade.⁸⁰ The policy eventually evolved to support the hierarchies of the East Asian international order and was adopted by China's neighbours. By forcing foreign merchants to participate in 'official' trade and its rituals, the member states often demonstrated their 'superior', 'Middle Kingdom' status. 'Therefore,' Arano Masanori argues, 'the "*haijin*" policy was not necessarily a policy that "closed a state's borders" but a policy to recognise a given state's desired way to conduct diplomatic intercourse.'⁸¹

This seems to suggest that the policy of 'seclusion' had an important role in legitimating Japan's (and indeed other states') position(s) within the East Asian international order. A state's ability to implement these policies was of course contingent on its geopolitical environment. States that lacked a powerful central government or were heavily reliant on entrepôt trade were less likely to strictly implement some of the policies of seclusion, such as the restrictions on trade. However, for those who could afford to do so, the policy had considerable utility. The intellectual influences of Confucianism – which were shared to varying degrees across China, Korea, and Japan – dictated that the 'unification [of a country] was one of the classical criteria of governmental legitimacy in the region'.⁸² The ability of a government to monopolise its diplomatic relations highlighted its strength, and recognition of this feat by foreign countries had the effect of demonstrating a state's legitimate membership of the East Asian international order.⁸³

The alternative 'Japan-centric' tribute system

The discussion above shows that despite the strict controls imposed on interstate relations, Japan remained an active member of the East Asian international order until

⁷⁹ Tashiro Kazui, 'Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: Sakoku Reexamined' (Susan Downing Videen, trans), *Journal of Japanese Studies* (vol. 8, no. 2, Summer 1982, pp. 283-306), p. 284

⁸⁰ Tanaka Takeo, *Chūsei taigai kankeishi*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1975), pp. 85-86. Note also that Japanese only constituted about 10-20 percent of the 'Japanese' pirates. See also Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 96.

⁸¹ Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nippon to higashi ajia*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1988), p. iv

⁸² Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 56. C.f. Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 180, where Fung quotes Mencius' dialogue with the King of Liang, who asks: "How may the world be at peace?" To which Mencius replied: "When there is unity, there will be peace."

⁸³ Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nippon to higashi ajia*, pp. 30-31

the expansion of European International Society.⁸⁴ This suggests that Japan's identity in the international realm continued to be very much tied to the Confucian social standards of the order, although again this is not to suggest that they remained static. Japan considered itself a 'virtuous' member state of the East Asian international order. Under the Tokugawa, it had unified the country, which would assist the prospering of its populace. Furthermore, a clear lineage of rulers had been established. This fulfilled the Confucian criteria of legitimate domestic statehood,⁸⁵ and on these grounds it was considered that Japan had and deserved a high position on the hierarchical ladder of the order. What remained now was the need to enhance and maintain Japan's social identity and status within the East Asian international hierarchy.

However, pursuit of these particular interests presented the Japanese with a dilemma. In theory, a non-Chinese state had to seek China's investiture for legitimate statehood in the East Asian international order. As the regional hegemon, China's claims to moral supremacy were not easily challenged. However, seeking Chinese approval for Tokugawa rule was a risky tactic. In the context of the early Tokugawa period, it would 'require that...the representative of Japan...compromise the very independent legitimacy and sovereignty that he was seeking to establish, by petitioning the Ming emperor in a formal document...in which he called himself a "subject" of Ming, dated in the Ming calendar.'⁸⁶ Japan had never completely accepted inferior status to China, largely due to Japan's 'self-perception, in large measure bound up with the mythology of imperial divinity,' which 'made the acknowledgement of any supervening authority extremely difficult.'⁸⁷ Any admission of Chinese supremacy was sure to hurt Japanese pride and have potentially negative consequences for the Tokugawa shogunate's attempts to legitimate their rule, as the precedent of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu had shown.

⁸⁴ Tanaka Takeo supports this assertion by arguing that the *sakoku* policy should be seen as 'nothing more than a Japanese expression of the Sinocentric East Asian international order'. See Tanaka Takeo, *Chūsei taigai kankeishi*, p. 272

⁸⁵ The last criterion is, along with the unification of a country, based on Chinese Confucian philosopher Ouyang Xiu's treatise on legitimacy. See Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, pp. 56, 60. Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) was a poet and statesman of the Song dynasty. He was put in charge of the civil examinations, and worked in the fields of social, financial and military policy.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 58

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 172. For an illustrative example of this, see the exchanges between the Japanese officials and the Ming Hongwu emperor in Wang Yi-T'ung, *Official Relations between China and Japan 1368-1594* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies IX). (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 18. Tsukamoto Manabu also discusses how some Japanese intellectual claimed superior status to China due to its mythical unbroken imperial lineage and the reverence it commanded from the people. See Tsukamoto Manabu, 'Edo jidai ni okeru "i" kansen ni tsuite', *Nihon rekishi* (no. 371, April 1979, pp. 1-18), p. 3

The solution to this was found by developing two policies. First, the Japanese did not seek investiture from China. While some diplomatic overtures were made to the Ming, as the shogunate in Edo (江戸 present day Tokyo) strengthened their control over Japan, interest in seeking Chinese investiture diminished.⁸⁸ Japanese attitudes towards China around this time can best be described as ambivalent. Studies of Japanese Confucianists of the Tokugawa period show that while many of them produced works legitimating Japanese claims to civilisational superiority vis-à-vis China, they harboured feelings of admiration towards Chinese civilisation and had difficulties in shaking these sentiments off completely.⁸⁹ However, these inner tensions were to a certain extent relieved by the rise of the Manchurian Qing dynasty as the new ruling dynasty of China. The rise of the Manchus, who were conventionally seen as 'barbarians', came as a considerable shock to many of the Japanese elite. While feelings towards China remained riddled with contradictions, to a certain extent the emergence of the 'alien' Manchu Qing dynasty made the Japanese even more reluctant to seek Chinese investiture.⁹⁰

Second, following from above, the Japanese now established their own alternative tribute system, which was 'an alternative order of Japanese fantasy, a looking glass which might reflect the reemergent centrality of a newly reunified Japan.'⁹¹ To this end, any references which may have implied Chinese superiority were eliminated in Japanese diplomatic intercourse. The Tokugawa rulers did not use the title 'king' (ō 王), which implied inferior status to the Chinese emperor, and neither did they use the Chinese calendar in their correspondence. Although it is tempting to suggest that this constituted a fundamental challenge to the East Asian international order and indicates a shift in Japan's identity and interest, this was not the case. To be sure, Japan's actions did contest the *Sinocentric* international order, but in fact, Japan continued to conduct its diplomatic relations within the *East Asian* international order, just as it had before. The difference now was that Japan assumed the position of the virtuous state, the *ka* (華), or

⁸⁸ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, pp. 60-61

⁸⁹ For an excellent study of the contradictory positions of the Tokugawa Confucians, see Kate Wildman Nakai, 'The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan: The Problem of Sinocentrism', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (vol. 40, no. 1, June 1980, pp. 157-199)

⁹⁰ Tsukamoto Manabu, 'Tsunayoshi seiken no rekishiteki ichi o megutte', *Nihonshi kenkyū* (no. 236, April 1982, pp. 38-56), pp. 46-47. The collapse of the Ming also gave rise to debates among the Tokugawa political decision-makers over whether or not to send troops to China to assist the Ming, although in the end caution won the day. The discussions within the Tokugawa leadership surrounding the collapse of the Ming and the rise of the Qing are given detailed analysis in Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 110-167, 222-225

⁹¹ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 173

'Middle Kingdom'. The assumption of this status entailed labelling other polities as 'barbarians' (*i* 夷), and its neighbours (including China) readily filled this position.⁹² By 'excluding those countries which would not abide by the rules of [the Japan-centric] diplomatic order,' Ronald P. Toby argues,

the Tokugawa bakufu proficed a *climate* which could nurture conceits of Japanese centrality, the *atmosphere* in which an intellectual photosynthesis could transform the elements of indigenous ideas of national divinity and the difficult Confucian dichotomy of *ka* and *i* into an order in which Japan was *ka* and others, even the historical (if not the normative) China, were *i*.⁹³

Tributary missions from Korea and the Ryūkyū Kingdom continued to be an important means by which to enhance Japanese legitimacy, and this is indicative of the fact that the 'constitutional structure of procedural justice' in the Japan-centric tribute system remained one of 'ritual justice' informed by the norms of the Sinocentric tribute system.⁹⁴ In similar fashion to the Chinese reception of tributary missions, recognition by fellow member states would serve to show that the Tokugawa's virtuous rule and prestige had emanated far and wide, bolstering the regime's domestic and international legitimacy.⁹⁵ Indeed, a Tokugawa shogunate official in charge of hosting a Korean emissary in 1624 stated:

...the shogun is even now not yet supreme, and so the hearts of the people are even today not yet submissive. Therefore we awaited the arrival of your embassy most eagerly. We thought we would subjugate the land by a boastful display, conducting an embassy well suited to the situation. The shogun is deeply pleased. Had the embassy failed to arrive, the Japanese people might have doubted that we were totally at peace.⁹⁶

The Japanese conducted diplomatic and trading relations with Korea primarily through the indirect channels provided by the Tsushima fiefdom. Trade was mainly conducted through the fiefdom, headed by the Sō family, which acted as an intermediary and maintained a trading house in Korea (the *waegwan/wakan* 倭館). Both states (at least theoretically) interacted as equals. There were usually no direct diplomatic relations between the Tokugawa shogunate and the Yi dynasty. Direct communications took place between the shogunate and Korea in the event of visits by the Korean

⁹² For similar cases which took place in the context of Europe, see Neumann and Welsh, 'The Other in European self-definition'; Iver B. Neumann, 'Self and Other in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 2, no. 2, 1996, pp. 139-174); and Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999)

⁹³ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 227

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 170 confirms this assertion.

⁹⁵ Tanaka Takeo, *Chūsei taigai kankeishi*, p. 264

⁹⁶ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 70

emissaries (*tsūshinshi* or *t'ongsinsa* 通信使) sent on the event of a new *shōgun* ascending to power. While these foreign missions were presented as though they had been spontaneous sent by their rulers, the Tokugawa had in fact requested their visit to Japan.⁹⁷ The Japanese authorities hosted the Korean embassy (which was customary practice within the tribute system) during their stay.⁹⁸ They were also actively encouraged to visit shrines dedicated to the Tokugawa, an act that was perceived by the Japanese to be evidence of the splendour of Tokugawa rule.⁹⁹

Sino-Japanese relations under multiple tribute systems

Despite these challenges posed by the Japanese, Japan's actions did not in themselves constitute a fundamental challenge to the East Asian international order, and neither was China's hegemonic position within it overturned by them. For most of the time, relations among the member states of the East Asian international order were managed flexibly.

How did China and Japan interact with each other under their respective tribute systems? While Tokugawa Japan did not seek direct diplomatic relations with both the Ming and Qing, there is evidence of the first *shōgun* Tokugawa Ieyasu showing interest in trade with China; and in reality the Japanese could not entirely ignore their powerful neighbour either.¹⁰⁰ The eventual solution was to continue trading without compromising Japan's perceived position as the 'Middle Kingdom' of its own tribute system. Chinese traders were permitted to come to Nagasaki (長崎) to trade, and indirect trade was continued through Korea and the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Sino-Japanese relations from the seventeenth century were strictly commercial, however, and no embassies were sent by either country. Regardless of this, the Japanese did on some occasions make some attempts to impress their 'virtue' upon the Chinese. China's hierarchical position within Japan's alternative tribute system was downgraded considerably. Correspondence with China was dealt with by Tokugawa authorities of relatively low rank, befitting the former's inferior status.

⁹⁷ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 174-177

⁹⁸ A detailed examination of the Korean envoys visits to Japan can be found in George M. McCune, 'The Exchange of Envoys between Korea and Japan during the Tokugawa Period', *The Far Eastern Quarterly* (vol. 5, no. 3, May 1946, pp. 308-325).

⁹⁹ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, pp. 97-99

¹⁰⁰ Tanaka Takeo, *Chūsei taigai kankeishi*, p. 265, Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, pp. 55-61

By the eighteenth century, the Japanese took a further step forward in demoting the Chinese, no doubt spurred on by the understanding that 'the rise of the Qing was understood by East Asian intellectuals as a change from a "civilised" Han Chinese state to a "barbarian" Manchu state'.¹⁰¹ The Chinese were now issued with *shinpai* (信牌), a form of passport that was to be used by officially sanctioned merchants.¹⁰² While the issuing of the *shinpai* was also a means to prevent the drain of silver and copper out of Japan,¹⁰³ it also served to establish Japan's 'superior position' in the international hierarchy. In his excellent study of Tokugawa Japan's diplomacy, Toby explains this particular aspect of the *shinpai* system as follows:

The Chinese were barbarians: the credentials were dated in the Japanese calendar; they called China 'T'ang [Tang, or *kara* in Japanese], the vulgar Japanese name for that country, rather than 'ta-Ch'ing [Da Qing], the formal name usually used in diplomatic discourse...If Chinese merchants accepted the use of the Japanese calendar, were they not also signalling Chinese acknowledgement of Japan's central role in the world yielding the center to Japan?¹⁰⁴

China, on the whole, was indifferent to Japanese contestations of its supremacy within the East Asian international order. China of course never acknowledged Japan's 'superiority'. In its responses to early Tokugawa overtures of relations, the Ming used language deemed inappropriate and offensive,¹⁰⁵ which was unacceptable to the Japanese. This rendered early efforts by the Tokugawa regime to establish direct relations with the Chinese fruitless, and no further attempts were made by either side. This status quo continued even after the Qing's conquest of China. Although the Qing did attempt to entice Japan to send tributary missions via Korea, their overtures were thwarted by 'active sabotage' by the Koreans,¹⁰⁶ and both sides subsequently continued their unofficial, indirect relations. The Chinese were similarly unmoved by Japan's own attempts to usurp their claims to the apex of the social hierarchy of the East Asian international order. Chinese resentment towards the *shinpai* system was strong at the

¹⁰¹ Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nippon to higashi ajia*, p. 37

¹⁰² The *shinpai* were tickets with official seals affixed on them. These were then split in half between the merchant and the Nagasaki Office of Chinese Interpreters. Whenever a Chinese vessel entered the port, the Nagasaki authorities could then check to see if the merchants were those authorised by the Tokugawa authorities. The system had also been adopted by the Ming in its trading relations with Japan, primarily to protect Chinese shores from Japanese pirates. This form of trade is known in Japanese as *kangō bōeki* (勘合貿易).

¹⁰³ Despite the lack of official relations, China and Japan enjoyed thriving trading relations. Japanese silver and gold was in particular demand by the Chinese, and this drained out of the country either directly or via Korea. See Tashiro, 'Foreign Relations during the Edo Period', especially pp. 294-296.

¹⁰⁴ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 199

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 62

¹⁰⁶ Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nippon to higashi ajia*, p. 35

outset, even resulting in the merchants petitioning the Qing officials that Chinese were being compelled to enter subordinate relations with Japan.¹⁰⁷ The Chinese were, however, in much need of Japanese copper at this time, and did not wish to disrupt stable trading relations. The Kangxi emperor eventually decided not to chastise the Japanese.¹⁰⁸

Such Chinese postures towards Japan are, to risk stating the obvious, a product of multiple factors on the side of the Qing.¹⁰⁹ Its relatively benign policies towards its Japanese neighbour (particularly if we consider the latter's blatant defiance towards the theoretical assumptions of Chinese supremacy) seem to fit John King Fairbank's argument that China adopted relatively passive policies towards states which shared a similar political culture. However, there are also instances when China *did* use force against its closer neighbours who shared a similar culture,¹¹⁰ and these historic realities do suggest an overly benign view of China on Fairbank's part. Rather than cultural reasons, it seems that there were other reasons for China not taking action towards Japan, and we will have to satisfy ourselves with three possible reasons for China's indifference to Japan, which will be forwarded here.

First, it is possible that the Qing were not particularly bent on changing a system that was serving its economic interests rather well. Second, it can be argued that the Qing was not primarily concerned with Japanese challenges to their security or prestige at this time. Even at the height of its powers under the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors, its main preoccupation was subjugating the Jungar Mongols. Third, even though Japan's actions may have been an important change in Japanese eyes, this quite possibly did not constitute a significant challenge to China's own sinocentrism. While defiance by member states was frequent within the East Asian international order,

¹⁰⁷ The Chinese merchants who protested were primarily from Fujian, as they had not been issued with the *shinpai*, and were subsequently excluded from trading with Japan. Their complaints, however, were framed in terms of indignation at being placed in an inferior social standing vis-à-vis Japan. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, pp. 199-201.

¹⁰⁸ Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nippon to higashi ajia*, p. 38. Arano also states that in the specific case of the *shinpai*, the Chinese could also utilise them to control private trade, thereby furthering the implementation of their own policy of restricting private trade.

¹⁰⁹ Onuma Yasuaki notes four possible factors that China would have considered. First, 'the gravity, manner and...intent' of insubordination; second, 'the comparison in terms of military strength between China and the party in question'; third, 'the distance between China and the party (whether the party is so distant that the failure [to respect Chinese supremacy] does not seriously matter in Chinese domestic politics', fourth, 'the domestic situation (whether it is financially and/or militarily possible for the Chinese dynasty to dispatch military forces to sanction the "disobedient" party).' See Onuma, 'When was the Law of International Society Born?', p. 16

¹¹⁰ According to the exhaustive study of the *Zhongguo junshi shi* editorial group, there are twelve instances of military conflicts between the Qing and states within the 'Sinic zone', Korea, Vietnam, Ryūkyū, and Japan. See *Zhongguo junshi shi bianxiezu* (eds), *Zhongguo junshi shi (fujian): lidai zhanzheng nianbiao* (vol. 2). (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1986)

quite often 'nothing they did caused the Chinese any doubt that the universe accepted their position of centrality and paramountcy',¹¹¹ and they could safely ignore such challenges 'by characterizing the objecting party as an ignorant savage whom the civilized people such as the Chinese would find it a waste of time to bother with'.¹¹² It is perhaps this highly Sinocentric notion of supremacy that allowed ambiguities to continue without destabilising the East Asian international order. All that was needed was to maintain this supposed 'supremacy' of China, and to this end, 'organised hypocrisy' worked extremely well. While Japan was quite open in its rejection of Sinocentrism, all other states within the East Asian international order – Korea and the Ryūkyū Kingdom – at the very least nominally accepted China's claims to supremacy. This was enough to satisfy the Chinese, and consequently they did not see much need to take action towards Japan.

China, Japan, and their Tributaries: Korea

While China and Japan's lack of official bilateral relations meant that their competing claims to normative primacy within the East Asian international order did not come into direct conflict, it is important to keep in mind that there was still room for indirect friction to occur within the wider realm of the region. In order to legitimate their self-proclaimed positions at the apex of the social hierarchy, China and Japan needed to solicit tributary relations with their neighbours and showcase their 'virtue' towards their peers. Geographical proximity meant that the 'target' states for both Chinese and Japanese would overlap, and this also gave rise to interesting ambiguities – and sometimes conflicts.

Korea was an important state for both the Chinese and Japanese, owing both to its strategic location, geographical proximity, and long-standing ties with both states. But Korea was in no way completely subservient to its neighbours. In similar fashion to Japan, the rise of the 'barbarian' Manchu Qing dynasty was a shock to the Koreans, and for a while they remained loyal to the Ming, refusing to recognise the Qing as their superior and preferring to characterise their relations in terms of a relationship of elder and younger brothers. Their recalcitrance eventually brought about an invasion by the Qing in 1627 and 1635, and the Koreans entered full tributary relations based on paternal relations. The Koreans, however, maintained an independent stance. They

¹¹¹ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 202

¹¹² Onuma Yasuaki, 'When was the Law of International Society Born?', p. 16

were not 'fully devoted to the Ch'ing [Qing] dynasty, whereas [they] had highly respected the Ming, not only because the Ming had given help during the Japanese invasions of the late sixteenth century but also because Confucian culture had flourished in Ming China.'¹¹³ They continued to wear Ming-styled clothing, and refused to use the Qing calendar in their correspondence with the Japanese, covertly demonstrating their refusal to recognise the 'barbarian' Manchu dynasty as their superior.¹¹⁴

Contestation over social hierarchy was also evident in Japanese-Korean relations. While the relationship was theoretically conducted on an equal basis, both sides utilised the bilateral relationship to place themselves in a higher position. The Japanese frequently described the Korean embassies as 'tributary missions', implying their superiority. The Koreans engaged in similar behaviour. Their historical experience 'of transmitter of Chinese culture to Japan' caused them 'to regard themselves as culturally superior to the Japanese.'¹¹⁵ They did not use the Japanese calendar in their correspondence with Japan, preferring to use cyclical names for the particular year.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the Koreans also maintained their own 'tributary' in the form of the Tsushima fiefdom. In return for their rights for direct trading and diplomacy with Korea, the Sō rulers were issued with 'official titles or seals from the Korean court' which 'put themselves in a semi-tributary relationship' with the Koreans.¹¹⁷ When visiting Korea, Tsushima officials would also present gifts that were termed 'offerings (*chinsang* 進上)',¹¹⁸ implying their inferior relationship. In return, the Sō fiefdom received gifts and rice from the Korean king as a royal favour. According to the logic of the East Asian international order, this again indicated the existence of a form of tributary relationship between Tsushima and Korea, the former in a subordinate status of a 'outer servant (*gaishin* 外臣)'.¹¹⁹

China, Japan, and their Tributaries: the Ryūkyū Kingdom

While the Koreans maintained their tributary relations with China and refused to acknowledge deferential relations vis-à-vis Japan, the Ryūkyū Kingdom showed a

¹¹³ Hae-jong Chun, 'Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period' in John King Fairbank (ed), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 111

¹¹⁴ See Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 95

¹¹⁵ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 21

¹¹⁶ This calendar was based on a sixty-year cycle.

¹¹⁷ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 18

¹¹⁸ McCune, 'The Exchange of Envoys between Korea and Japan during the Tokugawa Period', p. 321

¹¹⁹ Fujimura Michio, *Nisshin sensō zengo no ajia seisaku*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), p. 20

different pattern of interaction.¹²⁰ The historical records indicate that both the Japanese and Chinese interacted with the inhabitants of the Ryūkyū Islands (also known as the *Nansei shotō* 南西諸島 in Japanese) as early as the seventh century. Although the island was still divided between three rival camps, the first tributary mission was sent to the Ming in 1373, and received investiture as the *Chūzan'ō* king (中山王). After the island was unified under Shō (尚) lineage, tributary missions with China continued until 1864.¹²¹

However, the kingdom did not merely remain a tributary of the Chinese empire. It maintained tributary relations with its other neighbour Japan. The Satsuma lord Shimazu Iehisa (島津家久) invaded and established control over the island kingdom in 1609, in part to chastise it for refusing to send a tributary mission of submission to the Tokugawa shogunate, but primarily to satisfy motives 'to utilise the Ryūkyū Kingdom's special position [as a tributary state to both China and Japan] and reap the benefits of trade'.¹²² The Ryūkyū Kingdom was placed under Satsuma domination. It had to seek the latter's approval for the succession of new kings, and it was also compelled to provide taxes for the fiefdom.

This does not mean that the kingdom was under 'imperial control' under the Satsuma fiefdom. While the Ryūkyū kings had to seek Satsuma's permission for a new king to come to the throne, this was compatible with the norms of the tribute system and did not necessarily signify 'imperial control'. Under the East Asian international order, all rulers of the 'tributary states' were expected to seek investiture from the 'senior state' (which typically meant China). From this perspective, the Satsuma prerogative vis-à-vis the Ryūkyū Kingdom was 'the same as those of the Chinese emperor, who also had the right of investiture on the kings.'¹²³ To be sure, the Satsuma fiefdom exerted greater control than China, which never interfered directly with Ryūkyū domestic politics.¹²⁴ But Satsuma interest in the kingdom was not in outright 'imperial' domination.¹²⁵ By

¹²⁰ The discussions that follow draw heavily from Hanabusa Nagamichi, 'Okinawa kizoku no enkaku', *Kokusaihō gaikō zasshi* (no. 54, vol. 1-3, April 1955, pp. 3-40)

¹²¹ A brief, albeit useful survey of Ryūkyū history prior to unification can be found in Takara Kurayoshi *Ryūkyū ōkoku*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993) and Harada Nobuo, *Ryūkyū to Chūgoku: wasurerareta sakuhōshi*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2003)

¹²² Hanabusa Nagamichi, 'Okinawa kizoku no enkaku', p. 12. The invasion of the Ryūkyū Kingdom was justified on the grounds that the Ashikaga Shogunate 'rewarded' the Ryūkyū Islands to the lord of the Satsuma fiefdom.

¹²³ Uemura Hideaki, '“Hokkaidō”, “Okinawa” no shokuminchika to sono kokusaihō no ronri', *PRIME* (no. 12, March 2000, pp. 55-82), p. 72

¹²⁴ Stephen D. Krasner, 'Organized hypocrisy in nineteenth-century East Asia', p. 178

¹²⁵ This point is supported by Uemura Hideaki, '“Hokkaidō”, “Okinawa” no shokuminchika to sono kokusaihō no ronri', p. 71. Robert K. Sakai also notes that the Satsuma fiefdom 'controlled

continuing its tributary relations with the Chinese Empire and Japan,¹²⁶ the Ryūkyū Kingdom could legitimate its existence as a member of the East Asian international order, and was left with a channel to conduct its own independent foreign policy. Furthermore, by accepting a subordinate position vis-à-vis the Satsuma fiefdom and providing the latter with the means for trade, the kingdom did to a certain extent defend its political existence. In this sense, Uemura Hideaki argues, the Ryūkyū Kingdom ‘used trade-centred diplomatic policies to maintain its own nation-state and territory’.¹²⁷

The Ryūkyū Kingdom’s tributary relations with China and Japan equally served both states’ interests in enhancing their normative standing within the East Asian international order. For the Japanese side, the kingdom served both political and economic interests. Economic interests were particularly prominent for the Satsuma fiefdom. It used the island kingdom to trade with China, and continuously imposed heavy taxes on the island to enrich its own coffers. The Amami islands, traditionally closer to the Ryūkyū Kingdom, came under direct Satsuma control and were subjected to brutal rule.

Political interests were prominent in the minds of both Satsuma and Tokugawa rulers. Although the Kingdom was under indirect Satsuma rule, the islands were seen as an important ‘tributary’ that could be utilised to enhance both the Satsuma fiefdom and the Tokugawa shogunate’s prestige within Japanese society and the East Asian international order. In the context of the rule of the third *shōgun*, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1623-1651), the Tokugawa authorities had tributary missions sent to Edo (present day Tokyo), where the Ryūkyūans ‘served much the same function for Iemitsu as the 1617 Korean mission had for [second *shōgun*] Hidetada, helping to confirm the legitimacy of his sole possession of the shogunal office’, and ‘parade before the court and the daimyos [大名 feudal lords]...thus producing “the illusion that the shogun’s grace extended beyond the seas.”’¹²⁸ By 1634, Ryūkyū visits were described by the Japanese as ‘bearing tribute (来貢 *raikō*)’, clearly signifying the former’s subordinate status.¹²⁹ In their correspondence, the former used the Japanese calendar and addressed the *shōgun* in

[Ryūkyū]...primarily by surveillance. Rather few officials were sent to the islands. Their direct participation in internal administration was slight, their chief responsibilities being foreign trade and foreign relations.’ See Robert K. Sakai, *The Ryukyu (Liu-Chiu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma*, in John King Fairbank (ed), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 119.

¹²⁶ Apart from regular tributary missions to the Satsuma fiefdom, the Ryukyu kingdom also sent missions to the Tokugawa shogunate in Edo.

¹²⁷ Uemura Hideaki, ‘“Hokkaidō”, “Okinawa” no shokuminchika to sono kokusaijō no ronri’ p. 72

¹²⁸ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p.72

¹²⁹ Hamashita Takeshi ‘Higashi ajia shi ni miru kai chitsujo’, p. 34

respectable language. In accordance with the logic of differentiation between the 'centre of civilisation' and 'barbarians', the Ryūkyūans' 'exotic' cultural differences were emphasised in order to demonstrate that peoples of lands far away had felt the virtuous rule of Satsuma and Tokugawa.¹³⁰ The embassies were required to dress in traditional Ryūkyūan clothing, and a decree issued in 1709 further demanded that they 'carry long swords, dress in brocade and bring with them "Chinese style" weaponry. Their equipment, above all, must be "of the sort used in a foreign court, so that they cannot be mistaken for Japanese".'¹³¹

Sino-Ryūkyū relations were primarily of a political nature. Although the Ryūkyū Kingdom had been an important entrepôt for trade between East and Southeast Asia in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, its economic importance had declined. The Kingdom found it extremely costly to host the Chinese imperial emissaries; at times it could not afford to purchase the goods the latter brought for trade, resulting in squabbles between the two. Tributary relations were continued between the two primarily because of the political gains that could be derived. For the Ryūkyū Kingdom, receiving Chinese investiture was an important means by which it could maintain an independent identity, and it had also

...attached a high spiritual value to the investiture, even though it had no immediate effect on the king's political authority. During the long period of direct contact with China, Chinese influence had permeated Liu-ch'iu [Ryūkyū]'s administration and Confucianism had become the state ideology.¹³²

The Satsuma fiefdom was similarly interested in maintaining Sino-Ryūkyū tributary relations for trading purposes, but unwilling to risk a rupture in the two states' ties by revealing its control of the island kingdom. To this end, they engaged in efforts to rid Ryūkyū of any Japanese influences whenever the Chinese envoys arrived. The few Satsuma officials on the islands went into hiding during an emissary's visit. Locals were forbidden to wear Japanese-styled clothing, and the elites were forbidden to talk to Chinese officials about the true nature of their relations with Satsuma.¹³³

The Chinese were certainly not ignorant of Satsuma-Ryūkyū relations. They had received Ryūkyūan reports of the Satsuma invasion of 1609. Furthermore, the Chinese

¹³⁰ The Ryūkyū Kingdom's tributary relations with Satsuma are examined in detail in Sakai, *The Ryukyu (Liu-Chiu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma*, p. 123

¹³¹ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, 'The Frontiers of Japanese Identity', p. 52

¹³² Ta-Tuan Ch'en, 'Investiture of Liu-ch'iu Kings in the Ch'ing Period' in John King Fairbank (ed), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 160

¹³³ Sakai, *The Ryukyu (Liu-Chiu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma*, pp. 132-134

envoys sent to the kingdom noted that the people conspicuously avoided talking about the Japanese. While 'there is no indication that the Liu-ch'iu's real subordination to Satsuma came to [the Chinese envoys'] knowledge...[t]hey realized the Liu-ch'iuans were hiding something.'¹³⁴ However, neither Japanese control of Ryūkyū nor the latter's deception seems to have caused a significant problem with the Chinese. As Ronald P. Toby argues, '[w]hat was critical for the maintenance of the Chinese self-image, the perception of Chinese centrality, was merely the *appearance* of acceptance by foreign states.'¹³⁵ The Ryūkyū Kingdom's loyalty was sufficient to demonstrate China's hierarchical supremacy. Furthermore, even under Satsuma control, the Ryūkyūans continued to send their students to China for study, serving to further Chinese perceptions of their superiority.¹³⁶ As long as this perception was held by the Chinese, there was little chance that the Qing would take decisive action, and even this was contingent on whether or not the Chinese had adequate material power at their disposal. Ta-Tuan Ch'en is correct when he writes that the Chinese

...rested content with the loyalty shown by the Liu-ch'iu government, pleased with all the sinicized forms they witnessed in Shuri and Naha. The evidence of all the mission journals written in the Ch'ing era indicates that the Chinese envoys – and also the Ch'ing court – remained indifferent toward Liu-ch'iu-Japanese relations.¹³⁷

Conclusion

On the eve of the expansion of European International Society, the diplomatic interaction between China, Japan and its neighbours had settled into a pattern of 'competing tribute systems'. Both states' behaviour was thoroughly informed by the fundamental norms of the East Asian international order: both states identified themselves as 'Middle Kingdoms' or the 'Centres of Civilisation', and their interests were framed in terms of seeking to enhance and maintain this social standing within the order by attracting 'foreigners' to submit tribute.

¹³⁴ Ta-Tuan Ch'en, 'Investiture of Liu-ch'iu Kings in the Ch'ing Period', p. 163

¹³⁵ Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 202

¹³⁶ Harada Nobuo states that the Ming Hongwu emperor was particularly pleased by the Ryūkyū's sending of students, no doubt as it vindicated Chinese claims to cultural advancement. Harada Nobuo *Ryūkyū to Chūgoku: wasurerareta sakuhōshi*, pp. 15-16. Ryūkyū practice of sending students continued well into the Qing era, and the Qing continued to extend extremely generous support for the Ryūkyūan students. For a detailed description of the Ryūkyū students in China, see Mitsugu Matsuda, 'The Ryukyuan Government Scholarship Students to China 1392-1868: Based on a Short Essay by Nakahara Zenchu, 1962', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 21, no. 3/4, 1966, pp. 273-304)

¹³⁷ Ta-Tuan Ch'en, 'Investiture of Liu-ch'iu Kings in the Ch'ing Period', p. 163

These identities were of course not monolithic, and were open to negotiation *within* each polity. China had to make some adjustments to their notions of superiority in order to incorporate competing claims and ideologies that challenged it. However, the Chinese do appear to have felt more secure in their self-appointed position at the apex of the East Asian international order than their challengers. Even if a few states within the East Asian international order like Japan challenged their claims to supremacy, this had not been particularly significant – the real challenge to China had come from the nomads from the north. China was arguably one of the most powerful states in the region, and many of its neighbours were keen to maintain economic and political ties. The Chinese consequently had plenty of ‘barbarians’ who would present ‘tribute’, and in any case the institutional ambiguities inherent in the East Asian international order served to preserve the image of a Sinocentric order.

For the Japanese, their claims to ‘Middle Kingdom’ status were arguably more tenuous: although they went to considerable lengths to demonstrate their entitlement to this status, they were under in the shadow of the regional hegemon, China. Many Japanese Confucian scholars, for instance, were proud of their own civilisation and actively took part in legitimating Japan’s claims to ‘superiority’; yet they found it hard to rid themselves of some sense of admiration for Chinese culture and learning. Japan’s own sense of its ‘Middle Kingdom’ status only began to solidify after the rise of the ‘barbarian’ Qing dynasty, which served to tarnish Japanese perceptions of China as the centre of Confucian civilisation.

It is striking to note that both the East Asian international order and European International Society were characterised by their hierarchical structures in the context of the nineteenth century. European International Society has of course been characterised by its notion of sovereign equality. This is true, but only within the narrow confines of its ‘civilised’ core. There did in fact exist two hierarchies between the ‘civilised’ and ‘uncivilised’, and this displays some similarities to the East Asian international order, where the ‘civilised’ and ‘uncivilised’ were differentiated in terms of their perceived attainment of Confucian ‘virtue’.

It is worth pondering to what extent the hierarchies within the East Asian international order hindered or facilitated China and Japan’s socialisation into European International Society. The East Asian international order and its tribute system had made both states highly sensitive to hierarchies within their international environment. Furthermore, as their interactions with European individuals increased, both states

eventually became aware of the concept of differential treatment based on 'civilisational' attainment within their international environment. Whether or not they would attempt to climb this newly discovered international social ladder depended on whether or not they would accept it as legitimate, and this process will be explored in the chapters that follow.

ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE: CHINESE AND JAPANESE PERCEPTIONS OF EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Introduction

This chapter seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the Chinese and Japanese interpretations of European International Society. The period under investigation is between the 1840s (when the Chinese experienced their first full encounter with the Society) to the 1890s. In the case of Japan, the period covers both the end of the Tokugawa era (also known as the *bakumatsu* 幕末 period) and the Meiji era (which began in 1868). The empirical examinations here correspond to the stage of socialisation of acquiring 'knowledge': it investigates Chinese and Japanese interpretations of the Society, its institutions and its social rules. These are often visible in the debates among their elites, and took place under different contexts. The empirical cases will reflect this. In the case of China, the discussions surrounding the Chinese elites' adoption of certain institutions of the Society are most relevant to our investigation. This took place primarily after the military fiasco of the Arrow War (1856-1860), when the Xianfeng (咸豐) emperor and his conservative entourage were forced to flee the capital and a group of moderates headed by Prince Gong took control of foreign affairs in the ensuing power vacuum. As a result of this development, a new office, the *zongli yamen* (總理衙門), was established in 1861 to specifically deal with the European powers. China began to use international law in its dealings with the European powers, and in 1877 Guo Songtao was sent to Britain as China's first Minister overseas. For Japan, the focus is more on the Meiji period, when the elite were making a concerted effort to adapt to their new international environment. Discussions of European International Society are often found in the written works of leading intellectuals, as well as the official records such as the Iwakura Mission (which was despatched in 1871), the Japanese leaders' fact-finding trip to Europe and the United States.

As argued previously, if an actor desires to seek membership into a social group, she needs to gain sufficient knowledge of the rules of her social environment for successful reproduction that will enable her acceptance by the members of the group. Perceptions – what actors 'believe' the rules to be – will thus play a crucial role in shaping the process of socialisation. Investigations into initial perceptions of European International Society are, then, an integral part of obtaining a better understanding of China and Japan's socialisation into the Society.

While previous studies of China and Japan's entry have concentrated primarily on the acceptance of European-style diplomacy and international law, this chapter aims to forward a more nuanced depiction of this process. In their conceptualisation of the *expansion* of European International Society, works by English School scholars have assumed that a Society that aimed for some form of order and coexistence expanded to East Asia.¹ It seems worthwhile, then, to compare Chinese and Japanese perceptions of the institutions of the Society with the 'Grotian' ideal types. The results serve to highlight that both China and Japan did not believe themselves to be engaging with a Society which aimed for 'coexistence'. They also challenge English School assumptions that these states were socialised into an International Society with a single mode of interaction.

China and Japan's engagement with European International Society was by no means an uncritical acceptance of its institutions and moral purpose, but a complex process. Their perceptions of the Society were multifaceted, and sometimes contradictory: they reflected both the existence of imperialism and order, as well as the historical context of the late-nineteenth century, when tensions *between* European states were never far from the surface. Initially, however, both states' encounter with the Society began with a full confrontation with its 'civilising' mode of interaction. Consequently, the institutions of the Society were initially seen in a coercive light, rather than promoting order or coexistence within international politics. One of the consequences of the expansion of the 'civilising' mode of interaction to East Asia was, however, to force both China and Japan into entering much more intense diplomatic relations with the European powers. As both states' knowledge of the European world began to increase as a result, the mode of interaction that supposedly governed the 'civilised' members became known to them. The consequence was an ambivalent and dualistic interpretation of European International Society and its institutions.

¹ This is not to imply that the English School scholars were unaware of different understandings of these institutions. Hedley Bull himself concedes, for instance, that great powers can abuse their power, and that the preservation of the common good – such as the balance of power – has often been achieved at the detriment of the weaker states. This of course leaves open the possibility for alternative interpretations of International Society and its institutions. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp. 103-105, 200-201 and 220.

The Expansion of European International Society: encountering the 'civilising' face

Witnessing the 'civilising' mode of interaction: early Chinese elites' perceptions

China's incorporation into European International Society came in the wake of the Opium War of 1840-1842. The War had its origins in Qing confiscation and the destroying of British-imported opium. The British had become the leading importer of opium by the late-eighteenth century, and the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade resulted in increased imports. From the British point of view, this was indeed a very effective way of redressing the chronic trade deficit it had suffered in its trade with China.² The Qing despatched an imperial commissioner, Lin Zexu (林則徐),³ to deal with the opium problem. Lin took decisive action. In March 1839, he ordered foreign traders to hand over all of their opium and sign a bond assuring the Chinese that they would not engage in the smuggling of the drug. When he encountered resistance, Lin suspended trade and besieged the British traders' quarters. With Chinese compradors and servants withdrawn, the British were without regular supplies of food and were eventually forced to surrender their opium, which was then burned by the Qing authorities.

Back in Britain, there was outrage at what was seen as arbitrary destruction of British goods and insults to British subjects, fuelled by lobbying from the business community with links to China, who were, 'unanimous in asking...that vigorous measures shall be taken against the Chinese'.⁴ The British took military action against the Qing, and succeeded in overwhelming Chinese resistance. The following year, the British proceeded to occupy Hong Kong and besieged the City of Guangzhou (廣州 also known as Canton). In 1842, Shanghai was occupied. The Chinese were no match for British naval prowess and firepower. Lin Zexu was made the scapegoat for the entire military fiasco and hastily dismissed from his post by the emperor.⁵ A conciliatory stance was shown to placate the

² Immanuel C. Y. Hsü notes that '[a]fter 1826 the balance [of payments] began to slip the other way [to Britain]; between 1831 and 1833 nearly 10 million taels flowed out of China. The reversal gathered further momentum as time went on.' Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 168

³ Lin Zexu (1785-1850) was an official from Fujian province. He served in various posts including governor of Jiangsu and governor-general of Huguang, and was noted for his incorruptibility.

⁴ Secret despatch from Viscount Palmerston to Captain Elliot, R.N., Superintendent of Trade, 18th October, 1839. *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (series E, vol. 16: Anglo-Chinese War and Its Aftermath, 1839-1849). (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1994), p. 1

'English barbarians', and after some negotiations, the Treaty of Nanjing was signed on 29th August 1842.

The Treaty marked the beginning of China's incorporation into European International Society. Yongjin Zhang has noted that the 'process through which China was forcibly drawn into the world-wide European-dominated international system is that of the demise of Sinocentrism.'⁶ In 1842, this took place in two senses. Firstly, the treaty stipulated equality in official correspondence, thus breaking down the traditional sinocentric notion of the assumed superiority of China. The Chinese were forced to acknowledge sovereign equality, at least at a superficial level. Secondly, the Treaty forced the Chinese to accept British consuls in Guangzhou, Xiamen (廈門), Fuzhou (福州), Ningbo (寧波) and Shanghai (上海), if not at the capital Beijing (北京).

Another feature of the Society's expansion was the notion of extraterritoriality, whereby British nationals were to be tried by their own consuls rather than according to Chinese law. This was a hallmark of an 'uncivilised' identity, and signified that China not yet fulfilled the 'standard of civilisation',⁷ and symbolically placed China in an inferior position vis-à-vis Britain. The Chinese were not aware of the significance of this. Their 'inferiority' was based on the social standards of European International Society, which (at this stage) did not command much legitimacy, and meant little to them. However, in the future, if China was to share the sovereign prerogatives which European states enjoyed, it would have to fulfil the 'standards of civilisation', and further its socialisation into the norms and rules of the Society.

Preliminary Chinese reactions to this latest encounter with the Society came in the form of a number of works aimed at understanding the West. Studies such as Lin Zexu's translation of Murray's *Cyclopaedia of Geography*, the *Sizhou zhi* (四洲志 A Gazetteer of Four Continents), Wei Yuan (魏源)'s *Haiguo tuzhi* (海國圖志 Illustrated Treatise on the

⁵ Arthur Waley notes that the emperor 'was quite wrong in thinking that China's defeat was due to the inexperience of her military leaders. Superiority of fire-power and command of the sea and of the major waterways were what made the English invincible.' Arthur Waley, *The Opium War Through Chinese Eyes*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 185

⁶ Yongjin Zhang, *China in the International System 1918-20*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 16

⁷ Charles Elliot, the British Chief Superintendent of Trade in Canton (present day Guangzhou), had earlier already made clear to Viscount Palmerston that '[i]f...written assent to the laws of a foreign country involving conditions utterly incompatible with the fundamental principles of the law of England, are suddenly proposed to British subjects, there can be no voluntary lawful intercourse with that country till the difficulty shall have been removed, or met by special enactment.' Despatch from Captain Charles Elliot, R. N. to Viscount Palmerston, 17th January, 1840. *British Documents on Foreign Affairs* (series E, vol. 16: Anglo-Chinese War and Its Aftermath, 1839-1849), p. 32

Maritime States) and Xu Jiyu (徐繼畲)'s *Yinghuan zhilüe* (瀛環志略 A Brief Survey of the Maritime Circuit), were published in quick succession.⁸ These works, particularly the *Haiguo tuzhi*,⁹ give significant clues to early Chinese perceptions of European International Society for several reasons. Firstly, as Jane Kate Leonard notes, they constituted the first serious works by the Chinese 'to make a realistic geopolitical assessment of the worldwide dimensions of Western expansion and of its implications for Asian trade and politics'.¹⁰ Second, these works' influence on Chinese political decision-makers' perceptions of the European international order was considerable. According to Earl Swisher, the *Haiguo tuzhi*, for instance, 'was made required reading for all Chinese officials dealing with foreign affairs and was a standard work on the subject for two decades'¹¹ and influenced later Chinese reformers such as Kang Youwei (康有為).¹²

The starting point for both the *Haiguo tuzhi* and the *Yinghuan zhilüe* is the shock at witnessing the clear weakness of China in face of the challenge from the West. Accordingly, these accounts of the West are coloured by fear. The *Yinghuan zhilüe* painted a picture where European states, particularly Britain, were described in a somewhat predatory fashion. In describing the annexation of India by Britain, Xu Jiyu wrote:

In 1755 Bengal was annexed, and taking advantage of their victories the English stealthily encroached on the various states like silkworms eating mulberry leaves. The various parts, scattered and weak, could not resist, and consequently more than half became British colonies.¹³

The Dutch and the Spanish, he continues, feared British power. Similarly, in the *Haiguo tuzhi*, the fate of those who had been colonised by the European powers was depicted as a miserable one.¹⁴

⁸ 1841, 1843 and 1848, respectively.

⁹ The *Sizhou zhi* written by Lin Zexu was handed over to Wei Yuan by the former during his trip to exile following his dismissal, along with other pieces of information concerning the West. The *Haiguo tuzhi* is based heavily on these materials. It therefore seems safe to assume that there are overlaps between the *Sizhou zhi* and *Haiguo tuzhi* and to restrict analysis here to the *Haiguo tuzhi*.

¹⁰ Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984), p. 2

¹¹ Earl Swisher, 'Chinese Intellectuals and the Western Impact, 1838-1900', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (vol. 1, no. 1, October 1958, pp. 26-37), p. 29

¹² See Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), p. 211

¹³ Cited from Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 43

¹⁴ Wei Yuan, *Haiguo tuzhi* (abridged edition). (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1999), p. 167. Any translations in this study are, unless stated, my own.

Wei paid attention to the increasing expansion of European states, and attributed this to the increasing needs of commerce. For Wei, the pressures for trade were responsible for the bellicose behaviour by the Europeans, particularly the British; this possibly suggests his moral disapproval of European behaviour, particularly if we consider that Confucian philosophy tended to see commerce and merchants as 'corrupt', 'treacherous and therefore selfish'.¹⁵ Furthermore, such states were described as destabilising the peace within Europe for the sake of their own narrow interests. By utilising 'an inaccurate blend of accounts of the Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Empire,' Jane Kate Leonard states, 'Wei deduced that all Europe had once been unified under a vast empire centered in Rome in the country currently known to him as Italy.'¹⁶ On this basis, Wei drew parallels to the Roman and Chinese Empires by claiming that the pope was responsible for "act[ing] on Heaven's behalf to nurture the people" (代有持世之教皇, 代天宣化).¹⁷ He argued that commercial greed motivated England and France to disregard their religious duties and take over the power of the papacy and the Roman Empire, eventually causing the empire to fragment. Since a unified state was the Confucian ideal, British and French actions further implied immoral behaviour had plunged the populace into disorder and misery. The problem as defined by Wei was that the British in particular had 'neglected their duties of keeping to the teachings of Christianity and concentrated on trade. What is more, in order to support their trade, they [Britain] used their soldiers; commerce and military helped each other, and they finally overpowered the [other] island barbarians (不務行教而專行賈, 且佐行賈以行兵, 兵賈相資, 逐雄島夷).'¹⁸ The net result of such views of the West was a portrayal of the European international order as an immoral, competitive one. Leonard argues that Wei believed this lack of morality stemmed from the need to trade. This had led 'to...the emergence of the competitive, nation-state system. Both these characteristics had promoted patterns of national self-aggrandizement which were out of harmony with Chinese political values.'¹⁹

¹⁵ Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 18. In reality, however, Chinese officials were often not above engaging in private trade themselves.

¹⁶ Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, p. 155

¹⁷ See Wei Yuan, *Haiguo tuzhi* (abridged edition), p. 267, 'Ouluobazhou geguo zongxu (Preface to Europe)'. The translation is rendered from Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, p. 155

¹⁸ Wei Yuan, *Haiguo tuzhi* (abridged edition), p. 267

¹⁹ Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, p. 155

We must be careful not to overstate the influence of these early works, however. Despite these developments, most of the Chinese elite remained unaware of the Chinese Empire's position in the international arena and did not notice the full impact of the expansion of the Society into China.²⁰ Defeat by Britain was just another in the long line of defeats at the hands of 'barbarians', and the concessions the Chinese were forced to grant the British 'were adequately explained by the traditional and reassuring *formula*' of claiming that the emperor had bestowed an 'imperial favour' on the troublesome Western barbarians.²¹ The Treaty of Nanjing was viewed by the Daoguang (道光) emperor 'as a device that would "permanently prevent further troubles from happening"'.²² It would take a few more 'shocks' to spawn a reorientation in Chinese perceptions of their international order.

Later Chinese elites' perceptions

If the first Opium War did not shake the foundations of the world view of the Chinese elite, the Second Opium War (also known as the Arrow War) served to finally force this. The war itself was 'fought over a petty and dubious incident in which the British consul demanded an apology from the Guangdong governor general' for boarding a British-registered ship.²³ However, the consequences were catastrophic for the Chinese. British and French troops not only proceeded to occupy Guangzhou, but also captured Tianjin (天津), an important coastal city not far from the capital Beijing (北京). The Chinese aggravated matters by attacking the British delegates sailing to Beijing to ratify the Treaty of Tianjin that had been concluded in 1858. British and French troops sacked the Summer Palace in retaliation, and the Xianfeng emperor fled.

The Second Opium war and its aftermath are significant events in China's incorporation into European International Society in that they compelled a larger number of the Chinese elite to recognise and accept the fact that China was now part of a new

²⁰ It is interesting to note that the reformist intellectual Wang Tao also commented in his meeting with Japanese in 1879 that Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi* was not taken seriously during Wei's lifetime. See Yamamuro Shin'ichi, p. 217.

²¹ Earl Swisher, 'Chinese Intellectuals and the Western Impact, 1838-1900', p. 26

²² See Yen-p'ing Hao and Erh-min Wang, 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95' in Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (eds), *The Cambridge History of China* (vol. 11: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, part 2). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 154

²³ Henrietta Harrison, *China: Inventing the Nation*. (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 63

international system which they could not afford to ignore.²⁴ This acceptance was by no means an easy one, however. Many members of the court were forced only by the sheer power asymmetries between the Chinese and the European powers to accept that China had to enter relations with the latter on terms dictated by European International Society. Although they acquiesced to adopting some institutions of the Society, they remained deeply opposed to these changes, and their presence continued to constitute a significant force. Even those who were considered relatively conciliatory towards the Western powers often were so from a sense of lack of viable options.²⁵

The fact that China was coerced into the Society meant that the Chinese elites' views of the European international order were often coloured by fear. This is of course not to say that the perceptions of the Chinese elite remained static. As their interaction with the Western powers and their diplomats and nationals increased, some officials did argue that the Western powers were not necessarily aiming to conquer China, and were primarily interested in trade. Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠), for instance argued in 1875 that 'the true intentions of the Western states' plotting against us lies entirely in obtaining the benefits of trade, and they do not necessarily harbour sinister intentions against us (其志專在通商取利, 非必別有奸謀).²⁶

However, such views did not rid the Chinese elites' fears. Negative perceptions of the Society as a perilous entity persisted over time and among a wide range of individuals. More benign views frequently referred only to specific Western states during specific

²⁴ Indeed, Yen-p'ing Hao and Erh-Ming Wang state that whereas only one scholar commented upon the great changes in China's international environment between 1840 and 1860, this number jumped up to forty-three between 1861 and 1900. See Hao and Wang, 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', p. 156

²⁵ Several factors can be cited to explain why such views came to be held. First, such officials tended to have had first-hand experience of dealing with Western diplomats and had witnessed the sheer power of European military technology. Second, the higher-ranked officials who were involved in the political decision-making had access to military field reports and confidential memorials, and had a more accurate picture of the military superiority of the European powers. Third, there was 'a latent but not negligible influence for peace' (Banno: 71) by Chinese who were engaged in trade with the European powers, as well as some officials whose jurisdictions included treaty ports. See Masataka Banno, *China and the West 1858-1861: The Origins of the Tsungli Yamen*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 54-92, for a full discussion on the domestic context.

²⁶ Zuo Zongtang, 'Fuchen haifang saifang ji guanwai jiaofu liangyun qingxing xi', Memorial dated 7th day of Third Month, 1875. *Zuo Zongtang quanji: zougao* (vol. 6). (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1992), p. 188. Similar sentiments were expressed by Guo Songtao (1818-1891), who served as the first Chinese ambassador to Britain between 1877-79. See Sasaki Yō, *Shin matsu chūgoku ni okeru nihon kan to seiyō kan*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2000), p. 85. But note that Zuo's comments may have taken place around the time when there was a lively debate over where the Qing should concentrate its defences: Zuo was in favour of strengthening land defences, and he may have underplayed the threat from the maritime European powers to support his case.

periods, and whenever the Western powers (later joined by the Japanese) encroached on Chinese territory or China's tributary states, Chinese anxieties would reappear.²⁷

Table 4-1: Western Encroachment on China and its Tributaries

1854	Russia occupies northern Heilongjiang.
1856 (~1860)	The Second Opium War: British and French troops occupy Guangzhou and Tianjin, sack Summer Palace in Beijing.
1871 (~1881)	Russia occupies Ili (Yili).
1874	Japan's expedition to Taiwan
(1879)	(Ryūkyū kingdom absorbed into Japan: becomes Okinawa prefecture)
1884 (~1885)	Sino-French War
(1886)	(Britain annexes Burma)
(1887)	(French Indochina established)
1894 (~1895)	Sino-Japanese War
1898	The scramble for concessions – Germany establishes concessions in Jiaozhou, Russia in the Liaodong peninsula, Britain in Weihaiwei, and France in Guangzhou.

The European international order was often compared to the Spring and Autumn (770-403 B.C.) and Warring States periods (403-221 B.C.).²⁸ Yen-p'ing Hao and Erh-min Wang state that this was a result of China's increasing awareness of its position as a state among a multiple number of states.²⁹ The analogy between the Spring and Autumn/Warring States periods and the European-dominated international order demonstrate, they argue, Chinese intellectuals' recognition that 'China was not the Middle Kingdom but rather a state among

²⁷ A similar point is made by Mary C. Wright: even during the 1860s, when the Western powers were adopting a 'co-operative policy' with China, 'Chinese officials...were never quite certain what was behind the Co-operative Policy.' Although there was a degree of trust placed in some of the Western diplomats (who played an important role in implementing the 'Co-operative Policy') 'and they were quick to grasp the opportunities for maneuver that the new diplomatic atmosphere provided...the latent distrust of the foreigner's ultimate intentions remained and quickly returned to the surface in times of crisis.' See Mary C. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874*. (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 41. For a different viewpoint, however, see Owen H. H. Wong, *A New Profile in Sino-Western Diplomacy: The First Chinese Minister to Great Britain*. (Kowloon, Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Book, 1987), p. 5

²⁸ Hao and Wang observe that by 1894, Feng Guifen, Zheng Guanying, Ma Jianzhong, Zeng Jize, Wang Tao, Peng Yulin, Chen Qiu and Zhang Zhidong had used the Spring and Autumn period to characterise the new international order. See their 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', p. 189. There are different opinions regarding the exact period which constitutes the Spring and Autumn Period. John K. Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer give 722-481 B.C. as the dates of the Spring and Autumn Period (see John K. Fairbank, and Edwin O. Reischauer, *China: Tradition and Transformation*). However, recent works have shown that 722 B.C. indicates the date the Confucian text *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn) was written, rather than the actual start of the period itself. Here I use the periodisation used by Kamei Takayoshi, Mikami Tsugio, Hayashi Kentarō and Horigome Yōzō (eds) *Sekaishi nenpyō, chizu*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1995)

²⁹ I do not, however, agree with Hao and Wang's analysis that the invoking of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods denotes Chinese acceptance of itself as 'a state among equal states'. While there is no doubt that many Chinese were beginning to see the European powers as 'civilised' as China was, Sino-centric notions of superiority were difficult to overcome, and this was precisely one of the reasons why the Chinese found accepting their 'barbarous' status within European International Society so difficult.

equal states, like the state of Chin [Qin] in late Chou [Zhou]', where 'the Chinese world was made up of a conglomeration of separate states and principalities that resembled the multistate system of the late nineteenth century.'³⁰ Although this is no doubt true, Hao and Wang fail to note that both periods were traditionally seen in a highly negative light as periods in which war, alliance-making and diplomatic intrigues flourished.³¹

Meanwhile, others observed that in such an environment, competition for survival was the norm. Xue Fucheng (薛福成) noted that the states of the West 'rel[ie]d on intelligence and energy to compete with one another (西洋諸國, 恃智力以相競).'³² Feng Guifen (馮桂芬) noted in *Jiaobinlu kangyi* (校邠廬抗議) that the Western world was one of a highly zero-sum nature, where the barbarians worried that if one country became strong, then that would translate into the weakness of their own country (諸夷意中各有一彼國獨強即我國將弱之心).³³ Similar perceptions permeated the writings of higher-ranked officials in charge of foreign affairs. Zeng Guofan (曾國藩) stated:

Generally speaking, the foreigners in Europe have been annexing each other's territories for several hundred years, for no other reason than to seize the profits of the business people of the one country so that the ambitions of the attacking country may be satisfied....Since the hostilities, the Chinese people have been for a long time in deep suffering, as if immersed in water or fire.³⁴

Witnessing the 'civilising' mode of interaction: Bakumatsu Japanese perceptions

Japan's first full encounter with European International Society took place shortly after the latter had expanded into China. This expansion was partly a result of desires to open trading relations. As far as the European states were concerned, the East Asian

³⁰ Hao and Wang, 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', p. 189

³¹ See Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1996), p. 76. For a typical statement of this, see Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), p. 33. See also Paul A. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1987), pp. 92-93.

³² Translation rendered from Teng and Fairbank (eds), *China's Response to the West*, p. 142. The original text can be found in Xue Fucheng, 'Bianfa' in *Chouyang chuyi*. (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 89

³³ Feng Guifen, *Jiaobinlu kangyi*. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), p. 53. For similar perceptions, also see Ma Jianzhong, 'Shikezhai jiyuan' in *Caixi xueyi* (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 161-162

³⁴ Cited in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 65. Similar sentiments were expressed by Li Hongzhang. 'At present,' Li wrote, 'all the countries around the globe pay attention to military affairs, and all that matters is power (方今環球諸國各治甲兵, 惟力是視).' In this competitive world China's very existence was under threat, and 'China's strength as a whole is the key which decides whether foreigners will cause trouble or not (全視中華之強弱, 為相安相擾之樞機).' Li Hongzhang, 'Haijun yamen junjichu hui zou di', *Li Hongzhan quanji* (vol. 7): *haijun han'gao*. (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 4002.

international order did not seem particularly conducive to the free trade that the Western merchants wished. China, Japan and Korea continued to operate within the normative framework of the East Asian international order. Private trade was forbidden, and only highly controlled government-approved trade was allowed.³⁵ To many Western merchants, such restrictive trading agreements ran contrary to their commercial interests of exploiting what they believed to be a lucrative East Asian market. While China and its market was their most important target, there also had a keen interest in the Chinese Empire's neighbour, Japan.³⁶

Japan's perceived closing of its borders and refusal to participate in diplomatic intercourse as dictated by European International Society was an additional reason for the Society's members to force its doors open. Japan had previously fired upon European vessels (with the exception of the Dutch) that had approached its waters. This was regarded as fundamentally 'uncivilised' behaviour that had to be corrected. Referring to Japan's continued policy of *sakoku* (closing off its borders to foreign contact), an article which appeared in *The Times* on 26th March 1852 claimed:

Now, we deny the right of any nation situated upon, and occupying a portion of the sea-coast of the world, to refuse all commercial intercourse with other nations. Such a course may be tolerated by civilized nations so long as it does not interfere with their commerce and the welfare of the human race; but we insist that it is the right of civilized and Christian nations to *compel* barbarians thus situated to submit to the general law of nations, and to a certain degree of intercourse....³⁷

That day would finally come on July 1853, when the fleet of Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the United States appeared outside Tokyo Bay. Perry demanded the opening up of Japanese ports to provide shelter and assistance for any American ships in distress. The Treaty of Peace and Amity was signed between the U.S. and Japan in March 1854, and within two years an American consul (Townsend Harris) had arrived on the shores of Edo. This incident was Japan's first introduction with a key institution of European International

³⁵ In China, trade with the West was only allowed to be carried out in the port of Canton. This form of trade is known as the Canton system of trade. In the case of Japan, trade was confined to Nagasaki (with the exception of Korea). However, this system did not always function as efficiently as the political elite hoped – private trade, usually in the form of smuggling, continued to flourish.

³⁶ An article that appeared in *The Times* on 26th March 1852, gives a good example of European interest in Japan's market and resources. This article originally appeared in the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, and is reproduced in Kokusai nyūsu jiten shuppan iinkai and Mainichi komyunikeishonzu (eds) *Kokusai nyūsu jiten: gaikoku shinbun ni miru nippon* (vol. 1, *genbun hen*) (International News Dictionary: Japan Seen through Foreign Newspapers). (Tokyo: Mainichi komyunikeishonzu, 1989), p. 19

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 18. Emphasis added.

Society – the diplomatic system – and can be said to mark Japan's first full encounter with the Society.

The Japanese, however, had formed some opinions of the European international order as early as the first half of the nineteenth century. They got a taste of the highly *realpolitik*-dominated European international order in 1808, when the British (who were at war with the French-occupied Netherlands) sent the warship *Phaeton* into Japanese waters at Nagasaki with the aim of seizing Dutch ships. The British eventually captured two Dutch trading personnel located in Nagasaki and demanded a supply of food and water in exchange for the hostages. At the same time, British and Russian ships were increasingly encroaching on Japanese shores, requesting trading relations.

It was under these circumstances that Aizawa Seishisai (会沢正志齋) wrote *Shinron* (新論), which discusses the new international order that was drawing closer to Japan. Aizawa himself had had the chance to come into direct contact with Europeans, having interviewed British sailors who had landed on the shores of the Mito fiefdom in 1824. Aizawa's account of the international order outside the vicinity of East Asia is of a highly dangerous environment. He compares the international order to that of the highly *realpolitik*-dominated 'so-called seven states of the end of the Zhou dynasty', the Spring and Autumn/Warring States period (夫れ方今、宇内を挙げ列して七雄となして、周末の所謂七雄なるものと、小大異なれりといへども、その勢もまた絶だ相似たるものあり).³⁸ The European states, or 'Western barbarians', intent on invading China would first 'scheme with Persia against Turkey, and if victorious would then turn south and attack the Mogul empire. They would then fight with the Qing over the land of the Jungars [i.e. Oirat Mongolia], and if victorious would then sail over in droves and attack the celestial land [Japan].'³⁹

The Opium War of 1840-1842 and China's subsequent defeat gave the Japanese political leadership a stronger sense that the new Western-dominated international order was one which could pose a grave threat to Japan.⁴⁰ The Japanese gained their knowledge

³⁸ Aizawa Seishisai, 'Shinron' in Imai Usaburō, Seya Yoshihiko, and Bitō Masahide (eds) *Nihon shisō taikai: Mitogaku* (Japanese Thought Series, vol. 53). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1953), p. 93.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 92

⁴⁰ This point is also confirmed by Meiji oligarch Ōkuma Shigenobu (大隈重信). See Ōkuma Shigenobu and Enjōji Kiyoshi, *Ōkuma haku sekijitsu tan* (vol. 1). (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1980), pp. 207-208. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi also notes that the 'First Opium War...drastically altered long-held Japanese perceptions of Japan's place in international power relations.' See his 'Opium, Expulsion,

of international affairs through Chinese and Dutch written works, which were regularly imported. There is evidence that Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi* was imported to Japan as early as 1851, and was read by the political elite. The Tokugawa shogunate also had access to Dutch and Chinese intelligence reports, and news of the Opium War reached the Japanese through both these reports (*Oranda fūsetsusho* 阿蘭陀風説書 and *Kara fūsetsusho* 唐風説書). By 1841, Tokugawa shogunate official Shibukawa Rokuzō⁴¹ (渋川六蔵) had submitted a memorial pointing to the possibility of a Chinese defeat and a subsequent invasion on Japan by the British,⁴² and in 1842 intelligence from the Netherlands had reported that the Qing had suffered a catastrophic defeat in their war against Britain, and that Hong Kong had been ceded.⁴³ In 1853, the Dutch told the Tokugawa regime in advance of American plans to send a fleet to Japan, and urged them to commence peaceful trading relations in accordance with American wishes. The American fleet, the Dutch letter warned, 'comprises of several steam ships and sailing ships, and are equipped to an extent that *we cannot guarantee that they will not use force if their rightful demands are not met.*'⁴⁴ Such information was clearly resulting in highly negative understandings of the European international order even before Perry and his gunboats arrived. The Japanese political elite⁴⁵ was beginning to perceive this order as a highly coercive and insecure one in which Japan's survival would be precarious.

These views were confirmed when the Japanese finally experienced their full encounter with European International Society in 1853, when they were confronted by a fleet of American gunboats at the doorstep of Edo. As far as many quarters in the West

Sovereignty: China's Lessons for Bakumatsu Japan' *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 47, no. 1, Spring 1992, pp. 1-25), p. 2.

⁴¹ Shibukawa Rokuzō occupied the post of *tenmongata* (天文方), which was responsible for analysing foreign intelligence. His memorial cited here was submitted to the *rōjū* (老中) Mizuno Tadakuni. The *rōjū* was the second highest post in the shogunate bureaucracy, and responsible for policy formation of the Tokugawa shogunate. Therefore, it can be assumed that Shibukawa's memorial would have had some impact on the the Japanese political elites' perceptions of the European-dominated international order.

⁴² Iwashita Tetsunori, 'Ahen sensō jōhō no dentatsu to juyō: Tenpō jū nen kara jūsan nen made' in Meiji ishin shi gakkai (eds), *Meiji ishin to seiyō kokusai shakai*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999), p. 15

⁴³ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Miyako Voss (ed and trans), *Bakumatsu dejima mikōkai bunsho: Donkeru-kuruchiusu oboegaki*. (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōrai sha, 1992), p. 209. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵ Wakabayashi also notes that some accounts of the Opium War were disseminated in the form of fiction (he gives Mineta Fūkō's *Kaigai shinwa* as an example) among circles outside the political elite. Although many of these accounts were frequently inaccurate, this did contribute to some awareness and sensitivity to the outside world among the Japanese populace. See 'Opium, Expulsion, Sovereignty'.

were concerned, this was quite acceptable. In an article titled 'The United States Expedition Against Japan', *The Times* noted:

It is a fair question how far any tribe or race of human beings possesses the right of excluding the rest of mankind from all participation in the benefits to be derived from an extensive and beautiful region....Is this right of exclusion founded on reason or on force? If on reason, we should be curious to see the arguments by which it can be maintained. If the right of exclusion is simply the right of force, why, let those who appeal to such a principle be prepared at all times to make it good. They may feel well assured that, some time or other, their pretensions will be put to the test. In any case, they can lay little claim to sympathy. They have by their own acts put themselves out of the pale of the great brotherhood of nations. They have refused all aid to others; how can they ask it for themselves?⁴⁶

Meanwhile, a slightly more sympathetic article 'Japan and the United States' appeared in the *New York Times* on 24th February 1852:

A fleet composed of several steamers, backed by a frigate and one or two corvettes, is by no means a peaceful demonstration; and we fear that the effect of the arrival of these ships in the waters of Japan will be to frighten the poor Japanese out of their seaport towns, and out of their wits at the same time, so that it will be impossible to bring them to terms in good faith.⁴⁷

Japanese reactions to Perry's arrival seem to prove correct the above correspondent's fears. Although the event had, to a certain degree, been anticipated by the political elite, the sight of the gunboats indeed seems to have 'frightened' them 'out of their wits'. Perry's gunboats and their knowledge of China's defeat at the hands of the West forced them to conclude that any resistance against the United States' wishes would be futile.⁴⁸ As far as the Japanese were concerned, their incorporation into the European-dominated international order took place under the implicit threat of military force.⁴⁹ Their signing of the unequal trading treaties – which limited Japan's sovereignty and were not reciprocal – also took place under the threat of force from U.S. consul Townsend Harris, who warned the

⁴⁶ Kokusai nyūsu jiten shuppan iinkai and Mainichi komyunikeishonzu (eds), *Kokusai nyūsu jiten: gaikoku shinbun ni miru nippon* (vol. 1: genbun hen), pp. 16-17

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 15

⁴⁸ Satō Seizaburō notes that the *rōjū*, Abe Masahiro (阿部正弘 1819-1857) reported that opinions tended to be more hardline the further they were from Edo, while those 'who came to Edo and "understood the situation of foreign countries"' were more realistic and tended to call for some form of accommodation with the U.S.'s demands. See Satō Seizaburō, 'Bakumatsu/Meiji shoki ni okeru taigai ishiki no shoruikei' in Satō Seizaburō and R. Dingman (eds) *Kindai nippon no taigai taido*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1974), pp. 16-17

⁴⁹ Perry even sent the Japanese two white flags for their surrender in the event that the Japanese would refuse American demands the war would ensue, implying that any resistance to the U.S would be futile. This can be seen from Tokugawa Nariaki (1800-1860)'s memorial, 'Jujō goji kengi sho' (1853) in Yoshida Tsunekichi and Satō Seizaburō (eds) *Nihon shisō taikai* (vol. 56): *Bakumatsu seiji ronshū*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1976), p. 9. See also Miwa Kimitada, 'Perii "dai yon no shokan"' *Kokusai seiji* (no. 102, February 1993, pp. 1-21).

Japanese that British and French naval forces could arrive to force Japan to conclude trading treaties.⁵⁰ It is not surprising that we again see highly negative Japanese accounts of the Society, similar to those written prior to 1853. For instance, Kuroda Narihiro (黒田斉溥), the *daimyō* (大名 feudal lords) of the Fukuoka fiefdom, commented that warfare was ‘a constant state of affairs in foreign countries [i.e. the West]’,⁵¹ while fellow *daimyō* Matsudaira Yoshinaga (松平慶永) stated that the international situation that Japan now found itself in was a place where ‘fights take place between those who conquer and who are conquered.’⁵² Hotta Masayoshi (堀田正睦), who became *rōjū* (老中), the second highest bureaucratic position under the Tokugawa regime, came to similar conclusions. His memorial to the shogunate in 1857 states that ‘The current international situation resembles that of China’s Spring and Autumn period and the last years of Ashikaga rule in Japan. (一体当今万国の形勢一変致し、粗漢土春秋列国の時、本邦足利氏の末年に似たる有様の大なるもの)’, indicating both fear of the seemingly menacing international order Japan faced, as well as domestic disorder the encounter with it would bring about.⁵³

How was Japan to adapt to this new international environment? This was an obvious question that was to occupy the minds of the Japanese elite for years to come. Drawing on Arnold Toynbee, Minamoto Ryōen states that the Japanese political elite showed two different responses.⁵⁴ The first type was what Toynbee called the ‘Zealots’, who clung to their traditional culture and showed strong xenophobic reactions towards the newly introduced culture. In Japan, this took the form of attacks on foreigners and their property (攘夷 *jōi*). Naturally, the consequences of this form of reaction were disastrous for Japan. The protection of foreign nationals and their property was seen as an imperative component of the ‘standard of civilisation’ at the time; failure to do so would often render the ‘uncivilised’ state beyond the pale of the protection of international law and invite more

⁵⁰ Indeed, Japanese memorials are peppered with references that Japan should not make the same mistake the Chinese had committed. See, for example, ‘Rōjū tassho’ (1857); ‘Hyōteijo ichiza jōshin sho’ (1857); ‘Kaibōgakari no ōmetsuke, metsuke jōshinsho’ (1857) in Yoshida Tsunekichi and Satō Seizaburō (eds) *Nihon shisō taikai* (vol. 56): *Bakumatsu seiji ronshū.*, p. 51, 53 and p. 58 respectively. See also Wakabayashi, ‘Opium, Expulsion, Sovereignty’, pp. 17-18.

⁵¹ Kuroda Narihiro, ‘Kuroda Narihiro jōsho’ in Yoshida Tsunekichi and Satō Seizaburō (eds), *Nihon shisō taikai* (vol. 56): *Bakumatsu seiji ronshū*, p. 34

⁵² Cited in Satō Seizaburō, ‘Bakumatsu/Meiji shoki ni okeru taigai ishiki no shoruikei’, p. 15.

⁵³ Hotta Masayoshi, ‘Hotta Masayoshi ikensho’ in Yoshida Tsunekichi and Satō Seizaburō (eds), *Nihon shisō taikai* (vol. 56): *Bakumatsu seiji ronshū*, p. 69. The end of Ashikaga rule is known as Japan’s own ‘Warring States Period (*sengoku jidai*). During this time, many local warlords vied for the unification of Japan.

⁵⁴ Minamoto Ryōen, ‘Bakumatsu, ishin ki ni okeru “Kaikoku zushi” no juyō: Sakuma Shōzan o chūshin to shite’ *Nihon kenkyū* (no. 9, September 1993, pp. 13-25), pp. 20-21

foreign intervention. Moreover, the West, fully aware of the potential resentment caused by the domineering manner in which they incorporated non-European states into European International Society, often believed that a demonstration of military might would be a useful way to enforce observance of the code of conduct as stipulated in the treaties and 'standard of civilisation'.⁵⁵

Another response, which is labelled the 'Herodian' approach, was to adopt superior elements of an alien culture/society and to ensure the survival of the indigenous culture. As *jōi* movements resulted in frequent clashes with the West and subsequent defeats for the more xenophobic Japanese, it became increasingly clear that the only chance for Japan to ensure its survival was by adopting a more 'Herodian' approach. The drive to take on what was considered to be superior elements of Western technology – military hardware was the earliest choice – gathered momentum.⁵⁶ Eventually, an increasing number of Japanese *samurai* came to the conclusion that the political system had to be overhauled as well. The Tokugawa regime's weakness in face of the ever-present Western threat would mean that Japan could never regain its former status as a fully sovereign nation⁵⁷ free from the yoke of the Western states. A new political system had to be adopted. It was in this context that the Meiji Restoration (明治維新 *Meiji ishin*) took place, and Japan started taking real steps towards fully integrating itself into European International Society.

Meiji Japanese perceptions

However, fears of the European international order persisted among the Meiji political elite, and the Japanese political leadership continued to see their international environment as a

⁵⁵ As the British Minister to Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock argued: 'It is weakness, or the suspicion of it, which invariably provokes wrong and aggression in the East, and is a far more fertile cause of bad faith and danger among Asiatics than either force or the abuse of strength. Hence it is that all diplomacy in these regions which does not rest on a solid substratum of force, or an element of strength, to be laid bare when all gentler processes fail, rests on false premises, and must of necessity fail in its object.' Cited in W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*, p. 20

⁵⁶ For instance, the Yōgakusho (洋学所), dedicated to the study of Western studies of national interest, was established in 1855. The same year, steelworks were established in Nagasaki.

⁵⁷ I use this word guardedly and with reservation: sovereignty as a concept did not exist in East Asian international relations, as states were arranged – often hypothetically – into hierarchical orders. Sovereign equality was not usually the norm. However, 'sovereignty' can be said to have existed in the sense that states within the tributary system did not interfere with each other's domestic affairs. Owen N. Denny, the U.S. diplomatic advisor to Korea in 1885, noted that 'the past tribute relationships were sustained by a faith unshakable as long as China's treatment of its tributaries remained gentle, cordial, and fair and did not seek to interfere either with another country's system of tributary relationships or with its sovereignty and independence.' However, Denny himself 'was not sure whether or not Korean state sovereignty existed at all.' See Takeshi Hamashita, 'The Intra-regional System in East Asia in Modern Times' in Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraiishi (eds), *Network Power: Japan and Asia*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 126-127. I am indebted to Miwa Hirono for this point.

highly insecure one.⁵⁸ A brief survey of memorials describing international politics by key political leaders in Japan reveals a similarity to those of the Tokugawa officials. In a famous memorial submitted in 1869, shortly after the Meiji Restoration, Iwakura Tomomi (岩倉具視) offered this opinion of the international order at the time:

...although it can be said that all states overseas maintain contact with each other, in the end all states overseas are our country's enemies (海外万国ハ固ヨリ交通セサルヲ得トスト雖、畢竟海外万国ハ我カ皇国ノ公敵ナリ). What are these enemies? All foreign states nowadays study, improve their technology and aim to become rich and strong. Even small states like the Netherlands stand proud and independent, even though they are surrounded by great powers....All foreign states wish to stand above others states (海外万国ハ各其自国ヲシテ他国ノ上ニ立タシメンコトヲ欲ス): state A wants to stand above B, B over C. It is for these reasons that I say that foreign states are all our enemies.⁵⁹

Moreover, such views appear to have persisted during the Meiji period. This can be discerned from numerous memorials on international politics by the Meiji leaders. Calls for military build-up, for instance, were regularly made by referring to the dangerous international realm. While this claim may at times have been rhetorical, the very fact that it was used indicates that such interpretations had considerable resonance.⁶⁰ In a memorial submitted in 1880, we see Yamagata Aritomo (山県有朋), one of the key members of the Meiji leadership, claiming that 'nowadays all states stand equally. They possess their own clearly demarcated territories and are responsible for protecting it themselves. If their soldiers are not strong, it is impossible for them to maintain their own independence.'⁶¹ In 1887, another leader Inoue Kaoru (井上馨) submitted a policy paper in which the international order was described as follows:

Since the 1870s and 1880s, troubles have been settled between European states, and it has become impossible to wantonly resort to force. However, these [European states]

⁵⁸ See Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*, pp. 15-18. Banno Junji's point that 'up to the early and mid Meiji period, there was no change in Japan's international relations that would force a radical revision of its macro-international outlook (巨視的な對外観 *kyoshiteki na taigaikan*) that was formed during bakumatsu Japan's opening to the West' also supports this assertion. See Banno Junji, 'Meiji shoki (1873-85) no "taigaikan"' *Kokusai seiji* (no. 71, August 1982, pp. 10-20), p. 16. Satō Seizaburō states that this meant that the 'Warring States' model of international relations would frequently make a comeback in Japanese discourse of diplomacy whenever Japan experienced an international crisis. See 'Bakumatsu, Meiji shoki ni okeru taigai ishiki no shoruikei', p. 28

⁵⁹ Iwakura Tomomi, 'Tomomi gaikō kaikei ezochi kaitaku no sanken o chōgi ni fu suru koto' in *Iwakura kō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), p. 699

⁶⁰ See Thomas Risse, '“Let's Argue!”', pp. 8-9

⁶¹ Yamagata Aritomo, 'Shin rinpō heibi ryakuhyō' in *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho* (Ōyama Azusa, ed). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1966), p. 91. This memorial was written in the context of growing Japanese fear of China's military build-up following its 'self-strengthening' programme, which will be examined in greater detail in the chapters that follow.

have recently tended to concentrate on political tactics in the colonies....Ah! The continents of Asia and Africa have now become a hunting ground for the West.⁶²

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Iwakura Mission, the Meiji government's fact-finding mission sent to the United States and Europe. Its members had the chance to witness the colonised Southeast Asian states for themselves, and they appear to have concluded that European international order was indeed a perilous environment in which only the fittest could survive. The delegation's secretary Kume Kunitake (久米邦武) recorded: 'The flesh of the weak is eaten by the strong. Ever since the Europeans began sailing to faraway lands, the weaker states of the tropics have been devoured by them [the European powers]'.⁶³

Seeing a Janus-faced European International Society

The Chinese and Japanese were both incorporated into the Society of the states against their will, and initially confronted the 'civilising' mode of interaction of European International Society, and witnessed its more coercive side. It is not surprising, then, that both the Chinese and Japanese first interpreted European International Society as a highly coercive international order where only the fittest could survive.

However, this does not mean that the Chinese and Japanese only saw a competitive, almost Darwinian world. While these views certainly did persist over time, as their interaction with the European powers intensified, their knowledge of the Society, its institutions, and the mode of interaction that governed the relations among its 'civilised' members also increased. Western books were translated, and contributed greatly to increased information of the Society and its members. Both the Chinese and Japanese sent diplomats or statesmen abroad, and their accounts often brought in much needed information of the Society. Furthermore, the forcible 'opening' of China and Japan to the Society brought in a larger number of European diplomats, missionaries, or foreign advisors. While some were admirers of both states' culture, they were also creatures of their time; they often saw it as their duty to introduce the trappings of European 'civilisation' to China and Japan, and pressed upon the Chinese and Japanese of the necessity to conform to the 'standard of civilisation' if they wanted to be accorded equal treatment with the Society's 'civilised' members. This, in turn, resulted in increasing both

⁶² Inoue Kaoru kō denki hensan kai, *Segai Inoue kō den* (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Naigai shoseki, 1934), p. 907-908

⁶³ Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 5). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1982), p. 307

states' awareness of a different mode of interaction which applied to 'civilised' states and the dualism of European International Society. Accordingly, the Chinese and Japanese began to acquire a more complex understanding of the Society which moved beyond their initial coercive depictions. This will be discussed below with reference to Chinese and Japanese perceptions of the institutions of European International Society.

Figure 4-1: 'Another "sick man"', *Punch*, London, 8th January 1898



The Sultan (cheerily). 'Going to pieces, old man? Nonsense! All you want is a dose of "Concert of Europe!" Why - look at me!!' Of course, there were significant gaps between how the Europeans and non-Europeans envisaged the institution of the balance of power. Source: Roy Douglas, *Great Nations Still Enchained: The Cartoonists' Vision of Empire 1848-1914*. London: Routledge, 1993, p. 130

Chinese perceptions of war, balance of power and the great powers

War is perhaps the institution which requires the least explanation. As the discussion of Chinese perceptions of European International Society has shown, war was seen as fairly ubiquitous within the European international order. Military action, or the threat of it, was often used by the European powers against China, the 'semi-civilised' entity, to stamp out any 'barbarous' practices.⁶⁴ China saw itself as a victim of these wars, and there was little room to perceive the institution of war in Grotian terms, where '[p]eace is the norm, and war the violation or exception; peace is logically prior to war' and 'war is a necessary evil, to be minimized as far as possible. It is necessary, because it is the only means of justice when there is no political superior.'⁶⁵ Little appreciation was shown for the role of war in enforcing international justice.

In this context, neither was the institution of the balance of power always seen in terms of a conscious policy to protect weaker states. In fact, many Chinese elites saw the balance of power in terms of alliances that they could utilise for their survival. Chinese history provided rich examples. There was the famous tactic of 'playing barbarians off other barbarians'; the Spring and Autumn period also provided classic examples of small states surviving in a competitive world.⁶⁶ However, as Chinese interactions with the European states increased, there began to emerge among them a growing understanding of the concept of the balance of power as a *conscious* policy that was designed to facilitate coexistence among the Society's members.⁶⁷ Li Hongzhang (李鴻章) noted this aspect of the balance of power, and argued that it was a concept that was intentionally maintained by treaties among the great powers, operated within Europe, and benefited smaller states (按泰

⁶⁴ A typical example can be found in the 1870 Tianjin Massacre, where an anti-Christian riot resulted in the burning of a church and the death of foreign nationals. Although military conflict did not break out, European gunboats anchored off Tianjin and successfully demanded an indemnity and the despatch of a mission of apology.

⁶⁵ Wight, *International Theory*, pp. 206-207.

⁶⁶ Hao and Wang, 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', p. 198

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 199

西有三小國為泰西各大國互相立約保護，永遠相安無事，其於小國受益實多).⁶⁸ Ma Jianzhong, Li Hongzhang's protégé, wrote from Paris (presumably to the *zongli yamen*), and also provided a comprehensive understanding of how the institution of the balance of power functioned to preserve order within Europe.

Within Europe, there are many neighbouring states. Although each state can decide its civilian and military affairs itself, they promise not to cause trouble between their neighbours and bully other countries for their interests. Therefore, the states make a pact where the weak and strong look after one another and the big and small promise each other to form a balance of power. This is the same concept as the peaceful friendly alliances during the Warring States period. Now within Europe, this concept has been the dominant way in which to conduct diplomacy.⁶⁹

Did this indicate some degree of acceptance of the institution of the balance of power among the Chinese? Hao and Wang consider this to be the case: they point to increasing Chinese elites' references to the concept of balance of power, as well as suggestions that the institution could be applied in East Asia as well.⁷⁰ It is certainly true that there was an awareness of the concept of the balance of power as applied among 'civilised' members, but it is difficult to gauge China's 'acceptance' of the institution of the balance of power from proposals on how the institution should be applied in East Asia. Li Hongzhang did, for instance, suggest that Korea could benefit from it,⁷¹ but his proposal was written in 1885, amid growing fears of Sino-Japanese rivalry over Korea. While Li's statement may reflect a genuine desire to utilise the balance of power in East Asia to preserve order, Korea was seen as a buffer for China, closely linked to Qing strategic interests. It could therefore be equally argued that Li's ideas were somewhat myopic, assigning top priority to *China's* interests of survival, rather than that of maintaining order within East Asia as a whole.

From this perspective, China shows limited interest in utilising the balance of power for the common good of protecting other states from encroachment: even Li Hongzhang's suggestion, while claiming to be primarily interested in protecting Korean security, is

⁶⁸ Li Hongzhang, 'Zhu chaoxian deguo shushi tiaoyi', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 8): *yishu hangao, diangao*. (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 4769

⁶⁹ Ma Jianzhong, 'Shikezhai jiyuan' in *Caixi xueyi*, pp. 161-162. A similar recognition of the balance of power in operation can also be found in Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, pp. 102-103, 190-191. Writing after the collapse of the Qing, Kang Youwei also noted that the balance of power could help maintain some form of stability. See Kang Youwei, *Datongshu*. (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1998), p. 107.

⁷⁰ Hao and Wang, 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', p. 198

⁷¹ Li Hongzhang, 'Zhu chaoxian deguo shushi tiaoyi', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 8), pp. 4769-4771

ultimately connected to China's security.⁷² Despite these limitations, Li's interpretations of the institution as applied *within* Europe reflected an increasing Chinese awareness of how the institution served to protect weaker European states. This, in turn, demonstrated to the Chinese the possibility that a very different, more cooperative international environment was possible.

Chinese views of the role of great powers was also mixed. Towards the 1880s there was an increasing awareness that the great powers within Europe did play a role in holding the balance of power within Europe, and that this had benefited another 'weak' state – Turkey. The influential Shanghai intellectual Wang Tao, who had experienced living in Britain, noted:

...among the four great powers of Britain, France, Prussia and Russia, there is always one state that will control the balance and settle it. Otherwise, nothing could have guaranteed the peace, and everyone would have preyed on Turkey.⁷³

However, this awareness does not mean the Chinese now accepted that the great powers held a special responsibility for ensuring the survival of the members of the Society. This is not surprising, as China was classified as 'semi-civilised' throughout the 1840s-1890s, and continued to be subjected to the Society's coercive, 'civilising' mode of interaction.⁷⁴ These ambivalent views reflect the dualism of European International Society in the late-nineteenth century, as well as a growing awareness of this dualism on the part of the Chinese elite. Wang Tao was aware that the great powers play a crucial role in preserving weaker states *within* Europe, but he was equally, if not more, cognisant of the fact that the European powers did not behave in a similar manner within Asia. In this context, the great powers were seen as constituting more of a danger to China's survival, rather than playing a special role in preserving order and protecting weaker states. They were at the forefront of propagating 'civilisation', and engaged in interfering with China's diplomacy and domestic politics. Furthermore, they united in sharing the spoils from their encroachment of China through the most favoured nation clauses in their treaties. If they

⁷² In a separate occasion, Li Hongzhang advocated forming an alliance with Japan to 'prevent the Westerners from getting too close to Japan [lit. using Japan as an outpost]'. See Li Hongzhang, 'Lun tianjin jiaoran', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *pengliao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*. (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 4045. Hao and Wang also state that other Chinese intellectuals of this time were of a similar opinion. Ma Jianzhong 'cited examples to show that cooperation and the making of alliances formed the most effective policy for the management of foreign relations.' Similarly, Zheng Guanying advocated forming an alliance with the United States. See 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', p. 199

⁷³ See, for example, the views of Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 104

⁷⁴ Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 82

exercised any form of restraint, it was often among themselves in not expanding their economic and territorial privileges in a way that would arouse the jealousy of their peers. The consequences were scepticism on the part of the Chinese elite who 'were clearly disillusioned by the cynical way the western powers...seemed to exploit every opportunity to gain the maximum "profit" for themselves by using force...which, in the Chinese world view, were not morally justified.'⁷⁵

Figure 4-2: The partition of China



The Chinese were not the only ones who viewed the European partition with disdain. Note the gunboats, the British lion and Uncle Sam in the background, while the Russians and the Germans try and bite a piece off the hapless Chinese. Source: Sir Wilfred Lawson and (Sir) F. Carruthers-Gould, *Cartoons in Rhyme and Line*, T. Fisher and Unwin, London, 1905.

⁷⁵ John Cranmer-Byng, 'The Chinese View of Their Place in the World: An Historical Perspective', *China Quarterly* (no. 53, January-March 1973, pp. 67-79), p. 69

Chinese perceptions of international law

As regards international law, China's first real contact with this institution of European International Society occurred in 1864.⁷⁶ In a famous and oft-cited memorial, Prince Gong (恭親王) stated:

We have learned that there is a book called *Wan-kuo lü-li* [万国律礼 *Wanguo lüli*], 'Laws and precedents of all nations.' Yet when we wanted to seek it directly, and entrust its translations to the foreigners, we were afraid that they might wish to keep it confidential and not have it shown to us.... Shortly thereafter, in October of last year, Martin [丁韪良 W. A. P. Martin] was brought for an interview and presented four volumes of the *Wan-kuo lü-li*, saying that it should be read by all countries having treaty relations with others. In case of dispute it can be taken for reference and can be quoted.⁷⁷

The Chinese rendition of international law was derived from Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law*, and became known as *Wanguo gongfa*. Its translator, W. A. P. Martin, 'was acting on the conviction that he was giving the best fruit of Christian civilization to the Chinese, and that through this work the Chinese government might be brought closer to Christianity.'⁷⁸ He went to great lengths to use Chinese concepts to make international law more comprehensible (and possibly palatable) to the Chinese. Natural law was a concept that was used in particular. One reason for this was that Martin himself was 'a close associate of the Natural Law School of international law'.⁷⁹ However, Martin's use of the concept was also to facilitate Chinese acceptance of international law by appealing to the universality of natural law. For instance, the *Wanguo gongfa* stated that

The rules of humans are called "natural law", and when this is extended to its limites and applied to states, it becomes "international law" [*gongfa*]. Pufendorf agreed with Hobbes and stated: "Apart from the extension of natural law, there is no other international law that can attain states' respect and obedience." Therefore, all civilised states set definite rules and laws [i.e. international law] to avoid the cruelties of war.⁸⁰

Martin's introduction of the concept of 'natural law (性法 *xingfa*)', Satō Shin'ichi argues, was a deliberate one: as 'orderly relations based on human nature and the propagation of these relations' were the hallmarks of a civilised state in Confucianism, Martin wanted to

⁷⁶ Earlier, Lin Zexu had made use of Vattel's *Le Droit des gens* in his letter to Queen Victoria to request the halting of opium smuggling. He made reference to a state's right to prohibit illicit trade.

⁷⁷ Cited in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 98

⁷⁸ Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *China's Entrance into the Family of Nations: The Diplomatic Phase, 1858-1880*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 126

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 129

⁸⁰ Ding Weiliang (W. A. P. Martin), *Wanguo gongfa*. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), p. 3

convince 'the Chinese, who thought of themselves as civilised, had the moral duty to obey international law', which was conceptualised 'a legal norm based on human nature'.⁸¹

The Chinese elites' 'discovery' of international law marked an important event in its engagement with European International Society. Its theoretical notion of the equality of states before the law, Yamamuro Shin'ichi argues, showed them that 'all states in the world have, as sovereign states, equal rights',⁸² furthering their knowledge of the theoretical notion of 'liberal sovereignty', which was different from the hierarchical ordering of states in the East Asian international order.⁸³ The Chinese elite also witnessed the effectiveness of international law when they managed to score some diplomatic victories in their disputes with the European powers. One of the most famous cases was when Prince Gong utilised international law to protest the Prussian seizure of Danish merchant ships in Chinese territorial waters, eventually obtaining financial compensation.

Furthermore, Satō Shin'ichi notes, as their knowledge of the Society increased, the Chinese admitted that international law seemed to serve some purpose in keeping peace within the European nations. The European international order was not an 'anarchic one where every state pursued its own interest, but one where shared rules existed'.⁸⁴ For instance, Dong Xun (董恂), a minister at the *zongli yamen*, wrote in the preface for the *Wanguo gongfa*, 'there are many nations outside China. If there is no law to regulate them, how are nations possible [九州外之國林立矣，不有法以維之，其何以國]?'⁸⁵

Such statements were also an acknowledgement of the existence of shared, reciprocal norms and rules among the European states. Furthermore, as China's interactions with the members of European International Society increased, Yongjin Zhang notes, 'the Chinese officials were very much impressed that Western powers generally observed treaties faithfully',⁸⁶ and some of them even gradually came to see them less as rapacious

⁸¹ Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 72. Sumiyoshi Yoshihito also argues that the usage of Chinese philosophical terms was to facilitate Chinese comprehension, but was also related to the fact that Martin was a missionary who hoped to spread Christian thought through the translation of *Elements of International Law*. See Sumiyoshi Yoshihito, 'Meiji shoki ni okeru kokusaihō no dōnyū (The Introduction of International Law in Early Meiji Japan)' *Kokusaihō gaikō zasshi* (vol. 71, no. 56, pp. 32-58), pp. 34-35, 56.

⁸² Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia: kijiku, rensa, tōki*, p. 230

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 65

⁸⁵ Translation rendered from Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *China's Entrance into the Family of Nations*, p. 134. The original text can be found in Ding Weiliang (W. A. P. Martin), *Wanguo gongfa*. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), p.1.

⁸⁶ Zhang, *China in the International System, 1918-20*, p. 18

'barbarians' but more as a people whose actions were regulated by a shared *civilisation* and *etiquette*.⁸⁷ For instance, Guo Songtao wrote:

Nowadays, England, France, Russia, America, and Germany, all of them great nations which have tried their strength against each other to see who is pre-eminent, have evolved a code of international law which gives precedence to fidelity and righteousness and attaches the utmost importance to relations between states...they have evolved a high culture on a firm material basis. They surpass by a long way the states of our Spring and Autumn period.⁸⁸

As their views of international law and the European powers changed, some Chinese elites even began to advocate that international law was not an institution that only applied to European states, but also something that China should *actively* adhere to. Xue Fucheng, for instance, argued that China, as a 'civilised' state, also had the reciprocal moral duty of honouring international treaties and treating the Western powers and their diplomats with respect.⁸⁹ If China wanted to retain its identity as the most civilised entity within the East Asian international order, it was unacceptable for it to be placed beyond the pale of international law.

The significance of Xue's observations should not be overstated, however. While Prince Gong's aforementioned memorial did state that '[i]n this book [*Wanguo gongfa*] there are laws which can to a considerable extent control the foreign consuls, and this is certainly a useful thing',⁹⁰ this does not indicate a deep sense of normative commitment to international law. This point is underscored by the fact that Prince Gong also claimed that 'the contents of this book [the *Wanguo gongfa*] of foreign laws do not entirely agree with the system in China', which, claims Satō Shin'ichi, shows little indication that 'there was a belief that China had an obligation to obey international law'. Prince Gong's statement of the incompatibility of international law and Chinese law 'suggests that there still existed a value-laden assumption that the Chinese system was superior' and international law carried less moral authority.⁹¹ The lack of a detailed explanation for the incompatibility between

⁸⁷ Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 89; Hao and Wang, 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', pp. 188-189

⁸⁸ See Guo Songtao, *Shixi jicheng*. (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 39. Translation rendered from Guo Songtao, *The First Chinese Embassy to the West: The Journals of Kuo Sung-t'ao, Liu Hsi-hung and Chang Te-yi*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 72

⁸⁹ See Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 83

⁹⁰ Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 98

⁹¹ Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 66. The translation of the passage in Prince Gong's memorial is rendered from Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 98

Chinese domestic and international law indicated that this view was widely accepted by the Chinese elite at the time.

Immanuel C. Y. Hsü confirms this point, and argues that despite China's 'discovery' of international law, the Chinese elites failed to make full use of it, and even as time passed, their views of the law did not depart radically from Prince Gong's. Hsü gives two reasons for this. First, there was deep-seated fear of foreign demands, and the safest policy at the time was seen as avoiding any further disputes with the European powers by appeasing them as much as possible.⁹² International law was thus reduced to 'a diplomatic reference book with which the Ch'ing [Qing] officials might restrain "wild" foreign consuls and avoid diplomatic mistakes.'⁹³ Second, he notes the unequal treatment meted out by the European powers were not seen as a grave threat to China. The 'unequal treaties' signified 'uncivilised' status within European International Society, but China had yet to accept the social standards of the Society, and refused to be judged by them. While constructivist insights have noted that a 'negative reputation' within the international political community can at times constrain an actor and force it to conform with international norms,⁹⁴ this (except when outright coercion is used to force compliance) is only effective when the actor shares the social values held by the community. The lack of common values between China and European International Society meant that the Chinese elite perceived no 'shame' in its negative reputation as a 'semi-civilised' state, and consequently felt little need to improve their social position within the Society. Adherence to international law was a marker of 'civilised' status within European International Society, but in the eyes of many Chinese elites, China was equally (if not more) civilised than the European powers. There was no need to demonstrate their 'civilised' identity by adopting international law, bar in the face of coercion and the necessity to occasionally deal with the troublesome Westerners.⁹⁵

⁹² This was known as the '*jimi*', or 'loose rein' policy, and had a long-standing place in China's diplomacy, particularly when dealing with northern nomads who were militarily stronger than the Chinese dynasty at the time.

⁹³ Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *China's Entrance into the Family of Nations*, p. 145. For similar points, see Jacques deLisle, 'China's Approach to International Law: A Historical Perspective', *American Society of International Law: Proceedings of the Annual Meeting* (Washington 2000, pp. 267-275), p. 271 and Gong, 'China's Entry into International Society', p. 181.

⁹⁴ See Klotz, *Norms in International Relations*, pp. 30-31 and John M. Hobson, 'What's at stake in "bringing historical sociology back into international relations?"', p. 25

⁹⁵ Xue Fucheng notes this point in his polemic, 'Lun zhongguo zai gongfa wai zhi hai'. 'Asian countries', he writes, 'claim that their customs, political institutions and language are different, and rejected international law from the beginning'. As Xue's essay was in part intended as a political message to call

Hsü is thus certainly correct that the Chinese elite adopted international law as a matter of expediency, but he does not explicitly mention the contradictory effects of the dualities of European International Society and international law, and how these contributed to the inability of international law to attain any form of legitimacy. To explain the persistence of suspicion towards international law despite its acceptance by some of the Chinese elite, one should take note of the following two additional factors. First, the sense of injustice felt by the Chinese must not be underestimated. As Jacques deLisle states, ‘...as Chinese scholars and officials learned about the newly encountered barbarians’ international law, ...[t]hey expressed outrage at foreign states’ use of ostensibly neutral or universal legal doctrines to advance self-interested agendas, and the great powers’...actions [undertaken] against China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.’⁹⁶ This again lessened the chances that the European powers would be seen as a source of emulation.

Second, we should note that positive sentiments towards international law were based primarily on observations of European international relations. In the nineteenth century, the dualistic European International Society and the rise of positive international law meant that there existed two very different sets of norms that governed European International Society’s relations with European states, on the one hand, and non-European states on the other. The Chinese were beginning to develop an awareness of this. Li Hongzhang noted bitterly in 1879 that the unequal treaties which China had signed with the European powers went against the stipulations of international law, and placed them beyond the pale of its protection. Li wrote: ‘when China signed treaties with Britain and France before, it was under the threat of force. We were threatened and deceived. These treaties cause losses and they are outside the scope of international law [從前中國與英，法兩國立約，皆先兵戎而後玉帛，被其迫協兼受蒙蔽，所定條款吃虧過巨，往往有出地球公法之外者].’⁹⁷ Xue

for China to adopt international law, we must take some exaggeration into consideration. However, Xue’s claims do give us a glimpse of how international law was initially considered a fundamentally alien concept. See Xue Fucheng, *Chouyang chuyi*, p. 156.

⁹⁶ deLisle, ‘China’s Approach to International Law: A Historical Perspective’, p. 271. For instance, dismissing any reliance on international law as ‘stupid (愚)’, Zhang Zhidong argued: ‘If there is a balance in power there can be law, but if there is an imbalance, there is little room for law. Since ancient times when various states dealt with each other, if their strength was equal they competed with bravery, if they were equal in bravery they competed with guile. There has never been such a thing as international law that controls states [夫權力相等則有公法，強弱不侔，法於何有？古來列國相持之世，其說曰力鈞角勇，勇鈞角智，未聞有法以束之也].’ See Zhang Zhidong, *Quan xue bian*. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), p. 73.

⁹⁷ Li Hongzhang, ‘Tuo-chou qian zhe’, *Li Hongzhang quanji: zougao* (vol. 3). (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 1541. Emphasis added. For another important document that notes China’s

Fucheng also noted in 1892 that within Europe, small states were able to coexist among the great powers. However, with regard to China he noted that international law tended to protect the interests of the European powers, and that China was placed 'beyond the pale of international law (公法之外 *gongfa zhi wai*)'.⁹⁸ He criticised previous political decision-makers for this:

Once upon a time, the Westerners used international law to criticise us. The political elite at the time replied: 'China does not want to enter relations with you based on international law. Chinese and Western customs are different, how can you force us to be the same? We really do not care about international law.' Since then, the Westerners have said that China is beyond the pale of international law, and we have not been able to enjoy the benefits of international law....If we were strong...nobody would accuse us if we opposed international law and refused to deal with Westerners. But since we are weak, if we had adhered to international law, at least we would not have suffered as badly (as we have). What harm the past officials' careless remarks have caused us!⁹⁹

Xue's views were, however, in a minority. Chinese political institutions were seen as equally, if not more, 'civilised' by many members of the elite saw no need for a fundamental reconfiguration of China's identity along the lines of European models.¹⁰⁰ In their eyes, what was needed to be afforded the protection of international law was military power. This attitude was typical of the Chinese elite of this period. Subsequently, rather than meticulously complying with international law and demonstrating their 'civilised' identity (as judged by European International Society), most of the Chinese political elite advocated continuing on the path of accumulating military power. The results were recurring violations of international law and military coercion by the European powers – all of which served to reproduce Chinese moral outrage and the rejection of international law.

Chinese perceptions of diplomacy

The Chinese elites' engagement with the institution of diplomacy took place amid sustained pressure by the members of European International Society to adopt Western-styled diplomacy. For the European powers, the persistence of the diplomatic system of the East Asian international order disadvantaged them in at least two aspects. Firstly, the continued Sinocentrism constituted an insult to the European powers. Secondly, the European powers

position as 'beyond the pale of international law', see Xue Fucheng, 'Lun zhongguo zai gongfa wai zhi hai', *Chouyang chuyi*, pp. 156-157

⁹⁸ See Xue Fucheng 'Lun zhongguo zai gongfa wai zhi hai' in *Chouyang chuyi*, p. 157

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ It should be mentioned, however, that Xue did advocate the reform of some political institutions, and this in itself was considered radical during his time.

found that the system put international matters in the hands of provincial officials whose political interests lay primarily in local matters, hindering diplomatic intercourse with the central government. This latter aspect was particularly problematic as it rendered the European powers unable to pressure the imperial government to control anti-foreign riots and protect Western life and property within China.¹⁰¹ China's adoption of European practices of diplomacy, it was believed, would enable the European powers to pressure the imperial government directly to put an end to these grievances. Furthermore, in the age of imperialism, there existed 'mutual distrust among the British, French, and Russians, with each fearing the partition of China... an arena where the powers could jealously watch one another, preferably in Peking, the center of China's politics' was desirable.¹⁰²

The Chinese, for their part, balked at the idea. The Xianfeng emperor and a significant number of conservatives within the court were bitterly opposed to the posting of Western diplomats in Beijing. Previously, Satō Shin'ichi argues, as 'China did not [at least in theory] admit to the existence of states which stood on an equal footing of China, there was no way that the concept of diplomacy [among sovereign equals] could exist.'¹⁰³ For them, the notion of foreign representatives in the imperial capital challenged China's assumed superiority in the Sinocentric order.¹⁰⁴ The very idea of foreign representatives demanding direct audiences with the emperor and possibly refusing to kowtow to him was equally unacceptable. The European powers were determined to impose their demands on China, however, and the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin (which followed the Arrow War) finally established the right of European powers to permanently station diplomatic representatives at the capital.

Further developments took place after the skirmishes that followed the concluding of the Treaty of Tianjin and the British and French forces' sacking of the Summer Palace. One was the establishment of the *zongli yamen*, a foreign ministry that was charged to deal with China's relations with the European powers. This abolished the practice of interacting with Europeans through the offices that administered China's hierarchical tributary relations, and highlighted the nominal endorsement of one of the most fundamental

¹⁰¹ Banno Masataka, *China and the West 1858-1861: The Origins of the Tsungli Yamen*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 13-14.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, pp. 17-18

¹⁰³ Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 61

¹⁰⁴ Banno Masataka, *China and the West 1858-1861*, p. 36. This point is further elaborated by Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *China's Entrance into the Family of Nations*, pp. 111-113

normative features of the Society, sovereign equality, and signified a modification of the hierarchical East Asian international order.¹⁰⁵ The event has been described by Yongjin Zhang as ‘the beginning of the end of the traditional tributary system...and the acceptance of the existence of foreign relations defined by the European international society.’¹⁰⁶

We should not overemphasise the significance of this, however. While China is seen to have accepted – at least nominally – the concept of sovereign equality in the Treaty of Tianjin in 1861, the Chinese’ adoption of diplomacy also shows a certain sense of expediency, rather than a ‘*progressive* desire to conform government institutions and international relations to Europe’s accepted standard’ as argued by Gerrit Gong.¹⁰⁷ ‘Psychologically,’ Immanuel Hsü states, ‘the majority of mandarins eschewed foreign affairs as beneath their dignity and foreign assignment as a form of banishment’¹⁰⁸

Cultural differences aside, we must also note the fact that European-styled diplomacy was clearly forced upon the Chinese. Prince Gong’s memorial of 1861 which proposed the establishment of the *zongli yamen* clearly confirmed that the introduction of European-styled diplomacy was merely a temporary measure to control the Western powers, until China could attain the power to militarily ward them off.¹⁰⁹ The memorial stated that when ‘the affairs of the various countries are simplified, *the new office will be abolished and its functions will again revert to the Grand Council for management so as to accord with the old system*’.¹¹⁰ This clearly highlights that the adoption of some features of European-styled diplomacy were, at least at the beginning, motivated by self-interest. The new institution

¹⁰⁵ This point is supported by Gong, ‘China’s Entry into International Society’, p. 180. Evidence of this can be found in the question of granting Western diplomats audiences with the emperor without the *kowtow*. In response to a query on this matter, Zuo Zongtang ‘wrote emphatically that the audience the Western powers asked was no more than reasonable, since China had already recognised them as equals.’ See Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, p. 273. Article 3 of the Treaty of Tianjin stipulated: ‘He [the British Representative] shall not be called upon to perform any ceremony derogatory to him as representing the sovereign of an independent nation, on a footing of equality with that of China. On the other hand, he shall use the same forms of ceremony and respect to His Majesty the Emperor as are employed by the Ambassadors, Ministers, or Diplomatic Agents of Her Majesty towards the sovereigns of independent and equal European nations.’ Cited in Tseng-Tsai Wang, ‘The Audience Question: Foreign Representatives and the Emperor of China, 1858-1873’, *The Historical Journal* (vol. 14, no. 3, September 1971, pp. 617-626), p. 618

¹⁰⁶ Yongjin Zhang, *China in the International System, 1918-20*, p. 18. Also see Masataka Banno, *China and the West 1858-1861*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Gong, *The Standard of ‘Civilisation’ in International Society*, p. 150. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁸ Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 305

¹⁰⁹ See Prince Gong’s memorial in Jiang Tingfu (ed) *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao (shang juan)*. (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1982), pp. 323-324. Also see Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, p. 48

¹¹⁰ Jiang Tingfu (ed) *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao (shang juan)*. (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1982), p. 324. Translation rendered from Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, p. 48. Emphasis added.

had not attained legitimacy, and its acceptance was contingent only on whether or not its benefits outweighed the costs of not having them. This superficial nature of China's adoption of European diplomatic practice points to the fact that the institution of diplomacy had yet to gain sufficient legitimacy in the early 1860s.¹¹¹

However, events did not proceed as Prince Gong had hoped in his memorial. The European powers were there to stay, and now began pressing the Chinese elite to send diplomatic missions themselves. This, however, was again at odds with the Sinocentric notions of superiority, as it implied reciprocal relations among equals, and the Chinese resisted.¹¹² The European diplomats recognised this. The British Minister, for instance, stated that 'Britain would not be satisfied that China had dropped its pretensions to superiority until a Chinese plenipotentiary had been accredited', and other European powers echoed these views.¹¹³ Furthermore, the Western diplomats impressed the Chinese upon the benefits of adopting such an institution. Thomas Wade, the British Minister, presented two advantages that could be gained: first, increased and direct communication could reduce misunderstandings and the possibility of war between China and the Western powers. Second, it could afford China greater protection from other Western states.¹¹⁴

In response, the *zongli yamen* despatched a secret letter to seek the views of the leading high officials at the time.¹¹⁵ The *zongli yamen* pointed out that the sending of diplomatic missions abroad would benefit China in two ways: first, China would be able to collect first-hand information of the European powers and be able to interact with them more effectively. 'This would be in keeping with the ancient Chinese military exhortation:

¹¹¹ Ian Hurd argues that if a system and its rules lack legitimacy and are adhered to only out of self-interest, '[a]ctors are constantly recalculating the expected payoff to remaining in the system and stand ready to abandon it immediately should some alternative promise greater utility.' Prince Gong's statement seems to readily match this pattern of behaviour. See Ian Hurd, 'Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics', *International Organization* (vol. 53, no. 2, Spring 1999, pp. 379-408), p. 387

¹¹² Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, pp. 88-89

¹¹³ Knight Biggerstaff, 'The Secret Correspondence of 1867-1868: Views of Leading Chinese Statesmen Regarding the Further Opening of China to Western Influence', *The Journal of Modern History* (vol. 22, no. 2, June 1950, pp. 122-136), p. 127.

¹¹⁴ Owen H. H. Wong, *A New Profile in Sino-Western Diplomacy: The First Chinese Minister to Great Britain*. (Kowloon, Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Book, 1987, p. 11

¹¹⁵ The Yamen received replies from Zuo Zongtang (governor general of Shaangan), Ruilin (governor-general of Liangguang), Duxing'a (military governor of Shengjing), Ding Baozhen (governor of Shandong), Li Hanzhang (acting governor-general of Huguang and governor of Jiangsu), Shen Baozhen (commissioner in charge of the Fuzhou dockyard), Jiang Yili (governor of Guangdong), Zeng Guofan (grand secretary and governor general of Liangjiang), Yinggui (Tartar general at Fuzhou), Liu Kunyi (governor of Jiangxi), Chonghou (superintendent of trade for the three northern ports and vice-president of the board of war), Wu Tang (governor-general of Minzhe), Li Hongzhang (governor general of Huguang), Ma Xinyi (governor of Zhejiang), Li Futai (governor of Fujian), Guo Boyin (acting governor of Jiangsu and governor of Hubei), and Guanwen (acting governor-general of Zhili).

“Know your enemy as you know yourself.”¹¹⁶ Second, it was asserted that the sending of missions abroad would help bypass the domineering European representatives in China. The replies sent to the *zongli yamen* were largely supportive of sending Chinese diplomats abroad, and ‘conceded the desirability of obtaining by this means firsthand information about foreign countries’,¹¹⁷ as well as protecting overseas Chinese.¹¹⁸ These views were reinforced following a number of diplomatic disputes with the European powers,¹¹⁹ and eventuated in the decision to despatch Guo Songtao as China’s first ambassador in 1876.

But ambivalence towards European diplomats persisted, and this can again be attributed to China’s experience of engaging with European International Society’s coercive mode of interaction. Despite acknowledging the utility of adopting the Society’s diplomatic institutions, many of the political elite continued to see Western diplomats as highly domineering and adopting a coercive stance in their dealings with the Chinese.¹²⁰ Despite their acknowledgements of the benefits of diplomacy, even the memorials sent to the *zongli yamen* in response to the ‘secret letter’ were, according to a British Consulate report of 22nd May 1868, ‘more or less bitter against foreigners, accusing them of a desire to subvert the Empire, to reap harvest sown by the industry of the natives’.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Biggerstaff, ‘The Secret Correspondence of 1867-1868’, p. 128

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ This point was made by Li Futai in his reply to the secret letter circulated by the *zongli yamen*. See also Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 44-47. Zeng Guofan was of the opinion that ‘the terms of amity between us and other nations will necessarily bring about constant intercourse’ and the ‘duty of an Envoy is to represent the dignity of the Government, and to smooth over difficulties. On the whole, therefore, (the despatch of an Envoy), may be conceded.’ *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*. (part I, series E, Asia, 1860-1914, vol. 20: China’s Rehabilitation and Treaty Revision, 1866-1869) (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1994), p. 160. Zeng’s original reply can also be found in *Zeng Guofan quanji: Zougao* (vol. 9). (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1994), pp. 5784-5787. Li Hongzhang suggested that ‘Chinese representatives in foreign countries would be in a position to study Western developments which China might adopt to strengthen itself against further foreign aggression.’ Cited in Biggerstaff, ‘The Secret Correspondence of 1867-1868’, p. 128.

¹¹⁹ These incidents included the 1870 mission to France to apologise for the Tianjin massacre, the 1874 dispute with Japan over Taiwan (which will be examined in later chapters), and the Sino-British dispute over the 1875 murder of British consulate officer Augustus R. Margary. See Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *China’s Entrance into the Family of Nations*, pp. 167-179

¹²⁰ See, for example, Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 88. Such sentiments were even held by some British diplomats. Lord Elgin, who concluded the Treaty of Tianjin, was appalled by the high-handed attitude of some members of the British diplomatic legation in China.

¹²¹ *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*. (part I, series E, Asia, 1860-1914, vol. 20: China’s Rehabilitation and Treaty Revision, 1866-1869), p. 161. This is confirmed by Biggerstaff, ‘The Secret Correspondence of 1867-1868’, p. 135. It is interesting to note that officials such as Xue Fucheng who had first-hand experience of diplomatic practice within the core of European International Society did criticise traditional Chinese diplomacy as being the root-cause of this. Xue claimed that China had previously refused to engage in diplomacy because of its clinging to the norms of the Sinocentric international order, and it was China’s unwillingness to engage with European diplomats that had encouraged them to adopt a coercive stance to

When China began to send its officials abroad, however, alternative views began to appear.¹²² Some Chinese had the opportunity to witness the mode of interaction which applied within Europe, and, consequently, how diplomacy among 'civilised' states was conducted. There was also some appreciation of the effective functioning of diplomacy among 'civilised' states. Wang Tao claimed that in Europe 'diplomacy relies on certain principles, and is therefore carried out with courtesy (交際之道寓焉, 蓋亦以禮維持之而已)'.¹²³ Meanwhile, Xue Fucheng, who had first-hand experience of diplomatic practice among 'civilised' members of European International Society, observed in 1891 that while Western diplomats stationed in China were domineering and troublesome, within Europe the diplomats

...appeared to have some rules in their dealings with one another. They deal with each other with courtesy and manners, and they pay special attention to friendship. They do not show any intentions of relying on force to bully others, and neither do they rely on tactics and tricks. Not only British and French diplomats, but all the [European] diplomats are like this.¹²⁴

Similar views pervaded the views of Guo Songtao, China's first Minister to Britain, whose aforementioned entry in his diary noted that Western states interacted with one another on the basis of common ethics. It was this perception of *diplomacy based on shared values* that led Xue Fucheng to criticise traditional Chinese diplomacy as being the root-cause of European 'gunboat diplomacy'. He claimed that China had previously refused to engage in diplomacy because of its clinging to the norms of the Sinocentric international order, without recognising the moral dimension of European diplomacy. He was particularly critical of the foreign policies of the Daoguang and Xianfeng era. It was China's unwillingness to engage with European diplomats that had encouraged the latter to adopt a coercive stance to get their demands or grievances met.¹²⁵ Such views of diplomacy reflected the complex process of engagement between European International Society and China. On the one hand, first-hand observation of the institution and its functioning *within*

get their demands or grievances met. Xue Fucheng, 20th day, 6th Month, 1891, in 'Chushi riji xuke', *Chouyang chuyi*, p. 128

¹²² But many Chinese were still opposed to the sending of Chinese diplomats abroad. Upon hearing of Guo Songtao's appointment as first Chinese envoy to Britain, one official lamented: 'Kuo Sung-tao [Guo Songtao] stands out for his learning and literary talents, but he should not have accepted the mission to the West! I am truly regretful for him.' Cited in Hao and Wang, 'Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95', p. 183

¹²³ Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 47

¹²⁴ Xue Fucheng, 'Chushi riji xuke', *Chouyang chuyi* (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 127.

¹²⁵ Xue Fucheng, 'Chushi riji xuke', *Chouyang chuyi* (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 128

'civilised' Europe made a favourable impression with individuals such as Xue Fucheng. His critique of Sinocentrism is, in a sense, an admission that the European powers were just as 'civilised' as China was, and their diplomatic institutions were well worth adopting.

But on the other hand, the reality in China was that the members of the Society deemed China as 'uncivilised' and adopted the coercive mode of interaction to ensure the Qing adhered to the 'standard of civilisation' and 'enlighten' its policies. European diplomats were consequently viewed with suspicion. In Chinese elites' eyes, diplomacy thus often became a form of war. Wang Tao wrote that diplomats 'use their brushes to battle, their tongues to battle, and their minds/hearts to battle. There is no concrete form of control here, and victories are gained without using soldiers.'¹²⁶ To survive in this competitive arena, China needed to train intelligent diplomats that could adapt to any condition in international politics. The usefulness of diplomats in such a world was noted in Ma Jianzhong's letter from Marseille in 1878. '[B]eginning with the edicts of Emperor Han Wudi, it was deemed proper to refer to envoys in the same breath as generals and ministers. We can thus see how important they must have been!'¹²⁷ Here, the allusion to the role of diplomacy to ensure a state's survival is clear: Wudi was famed for his foreign policy of forging alliances with non-Chinese states to counter the threat from the nomads in northern China.¹²⁸ Ma points to the vital role that could be played by diplomacy in ensuring China's survival. In a separate letter to a friend from Paris, he admiringly writes about the exploits of Machiavelli, stating: 'Considering that Florence is such a small place, what would it have done without the diplomatic letters of Machiavelli to convince the powerful merchants of Venice and take away the ambitions of France?'¹²⁹ What China needed was more intelligent diplomats. Chinese diplomats, argued Ma, were considered by the Western diplomats a laughing stock. Professional diplomats in the Han dynasty were of much higher ability. 'Their intelligence, courage and resourcefulness had to be

¹²⁶ Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 47

¹²⁷ Ma Jianzhong, 'Reply from Marseille to a Friend', *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People: The Reform Writings of Ma Jianzhong (1845-1900)* (Durham East Asia Series, no. 2). (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 51

¹²⁸ See Paul J. Bailey's notes in *ibid.*, p. 55, fn. 9.

¹²⁹ Ma Jianzhong, 'Bali fu youren shu' in *Caixi xueyi*. (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1994), p. 161

exceptional; their urbanity and wide learning had to be sufficient so as to cope with any situation', and they needed to know the courtesies of diplomacy.¹³⁰

Meiji Japanese perceptions of war, great powers and the balance of power

Japanese perceptions of the institution of war were similar to those of the Chinese. The Western powers themselves did not show a strong interest in colonising Japan, and consequently, Satō Seizaburō argues, 'the view of imminent war in which Japan's very survival was at stake' receded after the Meiji Restoration.¹³¹ However, this did not mean that the Meiji leadership had begun to see their international environment as a secure one. Indeed, as Satō states:

...even when the direct threats of war had faded away, "wars" such as "economic wars" or "diplomatic wars" were constantly on the minds of [the Japanese]. Therefore, the "Warring States" analogy, while taking a different form, remained and returned as the framework of analysis for international affairs whenever an international crisis broke out.¹³²

In such a dangerous world, neither the great powers nor the balance of power were initially seen as playing the role of maintaining order, at least within Asia. The maintenance of the balance of power among the European powers did, as Tōyama Shigeki argues, keep any outright expansion in check at the time of early Meiji Japan.¹³³ However, this did not stop the great powers from stripping Japan of its sovereign prerogatives. In fact, the Western powers joined up to force Japan to sign unequal treaties, and, through the Most Favoured Nation clause, made sure any economic benefits to be derived from trading with Japan would be equally enjoyed by all powers. This meant that the institution's ability to protect smaller, lesser states was viewed with some suspicion.

On the other hand, as the Japanese began to develop a greater awareness of the two different modes of interaction within the Society, they acknowledged the roles the balance of power and great powers played in maintaining order. The Iwakura Mission's records

¹³⁰ Ma Jianzhong, 'Reply from Marseille to a Friend', *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People: The Reform Writings of Ma Jianzhong (1845-1900)* (Durham East Asia Series, no. 2). (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), p. 51

¹³¹ Satō Seizaburō, 'Bakumatsu, Meiji shoki ni okeru taigai ishiki no shoruikei', p. 28

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ Another factor was that economic expansionism was still in command during the West's expansion to Japan, and informal economic imperialism was consequently the main form of expansion the West adopted. See Tōyama Shigeki, 'Meiji shonen no gaikō ishiki' in Ronshū nihon rekishi kankōkai and Haraguchi Munehisa (eds), *Ronshū nihon rekishi* (vol. 9): *Meiji ishin*. (Tokyo: Yūseidō shuppan, 1973), p. 131.

indicate that its members noted that 'the states of Europe all differ in size and strength, and their independence is preserved because the five great powers maintain a balance of power.'¹³⁴ They noticed that small states like Belgium were able to maintain their autonomy thanks to their military morale and agreements among European states 'not to use Belgium as a route for advancing their armies', which can be interpreted as a form of balance of power, as it prevented the annexation of Belgium and the destabilising of the balance.¹³⁵ Furthermore, there emerged an understanding that this institution applied to states of a *similar identity*. Fukuzawa Yukichi (福沢諭吉), the highly influential Meiji intellectual, noted 'at times, among *states of a similar kind*, if a smaller state is on the brink of disaster [i.e. invasion], others will come to its aid. This balancing is known as the "balance of power" (バランス・ヲフ・パワ)'.¹³⁶

However, in East Asia this was a different story. Again, Fukuzawa forwarded a perceptive explanation of the reasons, again pointing to differences in identity:

At the end of the day, the balance of power only gets implemented [among the European powers] because emotionally the Europeans feel empathy for those of a same kind. However here in the Orient they stand by and watch Westerners do whatever they want; not one of them intervenes to stop this.¹³⁷

Here, Fukuzawa identified the key social logic of nineteenth-century European International Society: the demand for homogeneity. He concentrates primarily on racial similarities in the passage above, and does not mention the 'standard of civilisation', which was also a key component of this 'sameness' the Society required if a new entrant was to be subjected to the 'coexistence' mode of interaction. However, racial difference was an important element of 'civilised' identity within European society (both domestic and international) at this time, and his opinions must be concluded as extremely astute.

Dualistic observations also permeated Japanese views of the great powers. Japanese who observed European international politics came to the view that the balance of power, which protected the smaller, weaker European states, was maintained by the great powers. Nakae Chōmin (中江兆民) pointed to this in his famous satirical work, *Sansuijin keirin mondō* (三酔人経綸問答). He claims that there exists some form of common ethics

¹³⁴ Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 4). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1980), p. 106. The five great powers here are Britain, France, Germany, Austro-Hungary and Russia.

¹³⁵ Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1979), p. 190

¹³⁶ Cited in Hatsuse Ryūhei, "'Datsua ron" saikō' in Hirano Ken'ichirō (ed) *Kindai nippon to ajia: bunka no koryū to masatsu*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1984), p. 27. Emphasis added.

¹³⁷ Cited in *ibid.*

(although fragile) within European diplomacy, which is in turn indicative of his awareness of a societal element within European international relations. Nakae explicitly points out in the same work that this 'balance of power' is not a fortuitous one, but an 'idea' that is *consciously* maintained (諸国均勢の義).¹³⁸ The implication is that the great powers, because of their sheer preponderance, play a crucial role in this.

All states, at first glance, may seem as relying only on power and not ethics, but power does not matter to the degree that many people think. If one country out of Prussia, France, Britain and Russia became too powerful, perhaps they would rely on force and ignore international law. But this isn't the case today. Because a balance of power is maintained, these great powers have no choice but to adhere to international law to some extent, and this is why many smaller states [in Europe] escape being swallowed up.¹³⁹

Despite this evidence of increased knowledge of European international politics and the existence of a separate mode of interaction, the great powers continued to be viewed with the utmost suspicion and were regarded as the biggest threat to the survival of the Japanese state. Here, we see the effects of Japan's engagement with the Society's more coercive, 'civilising' mode of interaction. Yamagata Aritomo's statement in 1880 is a typical example:

Now it is said that that the Western countries do not massacre other tribes like ancient barbarians, but merely paralyse a state's armies and use their own soldiers to bring about the capitulation of others. Therefore, they will not take over others' lands...Now how can that be true? It is not about the West not doing this or not being able to do this, it is merely about them caring about their own gains. Therefore we see Poland being split into three and India being swallowed up by Britain. Is this not about seizing another state?...The Western states compete with each other over their weapons, each vying to overtake another...they are like greedy wolves and eye each other like tigers, trying to take advantage of the slightest chance presented to them...¹⁴⁰

The great powers were thus viewed in a contradictory fashion. They were not only sources of fear, but also sources of emulation. As Japan increasingly sought to be judged by the social standards of European International Society, many Japanese came to admire the industrial and technological progress the European great powers had attained, and sought to model Japan on them. Furthermore, as Japan's engagement with the dualistic European International Society deepened, there also began to emerge an understanding that a 'civilised' state was also given the prerogative to 'civilise' the 'barbarous' polities, and as

¹³⁸ Nakae Chōmin, *Sansuijin keirin mondō*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), p. 201

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 200-201. The translation here is based on Kuwabara Takeo and Shimada Kenji's modern Japanese translation, which can be found in pp. 102-103.

¹⁴⁰ Yamagata Aritomo, 'Shin rinpō heibi ryakuhyō' in *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho*, p. 91

the most 'civilised' entity in East Asia, Japan had the prerogative to enlighten its barbarous Asian neighbours, just like the European powers. This dualistic understanding of the great powers was to have important consequences in subsequent Meiji Japanese imperialism, and will be examined in greater detail in the following chapters.

Meiji Japanese perceptions of diplomacy and international law

In similar fashion to the Chinese, the Japanese initially found the introduction of the European-styled institutions of diplomacy difficult. There was strong resistance to allowing foreigners to reside in Japan, leading to the ouster of the *rōjū* Hotta Masayoshi. Under the *tairō* (大老) Ii Naosuke (井伊直弼),¹⁴¹ the Tokugawa shogunate eventually forced through the signing of the 1858 Treaty of Amity and Commerce Between the United States and Japan. This paved the way for increasing foreign diplomatic presence on Japanese soil, but also resulted in Ii Naosuke's assassination two years later. There were, however, calls to adopt the institution of diplomacy, even from the shogunate's opponents. Iwakura Tomomi, for instance, argued in 1867 that the sending of diplomatic missions could help Japan collect valuable information about the European states.¹⁴² In his letter of 1865, Terashima Munenori (寺島宗則), who later became foreign minister, also wrote that if Japan wanted to protect itself from the European powers and achieve parity with them, 'it is time for the ruler of Japan to open his eyes and rid Japan of old habits. Japan must be reborn. This means that Japan must send ambassadors to several great powers overseas'.¹⁴³

Japan's seemingly eager participation in the diplomatic system should not be taken as a sign of an immediate and full commitment to the norms of diplomacy of European International Society, however. Although Terashima's letter above is partially in favour of introducing elements of Western-styled diplomacy, his statements took place in the context of overthrowing the Tokugawa regime. His statements are not only a reflection of his engagement with European International Society, but also a desire to overthrow the domestic political order, and should not be taken at face value.

The diplomatic system of exchanging envoys gained increasing acceptance in the Meiji period, and the leadership did indeed continue to participate in European styled

¹⁴¹ The *tairō* outranked the *rōjū* and was the highest official position within the Tokugawa bureaucracy. The post was created only at times when the *shōgun* was deemed in need of assistance in political decision-making.

¹⁴² Yasuoka Akio, 'Iwakura Tomomi no gaikō seiryaku', *Hōsei shigaku* (vol. 21, 1969, pp. 1-23), pp. 7-8

¹⁴³ Cited in Inuzuka Takaaki, 'Meiji shoki gaikō shidōsha no taigai ninshiki: Soejima Taneomi to Terashima Munenori o chūshin ni' *Kokusai seiji* (no. 102, February 1993, pp. 22-38), p. 24

diplomacy (Japanese diplomats were, for instance, dispatched to Germany, France, and the United States in 1871). But Western diplomacy and its diplomats were seen as inherently coercive. Some of this thinking was a result of memories of events in the 1850s and 1860s: members of the Meiji elite had witnessed European ‘gunboat diplomacy’ for themselves.¹⁴⁴ Inoue Kaoru and Itō Hirobumi, who were from the Chōshū fiefdom, had witnessed the European powers bombard the city of Shimonoseki in August 1864, in retaliation for the Chōshū fiefdom’s attacks on foreign ships in the previous year. The ensuing settlement (which was concluded in the shōgun’s name) resulted in an indemnity of three million Mexican Dollars, and continued to place a terrible burden on the Meiji government after the Meiji Restoration. Diplomacy was thus seen as an arena in which ‘exchanges of favours, threats, and secret treaties of war’¹⁴⁵ are played out. In 1872, the secretary of the Iwakura mission noted: ‘In Western diplomacy (交際礼 *chipuromachikku*), on the surface everyone behaves in a friendly manner, but behind the scenes it is shot with deception and tricks.’¹⁴⁶ Without ‘extreme bravery and deep knowledge of European diplomacy,’ Japanese diplomats ‘could fall under the tricks of European diplomats and leave unspeakable national difficulties in the future.’¹⁴⁷

In the minds of the Japanese leadership, one of the most important institutions in European International Society was international law. However, despite this agreement, the Japanese elites’ attitudes remained ambivalent.¹⁴⁸ In his diary entry in 1868, Kido Takayoshi confessed his mistrust of international law, stating:

I am forced to believe that the military power of the Empire [Japan] must be great enough to deal with the great powers of the West as potential enemies. One cannot depend on international law without having a well-prepared military force. Many countries use the cloak of international law to seek their own interest in dealing with weaker nations. This is one of the reasons that I call international law a mere tool for depriving a weak nation of its rights.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ See W. G. Beasley, ‘The foreign threat and the opening of the ports’ in Marius B. Jansen (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (vol. 5): *The Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 259-307

¹⁴⁵ Itō Hirobumi (ed) ‘Jōyaku kaisei ni kansuru hōkoku’ in Itō Hirobumi (ed), *Hishoruisan: Gaikō hen* (vol. 1). (Tokyo: Hishoruisan kankōkai, 1936), p. 167

¹⁴⁶ Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 3), p. 116

¹⁴⁷ Itō Hirobumi (ed) ‘Jōyaku kaisei ni kansuru hōkoku’, *Hishoruisan: Gaikō hen* (vol. 1), p. 167

¹⁴⁸ A brief, albeit useful summary of Japanese views on international law can be found in Yasuoka Akio, *Bakumatsu ishin no ryōdo to gaikō*. (Ōsaka: Seibundō, 2002), pp. 16-18

¹⁴⁹ Kido Takayoshi, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi* (vol. 1). (Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota, trans). (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1983), 8th Day of the Eleventh Month (21st December), 1868, p. 148

Such views may well have been strengthened by the opinions of other international leaders. During the Iwakura mission's fact-finding visit to Berlin in 1872, the famous practitioner of power politics, Bismarck, offered the Japanese delegation his views of international politics. The Japanese delegation concluded that Bismarck's words 'were extremely meaningful, and we should take note of his mastering of diplomatic courtesy and political manoeuvring.'¹⁵⁰ Bismarck's remarks on international politics appear to have made a deep impression on the Japanese delegation, and are worth citing in length:

...although all states of the world nowadays interact with each other in a friendly and courteous manner, this is entirely superficial. Behind the scenes, states both strong and weak compete with each other, and have little respect for each other. When I was young and Prussia was weak, the political leaders cared little for the country. Upon seeing the realities of small states I always felt aggrieved, and this has never left my mind. As for international law, it is supposed to be a law which protects the rights of states. However, once the interests of great powers are concerned, the law is used to protect the rights of the great powers, and if international law is contrary to the interests of the great powers, military might is used instead. Although small states may try to keep to the courtesies and rules of diplomacy to protect their independence, once they face military tactics (by others) it is usually the case that they are unable to maintain their independence.¹⁵¹

It is not surprising that the members of the Iwakura mission found Bismarck's words of interest: despite the fact that states were supposed to be guaranteed their sovereignty, the Japanese found their sovereignty limited by the Treaty Port system. The realities of international law as stipulated in Western works seemed to have little resemblance to Japan's reality. Moreover, the fact that Chinese translations of international law tended to emphasise the role of natural law in international law only served to highlight the disparities between the ideals and realities of an international order supposedly regulated by international law.¹⁵²

But this does not mean that the Japanese elite failed to recognise that international law did exert a certain degree of normative influence, albeit within Europe. Hirosawa Saneomi (広沢真臣), who became councillor in the *dajōkan* (太政官) government,¹⁵³ acknowledged the role international law plays in protecting the sovereignty of states by stating in 1869 that 'small states rely on this [international law] for their preservation,

¹⁵⁰ Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 3), p. 330

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 329

¹⁵² See Tanaka Tadashi, 'Waga kuni ni okeru sensōhō no juyō to jissen: bakumatsu, meijiki o chūshin ni' in Ōnuma Yasuaki (ed), *Kokusaihō, kokusai rengō to nippon*. (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1987), p. 396

¹⁵³ The *dajōkan* government refers to an early form of government in the Meiji era. It was modelled on the central government institutions of direct imperial rule that was established in the eighth century. The *dajōkan* governmental structures continued until a cabinet was introduced in Japan in 1885.

compelling the larger states to refrain from using threats and force.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Sanjō Sanetomi (三条実美), who held the highest position of president of the *dajōkan* government, acknowledged the function international law is supposed to serve in his memorial to Iwakura Tomomi in 1871:

The existence of international law (列国公法 *rekko kōhō*) is to enable states, with equal rights and free from the threats of aggression, to profit from trade and engage in diplomacy on equal terms. As states possess equal rights, it goes without saying that the treaties they sign are on equal terms. International law exists to preserve states' independence, the balance of power and the benefits of diplomacy and allow states to enjoy the benefits of trade. It controls imbalances of power...and assists the norms of heaven and humanity.¹⁵⁵

To a certain extent, the positive perceptions of international law in Japan was a result of Chinese influence. One of Japan's earliest introductions to international law was via the *Wanguo gongfa* (万国公法 *Bankoku kōhō* in Japanese). As a result, early Japanese views tended to view international law as a form of natural law similar to Confucian ethics that was applicable to all nations, and this facilitated their acceptance of it to a degree.¹⁵⁶

Japanese knowledge of international law was furthered by the introduction of positive international law. One of the more famous texts was Nishi Amane (西周)'s *Bankoku kōhō*, published in 1868. Nishi's writings were based on the lectures given to him by Simon Vissering, professor of Leiden University in the Netherlands. Vissering made use of the most current treatises on international law for this purpose, and Taoka Ryōichi argues that Nishi's work strongly suggests that Vissering had used Berlin legal positivist August Wilhelm Heffter's work *Das europäische Völkerrecht der Gegenwart* for his lectures.¹⁵⁷

It is not surprising, then, that Nishi's *Bankoku kōhō* reflects the influences of legal positivism. He describes international law as 'Western international law' [泰西公法 *taisei kōhō*], and this reflects the fact that international law was considered to apply only to

¹⁵⁴ Cited in Yasuoka Akio, 'Bankoku kōhō to Meiji gaikō', *Seiji keizai shigaku* (no. 200, January, February and March 1983, pp. 188-199), 194

¹⁵⁵ Sanjō Sanetomi, 'Tokumei zenken taishi haken chōgi no koto' in *Iwakura kō jikki* (vol. 2) (Tada Kōmon, ed). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), p. 927

¹⁵⁶ Tanaka Tadashi, 'Waga kuni ni okeru sensōhō no juyō to jissen', p. 396

¹⁵⁷ Taoka Ryōichi, 'Nishi Shūsuke "Bankoku kōhō"' *Kokusaihō gaikō zasshi* (vol. 71, no. 1, 1972, pp. 1-57), pp. 24-25. While Vissering has been described elsewhere as an advocate of natural law by Richard H. Minear, Taoka Ryōichi notes that this view ignores the historical context of the time when positive international law was gaining ascendancy. The nineteenth century was a transitional time when despite the expansion of European International Society, international legal positivists such as Georg Friedrich von Martens continued to refer to the law as 'European' international law (*Le droit des gens de l'Europe* or *Das positive europäische Völkerrecht*) to differentiate themselves from proponents of natural law. Richard H. Minear, 'Nishi Amane and the Reception of Western Law in Japan', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 28, no. 2, Summer 1973, pp. 151-175), p. 156

certain polities – the ‘civilised’ members of European International Society.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, it pointed towards the possibility that international law was not a universal discourse as Martin’s *Bankoku kōhō* had suggested. Nishi’s translation reminded its readers that while ‘states which are able to effectively govern themselves and possess autonomy [自主の権] are, in accordance with *Western* international law, entitled to equal rights with other states’, they were differentiated on the basis of power [勢力 *seiryoku*].¹⁵⁹ ‘According to this power’, Nishi wrote, ‘European countries are classified as primary countries, secondary countries and third-rate countries [この勢力の差に依りて尋常、歐羅巴の諸国を第一等国、第二等国、第三等の三つに別つ]’.¹⁶⁰

The introduction of positive international law into Japan increased the awareness that international law was selective (in the sense that it originated from and had traditionally only governed intra-European relations), and only those who were deemed ‘civilised’ could enjoy the protection of international law.¹⁶¹ Iwakura Tomomi, for his part, claimed in a memorial in 1875:

They say that international law is there to protect peaceful relations between states and preserve peace. The logic of international law is said to be precise, and its ethics [‘way’], wide-ranging and fair. If so, even if a state is poor, its soldiers weak and its polity is not formed, it has nothing to fear. However, this is certainly not the case. Is it not claimed that there is nothing better than self-protection [to preserve peace] (自主自護 *jishu jigo*)? Is it not also claimed that large states stand on equal terms with each other and maintain the balance of power for this, but they do not take part in international law?¹⁶²

Iwakura’s comments are somewhat ambivalent and contradictory. On the one hand, he claims that the European powers are accorded *equal status*. The very notion of states

¹⁵⁸ While Nishi mentioned that ‘Western international law’ derives from natural law, this is, Taoka argues, ‘common in writings on international law in the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, when international legal studies gradually began shifting towards positive law’. Taoka Ryōichi, ‘Nishi Shūsuke “Bankoku kōhō”’, p. 32

¹⁵⁹ Cited in Yamamuro Shin’ichi *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia: kijiku, rensa, tōki*, p. 231.

¹⁶⁰ Cited in *ibid.* Emphasis added.

¹⁶¹ See Kōzai Shigeru, ‘Bakumatsu kaikokuki ni okeru kokusaihō no dōnyū’, *Hōgaku ronsō* (vol. 97, no. 5, 1975, pp. 1-38), p. 38; Sumiyoshi Yoshihito, ‘Meiji shoki ni okeru kokusaihō no dōnyū’ *Kokusaihō gaikō zasshi* (vol. 71 no. 5-6, 1972, pp. 32-58); and Taoka Ryōichi, ‘Nishi Shūsuke “Bankoku kōhō”’

¹⁶² Iwakura Tomomi ‘Tomomi gaikō no kimu o hitsuroku shi goran ni kyō suru koto’, *Iwakura kō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Hara shōbō, 1968), p. 233. Iwakura expressed similar sentiments in a separate memorial, where he claimed: ‘...it is claimed that trade...is supposed to be mutually beneficial and within the spirit of international law [天地ノ公道 *tenchi no kōdō*, the way of heaven and earth]. However, in reality the foreign countries only care about their own benefits, and care little for the other countries losses. Therefore, rhetoric such as sharing the profits of the world and adhering to norms of the world is nothing but an excuse for foreign states to satisfy their greed.’ See ‘Tomomi seiji no sakugi o Nijō Naritaka ni jō zuru koto’, *Iwakura kō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2), p. 27

standing as equals was a fundamental departure from the hierarchical East Asian international order, and suggests an unconscious recognition of a 'core' within European International Society where powerful states shared the notion of sovereign equality and mutually recognised this in their dealings with one another: this notion was of course supported by international law. He also notes in a later passage that if Japan strengthened itself, it could obtain *equal rights* with the European powers,¹⁶³ thereby implying that the Society was not lawless, but a realm where shared rules/norms *did* exist. On the other hand, Iwakura's own experiences of dealing with the coercive face of European International Society makes him unsure of how reliable these shared norms (including international law) are, and leads him to argue that power matters most. The result is a simultaneous acknowledgement and rejection of the existence of shared values.

There were Japanese elites who expressed the dual modes of interaction more explicitly, however. The intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi noted in an unpublished essay in 1874 that 'international law was a law for *European* countries and does not function at all in the Orient.'¹⁶⁴ Here, rather than identify military power as the determining factor of whether or not international law applied to a state, Fukuzawa points to regional factors. In identifying that the law only applied to European states, he again identifies some form of a *common identity* that seems to enable certain states to qualify for the protection of international law.

What did these dualistic interpretations of international law result in? First, as we will see in the chapters that follow, the Japanese elites acknowledged that those who were deemed to have a common characteristic were more likely to be afforded the protection of international law. This was of course the result of the emergence of the 'standard of civilisation', which had emerged by the time Japan was incorporated into European International Society and had the effect of placing those states labelled as 'uncivilised' beyond the pale of the protection of international law as afforded to European states. It took some time for the Japanese to realise this, and initially many thought that this 'common' feature was military power. However, as the existence of the 'standard of civilisation' became known, the Japanese leadership began to interpret international law as a marker of 'civilised' identity. Reference to international law in diplomatic intercourse

¹⁶³ Iwakura Tomomi, 'Tomomi gaikō no kimu o hitsuroku shi goran ni kyō suru koto', *Iwakura kō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), p. 233

¹⁶⁴ See Hatsuse Ryūhei, "'Datsua ron" saikō', p. 28. Emphasis added.

would serve to demonstrate Japan's efforts to becoming a 'civilised' member of European International Society. They thus undertook concerted efforts to comply with the 'standard of civilisation',¹⁶⁵ and also utilised international law to protect Japanese interests from the West. During a dispute with British Minister to Japan, Sir Harry Parkes, over the Meiji government's punishment of Christians, Ōkuma Shigenobu invoked the laws of domestic sovereignty, claiming that 'foreign countries had no right to interfere with Japan punishing its own people in accordance with its own laws.'¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Japanese incorporated the vocabulary of international law in their interactions with (their sometimes bewildered) neighbours to differentiate themselves from the 'backward' Asian states.

Conclusion

The empirical examinations here differ from previous studies that have examined China and Japan's entry into European International Society. They show that Chinese and Japanese understandings and perceptions were multifaceted, and increasingly reflected their awareness of the dualities within the Society.

Chinese and Japanese perceptions of European International Society share much in common. Contrary to the simplistic depictions by conventional English School studies, they did not just encounter and absorb the norms of the Society which only applied to 'civilised' states. Japan and China had encountered a Janus-faced European International Society, and they accumulated knowledge of the rules which governed the interaction among 'civilised' states and between 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' states. They began to understand that European states' sovereignty tended to be respected, but not theirs. This makes sense if we take the Society's duality and the operation of the 'standard of civilisation' into account; but the Chinese and Japanese elites initially found it difficult to recognise this, and the Society thus seemed contradictory (if not downright hypocritical) in their eyes.

This resulted in often ambivalent understandings and interpretations of the Society's institutions. The Chinese and Japanese elites' initial reactions after their encounter with the European-dominated international order was a heightened sense of insecurity which, given the coercion exerted by the Society at this time, is not particularly surprising. However,

¹⁶⁵ Sanjō Sanetomi, 'Tokumei zenken taishi haken chōgi no koto' in *Iwakura kō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), p. 929

¹⁶⁶ Ōkuma Shigenobu with Enjōji Kiyoshi, *Ōkuma haku sekijitsu tan* (vol. 1), p. 285

both the Chinese and Japanese did, to a certain extent, acknowledge that within Europe, the European powers seemed to apply norms that did, to a certain degree, appear to aim for the protection of small, weaker states, even if these were qualified to an extent by accounts of latent rivalry among the European states. This identification of the existence of some form of common rules correspond, to a certain extent, to Hedley Bull's observation that '[i]f states...form an international society...., this is because, recognising certain common interests and perhaps some common values, they regard themselves as bound by certain rules in their dealings with one another'.¹⁶⁷ In this sense, then, it is arguable that the Chinese and Japanese were beginning to envisage – hazy though it may have been – the existence of a form of 'International Society', even though they may not have termed it as such.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, Nakae Chōmin's satirical essay, *Sansuijin keirinmondō*, for instance, gives an account of the European international order by three different individuals, Mr. Brave, Mr. Western Learning, and Mr. Nankai. Each of them give an account of the Society from the perspective of power politics, the possibility of a form of 'democratic peace' inspired by Kant, and a picture of a precarious societal order maintained by states' common interests. Nakae's treatise almost resembles that of Martin Wight's seminal lectures of the 'three traditions' of International Society, and is a testament to the rich understanding of the Society the Chinese and Japanese were beginning to develop around this time.

The findings of this chapter confirm Keene and Wight's insights of a dualistic European International Society, but more importantly challenge conventional English School works' simplistic views of Chinese and Japanese perceptions of the Society. As argued previously, these works have conceptualised both China and Japan's entry into the Society as a process of accepting the institutions and norms which governed the 'civilised' *European* states. Any discrepancies are seen in terms of both states' elites concluding an 'absence' of a Society. With reference to Japan's bitterness towards the Society's differential treatment, Gong wrote:

If anything, Japan took the standard [of 'civilisation'] too seriously and naively, on face value, not understanding that even 'civilized' international society was characterized

¹⁶⁷ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p. 13

¹⁶⁸ Nakae Chōmin, for example, uses the term '*shokoku kōsai*', or 'intercourse among states'. See Nakae Chōmin, *Sansuijin keirin mondō*, p. 200

by anarchy (the absence of a monopoly of legitimate violence) and hierarchy (because without civil society, rights depend largely on might).¹⁶⁹

Gong, however, fails to appreciate that many Chinese and Japanese elites held these sentiments while *simultaneously* admitting to the existence of societal relations within Europe, because he assumes European International Society to be one with a single mode of interaction which facilitates order. These feelings by the Chinese and Japanese can be explained more satisfactorily when we understand them as anger towards the discrimination *within* European International Society, rather than a rejection of the Society *per se*.¹⁷⁰ However, Gong misses this aspect of China and Japan's engagement with the Society because his narrow conceptualisation of it.

By conceptualising China and Japan as entering a Janus-faced European International Society, this chapter has highlighted greater complexities and ambiguities in Chinese and Japanese interpretations of the Society than conventional studies have suggested. Gong's aforementioned passage implies that the Japanese only became aware of the Society's double standards *after* their attempts to attain parity with the European powers had failed, and can only make sense if we assume that the Japanese thought that they saw a 'single' International Society with norms and rules which applied equally to all its members. This thesis, however, elucidates the fact that neither the Chinese or Japanese elites were as naïve as Gong thinks. Their ambivalence towards the Society's members and institutions go back further, and this suggests that the historical roots of their subsequent rebellious policies in the twentieth century go much deeper.

Chinese and Japanese perceptions of the existence of a dual mode of interaction within the Society also reflected and pointed to an important social logic. In the context of the late-nineteenth century, there existed an almost contradictory tension within the moral purpose of the Society: it was supposed to aim for 'tolerance' and 'coexistence', but prior to this came the less 'tolerant' demand for 'homogeneity', in the form of fulfilling the 'standard of civilisation' and being judged as 'civilised'. This was made quite clear by S. Wells Williams, the Chargé d'Affaires at Beijing, who wrote in a letter to the U.S.

¹⁶⁹ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 165

¹⁷⁰ This can be seen from the fact that Japan and China continued to utilise international law and participated in European-styled diplomacy, which continued even during Japan's 'rebellion' against the Society during the 1930s-1940s: Japan sent an 'ambassador' and solicited other states to send their diplomatic envoys to the puppet state of Manchukuo. Even when Japan had seemingly rejected the Society and its norms, the institution of diplomacy had been internalised to the degree that it was unthinkable for Japan to abolish it in its diplomatic relations.

Secretary of State William H. Seward on 23rd November 1865 with reference to introducing international law to China and Japan:

An authentic study of this work [*Wanguo gongfa*] by the officials in both China and Japan will probably lead them to endeavor to apply its usages and principles to their intercourse with foreign countries. This will gradually lead them to see how greatly the principle of exterritoriality [sic] contained in their treaties with those countries modifies the usages in force between western and Christian powers.¹⁷¹

Williams' letter encapsulates this logic where non-European entities could only be subjected to the mode of interaction which governed the 'civilised' members if they fulfilled the criteria set by the 'standard of civilisation'.¹⁷² Whether or not China or Japan would be subjected to the more cooperative mode of interaction depended very much on their elites' ability to identify and conform to this 'logic', which was part and parcel of the Janus-faced European International Society.

The Chinese and Japanese were beginning to develop an awareness of this. This was expressed in the realisation that *certain types* of states were treated in a very different manner from themselves, as well as the fact that they were 'beyond the pale' of the protection of the Society's institutions. The key, then, was to understand *what* characteristics these states shared, and what was needed for China and Japan to qualify to be accorded the more 'cooperative' mode of interaction. While many remained sceptical as to whether the institutions of the Society mattered at all, the very fact that some were beginning to recognise a 'criteria' to qualify for different form of interaction was important: it pointed to the possibility of China and Japan undergoing a concerted effort to discern what this 'standard' was, and gain legitimate membership of 'civilised' European International Society by conforming to it. This would push the socialisation process to a deeper level.

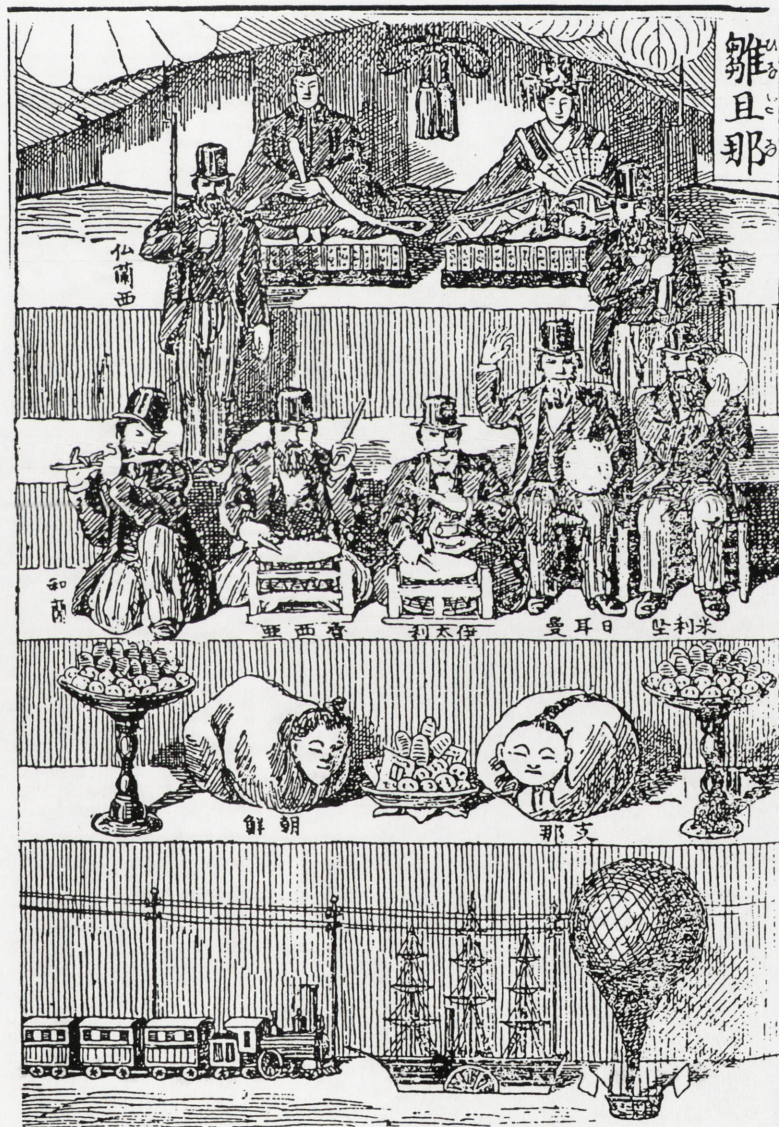
This was by no means guaranteed, however. The question thus becomes one of how the Chinese and Japanese elites decided to act upon the knowledge they accumulated through their interaction with European International Society. It will be recalled that this 'knowledge' is needed *a priori* for social reproduction if the actor wishes to enter her new social environment. How then, did the Chinese and Japanese elites act on this knowledge? To what extent did their awareness of the social demands of the Society play a part in their

¹⁷¹ United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs* (Part I, 1866). (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1965), p. 486

¹⁷² Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p. 32

socialisation? Did any divergences between the two emerge? If so, why? Furthermore, in light of our findings of an increased awareness of a Janus-faced Society on the part of China and Japan, it is necessary to pay particular attention to how these perceived dualities and coercive features of the Society played a part in both states' socialisation, if such socialisation occurred. This will be attempted in the following two chapters.

Figure 4-3: International hierarchies and Great Powers from the eyes of the Japanese



The picture gives us a glimpse into which states the Japanese thought of as most civilised. From the second row top, Britain and France, followed by the U.S., Germany, Italy, Russia, and the Netherlands below. The figures further below are China and Korea. Also note the 'trappings of modernity', telegraph lines, steamboats and trains. Source: Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)

LEARNING THE COMPETENCE AND SKILL TO BE A 'CIVILISED' STATE: STATE RECONFIGURATION IN CHINA AND JAPAN

The Master Said: Put me in the company of any two people at random – they will inevitably have something to teach me. I can take their qualities as a model and their defects as a warning. (*The Analects of Confucius*, 7.22)

Introduction

This chapter follows on from the previous discussions which investigated both China and Japan's acquisition of 'knowledge' – the development of an awareness for the social rules of the environment the actor finds herself in – by concentrating primarily on exploring the 'strategic learning' and 'emulative learning' phase of the socialisation process.

The previous chapter has demonstrated that some of the Chinese and the Japanese elites were beginning to engage with the two faces of a Janus-faced Society. They were beginning to notice that some states were accorded the protection of the Society's institutions more than their own countries, and that these states shared similar features. What then, were these features? In Chinese and Japanese eyes, The most conspicuous was military and industrial power. This is not surprising, as these material characteristics were most readily discernable. In the context of Chinese and Japanese experiences of encountering the Society's coercive, 'civilising' mode of interaction, military power was also seen to afford a state protection from the powerful armies and navies of the 'civilised' members of the Society.

The result of this was a concerted call for China and Japan to adapt to their new international environment by undergoing reforms that would transform their states into 'rich and powerful' states. However, was military power alone enough to be accorded the same treatment which the European powers enjoyed? To a certain extent it was, but the social logic of late-nineteenth century European International Society dictated that in addition to being militarily powerful, a state had to be judged as 'civilised' in order to be accorded the protection of its institutions. They had to demonstrate 'competence and skill' in applying the rules of the Society in order to convince the 'civilised' members that they had undergone a successful process of socialisation, and were now ready to enter the 'civilised family of nations' and be accorded the protection of their sovereign

independence and territorial integrity – and in an era of clear European military dominance, the 'uncivilised' non-European states often had little choice but to comply.

The Chinese and Japanese elites would thus have to recognise this 'social' logic' and become militarily powerful *and* fulfil the social standards of the Society simultaneously. It is here that divergences between the two states appeared. Some of the Chinese reformist elites did attempt to introduce European industry and technology and modernise the military. Any reforms that they undertook, however, were not intended to demonstrate their 'commitment' to the norms and expectations of the Society. Therefore, the Chinese did not go beyond introducing Western technology and weapons. They did not introduce European-styled political institutions on a wide scale (the establishment of the *zongli yamen* being a notable exception). Japan, on the other hand, also introduced European technology and industry, but took a very different route. Their reforms not only sought to make Japan a military power, but also to demonstrate Japan's 'commitment' to adhere to the Society's norms and prove itself a worthy candidate of 'civilised' membership. To this end, they attempted to reinvent Japan into a 'Europeanised' state, thereby transforming Japan's identity from a member of the East Asian international order to a 'civilised' member of European International Society.

This chapter focuses on the process by which China and Japan attempted to acquire (what they perceived to be) the 'competence and skill' needed to be accorded 'civilised' status within European International Society. It will be recalled that at this stage an actor is assumed to have acquired some degree of knowledge of her new social environment, and while this has yet to attain legitimacy in her eyes, the actor is, to a certain extent, able to conform to its procedural norms. The chapter begins by examining the theoretical considerations surrounding the global diffusion of 'Europeanised' states. It then proceeds to examine the socialisation processes of the Chinese and Japanese states by examining a number of reforms which took place in both states after their exposure to European International Society. The divergent paths followed by the two states mean that while the primary empirical cases presented here are, for organisational purposes, from the stage of 'gaining knowledge and competence', in reality the analysis does overlap with the 'commitment' stage of socialisation in the case of Japan. The empirical examinations are divided into four broad themes: identity formation, state centralisation, industrialisation and mass mobilisation. The intellectual origins of these reforms and the processes of implementation are examined within these themes. While the emphasis of this chapter is primarily on the role international social

pressures played in initiating these reforms, it must be emphasised from the outset that this does not deny that domestic socio-political factors played a role in the attempts to 'Europeanise' the state. Here, no attempt is made to discuss *which* factor mattered more, given the difficulties of disentangling the two causal factors. Rather, the simple proposition made here is that, amongst other factors, international social factors *were* important.

The empirical analysis concentrates primarily on the domestic reforms that China and Japan undertook between the 1860s and early 1890s following their encounter with European International Society. In the Chinese case, this period began shortly after the end of the Arrow War, when the reformists wielded some influence (particularly in foreign affairs). However, the reformists certainly did not enjoy a free hand in political decision-making either. The conservative faction was a powerful force to be reckoned with, and the Court continued to manipulate both reformists and conservatives to preserve their political power. Although the chapter does examine reforms that were implemented primarily by the reformists, it should be made clear that I do not wish to depict the process as a linear, unproblematic one, and, in light of the opposition the reformists faced, neither should we overstate the significance of their reforms.

A similar point should also be made in the case of Japan. The Meiji government had overthrown the Tokugawa regime in 1867, and faced less institutional constraints. Japanese society, however, was still in a transitional stage, and the implementation of reforms inevitably brought about opposition from groups whose interests from the Tokugawa era were threatened. Furthermore, the adoption of a 'Europeanised' identity elicited considerable debate among members of the Meiji elite, who were sometimes unsure of wholesale 'Westernisation', and resentful of the European powers.¹ The process often became one of learning the best from the Western states while still retaining Japanese identity; these goals were of course extremely hard ones to attain simultaneously, and were subject to varying interpretations and disputes. To this end, Japan's attempts to become a 'Europeanised' state also became a *political* process.

¹ Robert Eskildsen makes this point aptly when he remarks: 'the reproduction of Western civilization existed in tension with an antipathy to its corrosive effects on Japanese culture, and for better or for worse Western imperialism left Japan little choice but to engage Western civilization, which meant that the corrosion could not be avoided.' See Robert Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan', *The American Historical Review* (vol. 107, no. 2, April 2002, pp. 388-418), p. 393

Theoretical considerations

Before the examining China and Japan's socialisation, it would be worthwhile discussing some of the theoretical aspects of this process. This is primarily because these cases are somewhat problematic in that both states' policies following their initial encounter with European International Society were aimed at attaining 'wealth and strength'. Based on this, it is possible to view any forms of emulation of the European powers as a result of functional necessity: it is arguable that the introduction of Western weapons and technology, as well as the adoption of domestic political institutions modelled on Western states, took place in China and Japan because they provided the most efficient means by which both states could maximise their power and wealth. This possibility requires us to examine functionalist and sociological theoretical perspectives that seek to explain attempts by the Chinese and Japanese political decision-makers to reconfigure their states.

State reconfiguration in China and Japan: a comment on functionalist explanations

As argued previously, many conventional works by English School scholars on China and Japan's state reconfigurations following their engagement with European International Society are undergirded by functionalist accounts. Their main arguments can be summarised as follows: if the Chinese and Japanese elites wished to 'modernise' and reach the level of development of Western states, they needed to adopt the political, economic, and social institutions of the Western states. Japan quickly recognised this need and adopted these institutions to become a 'rich and powerful' state. China took longer to adopt these institutions, but once defeat by Japan – which it traditionally saw as inferior – proved the efficacy of Western institutions, it also began to reform along Western lines.

One reason for the prevalence of functionalist explanations for the adoption of Western institutions by China and Japan is the influence of modernisation theory and historical studies of the 1960s and 1970s that implicitly adopted this analytical framework.² In essence, modernisation theory posits the existence of a particular

² The consequences of this, among others, was a downplaying of the exploitation which took place alongside 'modernisation'; the tendency to see the domestic reforms that took place in Japan (and, to a lesser extent, China) following their encounter with the West as inherently 'rational' and progressive; and a tendency to place great (even excessive) importance on the political, economic, and social developments that took place as a result of the 'impact of the West'. An excellent discussion of Asian history and its adoption of modernisation theory can be found in John W. Dower, 'E. H. Norman, Japan and the Uses of History', pp. 3-101, and Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

trajectory that must be followed by humankind to 'subject natural forces to rational explanation and control, as well as...[to] promote social welfare, moral progress, and human happiness.'³ The theory suggests that modernisation entails the adoption of certain institutions which are most suited to maximise the efficiency of functionally differentiated institutions and the extraction of resources; various social changes which accompany modernisation are also presented as 'transformational in its impact and progressive in its effects.'⁴ As industrialised, developed states (in practice, Western states) are unproblematically assumed to be the most 'modernised', it is also tacitly assumed that modernisation will involve the adoption of political, economic and social institutions modelled on these industrialised societies. The 'modern state', with domestic political institutions similar to those of industrialised, European states, is an integral part of these institutions.

There are a number of problems with this particular approach. The first problem is that the influence of modernisation theories lends itself to a somewhat narrow view of history. The Meiji Restoration and its policies of modernisation are generally presented in a positive light, often neglecting the misery many Japanese (particularly the rural sector and women) had to endure in the process. In the case of China, which failed to 'modernise' at the same pace as Japan, 'traditional' society is frequently depicted as static and incapable of change from within.⁵ However, more recent scholarship has demonstrated that traditional Chinese intellectual frameworks were indeed open to new intellectual influences, and not rigidly conservative as often assumed.⁶ A similar tendency, particularly with reference to China, is the implicit assumption 'that China's traditional culture was an obstacle to a timely (and presumably felicitous) response to the West, allowing for modernization along Western lines.'⁷ Failure to adopt the

³ John Gerard Ruggie, 'Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations', *International Organization* (vol. 47, no. 1, Winter 1993, pp. 139-174), p. 145. See also Samuel P. Huntington, 'Political Modernization: America vs. Europe', *World Politics* (vol. 18, no. 3, April 1966, pp. 378-414)

⁴ Dean C. Tipps, 'Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (vol. 15, no. 2, March 1973, pp. 199-226), p. 202

⁵ Works that adopt this line include Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*. For an extended discussion of this point with reference to China, see Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China*.

⁶ Philip A. Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), for example, amply disproves the 'static' notion of Confucian culture by telling a fascinating story of the debates surrounding political reform in the late Qing.

⁷ Robert Marks, 'The State of the China Field: Or, the China Field and the State', *Modern China* (vol. 11, no. 4, October 1985, pp. 461-509), pp. 465-466. Mary C. Wright's classic study, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism* is one study that follows this argument, and, to a lesser extent, the influences of this attitude is visible in John L. Rawlinson, *China's Struggle for Naval Development 1839-1895*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967)

trappings of modernity is portrayed somewhat simplistically as a result of 'stubbornness' or 'ignorance'.⁸ This leads to an unfortunate implication that the Chinese were incapable of understanding the benefits that Western civilisation can bring; the result is an ethnocentric understanding of China which is not that different from that of the nineteenth century.

The second problem with these arguments is a simple one: its functionalist explanations do not work. It is by no means clear that institutions based on European models that emerge as a result of 'modernisation' are most suited for effective extraction and mobilisation of resources.⁹ Furthermore, the case of 'failed states' show that 'modern institutions' epitomised by the Westernised state do not in themselves guarantee better governance and the greater well-being of humanity.¹⁰ Martha Finnemore underscores this point succinctly:

Conventional arguments about the rise of the modern state emphasize its functional advantages at providing security and extracting revenue to explain its success at the expense of other forms of political organization. This may (or may not) be true of the rise of the state in Europe, but it does not explain the expansion of Western-style states to all corners of the world.¹¹

Functionalist and modernisation theories are oblivious to this fact, the latter not helped by its ethnocentric assumptions which 'evaluate the progress of nations...by their proximity to the institutions and values of Western, and particularly Anglo-American societies.'¹² Similar assumptions are visible in Gerrit W. Gong's work on the 'standard of civilisation', albeit implicitly. While he outlines the process by which China and Japan adhered to the 'standard', Gong is silent on the fact that in practice these 'standards' had to be attained by the adoption of Western-styled institutions. This point is again particularly pertinent when we consider that Western-styled institutions are not

⁸ For example, in discussing Chinese elites' rejection of Western political institutions, Knight Biggerstaff comments as follows: '...one is struck by their general ignorance and blindness...[only a few officials] gave evidence of possessing the intelligence and open-mindedness needed to cope with the situation. The thinking of the others was characterized by cultural arrogance and a complacent acceptance of traditional ways of doing things.' See Biggerstaff, 'The Secret Correspondence of 1867-1868', p. 136

⁹ As John W. Meyer *et al.* point out, many domestic institutions of the 'Westernised state' (such as mass schooling), while 'inscribed in commonsense descriptions and social-scientific theories of "the way things work"...may not mesh well with practical experience.' John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramirez, 'World Society and the Nation-State', *American Journal of Sociology* (vol. 103, no. 1, July 1997, pp. 144-181), p. 149

¹⁰ For a brief discussion of failed states, see Gerald Helman and Steven R. Ratner, 'Saving Failed States', *Foreign Policy* (no. 89, Winter 1992-93), pp. 3-20.

¹¹ Martha Finnemore, 'Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism', *International Organization* (vol. 50, no. 2, Spring 1996, pp. 325-347), p. 332. See also George M. Thomas and John W. Meyer, 'The Expansion of the State', *Annual Review of Sociology* (vol. 10, 1984, pp. 461-482), p. 462

¹² Dean C. Tipps, 'Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies', p. 206

necessarily the *only* means by which the standard can be achieved, and while the said institutions may work successfully within Europe, they may not do so in non-European states and societies.¹³ While he is more sensitive to the international social structures and pressures which were exerted on non-European states, Gong cannot explain *why* these polities had to reinvent themselves as 'Europeanised' states, as he focuses only on the legal requirements expressed by publicists.

The emergence of 'Westernised' states: a social approach

The emergence of 'Westernised states' thus does not appear to have been a result of purely functional necessity. Instead, it points to the existence of social demands for homogeneity within International Society, and that the Society has promoted *certain types* of actors as the only *legitimate* actors within international politics.¹⁴

Compliance with this demand can be brought about by two ways. First, it is possible that common interests result in convergence of actors' identities. Provided that common interests are recognised and the norm of 'legitimate membership' gains acceptance, a homogenous Society may emerge. An aspirant member may emulate the 'civilised' members of the Society because it has accepted the certain aspects of the Society's standards of 'membership' as legitimate. As Ann Florini argues:

Although it is rational for people to adopt innovations when they observe that someone they know who has already adopted the innovation has succeeded, it is also common for an innovation to be emulated because the person who has already adopted it has prestige.¹⁵

With reference to becoming a 'Europeanised' state, Meyer argues that aspirant members may be motivated to adopt Western political, social and economic institutions (regardless of their actual capacity to facilitate 'effective government') because it

¹³ With regard to China, the Republican government's attempts to extract resources via 'modern' Western-styled institutions were not successful, and the state eventually reverted to institutions which resembled Qing local political institutions. See Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988)

¹⁴ Hendrik Spruyt, who has also adopted a functionalist approach to explain the rise of the sovereign state, 'The specification of internal and external realms continues as a constitutive rule of international affairs.... Since states have been one way of ordering international relations, ethnic and irredentist movements define themselves as statist in their intent. With the possible exception of Islamic fundamentalism, movements define themselves in the terms of the international state system in order to be recognized by the other members. They claim international legitimacy based on their adherence to the constitutive rule of the system - sovereign territoriality.' Hendrik Spruyt, 'Institutional selection in international relations: state anarchy as order', *International Organization* (vol. 48, no. 4, Autumn 1994, pp. 527-557), p. 557

¹⁵ Ann Florini, 'The Evolution of International Norms', *International Studies Quarterly* (vol. 40, no. 3, Special Issue: Evolutionary Paradigms in the Social Sciences, September 1996, pp. 363-389), p. 375. It is also important to note that 'successful behaviour' is socially defined. As Wendt argues, it is never static or pre-determined, but 'constituted by shared understandings that vary by cultural context.' See Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 325

further their chances of being recognised as a legitimate member of a community. In the case of European International Society, 'legitimate', 'civilised' membership could offer a state greater respect for its sovereign integrity, and this provided some motivation for compliance. Attempts to adopt a similar identity, Meyer argues, 'enables a rational account to be given of how progress is being achieved',¹⁶ and demonstrates the level of commitment an aspirant member has towards entering the Society. Furthermore, it could result in smoother interactions, as similar domestic structures 'provides internal organizational elements that parallel and link up with similar elements in other countries and in the system as a whole. A state organization parallel to the others in the system maximizes external linkages and supports.'¹⁷

The second way in which 'homogeneity' is achieved is through the imposition of certain social standards, and this is particularly likely to happen when there exists little common interests, values or culture between the Society's members and other polities. Fred Halliday is correct in pointing out that Hedley Bull's 'communitarian' conceptualisation of an International Society as 'a grouping with shared values' is an inadequate one because it downplays elements of power within it.¹⁸ As the guardians of the Society are great powers, this often means that aspirant members have to recast themselves 'in the image of the dominant power or group of powers of the time'.¹⁹ While states may indeed decide to conform on their own accord, it must not be forgotten that such behaviour will be conditioned by the possibility that compliance will be met with positive rewards and deviation by sanctions.²⁰

This, however, does not imply that there existed strict, rigid criteria by which a state could be deemed to have gained the 'competence and skill' to have been socialised into European International Society. There were instances where some European states did not meet the 'standard of civilisation' (such as in Latin America),²¹ but were nonetheless accorded membership in 'civilised' European International Society. This aspect was not lost on Meiji statesman Itō Hirobumi (伊藤博文), who wrote bitterly in a letter to his colleague Matsukata Masayoshi (松方正義) in 1883:

¹⁶ John W. Meyer, 'The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State' in George M. Thomas, John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli (eds), *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual*. (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1987), p. 56

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 101

¹⁹ Paul Keal, 'An "International Society"?' p. 72

²⁰ However, neither does this negate the existence of a society and the possibility of shared values emerging. The functioning of most societies involves the exercise of coercion in the form of sanctions for 'deviant' behaviour.

When East and West interact, the Europeans always unite and try and overrun Japan, which is isolated. The reason for this is simply because we are different from them both in race and religion. One could say that this happens because our civilisation has not reached their standard, but why is it they recognise Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro or Romania, all states that have a civilisation no better than mountain monkeys, as civilised? The fact that Japan is far more civilised than these small, miserable countries is a well-known fact. In the final analysis, they [the European states] respect the barbarous mountain monkeys as civilised because they share the same religion.²²

Itō's observations point to the stark reality that nineteenth century European International Society was still coloured by patently racist notions that Asian and African peoples and their political entities were either 'uncivilised' or 'barbarous', and this influenced their decisions in awarding 'civilised' membership to non-European entities; a point which Gong inexplicably (and perhaps naively) downplays when he claims that the emergence of the 'standard of civilisation' was a 'response to the philosophical problem' of deciding which entities were worthy of membership in the Society.²³

What then, were the criteria for legitimate membership into 'civilised' European International Society? One of the most important has been that of sovereign statehood, which, Daniel Philpott argues, was 'codified into legitimacy' in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.²⁴ This new form of legitimacy was placed on firmer ground when states 'rearticulat[ed] it in subsequent treaties and law. They practiced it by crowding out the effective authority of alternative polities and by replicating themselves all across the globe.'²⁵ By the time China and Japan encountered European International Society, however, there were four additional criteria. The first was of course the fulfilment of the 'standard of civilisation', which has already been well-documented.

The second was popular sovereignty, which was beginning to emerge as an additional criterion for 'civilised', legitimate membership. We should be careful not to overstate this point, as not all European states had fully attained this criterion of 'legitimate' statehood, but at the same time it must be noted that 'the progressive move

²¹ See Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-states*, pp. 61-66

²² Itō Hirobumi, 'Ōshū no kenbun ni tsuki Itō Hirobumi shokan' in Shibahara Takuji, Ikai Takaaki and Ikeda Masahiro (eds), *Nihon kindai shisō taikai* (vol. 12): *taigaikan*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988), p. 56

²³ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, p. 24. But Gong does admit that admission to the Society was often decided on a subjective basis. He states: 'Even after it emerged as an explicit legal concept, the standard was still subject to the admixture of contrasting elements – political and legal, subjective and objective, explicit and implicit – associated with any doctrine of recognition.' See Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, p. 21, and pp. 21-23 for an expanded discussion of this problem.

²⁴ Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 97

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 91

toward constitutional and representative forms of governance' was gradually taking place,²⁶ and presented itself as a powerful intellectual influence around this time. The emergence of popular sovereignty as a norm of legitimate statehood was partly connected with power politics within Europe as well. Revolutionary France had been the first state to invoke the concept of popular sovereignty, and its challenge to eighteenth-century European International Society had demonstrated the possibility of mobilising a state's populace to successfully conduct 'total war', providing an important model of emulation among the members of the Society.²⁷ Consequently, a number of states within Europe also began to introduce means to mobilise their citizens. An army based on mass mobilisation was 'combat effective' and was a source of emulation, and mass conscription began to be introduced in some states.²⁸

Although the emulation of mass armies may, on the surface, be seen as a form of rational 'copying', Mlada Bukovansky insists that such emulation involved the transmission of ideas of popular sovereignty and nationalism as well; after all, she claims, 'using nationalism as a tool of mobilization may not have evolved at all without the impetus of Enlightenment ideas'.²⁹ Mobilisation of popular nationalism required giving a state's citizens a political role. While the state also created and made use of this sentiment, the 'upsurge of nationalism was not simply generated from the top down, but resulted from the collapse of the old regime' of dynastic sovereignty and the emergence of states based on popular sovereignty.³⁰ An increased perception that citizens had 'invested the institutions and representatives of the state with sovereign authority'³¹ to protect their individual rights fostered what Benedict Anderson calls a

²⁶ Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p. 131. Reus-Smit argues that the rise of legislative justice was deeply intertwined with the rise of popular sovereignty for two reasons: 'first, ...only those subject to the rules have the right to define them and, second, that the rules of society must apply equally to all citizens, in all like cases.' To this end, laws were reconceived as an expression of increasingly codified, mutually binding agreements, as opposed to commands of a superior whose legitimacy and authority lay in hereditary rights.

²⁷ This emulation process is discussed by Mlada Bukovansky, 'The altered state and the state of nature – the French Revolution and international politics', *Review of International Studies* (vol. 25, no. 2, 1999, pp. 197-216), and within a neorealist framework by Barry R. Posen, 'Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power', *International Security* (vol. 18, no. 2, Autumn 1993, pp. 80-124)

²⁸ See Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, pp. 88-89 and Posen, 'Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power', pp. 82-83

²⁹ Bukovansky, 'The altered state and the state of nature', p. 201

³⁰ Mlada Bukovansky, *Legitimacy and Power Politics: The American and French Revolutions in International Political Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 207

³¹ Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p. 129

'deep horizontal comradeship' necessary to 'imagine' a community as a rallying point for loyalty.³²

Third, the attainment of science, technology, and industry was crucial to being deemed civilised. As Michael Adas has persuasively argued, by the nineteenth century these particular aspects 'became the key gauges by which even the missionaries compared other civilizations to their own and vital sources of their sense of righteousness and purpose.'³³

Finally, the findings of Meyer *et al.* and Finnemore suggest a fourth criterion: that the two aforementioned conditions for membership of the Society had to be met by becoming a state based on *European* models.³⁴ They have noted the remarkable global spread of the 'nation-state model' – in itself a Western concept – and its domestic institutions, regardless of how 'functional' such models may be.³⁵ They find the cause for this in a 'world culture' which actively promotes the Westernised nation-state as a social good, and claim that in this sense, the Westernised nation-state is a social construct. Consequently,

...[o]rientation to the identity and purposes of the nation-state model increases the rate at which countries adopt other prescribed institutions of modernity. Having committed themselves to the identity of the rationalizing state, appropriate policies follow – policies for national development, individual citizenship and rights, environmental management, foreign relations. These policies are depicted as if they were autonomous decisions because nation-states are defined as sovereign, responsible, and essentially autonomous actors. Taking into account the larger [global] culture in which states are embedded, however, the policies look more like enactments of conventionalised scripts... Even if a state proclaims its opposition to the dominant world identity models... [i]t will find... itself modifying its traditions in the direction of world-cultural forms.³⁶

In the context of the late-nineteenth century, the 'Europeanised' state and its political institutions were inextricably linked with 'civilised' identity. This was also a reflection of 'a presumption of superiority based not simply on ethnocentrism but also on demonstrated achievements of Europeans in science, technology, warfare,

³² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 1991), p. 7

³³ Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, p. 206

³⁴ Bukovansky also claims that 'states experience pressure not only to emulate successful behavior, but also to organize their domestic structures in such a way as to coincide with the dominant legitimacy conceptions of the day.' See Bukovansky, *Legitimacy and Power Politics*, p. 35.

³⁵ It should be noted that while Meyer *et al.* use the term 'nation-state', by this they actually emphasise the various political and economic institutions seen in almost all sovereign/nation-states.

³⁶ John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramirez, 'World Society and the Nation-State', p. 159

government, political economy, architecture, literature, and the rest.'³⁷ Theories of Social Darwinism that were prevalent at this time suggested that the industry, scientific technology and political institutions of the 'civilised' states of the West represented the highest form of development in humankind. As the course of evolution was described as a linear one, the Western model of the 'civilised state' was the *only* form of statehood that could serve as a model for emulation.

This meant that states that were deemed as 'barbarous' or 'uncivilised' were subjected to social pressures to reform their states along Western lines if they wished to be accorded membership to 'civilised' European International Society and escape being subjected to its 'civilising' mode of interaction. As D. Eleanor Westney argues, '[t]he standards by which [Western] societies measured "civilization" were obviously those of their own societies, and the surest way for [non-European states] to meet those standards was to take their institutions as models.'³⁸ Furthermore, the European powers were usually able to militarily impose their social standards of 'legitimate' membership, and non-European states had very little choice but to follow them if they wished to preserve their independence. Yamamuro Shin'ichi summarises this with reference to the adoption of international law by non-European states as follows.

The expansion of international society and its European-originated state system meant that its international law was presented as an inherently superior law that ought to be applied to all political societies throughout the globe. At the same time, this indicated that the civilisation which undergirded [European] international law – while allowing the existence for multiple civilisations – became a universal and normative standard as the highest form of civilisation. [Under these circumstances]...the drive to become 'civilised' was not simply a matter of changing indigenous customs or Europeanising (*ōka* 欧化) ways of living; it was a demand imposed by international law and a necessary condition for independence.³⁹

³⁷ Jackson, *Quasi-states*, p. 61

³⁸ D. Eleanor Westney, *Imitation and Innovation: The Transfer of Western Organizational Patterns to Meiji Japan*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 22

³⁹ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia: kijiku, rensa, tōki*, p. 41

Figure 5-1: Adopting European weapons



'My army is equipped and by the Europeans and well-trained, of course we will defeat the Babaoro'm!' says the chieftain proudly. (Hergé, *Tintin Au Congo*, clip supplied and reproduced by kind permission of Moulinsart s.a., Brussels). In the racist context of the early-twentieth century, Non-European peoples' efforts to emulate the West were sometimes the subject of ridicule by the Europeans, as this clip shows.

Applying social explanations to the Chinese and Japanese cases

In the cases of China and Japan, the preliminary goal that emerged among its elite following both states' exposure to European International Society was to become a strong, wealthy state that would be able to ward off the threat from the Western powers and rid themselves of the unequal treaties.⁴⁰ However, as the discussion below will indicate, the Chinese and Japanese embarked on two different courses. While the Chinese elites' pursuit of 'wealth and strength' primarily entailed attempts to introduce some level of Western technology and industry, the Meiji leadership's endeavours to achieve the same goal went further. Not only did they introduce Western technology and industry, but they also consciously sought to emulate the political institutions and culture of the 'civilised' states. In other words, Japan's attempts to become a 'rich and powerful' state entailed the adoption of the identity of a 'civilised' state as collectively decided by the Society. Here we see an important difference between the Chinese and Japanese in their interaction with the expanding European-dominated order. The Japanese experience (which will be examined in detail below) strongly suggests that the

⁴⁰ Note, however, that the motivation to repudiate the unequal treaties did depend to a certain extent on recognising their symbolic value. It will be recalled that the signing of the unequal treaties did not immediately cause outrage in China.

elites were prepared to enter European International Society and be judged by the latter's social standards, while China was unwilling to do so.

While the elites from both countries were conscious of the military threat posed by the Society and wanted to attain 'wealth and strength', this difference in attitude would take China and Japan along different paths. Alexander Wendt has pointed out that '[i]dentities are the basis of interests. Actors do not have a "portfolio" of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead they define their interests in the process of defining situations.'⁴¹ It is this newly adopted identity that then goes on to define and shape the interests and goals of states. Subsequently, Japan's desire to attain the identity of a 'civilised' member of European International Society and be judged by its social standards meant that its reforms would take place based explicitly on European models.⁴² As Roger Hackett has argued, the Japanese leadership's desire to attain military and economic strength was not limited to 'the desire for Japan to hold its own in the modern rivalry and struggle between nations; there was [also] the ambition to be accepted as a civilized nation, with the standing of a Great Power.'⁴³ It attempted to become 'rich and powerful' while at the same time complying with the social demands of attaining 'civilised' statehood. In contrast, China's emulation (if it can be called as such) of the 'civilised' members of European International Society remained superficial.

Accordingly, the in-depth empirical analysis that follows below examines how China and Japan interacted with the 'social pressures' to attain 'Europeanised' statehood in the course of their reforms aimed at strengthening the state. The crucial benchmark by which to gauge the degree of China and Japan's attainment of 'competence and skill' in applying the social norms of European International Society (and with it, the degree to which it has socialised) was the degree to which both states' elites were willing to be judged by the standards of the Society's 'civilised' members. If a state was more receptive to the social pressures of European International Society, it was likely that it would seek to attain the identity of a 'Europeanised' (or, to use the terminology of the nineteenth century, 'civilised') state that was also rich and strong. A state that was less receptive to the social norms of the Society was more likely to attempt to become 'rich

⁴¹ Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', p. 398

⁴² Of course, the 'West' was not a monolith: while the Japanese elite did emulate the 'West', this was based on a variety of countries. For instance Japan modelled the navy, telegraph system, postal system, and postal savings system on Britain; the national bank system, and the Sapporo Agricultural College on the United States, the judicial system and military police on French models; and the Bank of Japan on Belgium. See Westney, *Imitation and Innovation*, p. 13

and strong' by other means. In the latter case, a 'Western-style' state was not seen as possessing social prestige, and neither was success seen in terms of attaining a 'Europeanised' identity.

With regard to attaining military power, I draw on Michael Howard's argument that '[o]nly sophisticated and wealthy political organisms [can] produce and sustain regular armies' equipped with capital-intensive weaponry. To this end, a state needed efficient '[t]ax systems to pay for them [the military], the bureaucracy to levy and maintain them, the arsenals to manufacture their weapons, all [of which] implied a degree of social organization that was becoming palpably higher in Western Europe than among the other societies with which Europeans were in contact.'⁴⁴ The analysis of institutional reforms to become a military power is thus divided into three broad themes: state centralisation; adoption of technology and industry; and mass mobilisation. Chinese and Japanese attempts to become 'rich and powerful' states are explored within these themes, with particular reference to both states' responses to the normative constraints and demands of European International Society that called for the adoption of European-styled domestic institutions.

Becoming a powerful 'Westernised' state?

As we have seen from the previous discussion in Chapter 3, the confrontational manner in which China and Japan encountered European International Society elicited wide debate among the political elites of both states. The attainment of military power eventually emerged as a principal goal for both states,⁴⁵ and this reflected the Chinese and Japanese elites interactions with the 'civilising' face of the Janus-faced European International Society. Their experiences of 'gunboat diplomacy' and what they

⁴³ Roger F. Hackett, 'The Meiji Leaders and Modernization: The Case of Yamagata Aritomo' in Marius B. Jansen (ed), *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 245

⁴⁴ Michael Howard, 'The Military Factor in European Expansion' in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 36. William H. McNeill also points out that by the nineteenth century the capacity to transport and supply large numbers of troops became increasingly important: this led to the necessity to develop highly efficient sea or land transport. As a consequence, states were required to develop either railroads or large shipping fleets. These were both capital-intensive undertakings that called for a further industrialised economy. See William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), pp. 223-261.

⁴⁵ The attempt to become a military power was epitomised by the slogans of *fuguo qiangbing* or *fukoku kyōhei* (富国強兵), which can be translated as 'rich country, strong army'. The term has a long historical heritage. It appeared in the works of Shang Yang (died 338 B.C.), who guided the policies of the Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.). Legalism, according to Wm. Theodore de Bary *et al.*, was one of the most influential schools of Chinese philosophy of its time. Its 'exponents [were] practicing politicians, more concerned with immediate problems and specific mechanisms of control than with

perceived to be the blatant differentiation between European and non-European entities left them with a deep sense of suspicion of the European states. A weak state unable to provide effective defence and governance within its borders was certainly not going to be able to ward off their threats. Furthermore, the Chinese and Japanese were aware that those 'civilised' states which were given greater respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity tended to be militarily powerful ones. The decision to strengthen a state militarily flowed easily from this observation.⁴⁶

To realise these goals, however, some form of institutional reforms seemed inevitable: the Western powers posed an unprecedented threat with their vastly superior military, technology, and industrial development. China and Japan appeared incapable of attaining parity with the European powers in these areas. Many of the Chinese and Japanese political elites were most certainly aware of the necessity to reform. But they were to subsequently attempt to realise this in different fashion.

The Japanese case: state reinvention

Although the Japanese elite began to embark on a concerted effort to reform along Western lines following the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1867, acceptance of wholesale reforms along Western lines did not come easily. Some Japanese intellectuals who were exposed to Western learning (or 'Dutch learning', *rangaku* 蘭学) were more favourably disposed to adopting Western technology and showed some interest in European political institutions. However, Torii Yōzō (鳥居耀藏), an official of the shogunate, described the European powers in the 1840s as only interested in 'the pursuit of profit, in contrast with a society intent on rites and rituals; it waged war to compete, rather than defend morality.'⁴⁷ He was opposed to the adoption of 'Western technique [because this] necessarily meant adopting the culture that had produced it.'⁴⁸ When Perry arrived on Japanese shores, some changes took place. Some justified the

the underlying principles of government.' See Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (vol. 1). (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 122

⁴⁶ Richard J. Smith lists four initial responses to the 'threat from the West' held by the Chinese and Japanese. These are: '(1) [r]ecognition of Western military superiority; (2) recognition of Western scientific technology as the basis of military superiority; (3) recognition of the need to train native personnel in Western military technology; ...and (4) recognition that scientific technology in the military sphere is merely part of Western science and technology in general, and that in order to develop it, the pure science and general learning of the West also had to be introduced.' See Richard J. Smith, 'Reflections on the Comparative Study of Modernization in China and Japan: Military Aspects', *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (vol. 16, 1976, pp. 12-24), p. 13

⁴⁷ H. D. Harootunian, 'Late Tokugawa culture and thought' in Marius B. Jansen (ed), *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 125

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

adoption of Western methods on the grounds of compatibility with Confucian scholarship. Confucian scholar Sakuma Shōzan (佐久間象山) claimed in 1862 that '[t]he learning skills developed in the West are conducive to the learning of the sages'.⁴⁹ Similarly, in 1860, after the signing of the trade treaty between Japan and the United States, Yokoi Shōnan (横井小楠), the Confucian samurai-official, also claimed that engaging in trade and diplomacy was not a 'Western' phenomena. 'From the very beginning', Yokoi claimed,

commerce with foreign countries has been an important part of the trade of a country, and its path has been firmly fixed by principles of heaven and earth. Those who rule others must be nourished by the latter, and those who nourish must be ruled. This is the way of trade, and the same applies to government. Nourishing the people is the main work....The rule of the empire of [the sage kings] Yao and Shun was none other than this.⁵⁰

Yokoi even began to question traditional notions of Chinese learning, which had often been held in high regard. Pointing to China's continuous weakness towards the Western powers, he contemplated whether 'China was trapped in its traditional Sinocentrism while its civilisation and ethics were close to collapse,' while the West, by 'promoting learning, ruling benevolently, respecting justice, and empowering and enriching the state...had in fact attained the goals which Confucianism had always advocated.'⁵¹ However, it must be noted that Yokoi's questioning of traditional governance was still a guarded one: despite the crises China faced, Confucian governance was still seen as the ideal form of governance, rather than European political institutions.

These statements suggest that in the context of the late-Tokugawa period, a holistic acceptance of the institutions of European states as a source of emulation had not necessarily take place among many Japanese. It is certainly true that Western technology and science were seen as conducive to achieving 'wealth and strength', and some European institutions were equated with Confucian thought meant that some Japanese had 'elevat[ed] the Westerners from their usual category of beasts to men',⁵² placing them on an equal footing with themselves. Individuals such as Sakuma, however, continued to believe that the weakness of Japan 'was physical and material',

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 130

⁵⁰ Yokoi Shōnan, 'Kokuze Sanron: The Three Major Problems of State Policy' (D. Y. Miyauchi, trans.), *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 23, no. 1/2, 1968, pp. 156-186), pp. 166-167

⁵¹ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia: kijiku, rensa, tōki*, p. 167

⁵² Marius B. Jansen, 'Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization', in Marius B. Jansen (ed), *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 60

and did not require emulating the West.⁵³ This indicates that the 'Western-styled' state was still not fully regarded as a legitimate expression of 'prestige' or 'success'.

Figure 5-2: Fulfilling the Standard of Civilisation is not easy – *Japan Punch*, December 1881



Here, the British Minister Harry Parkes tells the complacent Japanese to wake up from their slumber to work hard, if they want to be treated as equals to the European powers. Source: Shimizu Isao and Yumoto Kōichi, *Gaikoku manga ni egakareta nippon*. (Tokyo: Maruzen bukksu, 1994), p. 31

A gradual change took place following the transition from the Tokugawa period to the Meiji period. Although they had overthrown the feudal Tokugawa regime, the new Meiji leadership provided some form of continuity in that they were equally committed to the goal of *fukoku kyōhei*, or making Japan rich and strong. The biggest departure by the Meiji leadership was, however, its determination to undertake reforms along *Western* lines, a policy which resulted in the despatching of the Iwakura fact-finding

⁵³ Ōkuma Shigenobu confirms this point in his memoirs first published in 1895. During the *bakumatsu* period, Ōkuma claims, '[a]lthough we studied Western studies out of necessity at the time, we did not necessarily wish to open up the country and interact with the West. We merely wished to learn their strengths and correct our shortcomings (*kare no chō o torite ware no tan o oginawan to hossuruni sugisarishi nomi* 彼の長を探りてわれの短を補はんと欲するに過ぎさりしのみ).' Ōkuma Shigenobu and Enjōji Kiyoshi, *Ōkuma haku sekijitsu tan* (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1981), p. 446. Also see pp. 447-448.

mission in 1871.⁵⁴ This is not to suggest that the Meiji leadership were committed from the beginning to reconfigure Japan into a 'Western' power, even though they were united in their desire to transform Japan into a strong power that could defend itself against the 'civilising' face of European International Society. The new leadership did contain individuals who had been exposed to Western learning, but a coherent programme of reform had yet to emerge. As W. G. Beasley notes, proposals for reform in the early days of the Meiji era can be characterised by the lack of 'the specifically Western ingredient that was eventually to color the modern bureaucracy, industry, and military establishment.'⁵⁵ Subsequent suggestions for future political structures made references to Chinese models or political systems of eighth-century Japan.⁵⁶ This also reflected of the fact that the leaders of the Meiji Restoration had used the return of power to the emperor (known as *ōsei fukko* 王政復古) as its rallying point.⁵⁷ Similarly, the new criminal code (the *Shinritsu kōryō* 新律綱領) of 1870 was still based on the legal codes of the Ming dynasty (the *Daming lü* 大明律), to the extent that 'any individuals aspiring for a legal career had no choice but to learn the Chinese classics'.⁵⁸

However, as the new Meiji leadership consolidated its power in Japan, calls for Japan to adopt a more 'Europeanised' identity grew stronger. There were three reasons for this. First, we should not ignore the aspects of power relations behind Japan's decision to adopt the identity of a 'civilised' state. The Japanese knew that the European powers were able to enforce the social standards of the Society by force if needed, and any attempts to resist them would be futile. China provided an excellent (negative) example of this.

Second, the Meiji leadership became alert to the fact that the dualistic European International Society was far more likely to protect the sovereignty of 'civilised' states. This recognition was by no means an obvious or easy one. As we have seen, some

⁵⁴ Needless to say, this gesture was positively welcomed by the 'civilised' members of European International Society. In a report on 18th November 1871 to British Foreign Secretary Earl Granville on the impending departure of the Iwakura mission, British diplomat reported that he had told the Japanese that the project was 'an admirable one, that as we might now hope that the Mikado's Government was becoming a *real Power*, it was time that a well-chosen Embassy should be sent abroad'. See 'Mr Adams to Earl Granville' in Ian Nish (ed), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (Part I, Series E, Asia, 1860-1914, vol. 1 Japan and North-East Asia, 1860-1878). (Lanham: University Publications of America, 1989), p. 300. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵ W. G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 305

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 304. The 'Fujiwara' refers to a powerful clan of court nobles who dominated court politics during Heian period (794-1192).

⁵⁷ See also D. Eleanor Westney, *Imitation and Innovation: The Transfer of Western Organizational Patterns to Meiji Japan*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 3

Japanese thought that European states were treated differently because they were military powers, while some believed that racial similarities facilitated this. However, as their interactions with the Society's members intensified, they became increasingly aware that they were also differentiated on the basis of 'civilisation'. By the early 1870s, Wayne C. McWilliams' asserts, 'the Meiji leaders were well aware of the practical as well as the symbolic disadvantages of the treaty system imposed on Japan by the Western powers.'⁵⁹ The Europeans often made a point of telling the Japanese elite that attaining a 'civilised' identity on European International Society's terms would greatly facilitate the protection of Japan's sovereignty, and members of the Japanese elite also came to a similar conclusion: it was necessary for the Japanese elites to fulfil certain normative requirements if they wanted Japan to be accorded equal treatment with the European states.

Fukuzawa Yukichi put this in stark terms in his 1875 *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (文明論之概略), where he stated: 'Today, the Japanese are trying to attain civilisation in order to maintain the independence of the country. Therefore, the independence of Japan is an end, the people's attainment of civilisation is the means.'⁶⁰ Fukuzawa's conceptualisation of 'Western civilisation' was a wide-ranging one, and he argued that the priority was to teach the populace the Western 'spirit of civilisation (*bunmei no seishin* 文明の精神)', namely nationalism and critical thinking.⁶¹ At the same time, neither did he deny the importance to attain Western material civilisation, namely 'clothing and food, machines, dwelling, and legal codes'.⁶² In this sense, Yamamuro Shin'ichi is correct in pointing out that Fukuzawa's argument is a symbolic statement of his understanding of the intertwined nature of European International Society's differential modes of interaction and its demand for civilisational homogeneity.⁶³

⁵⁸ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, 'Kindai nippon ni okeru kokumin kokka keisei no shosō', *Hōseishi kenkyū* (no. 34, 1984, pp. 1-22), p. 3

⁵⁹ Wayne C. McWilliams, 'East Meets East: The Soejima Mission to China, 1873', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 30, no. 3, Autumn 1975, pp. 237-275), p. 239

⁶⁰ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), p. 297.

⁶¹ This stemmed from Fukuzawa's scepticism towards what he considered to be the superficial emulation of European industry, technology, and institutions. Also note that Fukuzawa himself was not an uncritical supporter of European civilisation either: although he does call for Japan to adopt Western civilisation, he claims that this is only because it is, for the moment, the highest form of civilisation available, not because it is *inherently* civilised (Fukuzawa, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, p. 29). An excellent discussion of Fukuzawa's *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* can be found in Maruyama Masao, *Maruyama Masao zenshū* (vols. 13, 14). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996). My thanks to Tomoko Akami for pointing me to this source.

⁶² Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), p. 30. C.f. Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia: kijiku, rensa, tōki*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), pp. 43-44.

⁶³ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia*, p. 41

The third reason was the Japanese elites' increasing desire to be deemed a 'civilised' state by the social standards of the Society. This necessarily entailed a reluctant acceptance of Japan's status as a 'semi-civilised' entity, and understandably hurt Japanese pride.⁶⁴ At the same time, the Meiji leadership included a number of individuals (such as Itō Hirobumi, Inoue Kaoru, and Ōkuma Shigenobu) who pushed for greater 'Westernisation'. The members of this group were either immersed in 'Western learning' or had the experience of living abroad. It appears that increased contact with the member states of European International Society left a deep impression of Japan's 'inferiority' in comparison to the West. The European states' scientific and technological achievements impressed many Japanese, and they were committed to transforming Japan into a Western-styled state, and, in the words of a somewhat critical Iwakura Tomomi, 'wanted "to adopt foreign inventions at once and advance the country as it were at telegraphic speed"'.⁶⁵ This desire to attain the identity of 'Europeanised' statehood strongly indicates Japan's willingness to become a member of European International Society, indicating an acceptance of the new international order and its social norms. These sentiments can be seen in documents exchanged among the members of the Meiji leadership.⁶⁶ In a letter written in September 1871 discussing the objectives of sending a mission to the 'civilised' Western states, Sanjō Sanetomi, the head of the *dajōkan* government, wrote to Iwakura Tomomi as follows:

States possess equal rights and refrain from encroaching upon one another; on an equal footing, they engage in polite, cordial diplomacy and enjoy the benefits of trade. This is why international treaties exist. It goes without saying that states should naturally possess equal rights, and treaties should therefore be concluded on an equal basis (此レ列国条約アル所以ニシテ、而テ国ト国ト固ヨリ対等ノ権利ヲ有スルコト当然ナレバ、其条約モ亦対等ノ権利ヲ存ズルベキハ言ヲ待タザル事ナリ)...[S]ince the Meiji Restoration, we have desired to recover lost rights and stand on an equal footing [with the Western states] without having our territory encroached upon. However, the [unequal] treaties have yet to be rectified and old obstacles have yet to be removed, and the governments and ministers from other states still believe Japanese political institutions to be belonging to those of the Orient...Therefore, we have undertaken painful reflections on this matter and unified the country, reformed our institutions, laws,

⁶⁴ This point is supported by R. P. Anand, *Family of 'Civilized' States and Japan*, p. 16; Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 172-173

⁶⁵ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 353. There were of course plenty of criticisms for the 'progressives' from other quarters of the leadership, who considered the group as being overly hasty in implementing these reforms.

⁶⁶ Marius B. Jansen claims that in the earlier years of the Meiji period 'a class of "intellectuals" had not as yet clearly emerged, and...most men of letters shared the goals and hopes of their contemporaries in government service.' See Jansen, 'Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization', p. 65

and authoritarian rule, ...and thereby laid the foundations for standing on an equal footing with the Western powers.⁶⁷

The document again indicates an acceptance of European standards of 'legitimate' statehood. There is (in similar fashion to Fukuzawa's views cited above) an acknowledgement that 'the Meiji leaders felt that the country's internal reforms had not yet progressed to the point that it could boast a completely modernized system of laws.'⁶⁸ This confirms the growing acceptance by leading Japanese intellectuals and political leaders of Japan's 'inferior' political position within European International Society, which was based on the 'standard of civilisation'. It also suggests that the 'institutionalisation' of the 'standard of civilisation' had taken place and the 'standard' had, to use Kai Alderson's definition, become 'entrenched where [it] is disseminated throughout the organizational fields which compose the polity, permeating society at a variety of levels.'⁶⁹

The acceptance of European International Society's social hierarchy inevitably meant that if the Japanese wished to improve its standing within it, they would have to reinvent Japan as a 'Westernised state', which stood at the apex of this new civilisational ranking. This again appears to conform with Kai Alderson's argument that once 'institutionalisation' of a particular norm occurs, it 'not only alters incentives but also shapes the cognitive categories through which the world is perceived and strategies are crafted.'⁷⁰ A typical statement of this phenomenon can be found in a policy document written by Inoue Kaoru during his tenure as Foreign Minister:

⁶⁷ Sanjō Sanetomi, 'Tokumei zenken taishi haken chōgi no koto'. This document can be found in Shibahara Takuji, Ikai Takaaki and Ikeda Masahiro (eds), *Nihon kindai shisō taiki* (vol. 12): *taigaikan*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988), pp. 17-19; and, *Iwakurakō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), pp. 927-929. The letter was based on a document entitled *A Brief Sketch*, written by Guido F. Verbeck (1830-1898) to Ōkuma Shigenobu in 1869. Verbeck was a missionary who taught Ōkuma Shigenobu 'Western studies' in Nagasaki. He later served as a political advisor to the Meiji government. Although based on Verbeck's document, Sanjō's letter can be seen as a reflection of Meiji interests for several reasons. First, the document was rewritten and altered by Sanjō himself; second, as Albert Altman argues, '[t]he basic motivations for the [sending of] the Embassy came from the Japanese. The Meiji leaders required no Verbeck to inspire dissatisfaction with the treaties and Japan's international status. Neither did they need him to instruct them to desire reform of their institutions, and that, along Western lines.... Verbeck's paper... offered the Meiji leaders a design which they adapted to their ends, not his.' Albert Altman, 'Guido Verbeck and the Iwakura Embassy', *Japan Quarterly* (vol. 13, no. 1, January-March 1966, pp. 54-62), p. 57. Verbeck's role in the sending of the Iwakura mission is also discussed in Umetani Noboru, *Oyatoi gaikokujin* (vol. 11): *seiji, hōsei*. (Tokyo: Kajima shuppankai, 1971), pp. 32-41.

⁶⁸ Akira Iriye, 'Japan's drive to great-power status' in Marius B. Jansen (ed), *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.283. See also Joseph Pittau, *Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan 1868-1889*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 40

⁶⁹ Alderson, 'Making sense of state socialization', p. 420. Key-Hiuk Kim also argues that Japan 'accepted the Western argument that unequal treaties were justified and necessary when they were substantial differences in the level of cultural enlightenment between the contracting parties'. See Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 157

⁷⁰ Alderson, 'Making sense of state socialization', p. 420

We must make our empire a European-styled empire; make our people a European-styled people, create a new, European-styled empire in the Orient. Only by doing so can our empire climb to an equal position in terms of treaties with the Occidental states (我帝国ヲ化シテ欧洲的帝国トセヨ、我国人ヲ化シテ欧洲的人民トセヨ、欧洲的新帝国ヲ東洋ノ表ニ造出セヨ。只ダ能ク如此ニシテ我帝国ハ始メテ条約上泰西各国同等ノ地位ニ躋タル事ヲ得可シ).⁷¹

A brief comment on the source may be necessary here. Here, Inoue is responding to criticisms made by Tani Tateki (谷干城, also known as Tani Kanjō) in 1887, who, among other things, criticised Inoue's 'Europeanisation' policies (欧化政策 *Ōka seisaku*). However, this neither necessarily means that Inoue's calls to construct a 'Europeanised' empire were merely a rhetorical device for refuting Tani's remarks, nor that the program of 'Westernisation' was in serious danger of being rejected. There are two reasons for this assertion. First, while critical of the holistic, superficial manner and the timing in which 'Westernisation' was occurring, Tani himself does not criticise Westernisation *per se*. Second, Inoue's memorandum also argues that if Korea also demanded equal treatment with Japan, there was no way that Japan would permit it, because Korean laws would not be able to protect 'the interests of Japanese citizens'.⁷² At this stage, Korea had yet to accept the 'standard of civilisation', and the very fact that Inoue judges Korea as unworthy of equal treatment with Japan on this basis is an indication that he had internalised the notion that legitimate 'civilised' statehood had to be based on the standards of European International Society.⁷³ His argument that the 'Europeanisation' of Japan was necessary in order to be treated equally with the West was thus a logical extension of his beliefs.

This is not to imply that the Japanese were engaged in an uncritical adoption of every aspect of 'Europeanised' identity, and we must caution against portraying Japan and its leaders as a monolithic entity striving towards attaining this status. The official secretary of the Iwakura mission occasionally 'attack[ed] the sometimes

⁷¹ Inoue Kaoru, 'Jōyaku kaisei mondai ikensho' in Shibahara Takuji, Ikai Takaaki and Ikeda Masahiro (eds), *Nihon kindai shisō taikēi* (vol. 12): *taigaikan*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988), p. 68. The full text of this document, along with some commentary more sympathetic towards Inoue, is also available in Inoue Kaoru kō denki hensan kai, *Segai Inoue kō den* (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Naigai shoseki, 1934), pp. 907-937. Tani Tateki's memorial, *Ikensho*, can be found at 'Kindai dejitaru raiburarii' database (<http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/index.html>), available from the National Diet Library, Tokyo.

⁷² Inoue, 'Jōyaku kaisei mondai ikensho', pp. 7475

⁷³ Shibahara states that Inoue must have made such arguments because they were views commonly held by other Meiji leaders and were most likely to have fallen upon sympathetic ears. This again highlights the fact that the 'standard of civilisation' had indeed gained acceptance among the Meiji elite; and while the 'standard' remained a legitimate one in Japanese eyes, there was a widespread recognition that Japan was still 'inferior' to the West and needed to 'catch up' with the West by attaining the identity of a 'European-styled empire' and a similar level of 'civilisation'. Shibahara Takuji, 'Kaisetsu' in Shibahara Takuji et al, *Nihon kindai shisō taikēi* (vol. 12): *taigaikan*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988), p. 485

undiscriminating enthusiasm for Western fashions in Japan.⁷⁴ Noting that the European industrial exhibitions had contributed to a gradual decline of the adoration for anything French, Kume Kunitake wrote:

The present day is for us very much like that earlier time in European history when everyone was fascinated by the brilliance of Louis XIV and France. If we ignore our traditions and rush to model ourselves on Europe, is it not conceivable that we shall fall into the same delusion as European countries before the Great Exhibition?⁷⁵

The importing of foreign culture and foreign domestic institutions created other backlashes within Japanese society. As Hirakawa Sukehiro remarks, 'the assimilation of Western culture was dictated by reasons of state, yet such efforts were fraught with an uneasiness that Japan's cultural self-identity might be violated.'⁷⁶ Inoue Kaoru's attempts to revise the unequal treaties through a policy of rapid modernisation and allowing of foreign judges to sit on Japanese courts caused a nationalist outcry, as can be seen in Tani's memorial. The event culminated in Inoue's resignation.⁷⁷ The identity crises which took place in all walks of Japanese society resulted in increasing pressures for 'a genuine appropriation of the best in Japanese tradition',⁷⁸ and neither did the Meiji leadership advocate a total abandonment of Japanese culture and tradition.

It is, however, important to keep in mind that this 'identity crisis' within Japanese society did not signify the end of 'learning from the West'. As Carol Gluck argues, '[i]t is a trivialization...to regard [traditional] ideologists as anti-Western, which the majority emphatically were not, or as apostles of a return to the past, which had little hold on most of them.'⁷⁹ Most activists continued to wear Western clothing and 'were

⁷⁴ Andrew Cobbing, 'Britain [1]: Early Meiji Travel Encounters' in Ian Nish (ed), *The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe: A New Assessment*. (Richmond: Japan Library, 1998), p. 47

⁷⁵ *ibid.* The original text can be found in Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 2) (Tanaka Akira, ed). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1978), p. 69

⁷⁶ Hirakawa Sukehiro, 'Japan's turn to the West' (Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, trans.) in Marius B. Jansen (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (vol. 5): *The Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 498

⁷⁷ Inoue Kaoru's diplomacy included, among others, a charm offensive towards the Western nationals to showcase Japan's 'Western' identity. To this end, a dance hall, the *Rokumeikan*, was even built to entertain the Westerners. Inoue's diplomacy subsequently became known (with some ridicule) as 'Rokumeikan diplomacy (*Rokumeikan gaikō*)'. It is interesting to note that criticism of Inoue's policies even came from foreign quarters: French legal advisor to the Japanese government, Gustave Emile Boissonade de Fontarabie (1825-1910), also warned against what he considered to be Inoue's excessive concessions towards the Western powers, particularly allowing foreign judges to sit in Japanese courts. See Umetani Noboru, *Oyatoi gaikokujin* (vol. 11): *seiji, gaikō*. (Tokyo: Kajima shuppankai, 1971), pp. 144-150

⁷⁸ Hirakawa Sukehiro, 'Japan's turn to the West', p. 489

⁷⁹ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 20. Gluck points out that reaction to 'Westernisation' are too complex to be labelled as such: one particular essay titled 'Lamps and the Ruination of the State (*Ranpu bōkokuron*)' had 'involved a Buddhist defense of the faith against Christianity and Copernican theory,

themselves the frequent targets of satirical anti-westernism, their coats and trousers mocked, their "beer, brandy, vermouth" caricatured in song.⁸⁰

The Chinese case: state reconfiguration

The reforms that began to take place in China from the 1860s were, as noted above, a reflection of the Chinese elites' attempts to engage with European International Society by attaining wealth and strength. However, there also existed influence from European diplomats, missionaries, and technical experts in the employment of the Qing, who attempted to pressure the Chinese elites to undergo reforms that would bring them closer to the 'standard of civilisation.' One example of this pressure can be found in the British Minister in China, Sir Rutherford Alcock's note to Prince Gong:

...among the most revered of the ancient writings, there is one axiom which is not without application now. For Confucius taught, that "when a system is exhausted it must be modified, that modified it will work, and that working it will endure." The present machinery of Chinese Administration is exhausted, and no longer fit for the work to be done. It requires modification to adapt it to a totally new order of wants.⁸¹

One such European attempts to bring about reform in China came from Robert Hart and Thomas Francis Wade in November 1865 and March 1866 respectively.⁸² The memorandums were roughly similar in content, and give an insight into the nature of socialisation pressures the Qing dynasty faced. Some were, unsurprisingly, directly related to China's entry into European International Society. The necessity to adhere to international treaties was emphasised, and Hart and Wade strongly encouraged China to start sending its diplomats overseas. Significantly, Hart and Wade's proposals did not just stop at the adoption of the institutions of European International Society. As will be elaborated below, they forwarded a series of proposals calling for the reform of China's domestic institutions, which they argued would maximise the power of the state and facilitate industrial development. While this coincided with the Chinese elites' desires to attain wealth and strength, Hart and Wade's proposals went further in that they represented an attempt to reform the Chinese state along European lines. Both men

as well as an anti-establishment call for self-help in villages suffering the economic consequences of "civilization." (Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, p. 20)

⁸⁰ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, pp. 20-21

⁸¹ Ian Nish (ed), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (Part I, Series, E, Vol. 20: China's Rehabilitation and Treaty Revision, 1866-1869). (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1994), p. 107. The memorandum was enclosed in Rutherford Alcock's letter to British foreign secretary Lord Stanley, dated 23rd December 1867

were relatively 'Sinified', in that they had developed considerable respect for China and its heritage. However, to use Mary C. Wright's words, 'they were no eccentrics in flight from their own age. They understood the meaning of the nineteenth century and the relentless force of the Industrial Revolution.'⁸³ In an age where 'civilised' status entailed the possession of Western-styled domestic institutions and attaining industrial and military prowess, both men had no doubt that it was important for the Chinese elite to carry out reforms on 'Europeanised' lines if they wished to be treated as an equal to the 'civilised' member states of the Society.⁸⁴

However, the degree to which the Chinese political decision-makers would (or could) transform China along Western lines depended very much on their understanding and acceptance of the Society's demands for homogeneity, as well as their acknowledgment of the standards of 'success' within European International Society. Ultimately, most of the Chinese elite refused to do this. The very recognition of the Society's benchmarks for legitimate 'statehood' meant a denial of China's claims to superiority, and a concurrence with the Society's portrayal of China as an 'uncivilised' entity. Despite their comprehensive defeat at the hands of the British in the Opium War and Arrow War, the Chinese leadership found accepting these social demands extremely difficult.

There were of course variations among the Chinese officials. The more anti-Western elites opposed reforms that were based on introducing European practices, even though they accepted the need for some reforms to make China powerful. This went against their belief in the superiority of China and its institutions, and was a fundamentally misguided way to strengthen the country. The Grand Secretary Woren (倭仁) memorialised the Qing Court in 1867, questioning whether the learning of Western technology and learning would help China in any way. 'Whether we win the war [against the European powers]' he argued, 'depends on our ability to recruit men of

⁸² Thomas Francis Wade was British Minister to China from 1870-1883, and Robert Hart was in the service of the Qing government as Inspector General for the Chinese Customs.

⁸³ Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, p. 268

⁸⁴ It is also interesting to note that these 'pressures of socialisation' came from less official quarters: in 1885 a British officer told Zheng Guanying, the Chinese merchant/intellectual and the author of *Shengshi weiyan*, that the key to making China a powerful state was the development of industry and the possession of a parliamentary political system. This is indicative of the implicit 'standard of civilisation' which measured 'civilisation' according to the level of industrial and political development a state had achieved. China, the officer told Zheng, 'should reform its old institutions in the fields of commerce, mining and technological industry; second, China should develop a shipping industry, railways, telecommunication systems; third, China should establish parliaments and modern schools. If China could accomplish these three matters, there would be nothing to fear.' Cited in Key Ray Chong, 'Cheng Kuan-ying (1841-1920): A Source of Sun Yat-sen's Nationalist Ideology?', *The Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 28, no. 2, February 1969, pp. 247-267), p. 250

virtue and whether or not our policies match the teachings of the sages (戰勝在朝廷用人行政，有關聖賢體要者).⁸⁵

Even among officials who believed in the efficacy of introducing some European technology, industry, and political institutions, there often existed an inherent assumption that China was *as* superior as the European powers (if not more). The typical attitude adopted by these elites towards Western culture and its institutions was epitomised by the slogan 'Chinese studies at the base, Western studies for practical use (中體西用 *zhongti xiyong*)'.⁸⁶ 'Chinese studies' primarily meant 'traditional Chinese political and economic systems and their corresponding ideologies',⁸⁷ while 'Western studies for practical use' was limited primarily to 'Western science and technology. Western institutions (particularly political institutions) and thought were seen as heresy and dichotomous to "Chinese learning" and were subjected to rejection.'⁸⁸ One early expression of the concept came from Li Hongzhang's secretary, Feng Guifen (馮桂芬). It should be noted that while Feng himself may have given expression to this particular formula, he himself was by no means a rigid conservative, and was quite open to new ideas. He advocated drastic reforms of fundamental Chinese political institutions, and recognised the importance of Western studies and learning from Western political institutions.⁸⁹ He also called for the establishment of schools which taught science and Western languages.

Despite these personal qualities, Feng did not question the primacy of Chinese institutions. In his famous essay 'Cai xixue yi (採西學議)', Feng instead claims that 'Western' ways can be used to *strengthen* Chinese institutions. He claims: 'Would it not be best if we can use Chinese ethics and teachings as the base and use the method of strengthening from other countries to make up for the [former's] shortcomings (如以中國之倫常名教為原本，輔以諸國富強之術，不更善之善者哉)?'⁹⁰ Similar sentiments were expressed in Li Hongzhang's oft-quoted phrase, '[e]verything in China's civil and

⁸⁵ Cited in Fujita Yūji *Ajia ni okeru bunmei no taikō: jōiron to shukyū ron ni kansuru nippon, chōsen, chūgoku no hikaku kenkyū*. (Tokyo: Ochanomizu shobō, 2001), pp. 276-277

⁸⁶ This particular slogan was made famous by Zhang Zhidong shortly after the Sino-Japanese War, but similar concepts are also known, such as *zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong* (中學為體，西學為用). Wei Yuan's earlier exhortations to 'use the barbarian to control the barbarian (以夷制夷 *yi yi zhi yi*)' can also be seen as a variant on this theme.

⁸⁷ Yan Qinghua, 'Zhongri jindaihuachu de liangzhong duiwai kaifanguan: "zhongti xiyong" yu "hehun yangcai" sixiang bijiao', *Jingji pinglun* (no. 2, 1995, pp. 66-71), p. 67

⁸⁸ Wu Anlong, 'Cong "hehun hancai" dao "hehun yangcai": jianshuo "hehun yangcai" he "zhongti xiyong" de yitong', *Riben yanjiu* (no. 1, 1995, pp. 61-66), p. 64

⁸⁹ Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, p. 55

⁹⁰ Feng Guifen, *Jiaobinlu kangyi*, p. 57

military systems [was] far superior to the West (中國文武制度事事遠出西人之上).⁹¹ Thus, there was some need for 'learning' from the West, but only its technology and industry. There was no need to reinvent China as a 'Europeanised' state, and even when some institutions were created in response to European demands, this was seen as a temporary measure. This attitude is similar to those of Prince Gong's in his memorial concerning the establishment of the *zongli yamen*.

However, we must be careful not to assume that the Chinese elite as a whole rigidly adhered to the ideology of 'Chinese studies at the base, Western studies for practical use'. The lower reformist elite also shared the belief that greater industrialisation (such as opening up mines) was necessary to enrich and strengthen China,⁹² but some of them also now began advocating political institutional change along Western lines. For reformists outside official circles, argues Lloyd E. Eastman, 'the increasingly palpable shortcomings of the self-strengthening movement and the consequent diminution of Chinese complacency' and 'a considerable, if grudging, admiration for the Meiji leaders, who were bringing wealth and power to Japan',⁹³ provided additional stimuli for this shift. Within official circles, Ma Jianzhong recorded his observations of European political institutions and saw a link between such institutions and European strength. However, one of the most symbolic statements of this new line of thinking was Guo Songtao's famous phrase, written in 1877, that 'The kingdoms of Europe date back for some 2,000 years. Their governmental and educational systems are well-ordered, enlightened, and methodical (西洋立國二千年, 政教修明).' Moreover, the Western nations had both the 'essence and the peripheral (具有本末)'.⁹⁴ Previous discourse among the proponents of 'self-strengthening' had portrayed

⁹¹ Letter by Li Hongzhang to the *zongli yamen*, June 1863. For the Chinese original, see Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 1). (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1982), p. 365. A partial translation of this document is found in Teng and Fairbank (eds), *China's Response to the West*, p. 70. However, we should exercise some caution in taking Li's statement at face-value: Li Hongzhang, while certainly not free of the conservatism of his background and generation, was one of the most open-minded and reformist officials of his time. As will be discussed later, there was strong conservative resistance to reforms, and Li Hongzhang himself may have been writing this simply to placate the conservatives. This, however, does not take away from the fact that strong opposition existed towards the adoption of European-styled domestic institutional reforms.

⁹² See for example Wang Tao, 'Jian tielu', 'She dianxian', *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, pp. 61-62, 71-73; Ma Jianzhong, 'A Discussion of Railroads', 'On Enriching the People', in *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People*; and Zheng Guanying, 'Shangzhan (part 1 and 2)', 'Tielu (part 1 and 2)', 'Kaikuang (part 1 and 2)', *Shengshi weiyuan*. (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1998)

⁹³ Lloyd E. Eastman, 'Political Reformism in China before the Sino-Japanese War', *The Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 27, no. 4, August 1968, pp. 695-710), p. 707

⁹⁴ Guo Songtao, *Shixi jicheng*, p. 23. A translation is available in *The First Chinese Embassy to the West: The Journals of Kuo Sung-t'ao, Liu His-hung and Chang Te-yi* (J. D. Frodsham, trans.). (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 43. However, the translated passage of the 'essence' and 'peripheral' is my own, as this is omitted in Frodsham's translation.

(as in Li Hongzhang's remark above) China as possessing the 'essence (本 *ben*)', that is 'the correct rituals, ethics, and political systems', while the advantages the West possessed tended to belong within the 'periphery (末 *mo*)', 'such as machines and technology.'⁹⁵ Guo's argument had 'revolutionary implications, since it asserted the existence of a civilization morally equivalent to China, and thus undermined completely China's claim to superiority...to admire the *ethical* basis of Western civilization was to sound the death-knell of the Confucian world-order.'⁹⁶ Furthermore, his assertion opened up some intellectual space for exploring the possibility of China adopting Western political institutions.

But such views were limited. Although there was increasing acknowledgment of the potential efficacy of Western political institutions that may have been conducive towards the eventual adoption of a 'Europeanised' state identity, these were limited during the Tongzhi Restoration. There appear to be at least two reasons for this. First, the conservative factions within the court posed too formidable an obstacle for the reformists. Numerous attempts for reform encountered strong resistance from various levels of Chinese society, rendering sweeping changes (such as those undertaken in Japan) impossible. Some scholars have forwarded the notion that Confucian ideology was in itself not conducive to change,⁹⁷ claiming that 'the Restoration failed because the requirements of modernization ran counter to the requirements of Confucian stability.'⁹⁸ Such arguments are simplistic, and the failure of the movement cannot be reduced simply to ideological resistance.⁹⁹ However, it is certainly true that even 'moderate'

⁹⁵ Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 79. A similar observation can be found in Wang Tao, 'Ji yingguo zhengzhi', *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 89. Also See Paul A. Cohen's discussion in *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1987), p. 225

⁹⁶ J. D. Frodsham, 'Introduction' in *The First Chinese Embassy to the West: The Journals of Kuo Sung-t'ao, Liu His-hung and Chang Te-yi* (J. D. Frodsham, trans.). (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. xlii. Also see Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, pp. 80-81.

⁹⁷ The most famous of these proponents includes Mary C. Wright, whose work *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874*. (New York: Atheneum, 1967) still remains a classic. Another similar argument can be found in Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), pp. 59-78

⁹⁸ Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, p. 9

⁹⁹ While not wishing to suggest that the reformists themselves were not without their conservative limitations, the fact that Confucian scholars themselves could be receptive to new ideas can be seen, as David Pong points out, from the fact that many of the reformist officials – all indoctrinated in Confucianism to certain degrees – were in fact responsive to Western innovations. See David Pong, *Shen Pao-chen and China's Modernization in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 2. Wei Yuan was also another Confucian scholar who is known to have displayed a remarkable ability to transcend orthodoxy in his writings. For instance, his fascination with Western political institutions and 'his enthusiastic description[s] of the American and Swiss electoral systems indicated a breach in the traditional confidence in Confucian institutional-normative

reforms – ‘conservative’ as though they may seem from our vantage point today – were bitterly opposed by the conservative faction.¹⁰⁰

During the 1860s and 1870s, the reformists did enjoy support from the court, and any conservative resistance was relatively muted. However, following the anti-Christian Tianjin Massacre in 1870 and the increasing atmosphere of xenophobia,¹⁰¹ the conservative factions, most notoriously the *qingyi* (清議) group, increased their influence within the court.¹⁰² ‘By the mid-1890s’, writes Mary Backus Rankin, ‘this strain of critical opinion within the bureaucracy had become one aspect of a national political consciousness that could be called public opinion.’¹⁰³ Their power was such that they successfully lobbied to have the printed edition of Guo Songtao’s report from Britain, the *Shixi jicheng* (使西紀程), burnt. Guo himself was intimidated into early retirement, and did not visit Beijing upon his return from Britain for fear of his own safety.

Second, such impediments to the reform programmes as discussed above were further exacerbated by court politics. The empress dowager Cixi (慈禧) found it expedient to acquiesce to the wishes of the conservative faction. Her primary interest was to further her own power within the court,¹⁰⁴ and in order to attain this goal, she

universality.’ Peter M. Mitchell, ‘The Limits of Reformism: Wei Yuan’s Reaction to Western Intrusion’, *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 6, no. 2, 1972, pp. 175-204), p. 203.

¹⁰⁰ One of the most famous of these conservative views is the official Woren’s memorial opposed to Western learning. In this document, Woren insisted that ‘the way to establish a nation is to lay emphasis on propriety and righteousness, not on power and plotting. The fundamental effort lies in the minds of people, not in techniques.’ See Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰¹ The Tianjin Massacre occurred after an anti-Christian riot escalated into the burning down of a church and the murder of the French consul, Henri Fontanier. In the course of subsequent negotiations, Zeng Guofan recommended heavy penalties for the rioters and Tianjin local magistrates. Zeng’s proposals incited strong reactions from the conservatives, however, and Zeng was eventually withdrawn from his role as negotiator with the French.

¹⁰² *Qingyi* can be translated as ‘pure discussion’, and had a long pedigree in Chinese history. According to Mary Backus Rankin, ‘[s]ometimes it took the form of broadly reformist public dissent from government policies’ while at other times it ‘appeared to focus on narrow issues of procedure or ritual or to deteriorate into a vehicle for petty, irresponsible careerism within the bureaucracy. In all instances it was distinguished by a moralistic, sometimes intemperate rhetorical style that was repeatedly associated with the expression of opposition.’ See Rankin, ‘“Public Opinion” and Political Power: Qingyi in Late Nineteenth Century China’, *Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 41, no. 3, May 1982, pp. 453-484), p. 453. It must also be made clear that while the *qingyi* group did at times oppose the reformist groups, their motives were mixed, and not all of them were opposed to the reforms *per se*. For instance, Zhang Zhidong, one of the key reformist-officials in the 1890s, was also a key member of the *qingyi* group.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 454

¹⁰⁴ While she attained a significant degree of power, the empress dowager Cixi suffered from several weaknesses in her legitimacy to rule. First, as a female ruler she had to battle constant suspicion from the literati, who were indoctrinated in the belief that females had no place in politics. Second, rumours about her involvement in sinister political schemes (such as her part in murdering her co-regent and the widow of the Tongzhi emperor) were rife, making the legitimization of leadership doubly difficult. See Lloyd E. Eastman, *Throne and Mandarins: China’s Search for a Policy during*

often lent her support to the conservatives at the expense of the reformist officials. The fact that even the empress dowager – who was also regent to both the Tongzhi and Guangxu emperors – needed to solicit the support of the conservatives to consolidate her power within the court is indicative of the level of influence the conservative factions exerted.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, the conservatives, often with Cixi's backing, blocked many of the reform programmes. This aspect of court politics can be discerned from Li Hongzhang's letter to Guo Songtao:

I remember last winter when I visited the capital to have an audience with the emperor. I called in at Prince Gong's house, and went to great lengths to inform him of the benefits of railways, suggesting that we could establish a line between Qingjiang to Beijing, thereby facilitating transport between north and south China. Prince Gong agreed with me, but said that nobody would dare propose this. When I pleaded with him again to take the opportunity to mention this to the two empress dowagers, Prince Gong told me that even they could not make such a big decision by themselves. We never discussed the issue again (曾記是年冬底，赴京叩謁梓宮，謁晤恭邸，極陳鐵路利益，請先試造清江至京，以便南北轉輸，邸意亦以為然，謂無人敢主持。復請其乘間為兩宮言之，渠謂兩宮亦不能定此大計，從此追絕口不談矣)。¹⁰⁶

Although the empress dowager did often recognise the necessity of reforms, the goal of maintaining her own personal power took precedence over benefits to the Chinese state. Cixi's manipulation of the conservatives was, in Lloyd E. Eastman's words, 'a necessity of her political existence; a means of preserving the power of final decision from a power-hungry bureaucracy and self-engrossing mandarins.'¹⁰⁷ Eastman's depiction of officials as 'power-hungry' and 'self-engrossing' exaggerates the role that myopic, personal interests played in the self-strengthening movement, and may not give sufficient credit to the reformist elite's nationalism and loyalty towards the Qing

the Sino-French Controversy 1880-1885. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 214-217.

¹⁰⁵ Mary Backus Rankin holds a different view. She claims that *qingyi* proponents were often calling for enhanced roles for the bureaucracy, which could potentially challenge the power of the throne. Therefore, she concludes that 'qingyi was no tool of autocracy in the late nineteenth century' ('Public Opinion' and Political Power', p. 464). Although Rankin is probably correct in her assumption that the empress dowager Cixi did not actually *encourage* the *qingyi* movement, I do not agree with her assertion that the *qingyi* 'was no tool of autocracy': Cixi's record of involvement in court intrigues suggest that she was an expert in political manoeuvres, and she was not above using the *qingyi* group as a device for divide-and-rule tactics. As Lloyd E. Eastman observes, 'to deny that the Old Buddha [Cixi] was capable of using *ch'ing-i* for her own political purposes...would be to underestimate grossly her political skills.' Lloyd E. Eastman, 'Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 24, no. 4, August 1965, pp. 595-611), p. 606. Also see Ding Richu, 'Dowager Empress Cixi and Toshimichi [sic]: A Comparative Study of Modernization in China and Japan', in Frederic Wakeman Jr. and Wang Xi (eds), *China's Quest for Modernization: A Historical Perspective*. (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1997)

¹⁰⁶ Li Hongzhang, 'Fu guo yunxian xingshi', *Li Hongzhang quanji: pengliao hangao* (vol. 6). (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 3691

¹⁰⁷ Eastman, *Throne and Mandarins*, p. 213.

dynasty.¹⁰⁸ However, it does give a strong indication of how court politics served to severely undermine the efforts of reform.

Institutional reforms: state centralisation

Once a state had decided to adopt the identity of a 'Westernised state', it was inevitable that it would have to undertake some administrative reforms. One of the best known of these was the process of legal reform, where non-European states transformed their legal codes to meet the demands imposed upon them by the 'standard of civilisation' of European International Society. While these reforms were no doubt an important component of the process by which a non-European state attained 'civilised' status within the Society, they have been given comprehensive treatment elsewhere,¹⁰⁹ and are not the main focus of this chapter. Here, particular attention is paid to centralising the state's system of governance. By abolishing aristocratic power and estates, the French Revolution had demonstrated that a state's power could be strengthened through centralisation. It is noteworthy that when China and Japan encountered the Society, the 'civilised' states had just undergone a similar transformation themselves. As Westney notes, in the 1830s and 1840s, technological innovations such as the railroad and the telegraph had 'removed many of the constraints on coordination and control that in the past had limited organizational expansion and the physical separation of subunits, and they provided the means of centralizing and integrating activities on an unprecedented scale.'¹¹⁰ To Western diplomats who firmly believed in the necessity to introduce the trappings of European civilisation such as 'sound governance' and 'industry', a centralised domestic political structure modelled on European states was the best system of governance to realise these objectives, and was actively promoted. In East Asia,

¹⁰⁸ While the reformist officials may have stood to benefit from their programmes, such undertakings were cannot be said to have been dominated by personal interests, and were often backed by nationalistic concerns. Furthermore, the reformist officials owed their positions of power to the Qing court, and were in no way likely to challenge the dynasty. Furthermore, these arguments (particularly scholarship from the People's Republic of China) have frequently been a product of Chinese nationalism, which has traditionally seen the reformists as traitors who capitulated to the European powers, and are ideologically driven. See Samuel S. Chu, 'Li Hung-chang: An Assessment' in Samuel S. Chu and Kwang-Ching Liu (eds), *Li-Hungchang and China's Early Modernization*. (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 271-278. For views similar to Eastman, see Stanley Spector, *Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Regionalism*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964, pp. ix-x. The Marxist historian Mou Anshi also appears to come to a similar conclusion: he claims that most of the reformers consisted of men who 'established themselves either by commercial activities or by becoming warlords' (*Yangwu yundong*, p. 17). The self-strengthening movement, in this view, was a movement designed to consolidate the reformists' grip on military power, rather than strengthen China (see *Yangwu yundong*. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1956).

¹⁰⁹ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*

¹¹⁰ Westney, *Imitation and Innovation*, p. 10

however, China had traditionally provided a model of a centralised, bureaucratic empire, and the European states were not necessarily the *only* models available. This added another layer of complexity to the debates that surrounded state centralisation, particularly in Japan.

A centralised 'European-styled' state in Japan: motivations and intellectual origins

The motivations for centralising the Japanese state were complex, involved both pragmatic, ideational, domestic and international motivations, and was a radical departure from the decentralised, feudal structures of the Tokugawa shogunate.¹¹¹ Practical matters undoubtedly played an important role. For a start, the Meiji leadership had to consolidate their rule as the sole 'legitimate' government of Japan and make their authority be felt throughout what was still a feudal state.¹¹² This need was also given urgency by the fact that the 'increased encounters between foreigners and the Japanese brought about a[n]...even pressing need to clarify the locus of the legitimate governing authority of the nation.'¹¹³ The leadership faced further problems. A strong Japan would need to develop some form of system to extract resources necessary to finance its reforms. However, at the time the Meiji leadership took control of Japan, the fiefs continued to tax their own lands, and the only source of revenue the new Meiji government could rely on was from the lands confiscated from the Tokugawa. Furthermore, the Meiji leadership had come to power by utilising the prestige of the emperor and calling for the return of his political prerogatives. This meant that the position of the emperor and his future relations with the feudal fiefdoms inevitably came to the forefront of debate.

It was as part of this debate that the ideas of centralisation arose. In 1868, Kido Takayoshi expressed his concern that 'every one of the feudal domains was becoming and acting like a "miniature bakufu [shogunate]," with little or no sense of the significant change in the central government'.¹¹⁴ He highlighted the potential problems of continued feudalism in a memorial addressed to Iwakura Tomomi and Sanjō Sanetomi. Reminding them that one of the very reasons for the overthrowing of the

¹¹¹ Gong is certainly correct in asserting that the dismantling of the feudal order was one of the most significant reforms in the course of the reconfiguration of the Japanese state. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilisation' in International Society*, pp. 175-176

¹¹² By 'feudal state' here, I mean a state where land (and a degree of political power) was shared out among hereditary lords in return for military service.

¹¹³ Michio Umegaki, *After the Restoration: The Beginning of Japan's Modern State*. (New York: New York University Press, 1988), p. 55

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 59

Tokugawa shogunate was in order to allow 'Japan to stand equally among other states in the world', Kido wrote:

When we observe the current situation of the fiefs and the imperial court, we see that each is competing with one another over their military strength. The court relies on the fiefdoms of Satsuma and Chōshū, the latter two fiefs rely on their own forces, and the other fiefs do not differ greatly...it is not clear where power exists...once the war in the East has come to an end and all the fiefdom troops return and start governing their localities again, it would be very hard to remove the harm this would create.¹¹⁵

Why had a centralised state come to be seen as a viable form of governance? In the early days of the Meiji period, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that attempts to produce a militarily powerful state would result in the emergence of a centralised state. Even though the feudal leadership under the Tokugawa had been overthrown, this 'did not produce a corresponding realization that the feudal domains would be incompatible with the new Imperial government.'¹¹⁶ Some samurai activists (志士 *shishi*) who had earlier called for a greater elevation of the emperor,

...though often contemptuous of their [feudal] superiors, had not planned to abolish the whole structure that sustained them; they had proposed rather to replace the Bakufu with an Emperor-centered feudalism and create an imperial domain in which they and the Court nobles might find suitable rewards.¹¹⁷

At the same time, however, it appears that other members of the Meiji government did indeed believe that a centralised state was most suited for Japan. Although in 1858 Iwakura Tomomi was suggesting China's inability to defeat Britain in the Opium War was because of its centralised, bureaucratic structure, by 1867 he had shifted his position, advocating the centralising of the Japanese state.¹¹⁸ Itō Hirobumi was also an enthusiastic supporter of a centralised state long before the notion garnered significant support. In response to a request from the Himeji (姫路) fiefdom to return its lands to the emperor in 1868,¹¹⁹ Itō stressed that if Japan was 'to stand up as an equal to other

¹¹⁵ Cited in *Iwakurakō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), p. 673. Here, the 'war in the East' refers to the civil war that was still raging between the Meiji Restoration forces and the Tokugawa loyalists.

¹¹⁶ Umegaki, *After the Restoration*, p. 5

¹¹⁷ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, pp. 302-303

¹¹⁸ Iwakura's statement of 1858 can be found in Asai Kiyoshi, *Meiji ishin to gunken shisō*. (Tokyo: Gannandō shoten, 1968), p. 25. One example of his statement (made in 1870) for state centralisation can be found in Iwakura Tomomi, 'Tomomi kenkoku saku o chōgi ni fusuru koto', *Iwakurakō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2), pp. 830-831. While it is difficult to ascertain why Iwakura changed his mind, one factor may have been Japan's equal inability to deal with the foreign threat. While it is possible (and to an extent plausible) to claim that Iwakura's calls for a centralised state in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji were aimed at consolidating his own power, this argument inaccurately downplays the nationalist motivations of the Meiji leaders and should be treated with caution.

¹¹⁹ The request from the Himeji fiefdom was made in the context of a power struggle between the new lord Sakai Tadakuni (酒井忠邦) and the Tokugawa loyalists within the domain. Sakai Tadakuni's

foreign countries and carry out civilised, enlightened rule (我国ヲシテ海外各国ト並立テ文明開化之政治ヲ致サシメ)', it would be necessary to abolish the feudal structures and centralise power to the imperial government.¹²⁰ Significantly, at a time when centralisation had yet to gain wide acceptance, he wrote:

...if we wish to bring all [political power] to the centre, we need to put an end to the current situation, where all fiefs possess their own forces and compete with each other. If we do not do so, we cannot get the people to obey the laws of the Court; neither can the people be protected from the impartial laws and share in the benefits of the [central] government. Furthermore, if military forces remain fragmented, there is simply no way we can protect Japan from the insults of foreign states and demonstrate the imperial glory of Japan overseas.¹²¹

Where did such ideas and motivations for centralising the state come from? The ideas and motives of the members of the Meiji leadership undoubtedly originated from practical, functional concerns, as discussed above. However, very few ideas develop in a vacuum: the intellectual origins of the idea of centralising the state were no exception. It is here that an interesting interaction between the ideas of traditional statehood and 'modern' statehood of European International Society can be found. Finding precedents in Chinese and Japanese history was, as we have seen, a common way to justify political change around this time, and state centralisation was no exception. The Japanese had experimented with a more centralised system (known as *gunken seido* 郡県制度) based on Tang (唐 618-907) institutions,¹²² where officials appointed by the imperial government governed provinces. A return of political power to the emperor harked back to this system, and played a role in furthering the possibility of establishing a centralised state.

However, by the later half of the nineteenth century there were two salient differences. First, in an international environment where the main actors were sovereign states with a monopoly over domestic sovereign prerogatives, the Japanese leadership now had to represent the 'Japanese state', and this weakened their feudal/local loyalties.¹²³ Second, Japan now had a new source of inspiration in the 'civilised' states of European International Society. As the social standards of the Society gained

request itself can be interpreted as an attempt to gain the support of the Meiji government in order to strengthen his own position within the domain, and should not be simplistically seen as Sakai's acceptance of centralised rule *per se*. For this point, see Haraguchi Kiyoshi, *Nihon kindai kokka no keisei*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1968), pp. 50-53.

¹²⁰ Cited in *Iwakurakō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2), pp. 674-675. Itō's statement here took place before other fiefs had 'returned' their lands to the emperor (*Hanseki hōkan* 版籍奉還). This is discussed in detail in Umegaki, *After the Restoration*, p. 46

¹²¹ Cited in *Iwakurakō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 2), p. 675

¹²² This centralised system of governance was established in 645.

acceptance, China increasingly began to serve as a negative example. During the Tokugawa era, the Japanese had mixed views of the Chinese system of governance. Tokugawa Confucian Dazai Shundai (太宰春臺), for instance, had praised Japan's feudal system as superior: it came closer to the political systems of the days of mythical sages, when the feudal rulers were closer to their people and 'invested great effort in government and in ensuring the welfare of the people.'¹²⁴ China's centralised bureaucratic government rotated officials from province to province, and the rulers thus developed few bonds with the people. Japan's feudal system was thus a source of its national strength. Many Tokugawa Confucian scholars, however, also admired the centralised bureaucratic Chinese state, and this was typical of the paradoxical views held by many Japanese towards China at the time. There was 'an envy,' W. G. Beasley states, 'natural to those of only modest rank, of the fact that in China... "a man born among the peasantry" could "advance to the position of one of the chief ministers of the State."'"¹²⁵

As the European powers expanded to East Asia and the Qing's inability to ward them off became apparent, China's centralised bureaucratic system was now criticised as a source of weakness (as Iwakura did in 1858). Japan's own inability to effectively resist the Europeans, however, soon cast doubts over the strengths of a feudal political system. Ironically, China again served as a metaphore for Japan's weakness. It was claimed that Japan was similar to the feudal Zhou (周 1027 B.C.-403 B.C.) dynasty, unable to protect itself from foreign encroachment because of its fragmentation. As the 'social standards of success' began to be less located in China, Japan increasingly turned to the examples of the European states. It is here that it is possible to trace part of the intellectual motivations and social pressures from European International Society that were attempting to push Japan towards transforming itself into a 'civilised', centralised state.

Information on the centralised state structures of the Western nation was available via journalistic works on the Western states and translated Chinese sources.¹²⁶ Asai Kiyoshi notes one particular instance of Yamagata Aritomo's encounter with a

¹²³ Fujimura Michio, *Nisshin sensō zengo no ajia seisaku*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), p. 17

¹²⁴ Nakai, 'The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan', p. 177

¹²⁵ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 303

¹²⁶ Asai Kiyoshi also provides some evidence of the transmission of federalism, which, among others, took place through the publishing of translations of Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi*. He also states that there is also evidence of federalism in a constitution drafted by the Dutch-trained shogunate official Nishi Amane and submitted to Tokugawa Yoshinobu in 1867. See Asai Kiyoshi, *Meiji ishin to gunken shisō*. (Tokyo: Gannandō shoten, 1968), p. 45-56

translation of A. W. Fonblanque's *How We are Governed*, an exposition on British political history.¹²⁷ Here, it was stated that 'feudalism crumbled when [Britain] became civilised and "the people became more enlightened, the state became richer, and people began to engage in crafts other than war-making."¹²⁸ Similarly, Asai traces another Western intellectual source in the lectures of Simon Vissering, which also helped spread the intellectual link between a 'civilised state' and a centralised state.¹²⁹ In Tsuda Shin'ichirō (津田眞一郎 also known as Tsuda Mamichi)'s translation of his lectures, titled *Taisei kokuhōron* (泰西国法論), Vissering not only claimed that feudalism could weaken a country because of its fragmented authority; he also claimed that feudal political systems were a hallmark of uncivilised status. He stated that 'feudal systems are intricate in their system of governance; but this system only exists in semi-civilised states (藉土ノ制ハ設施巧ナリト謂フ可シ然レ共惟文化半開ノ国ニ於テ行ルベキ制度ナリ)'.¹³⁰ This demonstrates the significant fact that centralised states were, to a considerable extent, linked with the identity of 'civilised' status within European International Society in the late-nineteenth century.

The British Minister to Japan, Sir Harry Parkes, provides further evidence of social pressures from European International Society. W. G. Beasley quotes Parkes as expressing his 'anti-feudal prejudices and expectations' in 1869 to Iwakura Tomomi as follows:

The government of the country having now been reconstituted under the Mikado, it is obvious that the latter must be supported by a central organisation and by material power; and although much may still be left to local administration, still certain cardinal functions of government, such as legislation, national defences, foreign affairs, etc., should be conducted from the centre.¹³¹

While it is difficult to ascertain the degree to which the Meiji leaderships' engagement with the Society influenced their decision to push forward with abolishing feudalism and establishing a 'modern', centralised state, it does seem plausible to assume that the Meiji elite's acceptance of the 'standards of success' of the Society did result in increased responsiveness to such ideas.¹³² This can be discerned from their

¹²⁷ The Japanese title was *Eisei ikaga* (英政如何).

¹²⁸ Cited in Asai Kiyoshi, *Meiji ishin to gunken shisō*, p. 97

¹²⁹ For this point, see *ibid.*, pp. 97-98

¹³⁰ Tsuda Shin'ichirō, *Taisei kokuhōron*. (Tokyo: Buntokudō, 1876), pp. 67-68

¹³¹ Cited in Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, pp. 309-310

¹³² This point is supported by *ibid.*, pp. 305-306. Interestingly, the leaders of the Tokugawa shogunate appear also to have come to a similar point of view: in a letter to Leon Roches, the French Minister to Japan, Tokugawa Yoshinobu wrote: 'After having studied the general situation of the nations which inhabit the globe, and after having given very careful thought to the different forms of their constitutive powers, I acquired the conviction that there did not exist in Europe a single government

statements where they locate the success of European states in their centralised political systems. Itō Hirobumi stated in his memoirs that during his visit to Britain in 1863, he witnessed the strength of Britain and its centralised political system, and was 'reassured of his conviction that feudalism needed to be abolished in Japan.'¹³³ Such views were also seen in leaders who (at the time of their writing) had still yet to visit the West. In the following passage written as an entry in Kido Takayoshi's diary on 30th October 1869, Kido states:

When we discussed hereditary awards, I made the point that if we limit the strength of our nation with the hereditary system, how can we hope to confront those nations whose power is not limited by this system? How can we maintain the prestige of our Empire in the future?¹³⁴

Here, 'hereditary awards' means political power attained according to hereditary status, and refers to Japan's feudal state structure. The 'nations whose power is not limited by this system' refers to the stronger Western states. The implication here is that Japan had to abolish its feudal system of governance and adopt those of the European states in order to stand on an equal footing with them.

Implementing state centralisation in Japan

While the feudal lords remained in their lands and retained their power however, the political process of centralising the Japanese state remained a delicate one. This was especially so because the *samurai* of the fiefdoms of Satsuma and Chōshū had been instrumental in overthrowing the Tokugawa shogunate. There were fears that the continued domination of the two fiefdoms would arouse suspicion of a Satsuma and Chōshū takeover of the country and cast doubts over how genuine the 'restoration' under the name of the emperor was.¹³⁵

where power was not concentrated in the hands of only one ruler, and I am persuaded that this system is the only one capable of uniting in one single and solid bundle all the sentiments of our people and the forces of our country.' Cited in Jean-Pierre Lehmann, 'Leon Roches – Diplomat Extraordinary in the Bakumatsu Era: An Assessment of his Personality and Policy', *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 14, no. 2, 1980, pp. 273-307), p. 301

¹³³ Cited in Asai Kiyoshi, *Meiji ishin to gunken shisō*, p. 101. The cited passage comes from Itō's own recollections. While Asai himself states that the source is of a reliable nature, he rightly points out that they were not written at the time when the political process to abolish feudalism was actually taking place, and must be treated with some caution.

¹³⁴ See Kido Takayoshi, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi* (vol. 1) (Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota, trans.), p. 284. More examples can be found in Asai Kiyoshi, *Meiji ishin to gunken shisō*, pp. 98-101

¹³⁵ Consequently, the Meiji leaders acted cautiously and gave the feudal lords a voice in the new government. The government structures underwent rapid transformation around this time. There were three offices in January 1868, which were then reconfigured into three offices and seven departments in February. By late February this had changed into three offices and eight bureaus. In June 1868, a new quasi-constitution, the *Seitaisho* was promulgated, and this structure now had eight offices with a government structure with a separation of powers. Interestingly, in the drafting of the *Seitaisho*,

The Meiji leadership, however, gradually succeeded sidelining the *daimyō*.¹³⁶ In 1869, members of the Meiji leadership persuaded the leading fiefdoms of Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and Hizen to return the fiefs to the court (版籍奉還 *hanseki hōkan*), thereby 'making the daimyo imperial governors of the lands they had held in fief'.¹³⁷ This was by no means an easy process: for instance, Kido Takayoshi's effort to persuade the Chōshū fiefdom to surrender its domain register to the imperial court was met with a hostile response.¹³⁸ Despite these initial difficulties, the process of transferring the registers back to the emperor was completed quickly. Once the fiefs of Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and Hizen had submitted their memorials to request the return of their fiefs to the imperial government, the remaining domains quickly followed suit, motivated by 'the fear of becoming the last to endorse the action of the four key domains.'¹³⁹ The returning of the domain registers to the emperor received positive evaluation from Sir Harry Parkes, the British Minister, who stated:

I am glad to say...that light breaks out through the cloud....Several of the leading Daimios have come forward and offered to surrender the Government of their own territories – their revenues, forces, jurisdiction, etc. – into the hands of the Mikado's Government in order that a strong Central Power may be created.¹⁴⁰

Despite Parkes' optimistic appraisal, the process of centralising state power was far from over, as the feudal lords continued in power, albeit under the title of 'governor (知事 *chiji*)', and remained ambivalent towards the central government.¹⁴¹ The European diplomats continued to press the Meiji leadership to establish '[o]ne firm and compact State...not merely because this was the way to be civilized, but also because it would

several works on Western political systems (such as Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Seiyō jijō*) were consulted. For this particular aspect, see Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia*, p. 166

¹³⁶ For a detailed discussion of this process, see Albert M. Craig, 'The Central Government' in Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozman (eds), *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986)

¹³⁷ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 325 However, it must be noted that the process of replacing feudal lords with governors was not a linear process that took place after 1869. This process had in fact been taking place in former Tokugawa lands that had been confiscated and governed by the new Meiji central government.

¹³⁸ See Umegaki, *After the Restoration*, pp. 59-60. Kido himself alludes to this in an entry in his diary on 26th January 1869: 'Incessant argument', he wrote, 'has raged in Chōshū since last spring. Owing to this controversy I have endured a better experience...beyond the power of my writing brush to express.' See Kido Takayoshi, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi* (vol. 1) (Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota, trans.), p. 168. See also Asai Kiyoshi, *Meiji ishin to gunken shisō*, pp. 135-136.

¹³⁹ Umegaki, *After the Restoration*, p. 61

¹⁴⁰ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 332

¹⁴¹ This was the case even within the Meiji government. Continuous rivalry between members from Satsuma and Chōshū was, Umegaki states, 'a telling indication that something fundamental from the past had remained intact behind the facade of change since the Restoration.' (Umegaki, *After the Restoration*, p. 64). Some members of the leadership even suggested that the spoils from the civil war in Japan be distributed in the form of new fiefs; another testament to the lingering intellectual remnants of the feudal order.

give the [central government] a means of intervening in local affairs in order to punish samurai who attacked foreigners.'¹⁴² By 1871, the Meiji leadership had reached the decision to abolish the feudal domains altogether. On August 29, the *daimyō* were informed of this decision, thus bringing an end to the feudal system of governance in Japan (廃藩置県 *haihan chiken*).¹⁴³

The success in abolishing the feudal political structures was a departure from 'uncivilised' feudal governance, played a crucial role in demonstrating Japan's eagerness to attain membership of 'civilised' European International Society. This, combined with concerted efforts by the Meiji government to adopt European institutions, resulted in positive evaluation by the Society's members. The Meiji government and many *samurai* paid a price for this, however. In the process of increasing central government penetration into feudal affairs, the Meiji government placed increasing legal restrictions on the domains. This entailed limiting the expenditures on stipends for the samurai.¹⁴⁴ This caused considerable resentment among the already impoverished samurai, and even resulted in rebellions. However, the plans to abolish the feudal systems of governance were not derailed by this. Michio Umegaki states that one critical reason for this was the relatively weak links the Meiji leadership had with their feudal lords (many of the Meiji leadership came from middle to low-ranking *samurai* families). This, he argues, insulated the former from conflicting loyalties, and meant that there were fewer vested interests in preserving the old political order.

There can be no doubt that the abolition of the last vestiges of feudal governance greatly strengthened the ability of the Meiji government to penetrate Japanese society. The elimination of feudal military power meant that the government could now concentrate all military forces to itself. Economically, the state could now (at least potentially) maximise its ability to extract badly needed resources from the populace to aid it in its goal of reinventing Japan into a 'rich and strong' country modelled on the 'civilised' states of European International Society. Prior to the *haihan chiken*, the feudal domains continued to issue their own currency, severely devaluing the central

¹⁴² Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 344

¹⁴³ The surprisingly peaceful acceptance of this new policy was, in part, related to the fact that increased fiscal constraints on the domains had rendered them close to bankruptcy. Therefore, many lords/governors considered it advantageous to obtain central government assistance in dealing with their increasingly difficult financial situation.

¹⁴⁴ Other reforms instigated by the Meiji government included the revision of feudal political structures and the implementation of promotion based on merit, which had an effect of weakening traditional

government currency and prompting protests from the foreign diplomatic corps.¹⁴⁵ Abolition of the fiefs meant that the Meiji government could now stabilise its finances and centralise the taxation process. It would take a step in this direction in 1873, with the introduction of a land tax.¹⁴⁶ Finally, it helped Japan gain recognition that it was willing to conform to the social standards of legitimate statehood within European International Society.

Already centralised, and not emulating the European powers: the case of China

In comparison to Japan, China's case presents us with less evidence of its elites responding to European International Society's pressures for state centralisation. This is mainly for two reasons. First, during the period covered by this study, the Chinese had yet to accept the 'Europeanised' state as legitimate, and there is not a lot of evidence that demonstrates that there were serious attempts to alter the Chinese state and its institutions based on European models. Second, and more importantly, there were less pressures for China to centralise political power than Japan, because the Chinese had laid the foundations for a centralised, bureaucratic state at a much earlier stage of their history. The Qin dynasty, which unified China in 221-206 B.C., had divided its territory into districts and placed them under direct central government rule as early as 350 B.C. Unlike Europe, R. Bin Wong states, in early stages of state formation in China there were very few 'scales of resources or their multiple concentrations to sustain interstate competition',¹⁴⁷ and the independent power of nobles and elites had been destroyed by the mid-tenth century.

This, however, is not imply that European International Society did not exert pressures on the Qing leadership to strengthen central rule along Western lines. Banno Masataka claims that while the Europeans considered China's institutions of governance to be a centralised one, they found the provinces too powerful, operating more or less as they pleased.¹⁴⁸ They therefore called for greater central government control. For instance, while calling for the adoption of Western industry and technology, Robert Hart

powers within the domains, further eroding vested interests that could have prevented future centralisation plans.

¹⁴⁵ Umegaki, *After the Restoration*, p. 80. C.f. Hendrik Spruyt, 'Institutional selection in international relations', p. 550.

¹⁴⁶ In the early Meiji years, many domains continued to adjust tax rates, defying central government instructions. This process of centralising the fiscal system in Japan is given detailed treatment in Seki Junya, *Meiji ishin to chiso kaisei*. (Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 1967).

¹⁴⁷ R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 76

¹⁴⁸ See Banno, *The Origins of the Tsugli Yamen*, pp. 16-17.

and Thomas Wade also advocated domestic political changes that went beyond the usual calls for reform proposed by the Chinese elite.¹⁴⁹ While they continued to press the Chinese to strengthen their armies and open railroads or mines, they argued that the Qing's political institutions were ill-equipped to implement these reforms. Hart and Wade identified fiscal weaknesses and local misgovernment as the main cause. Wade charged that officials 'lacked integrity or were incompetent, and can neither prevent disasters nor take care of them after they have happened (各省官吏，或有失義，或系無才，事先不能防備，事後不能辦治)'.¹⁵⁰ With regard to fiscal matters, Wade argued that there was 'a shortage in all aspects of the central government's income. Despite some measures implemented to ease the financial shortages of the provinces, because of financial constraints only short-term measures are possible (所有入國大宗，無非缺欠。外省因缺銀糧，止得設法權計，亦不過為暫顧目前)'.¹⁵¹

Hart had more detailed proposals, and his proposals for reform pointed to greater centralisation. Like Wade, he also pointed out that the lack of funds was impeding domestic reforms. He advocated the introduction of a more progressive land tax. He also called for the reform of the salt tax and the domestic transit tax, pointing out that the system was vulnerable to embezzlement by the officials, which implied tighter central control by the imperial government.¹⁵² The bureaucracy and military were also in urgent need of reform. Provincial civil and military officials needed to be allowed to reside in their native provinces, where they had and could develop greater local knowledge that would allow for more effective government.¹⁵³ The military needed to be reduced in size and trained more effectively. They were also to be 'prevent[ed] from engaging in business activities outside their normal jobs (不准出外謀生)',¹⁵⁴ which, (when we take the low wages of the military into account) presumably meant that the

¹⁴⁹ Paul Cohen, has argued that 'Modern Westerners...have generally insisted on the need for a proper institutional and legal setting if society is to function effectively. When society fails to function effectively in a given area, the critic *may* call for new men. But he is just as likely to diagnose the failure as systemic and to prescribe institutional modifications.' While Cohen's argument may have a grain of truth to it, it may be somewhat questionable to ascribe a tendency to advocate institutional change as a 'Western' phenomenon. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, pp. 160-161

¹⁵⁰ Cited in Zeng Guofan, *Zeng Guofan quanji: zougao* (vol. 9). (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1991), p. 5243

¹⁵¹ Cited in *ibid.*

¹⁵² This point was also made in Wade's memorandum.

¹⁵³ In Qing China, under the 'principle of avoidance', a bureaucrat was forbidden to take up appointments in his native provinces or in an area within 160 miles (500 *li*) of his hometown, in order to prevent the rise of nepotism and other abuses of local connections. Under a similar rationale, officials were also rotated to different posts at regular intervals.

¹⁵⁴ Cited in Zeng Guofan, *Zeng Guofan quanji: zougao* (vol. 9). (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1991), p. 5240

military needed to be provided with better pay. Provincial officials also needed to be paid adequate salaries to prevent them from overtaxing the people. Hart proposed that one way to achieve this was for 'the central government to perhaps consult with the provinces and decide on a budget (各署定費，若將此意向外任詢問如何?)'.¹⁵⁵

Several Chinese officials who had the opportunity to witness the political systems of the European powers came to a similar point of view. Guo Songtao, for instance, was deeply impressed by the centralised nature of the British budgetary system.¹⁵⁶ The Chancellor of the Exchequer Stafford Northcote told Guo that the British financial system relied on a central budget that would predetermine government spending. This was a very different system from the decentralised Qing system, where 'neither the concept of budgets and accounts settlements existed, let alone a centralised fiscal system where the central government was responsible for funding various financial needs.'¹⁵⁷ Moreover, this process was debated in parliament and widely disseminated to the people via the popular press. This resulted, according to Guo, in 'the government and people uniting as one, governing and protecting their country. This is the reason that this country [Britain] continues to prosper, several thousand years after its founding.'¹⁵⁸

Attempting to strengthen state centralisation in China

Despite these social pressures and increased information of the centralised systems of governance in the European states, the Qing leadership ultimately failed to implement political reforms needed to centralise China along Western lines. The reasons for this can, to a certain extent, be located in the fact that the Chinese elite had not decided to adopt the identity of a 'Westernised' state and be assessed by the social standards of European International Society. This meant that the political will to implement any

¹⁵⁵ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 5239

¹⁵⁶ Sasaki Yō cites an interesting anecdote where the Japanese junior finance minister Inoue Kaoru erroneously explained to Guo that the British government financed their budget primarily from land taxes. Guo was deeply impressed that the mercantile activity was hardly taxed. However, this could hardly be further from the truth, as Guo himself subsequently found out when he visited the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Stafford Northcote: the British government's income was derived primarily from indirect taxation. See Sasaki Yō, *Shin matsu chūgoku ni okeru nihon kan to seiyō kan*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2000), pp. 131-132. Thanks are also due to Leonard Seabrooke for providing information on British taxation.

¹⁵⁷ Sasaki Yō, *Shin matsu chūgoku ni okeru nihon kan to seiyō kan*, p. 132. A useful discussion of the Qing taxation system can be found in Albert Feuerwerker, 'State and Society in Eighteenth-Century China: The Ch'ing Empire in its Glory', *Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies* (no. 27). (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1976), pp. 88-94 and Banno Masataka, *Kindai chūgoku seiji gaikō shi*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 2001), pp. 41-46

¹⁵⁸ Cited in Sasaki Yō, *Shin matsu chūgoku ni okeru nihon kan to seiyō kan*, p. 133

institutional reforms that would further centralise the Chinese state along 'Europeanised' lines was lacking.

There were certain points of agreement between Wade, Hart and the Chinese political elite. It is worth noting that the reforming of the tax system, bureaucracy and army did receive some support.¹⁵⁹ However, it would be somewhat misleading to equate this with a positive response to socialisation pressures from the European states. Most agreements that the Chinese political elite had with Hart or Wade were already being seriously discussed as pertinent issues. Zeng Guofan, for instance, predated Hart's advice for a better paid military by offering high salaries for his Xiang Army, which played an important role in suppressing the Taiping Rebellion.¹⁶⁰ The corruption of local officials and the downgrading of the quality of officials caused by the sale of official rank was well known, and seen as an issue that merited serious attention. The response, however, was not one of transforming China into a 'Europeanised' state. Rather, it was a matter of recruiting men of talent, and weeding out corrupt practices and the officials who carried them out. The Chinese elite on the whole did not, at least at this stage, consider it necessary to abolish the existing political institutions.¹⁶¹ Consequently, while reforms *were* undertaken, they tended to be limited in scope. While reforms on the tax system was undertaken in the form of tax reductions, limited legal reforms, and anti-corruption campaigns, Hart's proposals for a national land survey and progressive taxation system was ignored. While the reformist officials did attempt to appoint honourable individuals as tax collectors, this merely constituted a modification of the traditional tax system. A new government institution to collect taxes was not created. As regards bureaucratic reforms, many of the reformist officials made considerable efforts to recruit men of talent as their advisers or recommend them to official positions, but the traditional examination system was not abolished, and neither was the 'principle of avoidance' abolished, although some officials were sympathetic to the idea.

While many reformist officials have often been accused of focusing solely on the superficial aspects of Western strength (such as steamships) out of ignorance, this was, to a certain degree, also a result of their awareness of the political infeasibility of

¹⁵⁹ For a detailed discussion of this aspect of reforms, see Johathan K. Ocko, *Bureaucratic Reform in Provincial China: Ting Jih-ch'ang in Restoration Kiangsu, 1867-1870*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983), chapters 5 and 6.

¹⁶⁰ However, Zeng's organisation of his military was based primarily on Qi Jiguang, a Ming strategist. For this point, see Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 147

¹⁶¹ These issues included tackling corruption and limiting the sale of rank.

introducing sweeping reforms.¹⁶² The degree to which Chinese reformers could implement any meaningful changes was severely circumscribed by sociopolitical obstacles within Qing China at this time.

One problem was that state centralisation along Western lines was most likely to harm the vested interests of the local elite (the gentry). As Paul Cohen states, 'because the [local officials and gentry] had a vested interest in precisely those aspects of the system that were most cumbersome and irrational, it formed a powerful check on reform.'¹⁶³ When we analyse Wade and Hart's proposals, it is possible to see that their suggestions called for the further centralisation of government power. The fact that their proposals were based on European experiences would most likely have meant that they envisaged these reforms to maximise the state's capacity to efficiently extract resources needed to 'modernise'. For instance, with respect to bureaucratic reforms, Hart had suggested that the local clerks' power needed to be curbed, a point echoed by reformists such as Wang Tao. Such measures meant further central governmental control of the clerks 'by giving them status in the Confucian hierarchy, thus making them subject to its indoctrination and controls'.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, we may recall that Hart's proposals included a plan for a more efficient taxation system aimed at correcting abuses by officials, and entailed greater central control of China's tax collection. Had the adoption of a Western-styled budgetary system, which so impressed Guo Songtao, taken place, outright centralisation of fiscal resources would have also occurred.

This was a radical departure from conventional practice. Compared to European states, the Chinese state had experienced far less substantial and frequent threats to its survival. Even when a particular dynasty was overthrown, the political structures themselves survived. As R. Bin Wong observes, 'the common observation that China could be conquered but its system remained intact is important for us in a comparative context, since China was not threatened with the frequent possibilities of dismemberment or absorption faced by smaller European political units'.¹⁶⁵ Faced with fewer rival groups (both internal and external), the Chinese state faced less pressing needs to extract resources. Taxation subsequently remained relatively light, and local control was delegated to local officials. It was precisely this system of governance

¹⁶² For a discussion of this dilemma between reformist programmes and the practical political problems of implementing them, see Kwang-ching Liu, 'The Confucian as Patriot and Pragmatist: Li Hung-chang's Formative Years, 1823-1866', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (vol. 30, 1970, pp. 5-45)

¹⁶³ Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, pp. 213-214. Around the Tongzhi period, the number of clerks was said to be over one million.

¹⁶⁴ Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, p. 94

which made any attempts to further centralise state powers (had they been carried out) difficult.

Although the long-standing existence of a centralised bureaucracy has often given the impression of strong central control within China, in reality the power of the state was quite weak at the local level.¹⁶⁵ The rule of avoidance meant that the local magistrate (who was a bureaucrat sent by the central government) was often ignorant of local conditions. Furthermore, the Confucian ideal of omnicompetence did not fit realities: the magistrate was in fact 'dependent both on the day-to-day functioning of numerous clerks, messengers, guards, doormen, police, and servants and on the goodwill and cooperation of the local elite' for him 'to do his job well'.¹⁶⁷ Under the Qing system, local officials charged with the task of taxation were paid low wages, supplemented by some nominal stipends and a small office stipend. This income was not enough to meet the expenses of the local government,¹⁶⁸ and the local governments were expected to finance themselves. Subsequently, local governments were allowed to charge 'customary fees', which were 'irregular levies, in the sense that they were neither specifically authorized by imperial edict nor uniform from locality to locality.'¹⁶⁹

This traditional system of local governance made any attempts to increase the power of the central government extremely difficult. Further state centralisation inevitably entailed the loss of power on the part of the local elite, who were bound to offer the stiffest resistance and ultimately attempt to quash the reforms. Any attempts to further the state's ability to extract fiscal resources would deprive many officials of opportunities of 'squeeze', and were difficult to implement.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, Albert Feuerwerker argues, 'the commonality of values and interests between those gentry members who directly served the state (the official elite) and their more numerous kin and friends of the same class who held no office' meant that most of the elite 'accepted

¹⁶⁵ Wong, *China Transformed*, p. 90

¹⁶⁶ See Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, pp. 21-23

¹⁶⁷ Feuerwerker, 'State and Society in Eighteenth-Century China', p. 66. The local magistrates tasks included tax collection, maintenance of order, arbitrate civil and criminal legal matters and deal with the paper work required by the central government.

¹⁶⁸ The expenses of local government in Qing China were wide-ranging. It included salaries for the administrative staff, gifts to the superior offices, and contributions to the regional treasurer.

¹⁶⁹ Feuerwerker, 'State and Society in Eighteenth-Century China', p. 65. While it is tempting to label such forms of 'taxation' as corruption (and indeed the Chinese mandarins were often notorious among Westerners for their 'squeeze'), we must keep in mind that these practices were sanctioned by the imperial government, and cannot be called 'corruption' in the strictest sense. While corruption certainly did exist, Feuerwerker states that the phenomenon could 'be found in discernible quantities in Ch'ing China, that occasionally it occurred on a grand scale, but that it was not more prevalent than in earlier dynasties.' See Feuerwerker, 'State and Society in Eighteenth-Century China', p. 74

in practice the apparent anomaly that the local gentry both supported the imperial state and prevented its penetration and reorganization of local society in the interests of the whole nation rather than merely the gentry who actually ruled it.¹⁷¹ These problems were not missed by the British Minister to China, Rutherford Alcock, who pointed out to this problem as early as 1876 in his despatch to Foreign Secretary Lord Stanley. 'Dislike to innovation, as such, coupled with the fear of its possible but unknown sequences', he wrote, were nowhere

...so strongly marked as with the 'literati and gentry' of whom so much is heard in China. They represent the educated and official classes throughout the Empire. All the expectants and aspirants who have taken their first literary degree...; all who have retired from the public service, dwelling for the most part in their native places, where their influence is always considerable, enter into the same combinations....The Central Government in Peking is well nigh powerless in any matters opposed to the prejudices of these classes, when united, and animated by an *esprit de corps*, which is in itself a great element of strength. They mutually support and shield each other in all conflicts with the Government where foreign interests are in question; and the struggle will necessarily be long, because the governing classes and the whole public opinion of a nation cannot be either put aside as a thing of no account, or their actual services dispensed with.¹⁷²

Rich country, strong army: technology and industry

The desire for technological change was a key characteristic of both the Self-strengthening movement and the Meiji reforms. There was a heavy bias towards heavy industry. As discussed above, Western weapons (and with it, technology) were one of the most conspicuous aspects of the Western states' superiority over China and Japan. It is perhaps for this reason that the adoption of these weapons and the attempts to establish heavy industry capable of producing European weaponry and machines were one of the earliest and most important aspects of reforms in both states. Within Japan, industrialisation and the adoption of technology served a dual purpose of demonstrating Japan's 'civilised' status, as well as ensuring Japan had the means to protect itself from the dangerous European powers. For the Chinese elite, industrialisation merely served as a means to protect China, and did not serve to highlight China's commitment to reinvent itself along European lines. Rather, the slogan of 'Chinese learning for essence,

¹⁷⁰ This point is made in Barrington Moore Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 182

¹⁷¹ Feuerwerker, 'State and Society in Eighteenth-Century China', pp. 114-115.

¹⁷² Ian Nish (ed), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (Part 1, Series E, Vol. 20: China's Rehabilitation and Treaty Revision, 1866-1869), pp. 117-118

Western learning for practical use' was stressed, as this was less likely to be seen as constituting a threat to the identity of the Chinese state.¹⁷³

Industrialisation in Japan: intellectual origins and motivations

Although the slogan of 'rich country, strong army' became an explicit policy in the Meiji period, it is possible to trace its emergence prior to Japan's full encounter with European International Society. This was partly in response to domestic economic failures and partly as a result of a growing awareness of the expansion of the European powers. Japanese intellectual Kudō Heisuke, who was influenced by students of 'Dutch studies', argued before the arrival of Perry expedition that 'it was in Japan's national interest to promote foreign trade if the realm was to survive and overcome chronic domestic difficulties.'¹⁷⁴ Japanese with some knowledge of the West also began to note the yawning gap between Japan and European states in terms of technological and scientific development. Individuals such as Sakuma Shōzan had earlier 'argued that modern artillery was essential to protect Japan, and so international trade must be promoted to generate the wealth necessary for arms manufacture and national defense.'¹⁷⁵ The fact that after Perry's arrival there was no concerted resistance to this is reflective of the 'relatively advanced state [of] Western studies, and particularly the applied sciences' within Japan,¹⁷⁶ where Western weapons and writings on military science had always attracted keen interest.¹⁷⁷

The Meiji leadership carried over this intellectual inheritance, and industrialisation was envisaged as playing a number of additional roles. One was to reverse the substantial balance of payments deficit Japan faced by increasing the output of industry. The drainage of specie reserves meant that the Meiji government was increasingly forced to issue inconvertible paper currency to meet its spending, ultimately leading to a

¹⁷³ Of course, the assertion that industrialisation was least likely to threaten the Chinese ideological framework is a relative one, and does not suggest that Western technology was *never* seen as a threat to Chinese identity and society: railroads, for instance, were often opposed on the grounds that they disturbed the geomancy of the particular area.

¹⁷⁴ Harootunian, 'Late Tokugawa culture and thought', p. 117

¹⁷⁵ Richard J. Samuels, *Rich Nation, Strong Army: National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 36. Sakuma Shōzan (1811-1864) was a *rangaku* student who specialised in military science. He advocated that Japan repudiate its *sakoku* policy, and served as an adviser to the Tokugawa shogunate. He was later assassinated.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas C. Smith, 'The Introduction of Western Industry to Japan during the Last Years of the Tokugawa Period', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (vol. 11, no. 1/2, June 1948, pp. 130-152), p. 130

¹⁷⁷ For a brief survey of Japanese adoption of Western military science, see Seiho Arima, 'The Western Influence on Japanese Military Science, Shipbuilding and Navigation', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 19, no. 3/4, 1964, pp. 352-379)

depreciation of its currency. This, Thomas C. Smith, argues, led to three further problems. First, as the government relied heavily on land tax (which was fixed), 'any depreciation in the value of money meant a corresponding loss of revenue to the government.'¹⁷⁸ This in turn increased the spending power of the rural population, increasing the consumption of foreign imports, often to the detriment of the rural industry. Finally, the inflation caused by the excessive issuing of paper currency hurt the *samurai*, who relied on fixed stipends paid by the government (their stipends were only abolished in 1876 in the form of compulsory commutation). They remained a powerful, potentially destabilising force to be reckoned with, and the fledgling Meiji government could not afford to risk antagonising them. It was hoped that industrialisation could 'absorb the unemployed former warriors and make them a constructive element in Japanese society.'¹⁷⁹

There were international concerns as well. First, many of the Meiji elite believed that industrialisation would enable Japan to protect itself from European International Society's coercive mode of interaction. Second, it would play a crucial role in facilitating Japan's entry into European International Society as a 'civilised' member of European International Society. As discussed previously, a highly industrialised economy was seen as an integral part of the identity of 'civilised' members of late-nineteenth century European International Society. Furthermore, there is evidence that foreign diplomats reinforced this point. British Minister Sir Harry Parkes, while just as keen to see that Britain would benefit from trading with an industrialised Japan, believed that 'good government was but one mark of a civilized country, which ought also to enjoy the social and material advantages to be derived from economic growth',¹⁸⁰ and had impressed upon the Japanese leadership the need to industrialise and engage in free trade. The Meiji leadership and leading intellectuals of the time were certainly not ignorant of this fact, and any references to the 'civilised' states of European International Society frequently contained references to their industrial and technological prowess.¹⁸¹ Fukuzawa Yukichi's oft-cited *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* argued that within 'civilised states', 'industry and commerce were experiencing increasing

¹⁷⁸ See Thomas C. Smith, *Political Change and Industrial Development in Japan: Government Enterprise, 1868-1880*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 25

¹⁷⁹ Masakazu Iwata, *Ōkubo Toshimichi: The Bismarck of Japan*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), p. 242. This point is also visible in Iwakura Tomomi, 'Tomomi zaisei ni kansuru yōken o shoshi kakugi ni fusuru koto' in *Iwakurakō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), pp. 640-641

¹⁸⁰ Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 197

growth, and deepening the happiness of the people (工商の業は日に盛にして幸福の源を深くし).¹⁸² Kume Kunitake, the secretary for the Iwakura mission, also came to a similar view. As Marlene J. Mayo states, Kume noted that highly commercialised and industrialised states were all 'civilised' states.¹⁸³ As the Japanese elite were committed to reinventing Japan as a 'civilised' power, the identification of the intertwined nature industry, technology, and 'civilisation' would give additional impetus to industrialisation efforts, and consequently assist Japan's quest to become a member of the 'civilised' states.

Industrialisation in Japan: the implementation of ideas

The Meiji government's drive to industrialise was characterised by a high level of state involvement in promoting industry, and, as will be discussed below, constituted the most important difference between the Chinese and Japanese cases of industrialisation. Chinese efforts to attain 'wealth and strength' by industrialisation were primarily the product of local or individual initiatives. By contrast, the Japanese attempts were characterised by a high level of state involvement. As Chuhei Sugiyama has shown, in the early Meiji period, British intellectual influences was most strong in the realm of economics.¹⁸⁴ As Western works which advocated protectionism (such as H. C. Carey or Friedrich List) began to be introduced, there emerged calls for a more protectionist policy. Writing in 1871, Wakayama Norikazu claimed that '[f]ree trade...was good enough in theory but...it was not practical to adopt the principle in such a country as Japan where the majority of people were still poor, unfamiliar with manufacturing and commerce'.¹⁸⁵ Interestingly, Ōkubo Toshimichi appears to have come to a similar point of view.¹⁸⁶ In his memorial to Sanjō Sanetomi in 1874, Ōkubo argued that Britain had

¹⁸¹ Byron K. Marshall, *Capitalism and Nationalism in Prewar Japan: The Ideology of the Business Elite, 1868-1941*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp. 14-15, endorses this assertion.

¹⁸² Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, p. 27

¹⁸³ Marlene J. Mayo, 'The Western Education of Kume Kunitake, 1871-6', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 28, no. 1, Spring 1973, pp. 3-67), p. 42. Also see pp. 39-40. It is interesting to compare Fukuzawa Yukichi and Kume Kunitake here. As Marlene J. Mayo argues, Kume's work is 'quite different from [Fukuzawa's] polemical and philosophical works both in character and intent'. Unlike Fukuzawa, who was a civilian (albeit a highly influential one), Kume's views expressed in the *Beiō kairan jikki* give us 'clues to officialdom's interpretation of progress.' See Mayo, 'The Western Education of Kume Kunitake, 1871-6', p. 14.

¹⁸⁴ See Chuhei Sugiyama, 'The Development of Economic Thought in Meiji Japan', *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 2, no. 4, Meiji Centenary Number, 1968, pp. 325-341), especially pp. 326-329.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 331.

¹⁸⁶ Byron K. Marshall has also suggested that there is a strong possibility that Ōkubo Toshimichi was exposed to the intellectual influence of Friedrich List during his visit in Germany. Note, however, that List's work was not widely disseminated until the 1880s, after Ōkubo's assassination. See Marshall, *Capitalism and Nationalism in Prewar Japan*, p. 17, fn.

only committed itself to free trade policies *after* it had achieved wealth and strength based on protectionist, mercantilist policies. He believed that Japan should follow a similar path of development,¹⁸⁷ and argued as follows:

As far as encouraging industry is concerned, we have yet to reap any benefits from this, and domestic production and the consumption of domestic produce is decreasing day by day. Although we can say that this is because the people have yet to be completely enlightened and are unable to take advantage of the changing times to engage in successful commerce, we must also admit that we have up to now paid scant attention to this aspect of policy and have lacked the will to provide leadership....Those who are responsible for the people should provide thoughtful policies not only for industry, but also transportation and any other matters that require the immediate protection of the government. Moreover, such policies should take account of the characteristics of the land and the intelligence of the people....¹⁸⁸

In his memorial, Ōkubo primarily considered Britain as a worthy model of emulation. England was 'a small island country comparable to Japan, which had taken advantage of its ports and mineral resources to establish itself as an outstanding nation.'¹⁸⁹ However, he had no intention of following the British policy of free trade, preferring to follow a mercantilist programme that would aim, first and foremost, to promote Japanese industry. Meiji officials such as Iwakura Tomomi echoed Ōkubo's views.¹⁹⁰ To a certain extent, the decision to embark on a protectionist policy was connected to Japan's socialisation into European International Society. As we have seen, the Meiji leadership had witnessed the coercion exercised by the 'civilised' states of the Society, and continued to harbour deep suspicions towards them. This, in return, fostered a thinking that 'posit[ed] Japan in a hostile, Hobbesian world in which interdependence inevitably leads to dependence, and dependence eventually results in domination.'¹⁹¹

Heavy industry was particularly promoted. Richard Samuels identifies four pillars to this policy, namely 'protection of industries, provision of subsidies, leasing and

¹⁸⁷ See Ōkubo Toshimichi, 'Ōkubo Toshimichi no shokusan kōgyō ni kansuru ikensho' in Nakamura Masanori, Ishii Kanji and Kasuga Yutaka (eds), *Nihon kindai shisō taikei* (vol. 8): *keizai kōsō*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988), pp. 17-18.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 17

¹⁸⁹ Iwata, *Ōkubo Toshimichi*, p. 237

¹⁹⁰ See for example, Iwakura Tomomi, 'Tomomi zaisei ni kansuru yōken o shoshi kakugi ni fusuru koto', written in 1879. In *Iwakurakō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), pp. 632-642

¹⁹¹ Samuels, 'Rich Nation, Strong Army', p. 43. Indeed, Nakamura Masanori and Ishii Kanji argue that Japan's determination to minimise foreign capital is 'in contrast to Italy and Russia, which achieved capitalist industrialisation through seeking foreign capital and funds'. Consequently, the Meiji leadership frequently displayed a strong sense of fear towards accepting foreign investment to achieving industrialisation. Nakamura Masanori and Ishii Kanji, 'Meiji zenki ni okeru shihonshugi

transferring of new machinery, and establishing and ultimately transferring ownership of "exemplary" factories.¹⁹² The first step was to establish government enterprises to nurture industry. By the beginning of the 1880s the Meiji government had substantially expanded its involvement in industry¹⁹³, to the extent that the vast majority of modern industrial enterprises established before 1880 were state-owned.

Increasing pressures on government finances resulted in the sale of most government enterprises in the mid-1880s.¹⁹⁴ However, as Tessa Morris-Suzuki points out, 'many scholars argue that the central government continued to play a vital role in the promotion of technological change' and industrialisation,¹⁹⁵ primarily through a programme of military spending.¹⁹⁶ As diplomatic tensions with Korea rose (an anti-Japanese riot had broken out in Korea in 1882), 'the [Meiji] government took advantage

taisei no kōsō' in Nakamura Masanori, Ishii Kanji and Kasuga Yutaka (eds), *Nihon kindai shisō taikai* (vol. 8): *keizai kōsō*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1988), p. 420

¹⁹² Samuels, *'Rich Nation Strong Army': National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 37. See also E. H. Norman, 'Japan's Emergence as a Modern State', in John W. Dower (ed), *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), pp. 224-242

¹⁹³ The Meiji government's portfolio of industries included three shipyards (Nagasaki, Yokosuka and Hyōgo). It had also set up other enterprises such as the Akabane machinery works (1871), the Tomioka silk-reeling works (1872), the Fukagawa cement factory (1875), the Shinagawa glass factory (1876), as well as the Fukagawa white brick factory (1878).

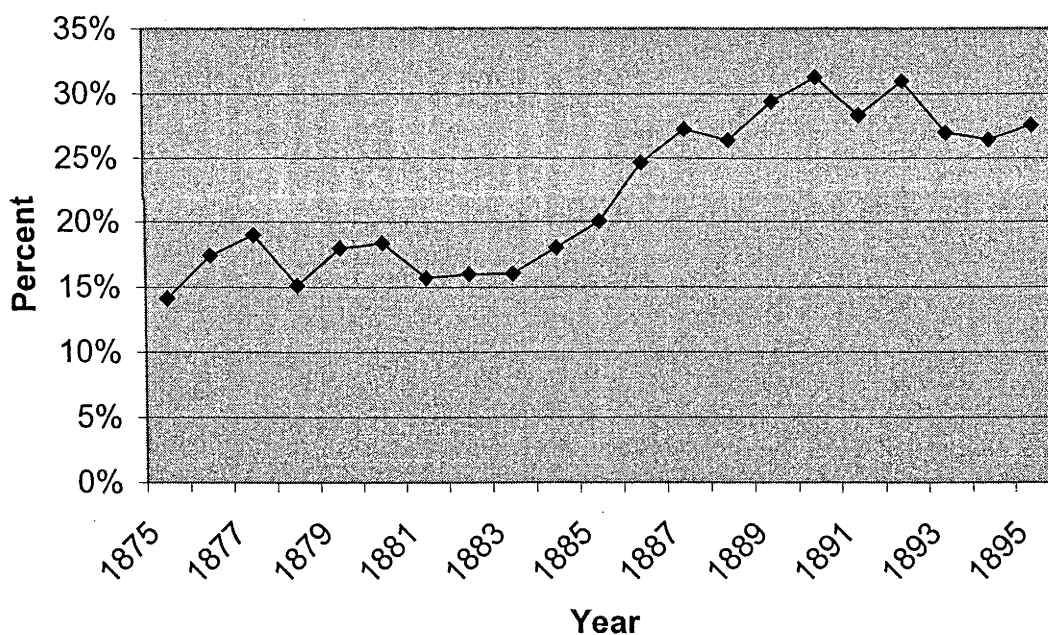
¹⁹⁴ A brief note on the sale of government enterprises is necessary here. The origins of the Meiji Restoration are subject to some debate, and scholars such as Thomas C. Smith have viewed it in terms of an alliance between the *samurai* and the rich peasants, which constituted an embryonic capitalist class. See Smith, *Political Change and Industrial Development in Japan: Government Enterprise, 1868-1880*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), pp. 13-22. The sale of the government enterprises were sold at extremely low prices, and heavily favoured entrepreneurs with close connections to the government. It is possible for such sales to be seen as a product of this samurai/government nascent capitalist alliance. However, this view overestimates the degree to which samurai/government class interests converged with those of the rich peasant/nascent capitalist class, and subsequently has difficulty in explaining why on some occasions, class interests (to the degree to which they can be called as such) were made subordinate to the interests of the leadership (for instance, the Meiji government pressed ahead with its nationalisation of railways despite opposition by the entrepreneurial class). Indeed, as W. G. Beasley argues, in many aspects of the Meiji Restoration and the subsequent policy adopted by the leadership, 'it is difficult to see class interest of either samurai or landlord as a direct and decisive influence'. See Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 400.

¹⁹⁵ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan: From the Seventeenth to the Twenty-first Century*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 78-79. It must be noted that the effects of this policy became noticeable in the latter half of the Meiji period. In the first half, improvements upon preexisting industry was primarily responsible for industrial growth in Japan, and the Meiji government also took steps to encourage this. See Seki Junya, *Meiji ishin to chiso kasei*, pp. 133-140

¹⁹⁶ This does not imply that the Meiji leadership and entrepreneurs were united in their acceptance of a large government role in industry, although Byron K. Marshall does claim that liberal economic policies had little appeal...for the majority of private entrepreneurs' (Marshall, *Capitalism and Nationalism in Prewar Japan*, p. 28). A particularly heated debate took place when the government announced its intention to nationalise the railways in 1892. Prominent businessmen such as Shibusawa Eiichi and the Mitsubishi Company vigorously opposed the policy. Ōkuma Shigenobu also opposed nationalisation, claiming his adherence to laissez-faire economic policy in 1897. See Marshall, *Capitalism and Nationalism in Prewar Japan*, p. 23. We should, however exercise some caution in taking Ōkuma's statements at face value, as he was in political opposition at the time, and also served as a political ally of the Mitsubishi Company.

of this situation to forward a eight-year plan for expanding the military.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, Japan's coercive diplomacy in East Asia and the subsequent deterioration of relations with China only fuelled calls for further military spending. Japan's military spending subsequently soared. In 1882, military spending was only 16 percent of total military spending; by 1889, it had risen to 29 percent.¹⁹⁸ This military spending and expansion of military industries, claims Kozo Yamamura, 'acted as highly effective centers for the absorption and dissemination of Western technologies and skills', and also created 'the demand necessary for assuring the survival and for aiding the growth of often financially and technologically struggling private firms in shipbuilding, machinery, and machine-tool industries.'¹⁹⁹ The Meiji government's assistance to Japanese military industry enabled the firms to diversify their production and, Richard J. Samuels argues, 'provided markets as well as necessary manufacturing technologies for the young Japanese electric and machinery industries.'²⁰⁰

Chart 5-1: Japanese military spending as percentage of budget



Source: Ōkurashō hyakunenshi henshūshitsu (ed), Ōkurashō hyakunen shi (bekkan). (Tokyo: Ōkura zaimu kyōkai, 1969), p. 137. The calculations are based on the general account expenditures.

¹⁹⁷ Nakamura Masanori and Ishii Kanji, 'Meiji zenki ni okeru shihonshugi taisei no kōsō', p. 443

¹⁹⁸ These figures are based on Ōkurashō hyakunenshi henshūshitsu (ed), Ōkurashō hyakunen shi (bekkan). (Tokyo: Ōkura zaimu kyōkai, 1969), p. 137. The calculations are based on the general account expenditures.

¹⁹⁹ Kozo Yamamura, 'Success Illgotten? The Role of Meiji Militarism in Japan's Technological Progress', *Journal of Economic History* (vol. 37, no. 1, The Tasks of Economic History, March 1977, pp. 113-135), p. 113. Samuels, 'Rich Nation, Strong Army', p. 60 also supports this point.

²⁰⁰ Samuels, 'Rich Nation, Strong Army', p. 49

The Japanese elites' appreciation of the interconnected nature of industry, technology and 'civilisation' (as defined by European International Society) also resulted in a recognition that the advantages of industry and technology would have to be disseminated to a wider audience to fundamentally reinvent Japan's identity. Conscious efforts were made to promote industry and science. Compulsory education (which was introduced in 1872) served to teach Japanese citizens in science, and Japanese universities provided advanced training to equip the Japanese with the technical expertise to replace foreign advisers. Another favourite method was industrial exhibitions. International exhibitions 'were both a forceful reminder of [Japan's]...industrial backwardness, and an excellent opportunity to study the best in foreign technology'.²⁰¹ They were also an excellent forum to showcase Japan's attainment of industry, science and technology, projecting the image of a state that had begun to attain the skills and knowledge of becoming a 'civilised' state. The Japanese sent carefully selected products to such exhibitions; within its own domestic society, the Ministry of the Interior also organised exhibitions in Japan to promote industry.

These efforts also generated, Tessa Morris-Suzuki argues, 'the creation of a mass of local institutions and projects designed to ensure that, whatever the intentions of the central government, "our" region should not miss out on the fruits of modernisation'.²⁰² Some members of the elite called for the government to provide greater assistance to the private and rural economy. In 1885, for instance, Maeda Masana (前田正名), the first secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, called for a programme of industrialisation led by the rural industry. Maeda 'argued that a capital-poor Japan should first nurture an export sector to generate capital for later heavy industrial development'.²⁰³ These calls for rural-led industrial development 'reflected a growing acceptance of the fact that Japan's industrial future' depended on rural industry, which was still 'responsible by far the largest share of Japan's industrial development and output'.²⁰⁴ There were calls within rural society that were similar to Maeda's proposed programme of industrialisation.

Assistance to rural industry was given an additional boost when the Meiji Constitution of 1889 expanded the franchise to male citizens over the age of 25 who had

²⁰¹ Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, pp. 82-83

²⁰² *ibid.*, p. 89

²⁰³ Samuels, *Rich Nation, Strong Army*, p. 39

²⁰⁴ Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, p. 99

paid more than 15 Yen in taxes.²⁰⁵ This had the effect – albeit a limited one – of increasing the political voice of the rural elite, leading to ‘a closer relationship between central government and groups of dominant local industrialists, accompanied by an increasing official interest in the initiatives of the regions.’²⁰⁶ Some governmental assistance was made available for local industrial initiatives, which also resulted in the mushrooming of trade associations that ‘provided a forum for the exchange of technical ideas and experience, as well as acting as an entry point for the inflow of technological information from “above”.’²⁰⁷

The industrialisation of Japan was to a large extent made possible because of the high level of motivation the Meiji government had in its desire to become a ‘civilised’ power within European International Society. The Meiji government as a whole was, with ‘a fine bureaucratic disregard for commercial considerations’,²⁰⁸ prepared to provide leadership to facilitate industrialisation, which they identified as a key component of the identity of a ‘civilised’ member of the Society. Not all programmes were unqualified successes. Government enterprises were often commercial failures, and the sacrifices by the rural populace, who had to finance Japan’s industrialisation, were often substantial. Nevertheless, it is difficult to deny that the central leadership provided by the Meiji government was crucial for Japan’s industrialisation.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, government leadership, particularly in its nurturing of capital-intensive industry, contributed substantially to fostering industry which most private Japanese entrepreneurs could not yet enter. Furthermore, they ‘provided an all-important demonstration effect, familiarising Japanese entrepreneurs and workers with the concepts of modern western technology.’²¹⁰ This resulted in, Morris-Suzuki argues:

...a system in which new and imported ideas were not simply concentrated in a few elite institutions run by the state or large private enterprises, but rather dispersed throughout a wide range of bodies, varying in size, structure and geographical location, but all involved to some extent in the process of importing, modifying or developing new technologies.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ In the Meiji Constitution, males aged over 25 who had paid more than 15 Yen in tax were given the right to vote.

²⁰⁶ Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, p. 99

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 104

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 80

²⁰⁹ Samuels argues that active government intervention provided the foundation for many industries, ‘especially those that applied modern science and technologies’. Samuels, *Rich Nation, Strong Army*, p. 87

²¹⁰ Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, p. 77. Also see Smith, ‘Reflections on the Comparative Study of Modernization in China and Japan’, p. 18

²¹¹ Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, p. 104

Industrialisation in China: the motivations and intellectual influences

The importance of introducing heavy industry and European technology was quickly recognised by a wide spectrum of the Chinese elite, but there were also pressures from European nationals urging them to 'industrialise' and attain 'civilisation'. Robert Hart, the British Inspector General of the Chinese Customs, wrote in a letter to his agent James Duncan Campbell in London that he saw it as his goal to introduce European-originated technology to China.²¹² While their main goal remained that of spreading Christianity, missionaries such as William A. P. Martin were, Jonathan Spence argues, often convinced that 'Christianity and the *scientific "progress"* of the West were inextricably linked', and 'it was logical...to conclude that Westernization must precede, and would inevitably lead to, Christian conversion.'²¹³

The Chinese saw things differently. For them, industrialisation was only linked to strengthening China. Many of the Chinese elite, in Philip A. Kuhn's words, 'explicitly proclaimed the cultural neutrality of modern technology',²¹⁴ indicating that European industry and technology were merely seen as a means of strengthening China and connected to the need to survive what was perceived to be a competitive international realm – the 'civilising' face of the Society. It served no value as a marker of 'civilised' identity, as it did for the members of the Society.

While earlier proposals had called mainly for the introduction of Western weaponry, attempts to learn the secrets behind the Westerners' weapons soon led to the realisation that superior weapons alone was insufficient to match the power of the European states. There was an increasing awareness that industry and commerce played a crucial role in the production of advanced weapons. The self-strengthening

²¹² Written on 29th May 1873. See John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, and Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson (eds), *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart Chinese Maritime Customs 1868-1907*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1975), p. 111. Hart regarded Campbell as a loyal and reliable aide. His letters are characterised by 'their complete candor. Hart commented without constraint on people and events, knowing that what he wrote was for Campbells' eye alone', and these letters can be seen to be of a reliable nature. See L. K. Little, 'Introduction' in John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, and Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson (eds), *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart Chinese Maritime Customs 1868-1907*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1975), p. 3. The biographies of such Western advisers can be found in Jonathan Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969)

²¹³ Spence, *To Change China*, p. 133. Emphasis added. Lloyd E. Eastman also notes that journals by missionary organisations, such as the *Wangguo gongbao* (The Review of the Times), published by The Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge, also 'contained many articles designed to convince Chinese literati of the need for reform.' They heavily influenced non-official reformist writers such as Zheng Guanying, who drew heavily from these articles. Eastman, 'Political Reformism in China before the Sino-Japanese War', p. 708.

²¹⁴ China's 'self-strengthening', the intention was, in Philip A. Kuhn's words, 'to graft Western industrial technology onto a Confucian cultural base', and 'explicitly proclaimed the cultural neutrality of modern technology.' Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, p. 52

programmes consequently began to expand in scope. David Pong claims that Chinese reformers reasoned that such undertakings would 'not only supply government needs but also...increase revenue and improve the people's livelihood...which was both a self-strengthening and traditional goal.'²¹⁵ Li Hongzhang argued:

Western machinery can produce farming, weaving, printing and pottery-making equipment for the daily use of the people. It is not solely for the purpose of making weapons. What is wondrous is that it utilizes the power of water and fire to save labour and material resources....Several decades hence, among the rich peasants and prosperous merchants of China, there will inevitably be rich peasants and merchants who copy Western machines and pursue their own profits (洋機器於耕織、刷印、陶埴諸器皆能製造，有裨民生日用，原不專為軍火而設，妙在借水火之力以省人物之勞費...臣料數十年後，中國富農大賈有仿造洋機器製作以自求利益者).²¹⁶

Li's statement was in itself a significant departure from the traditional Confucian attitudes towards the merchants,²¹⁷ and reflected the influence of the School of Practical Statecraft, which stressed the importance of studying how Confucianism could contribute to the solving of practical socio-political issues.²¹⁸ The leading exponents of the School of Practical Statecraft had argued that the pursuit of wealth and power was justifiable. According to Peter M. Mitchell, scholars of the School such as Wei Yuan

...steadfastly repudiated the orthodox Confucian interpretation of pursuit of li [profit] in any form as a low passion devoid of ethical worth. Instead it became the sole determinant of right and wrong so long as it had a collective socio-political interpretation. From such a position it was possible for him to hold wealth (fu 富) and power (ch'iang 強) as not only inevitable but also desirable and wholly valid ideals for government. Since the aim of scholarship was service to society, concern for provisions (shih 食) and weapons (ping 兵) were as appropriate for

²¹⁵ David Pong, 'The Vocabulary of Change: Reformist Ideas of the 1860s and 1870s', in *Ideal and Reality: Social and Political Change in Modern China 1860-1949*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), p. 42

²¹⁶ Li Hongzhang, 'Zhiban waiguo tiechang jiqi zhe', *Li Hongzhang quanji: zougao*. (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 426

²¹⁷ Traditionally, high officials were forbidden to conduct commercial activities. Although this rule was by no means adhered to rigidly, many lower officials would enter business. However, they used various excuses as to avoid being reproached by their peers. The very fact that leading officials such as Zeng Guofan or Li Hongzhang were prepared to engage in some business activities indicates an important shift in this attitude. For a discussion of late Qing perceptions on commerce, see Wellington K. K. Chan, *Merchants, Mandarins, and Modern Enterprise in Late Ch'ing China*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1977)

²¹⁸ Li Hongzhang and Zeng Guofan were influenced by the Statecraft School to varying degrees. In his article 'The Confucian as Patriot and Pragmatist: Li Hung-chang's Formative Years, 1823-1866', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (vol. 30, 1970, pp. 5-45), Kwang-ching Liu states that there is 'no trace in Li's early writings of any interest in administrative statecraft..., to which Tseng [Zeng Guofan] was also devoted' (p. 8). However, one of Li Hongzhang's advisors was Feng Guifen, who was one of the leading exponents of the Statecraft School at the time, and Li's 'proposals to enhance the state's "wealth and strength" (fu-ch'iang [fuqiang] 富強)...were influenced by Feng Kuei-fen [Feng Guifen]...the eminent statecraft scholar whom Li brought into his *mu-fu*' (p. 26). For an examination of Zeng Guofan and the statecraft school, see Han-Yin Chen Shen, 'Tseng Kuo-fan in Peking, 1840-1852: His Ideas on Statecraft and Reform', *Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 27, no. 1, November 1967, pp. 61-80).

scholars as for rulers. Wealth defined as social production and Power in blunt terms of military effectiveness were legitimate sage-sanctioned concerns of government and scholarship.²¹⁹

Furthermore, such undertakings also indicated a greater awareness for the need to protect *Chinese* political and economic interests. Li Hongzhang's letter of 1863 seems to confirm this. Li wrote: 'Ever since the Yangtze River was opened up to trade, Chinese economic interests have been under the foreigners' control. This has caused us much problems, but we have been unable to stop them (長江通商以來，中國利權操之外夷，弊端百出，無可禁阻).'²²⁰ The reformist elite were on the whole united in their distaste of foreign encroachment and wished to protect Chinese economic interests from foreign hands. Zuo Zongtang asserted that '“The method of self-strengthening should be to seek from among ourselves, not seek from among others. He who seeks the help of others will be controlled by others, and he who relies upon himself will have the situation under his own control.”'²²¹ This emergent nationalist sentiment was also a product of China's exposure to European International Society, and indicated, in Kwang-ching Liu's words, a growing awareness 'of the fact that the world was made up of contending states of varying strength and that the West was superior to China in power and technology.'²²² It corresponds closely to what E. J. Hobsbawm has called 'proto-nationalism'; a nationalism based on 'supra-local forms of popular identification which go beyond those circumscribing the actual spaces in which people passed most of their lives' and/or 'the political bonds and vocabularies of select groups more directly linked to states and institutions, and which are capable of eventual generalization, extension and popularization.'²²³

²¹⁹ Peter M. Mitchell, 'The Limits of Reformism', pp. 179-180

²²⁰ Li Hongzhang, 'Fu Luo Jiaosheng shangshu', *Li Hongzhang quanji: zougao, pengliao hangao* (vol. 5). (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 3138. Similar sentiments can be found in Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), pp. 36-38

²²¹ Cited in Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, p. 80.

²²² Kwang-ching Liu, 'The Confucian as Patriot and Pragmatist', p. 18. In the same article, Liu refers to Li's 'concern for China – his Chung-kuo or Chung-t'u – as "Confucian patriotism"' (p. 43). David Pong has also forwarded a similar form of 'Confucian patriotism', albeit with reference to the Sino-British dispute over the Wusong railway in 1877. According to Pong's definition, this nationalism is defined as 'first, a strong reaction against foreign encroachment on Chinese territorial and administrative integrity; second, a strong distaste for the corrupting elements, both at the official and the popular levels, brought about by the introduction and the presence of the railway; third, a genuine concern for the well-being of the poorer sections of the Chinese society; and lastly, a concern for the development and independence of Chinese economic interests.' David Pong, 'Confucian Patriotism and the Destruction of the Woosung Railway, 1877', *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 7, no. 4, 1973, pp. 647-676), p. 675.

²²³ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 46-47

Despite the enthusiasm of some officials, the drive to introduce European heavy industry and technology by no means received unqualified support. Fujita Yūji cites one argument by the official Fang Xunyi (方濬頤), who questioned the costs that such projects would entail, and argued that this would place an unnecessary financial burden on the people, and go against the Confucian ideal of benevolent government:

The people are the base of the country, but for many years they have been suffering from the hardships caused by war and corvée labour...we have been using the peoples money and strength for too long. Yet, the government is still trying to charge travel taxes and transit taxes to pay for schools, military schools, army and navy, and militia....If we want to rest, nourish, guide and protect our people, we had better rethink our policy again.²²⁴

A second argument pointed to the incompatibility of European methods with China, which shows some interesting parallels with contemporary resistance to foreign-influenced/imposed reforms. For instance, the building of railroads was opposed on the grounds of 'excessive concentration of the population in urban areas, as well as the decline of the countryside'.²²⁵ An official named Zhang Xihong (張錫鴻) also argued:

Nowadays, robbery is rife in China, and anything of slight value simply cannot be left in the streets [without it getting stolen]. Now, if we lay a railroad which runs for several thousands of miles, there is simply no way we can guard it properly, and it is obvious that the rails will be stolen.²²⁶

Fujita states that Zhang's argument goes beyond the rejection of railroads. His criticism of the inability for officials to adequately protect the railroad implicitly point out to corruption of Chinese officialdom. This in turn pointed to the inability of 'Westernisation' to put a stop to immoral governance, and critiqued its advocates of their misplaced priorities to eradicate the root causes of China's weakness. What was needed was to improve the current system of governance, not introduce European industry and technology.²²⁷

Industrialisation in China: the implementation of ideas

Despite such opposition, Western-styled forms of industry, industrial plants and enterprises began to be established under official patronage, as can be seen by Zeng Guofan's establishing of the Jiangnan Arsenal in 1855, Zuo Zongtang's Fuzhou Naval

²²⁴ Cited in Fujita Yūji, *Ajia ni okeru bunmei no taikō*, pp. 279-280

²²⁵ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 280

²²⁶ Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 281-282.

²²⁷ Fujita Yūji, *Ajia ni okeru bunmei no taikō: jōiron to shukyū ron ni kansuru nippon, chōsen, chūgoku no hikaku kenkyū*. (Tokyo: Ochanomizu shobō, 2001), pp. 282-238

Dockyard in 1866, and Li Hongzhang's China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company in 1870.

Many of the enterprises remained the initiatives of reformist local officials and were under their patronage, as epitomised by the *guandu shangban* companies (官督商辦, meaning 'official supervision and merchant management'). They were modelled, Wellington K. K. Chan, states, on the Qing salt monopoly (which utilised merchants but remained under government control), the European firm which 'required modern technology and some measure of Western-style management', and the traditional partnership enterprises characterised by the 'hiring [of] a manager who was then given almost absolute control.'²²⁸

From the point of making China rich and powerful, the reforms were successful to a certain degree. First, the Chinese firms did, in some instances, successfully compete with Western firms. Li Hongzhang's China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, for instance, successfully competed with the Western steamship companies. Second, it cannot be denied that many of the industrial enterprises set up by the reformist elite played an important role in providing weapons necessary to make China a 'rich and powerful' state. Zeng Guofan's Jiangnan Arsenal manufactured guns and ships, 'the last in 1872 with 400 horsepower and carrying 26 guns',²²⁹ while Zuo Zongtang's Fuzhou Shipyard produced forty ships. Third, the industrial enterprises established by the reformist elite also served as centres of Western learning. Although limited primarily to science and technological studies, the schools attached to the enterprises taught foreign languages and produced a number of translations of Western works.²³⁰

However, success was limited, at least during the period covered in this study. There were numerous problems that hindered the diffusion of European industry. Most important were financial constraints, which meant that efforts to industrialise suffered from a lack of coordination and inadequate funding.²³¹ To this we must also add the effects of imperialism. The Qing's financial difficulties were exacerbated by the

²²⁸ Wellington K. K. Chan, 'Government, merchants and industry to 1911' in Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (eds) *The Cambridge History of China* (vol. 11: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, part 2). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 422-423

²²⁹ Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p. 279

²³⁰ These Chinese translations of Western works were frequently imported by the Japanese, and served an important role in facilitating the dissemination of Western ideas in Japan.

²³¹ The politics of military reform of this period serves as a good example and is ably captured in David Pong, 'China's Defense Modernization and the Revenue of the Maritime Customs Service, 1875-1879' in *Tradition and Metamorphosis in Modern Chinese History: Essays in Honor of Professor Kwang-Ching Liu's Seventy-fifth Birthday* (vol 2). (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1998), pp. 979-1006

unequal treaties imposed upon China by the Western powers. Stephen C. Thomas notes that between 1870-1897 China lost 817 million *taels* of purchasing power to opium trade and 200 million *taels* because of foreign control of tariffs and smuggling from Hong Kong.²³² This had serious ramifications for the Chinese elite, as this made it seemingly difficult to fund projects to achieve the 'wealth and strength' they so desperately wanted. Furthermore, conservative opposition to excessive spending on industry made the imperial government increasingly wary of dispensing funds, and resulted in a lack of investment.

Another problem was that the enterprises established to undertake 'self-strengthening' were mostly run as a joint venture between merchants and officials, with the official retaining control. This meant that the merchants, who were responsible for the day-to-day running of the enterprises, were 'always liable to official exactions on his personal wealth or the assets of his enterprises',²³³ and official interference and corruption often took place. In this sense, the conservative factions who had argued for the need to stamp out dishonest practices had a valid point, and this added weight to their objections to handing out further funding for the fledging new enterprises. The merchants were often dissatisfied with the officials, but they did not have much choice but to collaborate with them. Their dilemma was that they recognised the necessity for official assistance. Chan notes that Zheng Guanying himself 'conceded that the merchants needed official protection because there was no commercial law or constitutional guarantee to safeguard their rights and properties.'²³⁴ However, their sense of vulnerability made them reluctant to invest heavily in the newly established enterprises.

There were other problems which were connected to weaknesses in the Chinese governmental institutions. One problem was the system of rotating officials, which meant, according to Chan, that '[t]he efforts of industrial promoters were often repudiated by those who succeeded them.'²³⁵ Another problem was the lack of coordination from the central government. The threat from the European states meant that Qing attention was diverted to coastal areas, resulting in a weakened grip on inland

²³² See Stephen C. Thomas, *Foreign Intervention and China's Industrial Development, 1870-1911*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 62-70.

²³³ Albert Feuerwerker, *China's Early Industrialization: Sheng Hsuan-huai (1844-1916) and Mandarin Enterprise*. (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 244

²³⁴ Chan, 'Government, merchants and industry to 1911' pp. 435-436

²³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 448

China.²³⁶ Consequently, China was 'deprived any movement for modernization of a central focus and direction',²³⁷ and unable to finance its own efforts at reform.²³⁸ The lack of a centralised budget, for instance, meant that

...the actual disbursements [of funds] and all the patronage that went with them were arranged under the provincial leaders' authorisation. This diffused the authority between the central and provincial governments and made it impossible to follow priorities on the national level so that industries could develop in an orderly manner.²³⁹

For an agrarian state such as China to industrialise, this was a most unfortunate situation. As R. Bin Wong demonstrates, 'the expansion of rural industry' in China was supported by a growing populace engaged in agriculture, and 'did not contain any stimuli for major capitalization or technological changes.'²⁴⁰ For China to achieve industrialisation, active governmental involvement was necessary; but this was not forthcoming.

This point was not lost on Zheng Guanying, who had worked at Li Hongzhang's Shanghai Cotton Cloth mill. He noted the intimate relationship between commerce and industry, and pointed out that within the West, merchants were treated well. 'Wealth', he stated, 'comes from merchants, and commerce originates from a collaboration between soldier, peasant and artisan. Because they know this, the countries in the West use soldiers to protect merchants, and fight wars not only with their armies but also through trade.'²⁴¹ In his mind, the imperial government was not paying enough attention to promote commerce and industry. Zheng was also aware that the Japanese government was taking an active role in promoting industry, and saw this in contrast to the realities in China. This gave his sense of urgency additional impetus. 'Since the Meiji Restoration', Zheng wrote, 'Japanese ministers have been touring the world and have a very good understanding of the benefits and detriments of trade....They have

²³⁶ Wong, *China Transformed*, p. 157

²³⁷ Feuerwerker, *China's Early Industrialization*, p. 13

²³⁸ This point has been made by David Pong through his case study of the politics of financing the Fuzhou Naval Dockyard. See 'Keeping the Foochow Navy Yard Afloat: Government Finance and China's Early Modern Defence Industry, 1866-75', *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 21, no. 1, 1987, pp. 121-152). See also Dwight H. Perkins, 'Government as an Obstacle of Industrialization: The Case of Nineteenth-Century China', *The Journal of Economic History* (vol. 27, no. 4, The Tasks of Economic History, December 1967, pp. 478-492).

²³⁹ Chan, 'Government, merchants and industry to 1911', p. 448. See also Banno Masataka, *Kindai chūgoku seiji gaikō shi*, pp. 41-46.

²⁴⁰ Wong, *China Transformed*, p. 41. This process by which an expanding rural economy actually hinders industrialisation has been labelled 'involution'.

²⁴¹ Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyan*. (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1998), p. 297

implemented Western laws, established a Ministry of Trade, and ordered the establishment of Trade Bureaus all across the country'.²⁴²

One reason for this difference between China and Japan can be traced to the different historical experiences between the two states. China had a vast territory, and a history of being a great power, both militarily and culturally. Many conservatives pointed out that in a country as large as China, there would surely be a man of learning who was well versed in technological expertise (including mathematics and astronomy); there was no need to insist on learning 'Western' ways.²⁴³ They claimed that alternative methods of strengthening the country were available, and since the Chinese elite on the whole deemed it unnecessary to reinvent China as a 'civilised state' of European International Society, these arguments proved persuasive and reduced the possibility of strong central government involvement in introducing European technology and industry. For Japan, the introduction of Western technology was crucial in displaying their 'civilised' identity, and the need to introduce European technology was felt much more strongly. While the direction the Japanese government took was sometimes questioned, this opposition did not constitute a force as significant as in China.

Mass mobilisation

China and Japan's encounter with European International Society was also to have important ramifications on both states' attempts to become rich and powerful. As both states' elites began to further their knowledge of the European powers, it came to their attention that a powerful state within the Society was one which possessed the ability to mobilise its citizens. For this, a state needed to command some form of popular support. While the notion of 'popular sovereignty' had yet to gain full acceptance as a benchmark for 'legitimate' statehood in the nineteenth century, China and Japan's interactions with European International Society resulted in the transmission of the ideas of popular sovereignty and power. Furthermore, Chinese and Japanese elites travelled to Europe and observed the political institutions there. They perceived a link between the political institutions of the European states and the patriotic sentiments. Some believed that this was the source of the European states' power.

²⁴² *ibid.*, p.305

²⁴³ This was a point made by the Grand Secretary Woren. See Fujita Yūji, *Ajia ni okeru bunmei no taikō*, pp. 288-289

Mass mobilisation in Japan: intellectual origins and motivations

As the Japanese elite were more interested in adopting a 'civilised' identity on European International Society's terms, they were obviously eager to adopt the political institutions of the member states of the Society. Also, as one of their goals was to become a rich and powerful country, they were interested in emulating European political institutions that would serve to maximise their military power. They were much more likely to look beyond 'Western' weapons and drill. The Japanese elites thus sought to locate and emulate sources of power that could be found within the political institutions of the 'civilised' states of European International Society. In the course of their intellectual searching, some of them were to locate this in patriotism and popular sovereignty.²⁴⁴

Patriotism was one of the prominent features of European states' power that caught the Japanese elites' attention. The influential intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi had introduced Japanese readers to this particular source of European power as early as 1866. In his best-seller *Seiyō jijō*, Fukuzawa introduced the French experience with mass armies. He wrote that in France,

Napoleon used all the people in war, and set up laws which stipulated that the people fight for their country; he loved the soldiers and officers, and generously rewarded them. The people hereby began to harbour feelings of loyalty towards the country and did not care about death in battle.... This was the reason for Napoleon's success; and all Western states are now said to base their army laws on those of Napoleon.²⁴⁵

Similar observations were made several years later when the Iwakura mission visited Europe. While the members of the delegation were impressed by the technological advances made by the European states, they also noted that these states not only relied on their superior arms for their strength. They relied on the patriotic sentiment of their citizens. Referring to Britain, the secretary of the Iwakura mission Kume Kunitake wrote that the source of its strength lay in the fact that 'its people are united as one and work hard to produce. They have strong patriotic sentiment (愛国ノ心ニ篤ク), and find it shameful to be subservient to other countries.'²⁴⁶ Education seemed

²⁴⁴ There is also evidence that Western influences played a role. Umetani Noburu notes that Guido F. Verbeck told the Meiji leaders that a Western-styled mass army needed 'patriotism and loyalty to the emperor', and also impressed upon them that a mass army could help destroy the remaining vestiges of feudalism and unify Japan. See Umetani Noboru, *Oyatoi gaikokujin* (vol. 11): *seiji, hōsei*. (Tokyo: Kajima shuppankai, 1971), p. 36.

²⁴⁵ Cited in Hirata Toshiharu, 'Meiji guntai ni okeru "chūkun aikoku" no seishin no seiritsu', *Gunji shigaku* (vol. 13, no. 2, September 1977, pp. 2-20), p. 7

²⁴⁶ Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1978), p. 99. A similar point is made in Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 3), p. 331

to be an important way in which to instil love for one's country. The Swiss education system was praised by the Iwakura mission for cultivating nationalism,²⁴⁷ as were education systems in other European states.²⁴⁸

The Japanese elite also observed that within Europe, these patriotic sentiments derived from their political institutions. There were vague observations on the connection between state power and popular sovereignty. As early as 1861, the prominent Meiji intellectual Katō Hiroyuki (加藤弘之) noted in his *Tonarigusa* (隣草) that when 'parliamentary democracy is carried out and public opinion is taken into account, national opinion is united and a "martial spirit" takes root among citizens.'²⁴⁹ A decade later the Iwakura mission also noted that the greater the political freedom in one particular state, the more prosperous the people seemed to be. The United States was the epitome of this, while Russia was perceived to be 'merely in the first stages of progress. The czar and Russian aristocracy grasped all the wealth and monopolized the higher culture. The czar was a despot; the ordinary people did not accumulate capital or engage in enterprise'.²⁵⁰ It also appeared that the greater political stake the people had in the country, the more they were likely to be united in patriotism. Referring to the British political system, Kume Kunitake claimed:

It is common practice throughout Europe for the people to elect their members of Parliament...nowadays, when ships travel around the world and trade and interaction take place, in order to protect national rights and interests, *the people must be united as one* (国民上下一和シテ) and respect property and become rich and strong. The right of legislation derives from this necessity.²⁵¹

However, when it came to applying the principles of popular sovereignty to Japan, the Meiji leaders were somewhat ambivalent. Ōkubo Toshimichi, Kido Takayoshi, and Itō Hirobumi were certain that Japan needed to adopt a constitutional government. An

²⁴⁷ See Marlene J. Mayo, 'The Western Education of Kume Kunitake, 1871-6', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 28, no. 1, Spring 1973, pp. 3-67), p. 21

²⁴⁸ See Joseph Pittau, 'Inoue Kowashi, 1843-1895 and the Formation of Modern Japan', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 20, no. 3/4, 1965, pp. 253-282), p. 273

²⁴⁹ Hirata Toshiharu, 'Meiji guntai ni okeru "Chūkun aikoku" no seishin no seiritsu', *Gunji shigaku* (vol. 13, no. 2, September 1977, pp. 2-20), p. 6. Katō Hiroyuki was associated with one of the first intellectual societies in Japan, the *Meirokusha* (明六社), established in 1873. Although in his earlier writings (such as the passage cited above) he did propagate liberalism, he later turned to Social Darwinism and espoused a particular brand of Social Darwinism which called for the subjugation of individual interests to the state. In 1881, he requested that all his works calling for liberal ideas be banned, thus making a conscious departure from liberal ideas. The passage cited above is made with reference to the Qing dynasty, but it is actually a covert critique of Tokugawa shogunate policies. While this is not directly related to Meiji mass mobilisation, it does demonstrate the existence of ideas inspired by popular sovereignty. For a brief discussion of the evolution of Katō's thoughts, see Mikiso Hane, 'Early Meiji Liberalism: An Assessment', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 24, no. 4, 1969, pp. 353-371), pp. 364-365

²⁵⁰ Mayo, 'The Western Education of Kume Kunitake, 1871-6', p. 36

²⁵¹ Kume Kunitake, *Beiō kairan jikki* (vol. 2), pp. 82-83. Emphasis added.

acceptance of the Society's 'standards of success' meant that they had to adopt European-styled political institutions, and they often did view European political institutions as superior. As George Akita argues, '[t]o assert...that the [Meiji] leaders limited their motives [to establish a constitutional government] to the demands of *Realpolitik* would be a misinterpretation. They are indications that they were convinced of the intrinsic superiority of the constitutional government.'²⁵² Ōkubo was convinced 'that a constitutional system insured that all officials would be provided with a fixed and consistent guide for official conduct. This in turn would lead to unity between the people and the government, and then modernization would be possible.'²⁵³ Furthermore, the Meiji leaders were conscious of the social standards of European International Society. An acceptance of these social standards would facilitate Japan's acceptance as a 'civilised' power by the member states. Inoue Kaoru expressed this succinctly when he stated:

Constitutional government was not created simply to satisfy the desires of the people. Those in the government also believed that it was imperative to create a constitutional regime to expedite the revision of treaties and the restoration of equal rights.²⁵⁴

However, the Meiji leaders were unsure about the efficacy of popular sovereignty in mobilising the masses. Yamagata Aritomo, who consistently remained suspicious of popular political representation,²⁵⁵ claimed that popular sovereignty would lead to self-centred policies. 'In observing the various assemblies and election methods during my travels in Europe,' he reported, 'I find that calm, mature discussion generally arouses little response while the reputation and influence of those advocating the empty theories of extremism gradually increases'.²⁵⁶ To be sure, the Meiji leaders did not necessarily advocate a highly despotic monarchical state. Ōkubo Toshimichi claimed that such a system of government could bring disaster upon a country if the ruler was unenlightened. However, at the same time, he was equally uneasy about popular sovereignty. Democracy (民主ノ政 *minshu no sei*), for sure, was a system that 'fully comprehends the laws of heaven (実ニ天理ノ本然ヲ完具スル者)', he said.²⁵⁷ However, at the same time, it was only suited to young, Protestant countries, and 'if applied to

²⁵² George Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan 1868-1900*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 12

²⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 12. See also Nakamura Naoyoshi, *Meiji kokka no keisei to ajia*. (Tokyo: Ryūkei shosha, 1991), p. 18

²⁵⁴ Cited in Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan 1868-1900*, p. 12

²⁵⁵ This assertion is supported by Roger F. Hackett, 'The Meiji Leaders and Modernization'.

²⁵⁶ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 266

“peoples who are used to old habits and stick to old ways”, it could display great cruelty, even worse than that of a despotic monarchy, just as in the French Revolution.”²⁵⁸ Kido Takayoshi appears to have harboured similar thoughts. In a conversation in 1873 on the constitution of Japan with Itō Hirobumi, Kido argued that the ‘fundamental law of the state has to be “despotic.”’²⁵⁹ In an entry in his diary dated 22nd November 1873, Kido appears to justify this stance as follows:

Even if we imitate the magnificent form of European and American governments in the externals of ours, while public understanding trails far behind, and the system is removed from the actual conditions of our country and unrealistic, it can only bring unhappiness to our people and cause damage to the nation, and so will be of no use.²⁶⁰

The belief among the Meiji leadership that the Japanese populace were not yet ready to participate in politics was a fairly widespread one. Amidst growing calls for the establishment of a parliamentary system, Meiji official Inoue Kowashi (井上毅) argued in 1881 that Japan needed a Prussian-style parliamentary system where the executive had greater power and was less vulnerable to the whims of the parliament. Inoue Kowashi, who played a key role alongside Itō Hirobumi in drafting the Meiji Constitution, claimed that Japanese civilisation was not yet ready for a British-styled parliamentary system.²⁶¹ Inoue Kowashi had noted in the early 1870s that ‘Prussia...was peaceful and the relations between monarch and people were well defined and stable. The Prussian Constitution was not derived from a social contract, but it had been granted by the monarch.’²⁶² A stronger monarch meant a greater limit on the powers of the legislature, and the political leaders were not vulnerable to the whims of the legislative. The masses did not trust intellectuals, he said, and were vulnerable to falling prey to selfish interests at the expense of national interests. A more authoritarian system would insulate Japan from the whims of the masses, and was far more suited to the

²⁵⁷ Cited in Nakamura Naoyoshi, *Meiji kokka no keisei to ajia*. (Tokyo: Ryūkei shosha, 1991), p. 17

²⁵⁸ *ibid.* See also Joseph Pittau, *Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan 1868-1889*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 48-49

²⁵⁹ See Kido Takayoshi's diary entry dated 20th November 1873, in Kido Takayoshi, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi* (vol. 2) (Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota, trans). (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1985), p. 398. Umetani Noboru suggests that Kido may have been influenced by the liberal jurist Rudolf von Gneist, who he met in Berlin. See Umetani Noboru, *Oyatoi gaikokujin* (vol. 11): *seiji, hōsei*. (Tokyo: Kajima shuppankai, 1971), p. 156

²⁶⁰ Kido Takayoshi, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi* (vol. 2) (Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota, trans), p. 398. See also Pittau, *Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan 1868-1889*, pp. 43-44

²⁶¹ During the drafting of the constitution, foreign advice (including Prussian and British) was actively sought. For a detailed discussion of the role played by the foreign advisers, see Umetani Noboru, *Oyatoi gaikokujin* (vol. 11): *seiji, hōsei*.

²⁶² Joseph Pittau, ‘Inoue Kowashi, 1843-1895 and the Formation of Modern Japan’, *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 20, no. 3/4, 1965, pp. 253-282), p. 256

gradualist approach favoured by the Meiji leadership. Accordingly, Inoue Kowashi stressed the stability the Prussian-styled constitutional government could bring. 'In Prussia', he wrote to Itō Hirobumi in June 1881, 'according to the constitution, the emperor has the right to appoint and dismiss the prime minister, whose tenure of office is determined by the emperor's will not by the votes of parliament. So also the prime minister cannot quit without an imperial order. I think this is desirable for our country.'²⁶³ The British system, on the other hand, worked only because its populace and its representatives were politically mature. Japan needed to consolidate its newly established political system, and needed stability.²⁶⁴

George Akita attributes this somewhat paternalistic thinking to Confucian intellectual influences among the Meiji leaders, which stipulated that educated men of moral learning had the duty to lead the people. The Meiji leaders, he argues, 'believed first of all in a benevolent elitism which stemmed from their acceptance of a natural hierarchy based on ability.'²⁶⁵ There are parallels with the thinking of the Chinese elite here, as we will see later. However, to what extent such attitudes stem from Confucianism is debatable. It is worth noting that even Meiji liberals such as Fukuzawa Yukichi regarded that a large number of the Japanese populace were not sufficiently enlightened to participate in politics. It is equally arguable that many leaders and intellectuals of this time were unable 'to overcome their class prejudices'.²⁶⁶ Furthermore, there were even international influences which cautioned the Japanese leaders against granting full political rights to their citizens. Ōkubo Toshimichi, for instance, witnessed the aftermath of the battles during the political turmoil surrounding the Paris Commune. It had the effect of heightening his suspicion of awakening the political consciousness of the masses.²⁶⁷ Furthermore, in what is indicative of the limited degree to which popular sovereignty had become a legitimate form of statehood, the Iwakura Mission's European hosts 'did little to introduce them to truly radical political theories and spoke less of social responsibility and individual freedom.'²⁶⁸

²⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 262. Inoue also mentioned that in Prussia the previous year's budget could be carried over into the new financial year if the legislature and executive did not agree, providing further stable governance.

²⁶⁴ See Inoue Kowashi's letter to Itō Hirobumi cited in *ibid.*, p. 261-263.

²⁶⁵ Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan 1868-1900*, p. 162

²⁶⁶ Hane, 'Early Meiji Liberalism: An Assessment', p. 371

²⁶⁷ See Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan 1868-1900*, pp. 28-29; Mayo, 'The Western Education of Kume Kunitake, 1871-6', pp. 35-36 and Tanaka Akira, *Meiji ishin to tennō sei*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1992), p. 126

²⁶⁸ Mayo, 'The Western Education of Kume Kunitake, 1871-6', p. 37. Another example of this can be found in the written works of General Charles William Le Gendre, who served as an advisor to the Japanese government. Writing on popular sovereignty, he states: 'It is not by transferring the

Implementing mass mobilisation in Japan

As regards the implementation of mass mobilisation, conscription was an institution that was introduced at a relatively early stage. The introduction of this particular form of military, however, was by no means automatic in Japan. There were political considerations which put the introduction of mass conscription into question. As Westney argues, European states needed mass armies to staff their ever-expanding military. However, in Japan '[e]ven if fewer than half of the estimated 450,000 unemployed samurai were incorporated into a new army and navy based on Western methods, their numbers would have exceeded the actual military strength mustered by Japan through the 1880s.'²⁶⁹ Doubts were expressed as to whether an army comprising of non-samurai could constitute an efficacious fighting force.²⁷⁰ There was also the danger of robbing the traditional role of the feudal warrior class and inflaming the resentment of unemployed former samurai.²⁷¹

Despite these objections, the imperial edict (徴兵告諭 *chōhei kokuyu*) that announced conscription in 1872 (this was followed by the Conscription Edict (徴兵令 *chōhei rei*) of 1873) claimed that Japan [was reverting to 'ancient practices', but also revealed European intellectual influences. It stated that 'the four classes [samurai, peasant, artisans and merchants] have finally been given their freedom (四民漸ク自由ノ權ヲ得セシメントス). This is a way of abolishing hierarchies and equalising human rights'.²⁷² In similar fashion to the European states, it was argued that Japanese citizens owed a duty to the *state* (rather than their feudal lord) in return for their rights. All the people were now 'nationals of the imperial land' and were all required to serve the state;

governing power from the Dai Jo Kuwan [*Dajōkan*] to the people, or *vice versa*, but by defining the functions of each in the body politic and keeping the one distinct from the other, that the problem of political reconstruction in Japan can be solved. For, while by the latter process, we may succeed in having the central power and the people work in harmony and to mutual advantage, by the former we make sure to place them in opposition to each other, and, thereby, lead them into a struggle for supremacy in which history teaches us, freedom must sooner or later, find its grave... So we see all uncontrolled powers are ban in this that they equally paralyse one of the two vital forces of the body politic. The uncontrolled power of the prince paralyses *freedom*, and that of the people, *authority*. But let me say, in passing, if I had to select between the *prince-tyrant* and the *people-despot*, I would decide for the first. There is nothing more cruel and difficult to restrain than a popular despotism.' General Charles William Le Gendre, *Progressive Japan, a Study of the Political and Social Needs of the Empire*. (New York: C. Lévy, 1878), pp. 113-114

²⁶⁹ D. Eleanor Westney, 'The Military' in Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozman (eds), *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 179

²⁷⁰ Katō Yōko, *Chōheisei to kindai Nippon*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1996), p. 45

²⁷¹ The assassination of one of the early advocates of universal conscription, Ōmura Masujirō demonstrated this danger.

²⁷² This document is found in Rekishigaku kenkyūkai (ed), *Nihonshi shiryō: kindai* (vol. 4). (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1997), p. 99

the passage that 'there should be no differences in [all classes'] duties to serve the state (皇国一般ノ民ニシテ、国ニ報スルノ道モ、固ヨリ其別ナカルヘシ)' indicated this.²⁷³

The introduction of mass conscription benefited the Meiji government in a number of ways. The adoption of the European-styled military served to protect Japan from the caprice of the European powers; when we consider the dualistic way in which the Japanese viewed the European states, this is understandable. But viewing such reforms simply as a response to an anarchical, dangerous international realm misses another crucial dimension: the introduction of a mass army was also intrinsically connected to demonstrating Japan's 'Europeanised' identity. As Hackett argues, one rationale for adopting a mass army along European models 'was that almost all European nations built their armies on the foundation of a universal conscription system.'²⁷⁴ An army, Hackett states, 'is by its very nature a comparative institution'.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, Hans J. Morgenthau claims, military power and the display of it has been used in the 'policy of prestige' (and this practice continues to this very day); '[s]ince military strength is the obvious measure of a nation's power, its demonstration serves to impress the others with that nation's power.'²⁷⁶ Such prestige, however, can only be meaningful when the notions of 'prestige' are shared by an actor and her peers.²⁷⁷ While Japan's army had some way to go before it could match those of the 'civilised' European states, in the context of the nineteenth century, the adoption of a 'Europeanised' army also entailed equipping it with advanced industrial and military technology, and this served as a visible sign of 'civilised' identity and military power. The Chinese were often ridiculed by the Europeans for their military 'backwardness'; one author wrote as early as 1836:

...there is, probably, at the present no more infallible a criterion of the civilisation and advancement of societies than the proficiency which each has attained in "the murderous art," the perfection and variety of their implements for mutual destruction, and the skill with which they have learned to use them.²⁷⁸

In such an intellectual climate, Japan's willingness to adopt a European-styled military institution would create a favourable impression on the 'civilised' powers of Japan's commitment to be judged by the Society's values. The fact that the Japanese

²⁷³ *ibid.* Also see Hirata Toshiharu, 'Meiji guntai ni okeru "chūkun aikoku" no seishin noseiritsu', *Gunji shigaku* (vol. 13, no. 2, , September 1977, pp. 2-20), p. 14

²⁷⁴ Hackett, 'The Meiji Leaders and Modernization, p. 255

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*

²⁷⁶ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 79

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 74

²⁷⁸ Cited in Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*, p. 185

elite had connected *European* military power and weapons with 'civilisation' meant that they understood this well.

The 1872 Education Act (学制 *gakusei*) that introduced compulsory education also served to foster a sentiment of loyalty towards the state. The system of mass education in the Western states made a favourable impression on the Japanese. Japan had a long tradition of providing education (though not compulsory) to its populace, and the educational benefits of mass schooling were certainly recognised. The Act 'openly urged the universal development of character, mind, and talent for the sake of rising and prospering in the world',²⁷⁹ and also demonstrated the appreciation for compulsory education as a social good. At the same time, the Meiji leadership linked education to strengthening the Japanese state, and the result of this was 'an educational policy devoted to "civilization and enlightenment" for the sake of strengthening the nation.'²⁸⁰ The textbooks of European origin, such as the *Taisei kanzen kunmō* (泰西勸善訓蒙), one of the most popular textbooks of the Meiji period, also introduced the concept of patriotic duty to one's state.²⁸¹

However, the Meiji leaders were less successful in preventing the increase of politically-minded citizens.²⁸² As discussed above, the Meiji leadership was reluctant to give the Japanese populace a greater stake in politics, even if it meant sacrificing a greater ability to mobilise their citizens. But mass conscription had the effect of politicising the Japanese populace. The new recruits were not only given physical training; often illiterate, they were taught to read and write, and many of them subsequently gained access to newspapers and radical magazines.²⁸³ Furthermore, Japan's conscious decision to enter European International Society entailed an exposure

²⁷⁹ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, p. 104

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*

²⁸¹ The *Taisei kanzen kunmō* was written by Frenchman Charles Louis Bonne. The works cited here is: Charles Louis Bonne, *Taisei kanzen kunmō* (Mitsukuri Rinshō, trans). (Nagoya: Nagoya gakkō, 1871), p. 51

²⁸² However, we must be careful not to overstate the degree to which the Japanese populace had become politicised. By 1890, Carol Gluck notes, the 'electorate of 450,000 comprised only 1.1 percent of the population', with 'urban dwellers of every economic stratum dramatically underrepresented.' While this can be attributed to the limited franchise of the time, Gluck also notes: '[t]he circle of newspaper readers who kept abreast of political activities was wider, though not by much....Although many copies passed through the hands of several readers, the social distribution during this period remained limited to the high elite and more recently added lower officials, elementary schoolteachers, merchants, and others of "middle class society. (*chūryū shakai*)"' Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, pp. 67-68.

²⁸³ See Nobutaka Ike, 'War and Modernization' in Robert E. Ward (ed), *Political Development in Modern Japan*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); David B. Ralston, *Importing the European Army: The Introduction of European Military Techniques and Institutions into the Extra-European World, 1600-1914*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 165-166; and

to 'foreign' material and intellectual influences, including those of popular sovereignty. A consequence of this was a mutiny of the imperial guard in the 1878 Takebashi Mutiny. The cause was located, amongst others, in the 'support to representative government, as part of a growing political agitation directed against the [Meiji] oligarchy.'²⁸⁴

Similarly, education was not quite having the intended effect of producing patriotic citizens. The education system was not always conducive towards producing a unified, patriotic sentiment that could be utilised by the government in its quest to become 'rich and strong'. The government had yet to establish a tight control over the educational system. The curriculum had undergone a bewildering series of changes,²⁸⁵ and 'the elementary curriculum had...shifted from Anglo-American egalitarian emphasis on the individual intellect, ...to a mixture of Confucian and European elitism and moral emphasis'.²⁸⁶ Moreover, as a relatively well-educated group, teachers were easily influenced by other far more radical (at least in the eyes of the Meiji leadership) intellectual influences from the West; their commitment to the state was often wanting.

The government's response to its increasingly politicised citizens reflected its ambivalence. On the one hand, it offered them some concessions by forming prefectural assemblies in 1878.²⁸⁷ In 1881, an imperial edict also declared that a national assembly was to be established by 1890.²⁸⁸ Suffrage was increased (albeit to a limited number of Japanese citizens) in the 1889 Meiji Constitution. At the same time, however, the emperor was given sovereign authority and prerogative of supreme command, and

Richard J. Smith, 'Reflections on the Comparative Study of Modernization in China and Japan', pp. 16-18

²⁸⁴ Roger F. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan, 1838-1922*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 84. The most direct cause of the mutiny was dissatisfaction over salaries and rewards.

²⁸⁵ Between 1872-1886, the schools were administrated along French, American, and Prussian-inspired models.

²⁸⁶ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, p. 19. Also see E. Patricia Tsurumi, 'Meiji Primary School Language and Ethics Textbooks: Old Values for a New Society?', *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 8, no. 2, 1974, pp. 247-261)

²⁸⁷ However, we must not overstate the influence of popular opinion behind the establishment of representative assemblies: while popular opinion *did* matter, the Meiji leaders were not necessarily against these measures *per se*. They knew from their observation of European states that constitutional government and some form of legislative assembly was necessary. The 1878 decision to set up prefectural assemblies had, for instance, already been suggested as early as 1870. George Akita seems correct in asserting that 'Meiji political history cannot be seen simply as a struggle between "liberal" opposition demanding political rights and a "conservative" regime bent on maintaining the *status quo* and acquiescing to change only when faced with opposition pressure.' Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan 1868-1900*, p. 23

²⁸⁸ The edict was issued in the wake of a public uproar surrounding the sale of the Hokkaidō Colonization Commission properties to a member of the Meiji leadership, Kuroda Kiyotaka, at a highly advantageous price. Anti-government rallies became linked to calls for representative

popular representation was limited. A brief examination of the drafting process shows that the leadership were determined to protect the power of the executive. An earlier draft constitution prepared by the Senate (元老院 *Genrōin*), which 'made important concessions to the democratic ideal' with 'clear checks and balances...established to limit the powers of the emperor and of the central government', was rejected.²⁸⁹ The British parliamentary system was also rejected in favour of a Prussian-styled constitutional government.²⁹⁰

The Meiji leadership also sought to suppress political dissent both through repressive legislation and a heavy dose of indoctrination in patriotism. One obvious target was the military. A politically active army was perceived as extremely dangerous, and the Takebashi Mutiny aroused much shock among the leadership.²⁹¹ The government moved to issue stern instructions to the military (the 1878 Admonition to Soldiers or 軍人訓戒 *Gunjin kunkai*),²⁹² warning them not to meddle with politics, and this was reinforced by the 1880 Regulations for Public Meetings, where soldiers were forbidden to attend political meetings.²⁹³ Soldiers were admonished by the emperor to refrain from political activities in the 1882 Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (軍人勅諭 *Gunjin chokuyū*). State and emperor were conflated, and soldiers were told to focus their loyalty on the emperor alone. Intellectual influences from European sources, which advocated loyalty to the state in return for the guarantee of certain rights, were less emphasised. In their place, Japanese notions of loyalty, which focussed on absolutely loyalty towards the ruler, was reintroduced.²⁹⁴ Politics was deemed to be 'in and of itself undesirable, even noxious.'²⁹⁵

government, and the government leaders were also accused of selfish, nepotistic practices. See Haraguchi Kiyoshi, *Nihon kindai kokka no keisei*, pp. 272-279

²⁸⁹ Pittau, 'Inoue Kowashi, 1843-1895 and the Formation of Modern Japan', p. 259. For further information on the *Genrōin* draft (the *Kokken sōan*), see also Akita, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan 1868-1900*, pp. 11-12

²⁹⁰ Umetani Noboru states that interest in the Prussian system of governance were increasingly visible from the late 1870s, and by 1879 or 1880, the core leaders involved in drafting the constitution (Iwakura Tomomi, Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kowashi) were united in their preference for this particular model. See Umetani Noboru, *Oyatoi gaikokujin* (vol. 11): *seiji, hōsei*, pp. 156-157

²⁹¹ The mutiny was described as 'the most conspicuous blemish in the history of the Imperial army, the most disgraceful event to scar the glorious Meiji era'. See Roger F. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan, 1838-1922*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 84

²⁹² These instructions were written by Nishi Amane, and announced by Yamagata Aritomo. The document is found in Yamagata Aritomo, *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho*, pp. 75-83

²⁹³ Other groups included were police officers, teachers, students, and agricultural and technical trainees. In July 1890, a new legislation, the Public Meetings and Political Associations Law expanded this group to include minors and women.

²⁹⁴ Hirata Toshiharu, 'Meiji guntai ni okeru "chūkun aikoku" no seishin no seiritsu', p. 18

²⁹⁵ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, p. 53

The education system was reconfigured to ensure that loyalty to the state was fostered. While reconfiguring the Japanese state along Europeanised lines had furthered Japan's acceptance by European International Society, the members of the Meiji leadership were all concerned by the increasing negative social problems that accompanied these reforms. The list was certainly a long one, as Carol Gluck states:

Society, they said, was in disarray, afflicted by ills, beset by economic difficulties, roiled by the struggle for survival, upset by labor problems, exposed to dangerous thought, threatened by socialist destruction, rent by gulfs between rich and poor, city and country, worker and capitalist.²⁹⁶

While the leaders agreed that some form of ideological education was needed, they disagreed over its implementation. Some individuals (such as the imperial tutor Motoda Eifu 元田永孚) advocated a return to more Confucian values. While they did not reject Confucian intellectual influences *per se*, other officials (such as Mori Arinori 森有礼, who became minister of education in 1885) stressed 'patriotic service to the state on the Western model rather than to the moral obligation between a Confucian ruler and his subjects'.²⁹⁷ Greater efforts were taken to gain control over schools (by 1902, the government had decided to replace privately published textbooks with national textbooks), and a policy of patriotic education which utilised the symbolic value of the emperor, as epitomised by the Rescript on Education (教育勅語 *kyōiku chokugo*), was introduced.²⁹⁸ Inoue Kowashi, who played a key role in drafting the Rescript, believed that the most effective way by which to inculcate the masses in patriotism was by stressing loyalty towards the emperor.²⁹⁹ Eventually, Carol Gluck states, the Rescript

...was raised to the status of a civic creed. What began as an assertion of native values and social ethics became a civil morality: an index of loyalty and patriotism

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 28

²⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 109

²⁹⁸ The Rescript was drafted by Inoue Kowashi and Motoda Eifu. While Inoue was a constitutional specialist deeply influenced by Prussian political theory and Motoda a Confucian, they were able to come up with a draft, partly due to their mutual interest (albeit with different interpretations) in Confucian thought. Details of the drafting of the Rescript is told in *ibid.*, pp. 120-123.

²⁹⁹ Pittau, 'Inoue Kowashi, 1843-1895 and the Formation of Modern Japan', p. 272. Also see Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, p. 85 for Mori Arinori's views. The *kokutai* is a somewhat vague concept. It often refers to the unbroken Japanese imperial line, while *Mitogaku* scholars such as Aizawa Seishisai interpreted it as a form of moral culture which included 'the moral values of trust, loyalty, filial piety, peace, and well-being among the people...all were part of that national essence that was transferred as a mandate from Heaven to the divine line of archaic kings through the son goddess Amaterasu.' See Tetsuo Najita, 'History and nature in eighteenth-century Tokugawa thought' in John Whitney Hall (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (vol. 4): *Early Modern Japan*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 640.

(*chūkun aikoku*) not only for the schools, but for wherever allegiance to the state was at ideological issue.³⁰⁰

Mass mobilisation in China: intellectual influences and motivations

Wei Yuan was one of the earliest Chinese intellectuals to explore European government institutions and their connections with greater mass mobilisation, even though the link with popular sovereignty and nationalism had yet to be made. Wei's starting point was what he considered to be the abysmal state of the Qing. Witnessing the corruption, rebellion, and China's inability to effectively counter foreign encroachment, Philip A. Kuhn notes, Wei Yuan's thoughts centred around the question of whether or not 'the state could be invigorated by more fervent commitment and broader political participation among the literati elite, and at the same time be strengthened in the exercise of its authoritarian rule.'³⁰¹ Wei also noted in his *Haiguo tuzhi* that in the United States, the people's participation in politics meant that popular opinion was reflected in politics. This made people work hard, and made the country strong.³⁰² Wei Yuan's proposal was to allow broader political participation by the members of the elite. He argued that the literary inquisitions during the Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors had led to a stifling of expressing opinions. By encouraging the educated elite to express their opinions more freely, Wei hoped for the articulation of a better policy that could serve China well.

Wei's contemporary Feng Guifen went further. Like Wei Yuan, Feng also believed that 'broader literati participation was to be the source of the heightened national energy needed to resist the West.'³⁰³ To this end, he suggested two important points. First, Feng argued that officials be appointed to higher positions based on nominations from other members of the elite. Second, Feng suggested that in order to eliminate the corruption and social unrest prevalent within the countryside, the growing powers of the middlemen and runners had to be curbed. The solution was the appointment of a new, different kind of middleman, voted by villagers. Unlike Wei Yuan, Feng owed his ideas to Western thought which advocated popular political participation, despite the fact that he did not explicitly discuss the concept of popular sovereignty. Philip A. Kuhn argues that the very notion of an equal vote bears the hallmarks of 'the idea of popular sovereignty – of the rights of man, liberty, equality,

³⁰⁰ Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, p. 127

³⁰¹ Kuhn, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, p. 32

³⁰² Wei Yuan, *Haiguo tuzhi* (abridged edition), p. 402

and the rule of reason',³⁰⁴ which is an anathema 'to the Chinese governmental system...for the simple reason that one man's opinion is assuredly not equivalent to the opinion of any other; men are, after all, differentiated by both virtue and education.'³⁰⁵

As China's interaction with European International Society increased, the ideas of popular sovereignty began to trickle into China. In their search for 'wealth and strength', the concept appears to have also caught the attention of the Chinese reformists. Writing to Li Hongzhang from France in 1878, Ma Jianzhong noted the seemingly close relationship between rulers and their subjects as well as the strong support the former seemed to enjoy. Furthermore, Ma noted that this seemed to generate patriotism, which further strengthened the state. He then went on to argue that the European powers derived this power from their responsiveness to the popular will.

When recalling the year or so since I came to Europe I remember that originally I assumed Europe's wealth and strength solely lay in its highly developed manufacturing industry and in its strict military discipline. When I delved further into its laws and examined its arts of government I realized that Europe's search for wealth had as its basis the protection of commercial organizations and that its quest for strength had as its guiding principle the gaining of popular support. By protecting commercial organizations taxes can be increased, thereby ensuring state revenues are sufficient; by gaining popular support loyalty and devotion are increased manifold, thereby ensuring shared hatred of external enemies.³⁰⁶

Outside officialdom, reformists such as Zheng Guanying and Wang Tao also came to similar conclusions. Zheng maintained that the close relationship between the people and the government meant that 'the country's minds are as one (舉國之心志如一)', making it difficult for despotic government to take root. The result was a stable, strong government.³⁰⁷ Wang Tao also argued that 'England's resource is the fact that there is a sympathetic government understanding between the governing and the governed, and a close relationship between the ruler and the people. The foundations of the country will be strong and stable (英國之所恃者，在上下之情通，君民之分親，本固邦寧，雖久不變)'.³⁰⁸ In so doing, Zheng and Wang had located popular sovereignty as one of the key powers of the Western system.

³⁰³ Kuhn, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, p. 57

³⁰⁴ Bukovansky, 'The altered state and the state of nature', p. 200

³⁰⁵ Kuhn, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, p. 61

³⁰⁶ Ma Jianzhong, 'A Letter to Li Hongzhang on Overseas Study', in *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People: The Reform Writings of Ma Jianzhong (1845-1900)*, p. 44

³⁰⁷ Zheng Guanying, 'Yiyuan (part 1)', *Shengshi weiyuan*, p. 96

³⁰⁸ See Wang Tao, 'Ji yingguo zhengzhi', *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, p. 89. The translation is rendered from Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China*, p. 225

Many Chinese reformists also identified the parliamentary system and direct elections as the key institutions that linked the people and government.³⁰⁹ Recording a conversation by a member of the Chinese diplomatic mission, Xue Fucheng argued that the secret of Western strength was seen in the closeness between the rulers and their subjects, and direct elections were one important aspect of this source of power. The Western powers

...carry out direct township elections and establish parliaments, and whenever trouble occurs, the people are allowed to say whatever they want to say. If there is anything that harms the benefits of the people, [the Western powers] enact new laws to improve the situation. Detailed censurs are taken, everything is recorded, and not one person is missed. So, this enables all the wishes of the people at the bottom to reach the top (用鄉舉里選以設上下議院，遇事倡言無忌。凡不便於民者，必設法以更張之。實查戶版生死婚嫁，靡弗詳記，無一夫不得其所，則上下之情通矣).³¹⁰

Meanwhile, Guo Songtao actively sought to enrich his understanding of European political systems during his tenure as Chinese Minister in Britain through his reading and interactions with the British. His time in Britain appears to have confirmed his earlier conviction that the strength of the European powers lay in their political institutions. With reference to the British system, Guo wrote in his diary: 'The reason Britain is becoming increasingly prosperous is because Parliament is charged with protecting the national policy. Meanwhile, Britain has also established mayors (買阿爾) so it can rule the people and remain responsive to the popular will.'³¹¹ Guo believed that the parliamentary system and mayoral system fostered strong ties between the ruler and his/her subjects. Herein lay the secret of British strength.

These statements also indicate that some of the reformists were beginning to show an increasing openness to institutional reforms based on European models. Writing in 1892 while serving as Chinese Minister to Britain, France, Italy and Belgium, Xue Fucheng appears to suggest that a Western-styled monarchical system could indeed be adopted by the Chinese system. While he identified democratic states as being able to widely recruit talent and able to limit abuses by officials, Xue was also concerned that it could lead to 'the establishment of cliques and increasing rivalry between them. Each

³⁰⁹ This was one of the earliest serious debates about parliaments among the reformists. However, the notion of introducing a parliamentary system were not seriously discussed until after the Qing had been defeated by Japan in 1894. Zheng Guanying's 1884 proposal to establish a parliament was rejected as 'mad and absurd'. See Eastman, 'Political Reformism in China before the Sino-Japanese War', p. 700. Debates on direct elections go back further, however:

³¹⁰ Xue Fucheng, 'Chu shi riji', *Chouyang chuyi*, p. 147

³¹¹ Cited in Sasaki Yō, *Shin matsu chūgoku ni okeru nihon kan to seiyō kan*, p. 127.

would try and advance their own interests at the expense of others and the state'.³¹² On the other hand, a monarchical state (君主之國 *junzhu zhi guo*) was less vulnerable to disruptions and could prosper at times of wise rulers. However, Xue claimed that its weaknesses included 'an excessive concentration of power at the top and the possibility that the people are exploited like cattle. (在上重下輕, 或役民如牛馬).'³¹³ Xue used Russia as an example of a 'monarchical government' where the people were vulnerable to harsh exploitation by the monarch. Following from this, he wrote in his diary:

Before the time of king Yu, a democratic system was prevalent in China (中國唐虞以前, 皆民主也). The sage king Shun, gathered a group of his followers at his homestead during the first year of his reign....At that time, it was an established rule that the people had the right to elect a man of integrity as their lord, and among the lords, the most virtuous would be selected as the Son of Heaven. This is the primary model of the democratic system in the early centuries of China (此皆今之民主規模也). Many centuries later, Qin Shi Huang introduced totalitarianism into China....The first two dynasties of Qin and Han maintained this pattern, and thus the monarchy became the one and only government system in China.³¹⁴

Xue's suggestions are significant in that he advocated the reforms of political institutions as a necessity. While Guo Songtao himself did not advocate introducing Western domestic political institutions, Xue Fucheng invoked Chinese history to justify domestic political reform. By referring to the time of the sage kings – a period eulogised in Confucianism as the time in which perfect government was carried out – Xue implicitly argues that 'Western political systems match those of the "era of the sage kings"' and should 'therefore be introduced',³¹⁵ rather than be rejected as something fundamentally alien to Chinese political traditions.

³¹² Xue Fucheng, 'Chu shi riji', *Chouyang chuyi*, p. 123

³¹³ *ibid.*

³¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 123-124. The translation of this passage is based on Helen Hsieh Chien. See Xue Fucheng, *The European Diary of Hsieh Fucheng: Envoy Extraordinary of Imperial China* (Helen Hsieh Chien, trans.). (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 114. However, the translator erroneously translates the passage 'Before the time of king Yu (中國唐虞以前)' as 'Before the time of the legendary Yao'. King Yu was in fact the successor to both kings Yao and Shun. Therefore, these passages have been corrected accordingly. Qin Shi Huang, also known as the First Emperor, was the first ruler to unify China. He is renowned for his brutal, despotic rule and often served as a negative example for successive rulers of China.

³¹⁵ Satō Shin'ichi, *Kindai chūgoku no chishikijin to bunmei*, p. 93. Invoking pre-Qin times to justify reform was common among reformists at this time, and can also be seen in the writings of Wang Tao. Paul A. Cohen states that in the case of Wang Tao, such reasoning demonstrated a 'willingness...to acknowledge fulfilment in contemporary Western society of the most cherished Chinese political ideals.' Similarly to Satō, Cohen also states that '[t]o call for a revival of pre-Ch'in [Qin] political behavior therefore, was not necessarily to countenance reaction; it could just as well signify a commitment to sweeping reform.' See *Between Tradition and Modernity*, p. 210. Also see. Eastman, 'Political Reformism in China before the Sino-Japanese War', p. 698

Discussions of mass mobilisation in China

However, such ideas were never implemented or received widespread and serious attention by the top elite during the Tongzhi Restoration. This does not mean that the Chinese elites did little to tap into the latent power of the populace to enhance the power of the Chinese state. Anti-foreign riots impressed many Chinese officials on the potential power of the masses. Fujita Yūji notes two points in particular. First, they believed that the masses would be more attached to their land than Qing soldiers, and fight to defend it from foreign encroachment. Second, they were convinced the Europeans feared that the Chinese people could rally around the Qing and become a powerful force that could drive them out of China.³¹⁶ In this context, an official named Yuan Baoheng (袁保恆) argued during the diplomatic dispute surrounding the anti-Christian riots and the Tianjin massacre of 1870 that the incident 'was caused by the rightful indignation of the masses, and demonstrated that they had the "qualities to control the barbarians" (制夷之資)'.³¹⁷

To an extent, Yuan Baoheng had identified that the latent power of mass mobilisation could potentially be unified and channelled to produce a sentiment of collective loyalty towards the state. His ideas were not inherently implausible either. We will recall the fact that at the elite level there was already an increasing nationalist sentiment, as well as an increasing consciousness of 'Chinese' identity that prompted officials such as Li Hongzhang to attempt to protect and promote Chinese economic interests. Furthermore, similar developments were taking place among Chinese of various social backgrounds. Increasing numbers of Chinese were coming into contact with Western ideologies through treaty ports or emigration to European colonies. Here, argues Henrietta Harrison, they encountered 'the racist attitudes of the colonisers, which were gradually being institutionalised during this period', often becoming 'aware of their Chineseness in a new context of nation and race' as a consequence.³¹⁸ It was possible that this latent nationalism could be united as one.

Despite these developments, little efforts were undertaken towards mass mobilisation through popular sovereignty or the utilisation of nationalism. While some

³¹⁶ Fujita Yūji, *Ajia ni okeru burmei no taikō*, pp. 261-262

³¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 262

³¹⁸ Henrietta Harrison, *Inventing the Nation: China*. (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 71. While the primary focus is on political elites here, this does not deny the existence of nationalist sentiment among non-elites. As Harrison further argues, '[p]opular proto-nationalism of the late nineteenth century...was strongly opposed to foreign interference in China' – such as proselytising by Christian missionaries which disturbed local social order – 'which was relatively well known and understood.' (Harrison, *Inventing the Nation*, p. 86)

officials did forward positive assessments of European political institutions, many were hostile. Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi* was one of the earliest works to introduce Chinese readers to popular representation, but relied on Protestant missionary accounts of the European system of states. These 'accounts of a world order based on the equality of nations and depending largely on international trade were intended to encourage China's entrance into the Western-conceived Family of Nations',³¹⁹ and violated traditional notions of Sinocentric superiority. Furthermore, hostility towards missionaries remained strong, and Wei's views did not fall on sympathetic ears during his time. Furthermore, China's refusal to transform itself into a 'Westernised state' meant that it did not introduce any European-styled institutions with popular representation, which may have led to the growth of a patriotic sentiment that the Chinese state could tap into. Philip A. Kuhn argues that as far as the political elites were concerned, 'their social position[s] rested upon no inherited system, [and] their elite identity and their local interests could, ultimately be protected by no power but that of the [traditional Chinese] state.'³²⁰

There were other ideological problems as well. Enlightenment thought that assumed humankind's capacity for reason influenced popular sovereignty. Confucian thought, however, stipulated that only those of higher learning possessed the 'virtue' to rule a state. Ideas of popular sovereignty thus elicited hostile responses. Any form of representative government would give political power to the immoral, and allow for selfish government: the result, one Chinese official wrote in response to Feng Guifen's suggestions, would be that ' "crafty officials" will all "flip the dust off their caps [preparatory to assuming their new posts] and congratulate one another," and the sincere, unassuming aspirant, whatever his merit, will have no chance at all.'³²¹ Li Hongzhang was equally harsh in his criticisms of Feng's ideas. Feng's suggestion for official appointments based on votes, he claimed,

...was modeled on the system by which the American Congress selects officials, without understanding their evils. [In that system], those below seek their private advantage, those above protect their clients. At its worst, the system amounts to seeking office through bribery. Perceptive people in that country are well aware of this.³²²

³¹⁹ Suzanne Wilson Barnett, 'Protestant Expansion and Chinese Views of the West', *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 6, no. 2, 1972, pp. 129-149), p. 146

³²⁰ Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, p. 47

³²¹ *ibid.*, p. 62

³²² Cited in *ibid.*, p. 63

To a certain extent, individuals such as Guo Songtao and Ma Jianzhong shared this view as well. Guo's praise of the British parliamentary system was based on his belief that the superior nature of the British political system had resulted in 'producing men of talent and the flourishing of scholarship, bringing wealth and strength'.³²³ However, his thinking remained heavily influenced by the Confucian notion that men of talent, rather than institutions themselves, could bring about national wealth and strength. Similarly, Zheng Guanying, while advocating the introduction of direct elections, placed relative emphasis on the system's ability to recruit men of talent.³²⁴ Ma Jianzhong, for his part, questioned the American political system by claiming that during elections 'bribery is openly practiced. With a change of president there is a change of governing personnel; incoming officials are all members of the new president's clique. How can such people be trusted to govern the country!'³²⁵

For similar reasons, no systematic attempts were made to introduce mass education and indoctrinate the masses in nationalism. In Japan, mass conscription contributed greatly to enhance national consciousness and maintain morale. In China, Richard J. Smith notes, '[e]ven in the new-style armies of Li Hung-chang [Li Hongzhang] and others, personal ties of blood, friendship or local affinity often counted for more than expertise',³²⁶ and mass conscription was not implemented. Traditionally, the ruling Chinese elites had harboured strong antipathy towards mass conscription. Not only were they expensive to run, they lacked the skills and experience necessary to fight China's traditional enemies, the Northern nomads. Another important reason relevant to our discussion here is that the Chinese rulers were deeply suspicious of the loyalty of mass armies, and this stemmed from their fundamental ambivalence towards the people. While the Chinese elite were aware of the potential power of a mobilised populace to ward off the troublesome European powers, they knew well that mass mobilisation was a double-edged sword: the people could easily turn against them. As Mark Edward Lewis points out, '[t]he danger to the government posed by an armed peasantry' was

³²³ Sasaki Yō, *Shin matsu chūgoku ni okeru nihon kan to seiyō kan*, p. 128

³²⁴ Zheng Guanying, 'Yiyuan (part 1)', *Shengshi weiyuan*. (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1998), p. 97. Wang Tao also proposed introducing 'Western elective procedures' which Paul A. Cohen claims 'was suggestive of – and very possibly influenced by – Western elective procedures.' *Between Tradition and Modernity*, p. 219. However, it should be noted that direct elections – a radical concept within China, for sure – were already being discussed, and could be found in the writings of Feng Guifen's *Jiaobinlu kangyi*. See Feng Guifen, 'Gong chuzhiyi', *Jiaobinlu kangyi*. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2002), pp. 1-2. Also see Philip A. Kuhn, 'Ideas behind China's Modern State'

³²⁵ Ma Jianzhong, 'A Letter to Li Hongzhang on Overseas Study', *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People*, p. 45

³²⁶ Smith, 'Reflections on the Comparative Study of Modernization in China and Japan', p. 19

evident to most Chinese rulers.³²⁷ Dynasties had fallen after mass revolts (usually described in terms of a loss of the 'mandate of heaven'), and the Chinese elite was not about to endanger their survival by arming the 'foolish' masses.

As far as the Chinese troops during this period were concerned, they continued to be '[l]ocally raised, armed, and trained...[and] had little sense of national identification.'³²⁸ Western-style education, which played a crucial role in disseminating nationalist sentiment, remained in small pockets, such as the Fuzhou Dockyard or missionary schools. They tended to teach technical subjects (such as mathematics), and 'in a world that placed a very high value on knowledge of the classics, they would be unable to converse as equals with members of the bureaucratic elite.'³²⁹ Consequently, very few members of the political elite sent their sons to these schools. The European-styled education system thus also failed to attract a sufficient number of students that could be mobilised for the Chinese state.³³⁰

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the stage of socialisation where China and Japan attempted to acquire the 'competence and skill' to become a power worthy of the protection of European International Society's institutions. The analytical framework adopted in this thesis allows us to forward a number of findings and interpretations that differ from conventional studies, and it is worth summing them up here.

Conceptualising China and Japan's socialisation as an engagement with two different modes of interaction allows us to identify a number of less documented characteristics in Chinese and Japanese elites' attempts to reform. While both the Chinese and Japanese elites ultimately sought to attain the identity of a 'Europeanised' state by the twentieth century, their witnessing of the Society's coercive face meant that suspicions towards the European powers remained. This resulted in an almost obsessive emphasis on enhancing state power. This, combined with the nineteenth-century

³²⁷ Mark Edward Lewis, 'The Han Abolition of Universal Military Service' in Hans Van de Ven (ed), *Warfare in Chinese History*. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 41

³²⁸ Richard J. Smith, 'Reflections on the Comparative Study of Modernization in China and Japan', p. 19. Also see Allen Fung, 'Testing the Self-Strengthening: The Chinese Army in the sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895', *Modern Asian Studies* (vol. 30, no. 4, Special Issue: War in Modern China, October 1996, pp. 1007-1031), pp. 1022-1026.

³²⁹ Henrietta Harrison, *Inventing the Nation: China*. (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 85. It is interesting to note that the Chinese leadership only introduced mathematics as a subject in the imperial examinations in 1898, after the shock of being defeated by Japan. This move proved extremely unpopular with the candidates.

intellectual climate that equated machinery and the existence of heavy industry with 'civilisation', meant that the fields of industry and military received disproportionate attention from the leaders.

Within the time scope of this study, this resulted in unbalanced industrial development, and caused considerable distress in rural Japan. Strong emphasis was placed on developing heavy industry, while small, rural industries remained, according to E. H. Norman, 'dominated by the capital of small traders and usurers, and ...compelled to remain at a primitive stage technically'.³³¹ Apart from heavy taxation, women in rural families were also sent to work in rural industries to supplement the family income. They provided readily available, cheap labour which assisted the development of the Japanese rural economy, but worked in appalling conditions.³³² The crucial role played (and indeed the sacrifices made) by the rural populace and women in the process of Japan's quest for equal status within 'civilised' European International Society should be readily acknowledged.³³³

This biased path of adaptation was also partly motivated by the Chinese and Japanese elites' observations that European states shared a common characteristic of being military powers. While the attainment of 'civilised' identity did ultimately become important for both states' elites, their institutional reforms would continue to be coloured by an overriding goal: making the country 'rich and powerful'. This aspect has been surprisingly downplayed in conventional English School works. The Meiji leaders, for instance, adopted constitutional government and introduced limited suffrage, but democratic ideals played a secondary role. Similar tenets can be found in the Chinese case, although this took place in the twentieth century. Michael M. Hunt has argued that one important characteristic of China's national identity 'has been a preoccupation with

³³⁰ However, this is not to suggest that the Chinese elite and intellectuals failed to appreciate the potential utility of a Western-style education. For a positive account of schooling in Europe, see Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyan*, pp. 66-68

³³¹ E. H. Norman, 'Japan's Emergence as a Modern State', in John W. Dower (ed), *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), p. 242

³³² It is worth noting that the English School approach has been criticised for its neglect of domestic politics and women's perspective because of its state-centric bias. Jacqui True, argues that gender is 'obscured within domestic politics by a naturalized public-private division that has historically relegated women to the private sphere and considered private sphere matters inherently non-political'; given the crucial role that women played in Japan's quest to attain 'civilised' identity, this seems a valid point. See True, 'Feminism' in Alex J. Bellamy (ed), *International Society and its Critics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 156

³³³ In his essay 'E. H. Norman, Japan, and the Uses of History', John Dower notes with reference to works on Japanese history inspired by modernisation theory: 'If one really steps back and appraises current scholarship on modern Japan, or "modernization," it must be concluded that there is something constricted and bloodless, something *truly* mechanistic' in their depictions of the reforms that took place in the Meiji era. See Dower, 'E. H. Norman, Japan and the Uses of History', p. 69

creating and maintaining a strong centralized state. During the crisis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this preoccupation reached proportions that an outside observer might characterize as obsessive.³³⁴ Hans van de Ven argues that '[s]elf-strengtheners like Li Hongzhang believed that a modern, industrial and prosperous China would come about in a process of gradual construction. This view continued to shape the minds of late Qing and early Republican leaders'.³³⁵ Unlike the Tongzhi Restoration, there were greater calls for the adoption of European institutions, but, in similar fashion in Japan, these reforms were inextricably linked with the aim of making China powerful. The reformist/intellectual Liang Qichao (梁啟超), for instance, 'treated modern education, the fostering of a spirit of nationalism, political reform and the revival of martial attitudes as part of the same package'.³³⁶ Chinese preoccupation with becoming 'rich and strong' continues to this day,³³⁷ and it remains to be explored to what extent China's experience of engaging with the coercive face of European International Society influences this behaviour.

The utilisation of a more agent-centric, process-oriented analytical framework has also uncovered the multifaceted Chinese and Japanese engagements with the Society. This goes beyond the linear, Eurocentric depictions forwarded in accounts by English School scholars. While China's initial lack of conformity with the Society's norms has been described as resulting from 'inertia',³³⁸ the empirical examinations here suggest the contrary. First, even though their views may have been a minority, we see that many Chinese elites were intellectually engaging with European institutions. Their observations went beyond the simple rejection of European influence on the basis of Chinese superiority. Second, while cultural barriers certainly existed and played a part, there was nothing inherently 'ignorant' about the Chinese elites' refusal to be judged by the Society's normative standards or their rejection of emulating the European states. The conservatives were correct in their criticism of corruption among the reformist elites. Furthermore, they did not necessarily oppose 'all attempts to modernize', as

³³⁴ Michael H. Hunt, 'Chinese National Identity and the Strong State: The Late Qing-Republican Crisis' in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (eds) *China's Quest for National Identity*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 62

³³⁵ Hans van de Ven, 'The Military in the Republic', *China Quarterly* (no. 150, Special Issue: Reappraising Republic China, June 1997, pp. 352-374), p. 357

³³⁶ *ibid.*

³³⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston argues, for instance that 'China's concept of major powerhood has changed little since 1949: The model is of a maximally sovereign and autonomous political state that is both rich and strong.' See Johnston, 'International Structures and Chinese Foreign Policy' in Kim, Samuel S. (ed) *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), p. 74

³³⁸ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, p. 146

Gong simplistically portrays.³³⁹ Their questioning of the suitability of adopting European-styled institutions in China was a perfectly valid one, as there was (and is) no reason to presume that the Western-styled state was inherently 'progressive'. These debates continue to this very day, in the form of resistance to the imposition of political institutions of Western origin.³⁴⁰

It is difficult to accurately categorise the stage of China's socialisation into European International Society; as discussed in the previous chapter, the Qing elites had begun to introduce some reforms in their diplomatic institutions. Furthermore, they sought to establish heavy industry under the rubric of 'rich country, strong army', and this was partly based on their 'knowledge' that the European states – all powerful, military states – were generally accorded some protection from invasion and intervention. They were in a sense trying to acquire what they *thought* to be the 'competence and skill' to become a state that would be accorded the protection of European International Society. This makes it tempting to label the series of domestic reforms undertaken between the 1860s and the 1890s as a result of the Chinese elites entering the 'strategic learning' stage of socialisation.

However, at this period, it would be more correct to interpret China as between the stage of 'adaptation' and 'strategic learning'. The Chinese elite had indeed recognised that a commonality between the European states facilitated a less coercive international environment, but they failed to recognise the importance and need to attain a 'civilised' identity to qualify for the protection of the Society. Neither did the Chinese elite necessarily perceive the 'modern state' as a social good that was promoted by European International Society. Consequently, while the attempts to become 'rich and strong' did superficially resemble adherence to the 'standard of civilisation', the Chinese elite did not perceive it as such. China was the hegemon within this order, and the fact that it had been able to dominate and decide the social norms of the East Asian international system undoubtedly made it more difficult for the Chinese to accept this new international order. The member states of European International Society classified China as a 'semi-civilised' state; something its elites, with knowledge of China's proud history and legacy of being the most 'civilised' state within its region, found difficult to acknowledge. Furthermore, the member states of European International Society were, in many Chinese elites' eyes, immoral countries that had the effrontery to called

³³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 150

³⁴⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, 'The West: Unique, not Universal', *Foreign Affairs* (vol. 75, no. 6, November/December 1996, pp. 28-46), especially pp. 37-41

themselves 'civilised', while at the same time encroaching on China's territory. This reduced the European powers' moral standing and capacity to serve as models of emulation, and in light of the atrocities the European states committed in the course of their imperial expansions, it is difficult to blame the Chinese elite for thinking in this way.

The Meiji elite, on the other hand, embraced – albeit reluctantly – the social standards of European International Society and followed the path of reinventing their state along the lines of a 'civilised' member of the Society. The Japanese leadership appear to have had a better understanding of the dual modes of interaction in the Society. They understood that in order to escape the coercion that emanated from the Society's forced introduction of 'civilisation', they needed to fulfil the social criteria set by its members. The evidence forwarded in this chapter thus suggests that Japan was engaged in a process of 'emulative learning', which, we will recall, is defined as taking 'the [society's] members' social world as the definitive guideline for action', 'faithfully orient[ing] personal action to conform to its principles and to achieve its reproduction' and being prepared to 'be held accountable to its requirements should something go awry.'³⁴¹ While simultaneously attempting to attain military and economic strength, Japan was already beginning to demonstrate its ability to abide by the social standards of European International Society not only by following the legalistic stipulations of the 'standard of civilisation', but also the 'hidden' standard of introducing 'Europeanised' systems of governance.

The reason why Japan managed to grasp these realities quicker than the Chinese is an oft-discussed topic.³⁴² One reason was Japan's smaller size meant that reforms were a lot easier to implement. The Chinese elite had the burden of having to govern a large country. Reforms could not easily be carried out, and this had the effect of increasing the number of 'violations' of the norms of European International Society, which only invited further intervention by the European powers.

Second, to a certain extent, Japan had the benefit of observing the mistakes of China. The defeats suffered by China were a shock to the Japanese, who had traditionally viewed the Chinese state as the regional hegemon and often a source of

³⁴¹ Long and Hadden, 'A Reconception of Socialization', pp. 43-44

³⁴² Examples include William W. Lockwood, 'Japan's Response to the West: The Contrast with China', *World Politics* (vol. 9, no. 1, October 1956, pp. 37-54) and Suganami, 'Japan's Entry into International Society', pp. 196-199

emulation. Now China served as a negative example. If Japan wanted to avoid the fate of semi-colonisation, it obviously had to follow a different path from the Chinese.

Third, Japan was fortunate in having a leadership that could forcefully implement the reforms necessary to facilitate its entry as a 'civilised' member of European International Society. While the Meiji leadership came from various segments of the traditional elite, they had come to power by overthrowing the feudal order. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, who were working *within* the institutional constraints of the traditional Chinese state, they were relatively insulated from feudal vested interests, and were in a far better position to implement the necessary reforms.

Lastly, there were ideological reasons. As Yamamuro Shin'ichi argues, while European International Society in the nineteenth century was just as (if not more) hierarchical as the traditional East Asian international order, 'unlike the Sinocentric order which promoted harmony under only one [usually Chinese] ruler', thereby denying any possibility of Japan achieving equality with the 'most civilised state', the new European dominated order 'gave the Japanese an opportunity to climb up the hierarchical ladder by attaining civilisation, thus facilitating its acceptance by the Japanese.'³⁴³ By accepting this point, I depart from Gerrit W. Gong's assertion that 'Japan experienced difficulty in perceiving and executing the Western concept of international equality' because it had 'projected its hierarchical social patterns into the realm of international relations'.³⁴⁴ Sovereign equality only operated within Europe, and European International Society in the nineteenth century *was* hierarchical vis-à-vis the 'uncivilised' entities. A long-time member of the hierarchical East Asian international order, Japan and its elite were already sensitised to the importance of social standings within an order; this, to a certain degree, facilitated Japanese elites' understanding and acceptance of the social structures of the Society.

Demonstrating 'civilised' status within nineteenth-century European International Society, however, was not only confined to domestic aspects. Internationally, Japan would also engage in demonstrating its 'civilised' statehood. This would involve behaving like a European Great Power and destroying of the traditional East Asian international order. This remains to be explored in detail, and it is to this aspect the empirical investigations will now turn.

³⁴³ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia*, p. 42.

³⁴⁴ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilisation' in International Society*, p. 166

DEMONSTRATING 'CIVILISED' IDENTITY: THE DISMANTLING OF THE TRIBUTE SYSTEM

In the days when Japan was engaging in peaceful arts, the Westerners used to think of it as an uncivilised country. Since Japan started massacring thousands of people in the battlefields of Manchuria, the Westerners have called it a civilised country. (Okakura Tenshin, *Cha no hon* [The Book of Tea], 1906)

Introduction

This chapter investigates the ways in which the socialisation of China and Japan into European International Society affected their international behaviour. As argued previously, in order to gain recognition as a 'civilised' member of the Society, non-European states were frequently required to demonstrate themselves worthy of being collectively judged as such by the 'civilised' members. The previous chapter has argued that one aspect of this process entailed certain domestic reforms that would transform an 'uncivilised' state into a 'civilised', Western-styled state. However, in order to display 'civilised' identity, an aspirant entrant not only had to possess 'legitimate' domestic attributes; it had to exhibit its 'civilised' identity in its international relations as well. This process went hand-in-hand with aspirant members' domestic reforms.

As the state that was more interested in attaining legitimate membership of 'civilised' European International Society, it is not surprising that it was Japan that took the lead in this, and the chapter's focus is consequently more on Japan's new foreign policy vis-à-vis its neighbours, while China takes a more reactive role of responding to the changes brought about by Japan in the Tributary System.

The process by which Japan put the norms of European International Society into practice and demonstrated its 'civilised' identity in the international social sphere led to the coercive subjugation of other polities or peoples and the invasion of their land. Japan's Asian neighbours naturally reacted negatively to these actions, and viewed Japan with the utmost suspicion. Japan consequently lost its status as a legitimate member of the East Asian international order, but how Asian polities and peoples viewed Japan was not of primary importance at this time. This issue would come to the forefront later when Japan acquired its colonies, and the necessity to impress Japan's identity as a 'civiliser' upon the 'uncivilised' peoples in its colonies arose. However, during 1870-1890s, Japan had yet to acquire colonies, and while it still languished in 'semi-civilised' status and was subject to unequal treaties, its primary goal was to gain

entry into 'civilised' European International Society. To this end, it needed to be collectively judged as such by the members of the Society. Consequently the audience for Japan's demonstration of 'civilised' status was primarily the European powers, while the Asian states were often props on the stage which the Japanese utilised to show this status.¹

The results of Japan's attempts to demonstrate its 'civilised' identity in the international arena were far from the English School ideal of enhanced order. The eventual result was a military clash between China and Japan over their influence in Korea – the first since the end of the sixteenth century. The Sino-Japanese war represented a clash between two different international orders, and was more than just than simple Sino-Japanese rivalry. It was fought between two states with different identities. Japan attempted to become a member of European International Society and adhere to its social expectations, while China sought to maintain its 'Middle Kingdom' status and remain a member of the East Asian international order. In order to become a member of the Society, Japan rejected the existence of 'Tributary States', based on ritualistic, hierarchical Confucian social norms. Tributary states either needed to be incorporated into the father/elder brother state or be treated as 'independent' sovereign entities. Ritualistic procedural norms were now replaced by legal procedural norms of the Society, international law. Hierarchies remained, but were now reconfigured in accordance with the level of 'civilisation' attained by *European* standards. As the Europeanised, 'civilised' state of East Asia, Japan now assumed the 'civilised' states' prerogative to introduce the trappings of 'European civilisation' by force.

Japan's dismantling of the Tribute System stripped the Qing of its prestige and identity as the 'centre of civilisation' and alarmed the Chinese, who had yet to fully socialise into the Society. It appears that they had difficulty in comprehending Japan's actions in terms of its socialisation into European International Society, and saw them as nothing more than an assault on the Sino-centric Tributary System to the Chinese. They subsequently began to develop a fear and suspicion of Japan's intentions. The coupling of Japanese aggression and Chinese suspicion eventually became the spark that started the War in 1894.

Before we undertake the empirical investigations, it is worth making a number of qualifications explicit from the outset. This is particularly so as Japan's demonstration

¹ For this point, I am indebted to Joel Quirk and C. W. Braddick.

of 'civilised' identity has often been labelled as 'Japanese imperialism'. However, imperialism is subject to numerous competing explanations and interpretations, and is at best a contentious, divisive issue. Japanese imperialism and its origins are no exception.² It must be made clear that this chapter does not attempt to resolve the various controversies surrounding the origins of Japanese imperialism, which in any case is beyond the scope of this study. Rather, its purpose (among others) is to explore one facet of late-nineteenth century Japanese imperialism and its connection with Japan's entry into European International Society, thus acknowledging the multi-causality of imperialism.

The chapter is divided broadly into four parts. The first section presents a brief theoretical discussion. The second section examines the invasion of Taiwan in 1874. The third will examine how the Japanese attempts to implement the norms of European International Society resulted in the subjugation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Finally, the Japanese penetration of Korea is examined.

Some theoretical considerations

At this point, it is worth reiterating what a 'civilised' state's identity consisted of in the context of the late nineteenth century. With regard to international conduct, a 'civilised' state's identity comprised two broad characteristics. One was respect for 'generally accepted international law, including the laws of war' and fulfilling 'the obligations of the international system by maintaining adequate and permanent avenues for diplomatic interchange and communication', as stipulated in the 'standard of civilisation'.³ This was an important component of a 'civilised' state's identity, as the 'standard of civilisation' not only served as a criterion for admitting new entrants into 'civilised' European International Society, but also as a crucial means by which the European states could differentiate themselves from other 'barbarous' polities.

Another important, yet relatively underexplored identity was that of a 'civiliser'. As argued earlier, nineteenth-century European International Society was a dualistic one in which the 'civilised' members applied different modes of interaction depending on

² See, for example, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, (eds) *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Inoue Kiyoshi, *Nihon teikokushugi no keisei*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001); and Andre Schmid, 'Colonialism and the "Korea Problem" in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A Review Article', *Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 59, no.4, 2000, pp. 951-976)

³ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, p. 15

the level of 'civilisation' a particular state had attained.⁴ A 'civilised' state was entitled to introduce the trappings of 'civilisation' into 'backward' states (by force if necessary); and in this context, imperialism was an integral component of the Society. While some European states were constrained by their material capabilities from engaging in 'civilising missions', in the case of the European great powers, their moral authority to do so was seldom questioned, and an integral part of their identity. Even for the less powerful European states, their superiority – particularly vis-à-vis Asian and African states – was taken for granted. Many of the smaller European states thus happily joined in signing unequal treaties with non-European states, which symbolised the former's 'civilised' status and the latter's inferiority.

This particular nature of European International Society was to have important implications for China and Japan's socialisation. As we have seen, while both China and Japan viewed European International Society as coercive and saw the need to become 'rich and strong', they each followed a divergent path. While China's response entailed limited incorporation of Western technology and political institutions, Japan consciously, if reluctantly, accepted its 'semi-civilised' status actively sought higher social status in accordance with the social standards of the Society. The reconfiguration of external relations was thus an especially pertinent issue for Japan.

Japan's attempts to demonstrate its 'civilised' identity in its international relations entailed at least two actions. First, clearly demarcated territorial boundaries were established, and any vestiges of the institutions of the Tributary System were abolished. Specifically, this meant the demise of a political entity: Japan incorporated the Ryūkyū Kingdom, which had traditionally presented tribute to both China and Japan and remained a 'vassal state (両属の国 *ryōzoku no kuni*)' to both countries.

Second, the Japanese faithfully replicated what they interpreted to be a great power's identity: to 'civilise' 'barbarous' states and peoples. The Japanese elite subsequently began to attempt to demonstrate their own 'civilised' identity by sending military expeditions and forcing Western-styled diplomacy and statehood on their Asian neighbours which they now labelled 'uncivilised'. Of course, while Japan's entry into European International Society clearly had a role to play in the emergence of Meiji Japanese imperialism,⁵ this is not to say that it was Japan's entry into European International Society *alone* which instigated Japan's imperialism in the Meiji era, and

⁴ See Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*.

neither do I wish to portray Japan as a victim of Western imperialism and ignore the fact that it was also a perpetrator of imperialism. However, it is equally impossible to dismiss the role of European International Society and its connections outright, and this point can be justified on the following grounds.

For a start, it is necessary to consider the historical context under which Japan and China encountered European International Society. As scholars such as Michael Adas have ably demonstrated,⁶ the late nineteenth century was a time when there existed a genuine belief that the 'civilised' states had a normative mission to introduce the trappings of civilisation into 'barbarous' states. This was the social environment in which the Chinese and Japanese leaders found themselves, and this particular feature of nineteenth-century European International Society must be taken seriously. The Meiji leaders were, to use a colloquial term, 'creatures of their time'. It would be mistaken to somehow assume that the proclamations of Japan's 'civilising' role within Asia was merely rhetoric, thus implying that the Japanese leaders were able to rationally detach themselves from their particular social world and cynically use the 'civilising mission' to justify imperialist ideas that had somehow *always* been latent.⁷

It is also important to acknowledge that from the standpoint of the socialisation process, it is extremely difficult to discount the effects of the Janus-faced nature of the Society, particularly towards aspirant members. The Chinese and Japanese elites noticed that the 'civilised' European states were subject to norms which protected their sovereignty and territorial integrity, while they were victims of European 'gunboat diplomacy' and subject to unequal treaties. Furthermore, both states' primary contact with European International Society was through the great powers of the Society, such as France, Britain, Russia, and, to a lesser extent, the United States. With the possible exception of the United States (which, in any event, joined the club of imperial powers by colonising the Philippines in 1898), all these powers were imperial powers. They were allowed to intervene in 'uncivilised' lands, and this fact did not escape the attention of the Chinese and Japanese elites either.⁸

⁵ Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, pp. 11-15

⁶ See Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*.

⁷ This is not to deny any possibility that latent imperialist thoughts *did* exist: but it is important nevertheless not to see imperialist motives before and after the expansion of European International Society in the same context

⁸ Alexis Dudden Eastwood, *International Terms: Japan's Engagement in Colonial Control*. (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1998), p. 99; Nishikawa Nagao, *Chikyū jidai no minzoku, bunka riron: datsu 'kokumin bunka' no tame ni*. (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1995), pp. 86-87

In the case of Japan's socialisation, the effects exerted by the dualistic European International Society can be discerned from several points. First, from a social theoretical point of view, an aspirant member would be expected to emulate the role of the Society's members to some extent. As Michael L. Schwalbe notes, '[r]ole taking is essential to establishing stable patterns of action and interaction. It is necessary to coordinate joint action and to sustain community life. The very existence of social structure is thus premised on role taking.'⁹ Furthermore, the more powerful the actors' significant others are, the greater the possibility that the pressures for emulation are high. Schwalbe again notes: 'Interacting with powerful others whose worldviews and inner states must be accurately surmised to obtain desired rewards might therefore encourage the development of role-taking accuracy.'¹⁰ In the case of socialisation into late-nineteenth century European International Society, then, we would expect some form of emulation of this dualistic feature by an aspirant member, particularly if it has observed both the modes of interaction which applied to 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' states.

It is thus hardly surprising that it was the Japanese, who were far more interested in being judged by the social standards of the Society, who emulated this particular characteristic of the Society in the process of their socialisation. They carefully used the 'civilised' language of diplomacy (by referring to international law, for example) in their intercourse with both the European and Asian states. For the former, this served to demonstrate their civilised identity; for the latter, it served to demarcate Japan from the 'uncivilised' diplomatic practices of the Tributary System. Furthermore, the Japanese also engaged in imperialistic practices aimed at introducing the trappings of 'civilisation' to their 'backward' Asian neighbours.

There is of course a difference between mere mimicry and actual empathy, and we will recall that a state in the 'strategic learning' stage of socialisation is more likely to resort to limited, *ad hoc* adoption of some roles of its new social environment, while a state in the 'emulative learning' stage is more likely to empathise with them.¹¹ With regard to a 'civilised' power's prerogative of intervening in 'barbaric' states, an

⁹ Michael L. Schwalbe, 'Role Taking Reconsidered: Linking Competence and Performance to Social Structure', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* (vol. 18, no. 4, December 1988, pp. 411-436), p. 426. Cf. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 329-330.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 420-421

¹¹ This, Michael L. Schwalbe states, has three dimensions, which is 'a general disposition to enter the perspectives of others...a disposition to strive for accuracy, range, and/or depth...[and] a disposition to seek to reconstruct the other's world-constitutive imagery, or to identify with the responses it evokes, or to do both.' *Ibid.*, p. 419

examination of Japanese sources gives some indication that this 'empathy' or internalisation had taken place among the Japanese elite in the late nineteenth century.

First, as Japan's process of socialisation and its consequent Europeanisation took place, there emerged an increasing disposition among Japanese elites to adopt the viewpoint of the 'civilised' member states of European International Society and see their Asian neighbours as 'uncivilised'.¹² The flip-side of Japanese elites' acceptance of their 'semi-civilised' status, as well as the desire to be seen as a 'civilised' power by the members of European International Society, was a concurrence with the view that other Asian and African polities were (also) 'semi-civilised' or 'savage'. Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of the leading Japanese liberals of the time, wrote in his highly influential *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (*An Outline of the Theory of Civilization*) as follows:

Today, when we discuss world civilisation, the European states and the United States are regarded as the most civilised states (*saijō no bunmeikoku* 最上の文明国). Turkey, China, Japan and other Asian states are considered to be half-civilised (*hankai no kuni* 半開の国), while Africa and Australia are held to be savage countries (*yaban no kuni* 野蛮の国). This view is widely held throughout the world, and the Westerners are extremely proud of their civilizational attainment. Even among those half-civilised and savage states, there is not a single one which accepts the stigma of being half-civilised or savage, makes no attempt to change this status, or dares to boast of itself and claim equality with the Occidental states.¹³

Furthermore, Fukuzawa claimed that this hierarchy was widely accepted throughout this world: 'Why is it that this is so? It is because this [hierarchy] is based on irrefutable reality.'¹⁴

This intellectual development was one consequence of Japan's attempts to attain a 'civilised' identity in European International Society. Drawing on the sociological insights of Emile Durkheim, Iver B. Neumann has argued that the creation of a collective identity, or 'an "in-group" must necessarily entail its demarcation from a number of "out-groups," and that demarcation is an *active* and ongoing part of identity formation.'¹⁵ In case of early Meiji Japan, the fact that the creation of a collective identity as a 'civilised' state took the form of selecting Japan's 'backward' Asian

¹² This intellectual climate is well expressed in the memoirs of Mutsu Munemitsu, the Japanese foreign minister at the time of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1894, although we must bear in mind that he was writing, in part, to defend and justify the Meiji government's policies, and he may have accentuated the differences between the two countries. See Mutsu Munemitsu, *Kenkenroku* (Gordon Mark Berger, trans.). (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982), pp. 27-28. See also Yamamuro Shin'ichi *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia: kijiku, rensa, tōki*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), pp. 44-46

¹³ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, pp. 25-26

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 26

neighbours as the 'uncivilised' 'other' can be seen both as evidence and result of an active process to carve out a 'civilised' identity for Japan based on the social criteria of European International Society.

Second, as the distinction between a now 'civilised' Japan and an 'uncivilised' Asian state became starker in Japanese minds, there were increased calls from the Japanese elite to introduce 'civilisation' into these places. Best known is Fukuzawa Yukichi, whose *Bunmei ron no gairyaku* (published 1875), he had already argued that the world was divided in accordance with the level of 'civilisation', and had categorised China as 'semi-civilised'.¹⁶ Ten years later, exasperated with Korea's slowness in reforms, Fukuzawa now wrote that it was necessary for Japan to 'leave Asia'. Japan's 'backward' Asian neighbours were becoming an embarrassment, and it was necessary 'to leave the ranks of Asia and join Western civilisation. There is no need to treat China and Korea differently because they are our neighbours; *we should deal with them just like Western nations deal with them.*'¹⁷ This, Nishikawa Nagao argues, is an expression that '[led] to an acceptance of conquest and intervention towards semi-civilised or barbarous states...and is an expression of the colonial theory of exporting civilisation'.¹⁸ It also provides evidence of the internalisation of the Janus-faced normative structures of European International Society and of the increasing recognition and acceptance of the 'civilised' states' prerogative to do so.¹⁹

There is also evidence that this view existed among political elites as well. For instance, in 1884 the then Japanese Minister to Russia Hanabusa Yoshimoto (花房義質) questioned in a memorandum to foreign minister Inoue Kaoru whether or not 'the most civilised Asians should join the Europeans in developing barbarous lands and guiding the savages to enlightenment.'²⁰ Hanabusa's document vividly illustrates the choice Japan was facing at the time.²¹ As Tsuda Takako argues, the choice was about

¹⁵ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other*, p. 4

¹⁶ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Bunmei ron no gairyaku*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), p. 25

¹⁷ Fukuzawa Yukichi, 'Datsua ron', collected in Rekishigaku kenkyūkai (eds), *Nihonshi shiryō* (vol. 4): *kindai*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1997), p. 187. Emphasis added.

¹⁸ Nishikawa Nagao, *Chikyū jidai no minzoku, bunka riron*, p. 94. Note, however, that while Fukuzawa's views were similar to those of Western colonists, he was not always consistent as regards the efficacy of force in introducing 'civilisation'. See Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea 1868-1910: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations*, pp. 138-139. Also see Hatuse Ryūhei, '“Datsua ron” saikō', pp. 19-44.

¹⁹ Fukuzawa's evolving thoughts on the dualistic European International Society are ably discussed by Hatuse Ryūhei, '“Datsua ron” saikō', pp. 19-44.

²⁰ Itō Hirobumi (ed), *Hisho ruisan: gaikō hen* (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Hisho ruisan kankō kai, 1936), p. 186.

²¹ Hanabusa was writing in the context of the ongoing Sino-French war over Vietnam and calling for the occupation of Taiwan to prevent France's occupation of the island. However, there are some points

...whether Japan would attempt to face the invading West as a member of Asia, or assume the identity of a Western power and 'enlighten' and 'develop' backward Asia....It is significant that this statement comes from Hanabusa, who was Japanese Minister to Korea charged with carrying out Japan's Korea policy during 1877-1882. Judging from his background, it would be difficult to deny that his statements were close to the understandings of the Japanese government at the time.²²

Such acceptance of 'civilising' prerogatives did not occur wholesale, however. As noted previously, there were many who were suspicious of blindly accepting 'Western' values, viewing traditional civilisation as something worth maintaining. Consequently, Japan's identity as a 'civiliser' was sometimes discussed in a different form, 'not only as a disseminator of occidental values towards the orient and a representative of the orient towards the occident, but [as] the creator of a new civilisation which emerged from a harmony of Eastern and Western civilisations'.²³ As Yamamuro Shin'ichi notes, however, the very fact that Japan was assumed to have attained the best of *both* cultures of the Orient and Occident 'had to be based on the assumption that Japan had become civilised by undergoing a process of Westernisation'²⁴ and attained the highest level of European 'civilisation', and the intellectual influences of European International Society continued to lurk behind Japan's ideology of 'civilising' its 'backward' Asian neighbours.

Punishing 'savages' in the name of 'civilisation': the 1874 Japanese expedition to Taiwan

While the annexation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom was a part of Japan's attempt to show its ability to adhere to the more legal requirements of European International Society, the Japanese expedition to Taiwan in 1874 merits our attention as a more explicit

which indicate that this statement can be seen as evidence of Japan's socialisation into the Janus-faced European International Society. First, Hanabusa makes clear that the choice over whether Japan should 'civilise' its Asian neighbours or not is an overarching choice that must be made before any strategic concern is met. The other grand strategy for Japan is to defend itself against the encroaching West without joining the ranks of the 'civilised' powers that interfere in 'barbarous' states. In this statement, we see the transitional nature of Japan's identity of the time. Second, we must take note of the nature of the document and its author. The document was written as a policy recommendation for foreign minister Inoue Kaoru, and reached the highest levels of political decision-makers in Japan. Hanabusa had previously been the Minister to Korea, and judging that he was given positions in Russia and Korea, both important states to Japan's strategic and economic interest, seems to indicate that he was trusted by his immediate superiors and his views were treated seriously by the ministry.

²² Tsuda Takako, 'Sen happyaku hachijū nendai ni okeru nippon seifu no higashi ajia seisaku tenkai to rekkkyō', *Shigaku zasshi* (vol. 91, no. 12, December 1982, pp. 1-33), p. 20

²³ Yamamuro Shin'ichi *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia*, p. 46

²⁴ *ibid.*

manifestation of the dualistic nature of the Society and its effects on the entry of non-European states.

The Japanese expedition to Taiwan has been subject to various interpretations by historians. Leonard Gordon argues that the Taiwan expedition constituted an 'abortive colonial venture'. He points to the careful military and colonisation planning which took place as early as 1872, well before the actual sending of the troops. This, combined with 'the anxiety for a favourable settlement of the Ryūkyū question...and the impact of a growing national consciousness in Japan lend credence to the contention that the expedition was a serious colonization effort.'²⁵

Another view is to analyse the incident primarily through the lens of domestic politics.²⁶ Marlene J. Mayo argues that in 1874 Japan was experiencing unprecedented domestic unrest. A row over sending an expedition to Korea had split the Meiji government, resulting in the resignation of leading figures such as Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛), Soejima Taneomi (副島種臣), and Etō Shinpei (江藤新平). To make matters worse for the remaining Meiji leaders, *samurai* resentment (exacerbated by government attempts to reduce their stipends) resulted in an assassination attempt on Iwakura on 14th January 1874. On 3rd February, a *samurai* rebellion broke out in Saga (佐賀). The Meiji leaders, Mayo argues, needed some form of means by which to divert simmering (predominantly *samurai*) resentment away from government policies. 'The Taiwan affair', she argues, 'should not be treated as an "abortive colonial venture," though that element was certainly not lacking, but rather as older arguments would have it: a safety valve.'²⁷

Mōri Toshihiko, meanwhile, takes a view which brings together the two strands. He is critical of Mayo's arguments, claiming that the detailed planning which went into the expedition suggests that venture was more than just a 'passive, *ad hoc* action they [the Meiji leadership] were forced to adopt' in light of domestic unrests.²⁸ He notes that while the Japanese government was at pains to claim that the 'object in sending officers to Formosa [was] to inquire into the fact that our people met with cruel treatment from

²⁵ Leonard Gordon, 'Japan's Abortive Colonial Venture in Taiwan, 1874', *Journal of Modern History* (vol. 37, no. 2, June 1965, pp. 171-185), p. 185

²⁶ This view is expressed in Hilary Conroy, 'Japanese Nationalism and Expansionism', *The American Historical Review* (vol. 60, no. 4, July 1955, pp. 818-829); Marlene J. Mayo, 'The Korean Crisis of 1873 and Early Meiji Foreign Policy', *Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 31, no. 4, August 1972, pp. 793-819); Iriye, 'Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status', pp. 289-290; and Iwata, *Ōkubo Toshimichi*.

²⁷ Mayo, 'The Korean Crisis of 1873 and Early Meiji Foreign Policy', p. 818

²⁸ Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*. (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1996), p. iv

savages and stop recurrence',²⁹ Japanese aspirations to assuming the role of a colonial power were visible in a number of aspects.³⁰ For a start, the office that was specially established to oversee the expedition was given the official English title of 'Colonization Office', while Ōkuma Shigenobu, its head, was designated as 'Minister of Colonization'. Furthermore, there existed detailed plans for the colonisation, which serves to refute the aforementioned arguments that the Taiwan expedition was merely a 'safety valve' for domestic discontent. There is also evidence that Ōkuma had ordered the recruitment of personnel to assist the colonisation effort, and there existed plans which 'called for stationing military colonists at several points along the east coast, and it laid out a plan for troops to establish small branch camps that would form the basis of a permanent presence in the aboriginal territory.'³¹ However, while he does pay greater attention to the colonial desires towards Taiwan which existed well before 1874, Mōri also places heavy emphasis on the domestic political scene. He points towards the leadership crisis of the end of 1873, and states that one reason for the Taiwan expedition was the Meiji leadership's 'pressing need for a visible performance' that would shore up their domestic legitimacy.³²

²⁹ Japanese foreign minister Terashima Munenori's telegram to Shinagawa, Japanese Consul in Shanghai, 14th April 1874, in Ian Nish (ed), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (part I, series E, vol. 21: Treaty Revision and Sino-Japanese Dispute over Taiwan, 1868, 1876). (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1994), p. 231. The telegram instructs Shinagawa to 'contradict' any 'false rumour' that would not correspond with the official explanation. In any event, there is a strong possibility that this telegram was a smokescreen, as LeGendre's memorandum had made clear that 'in order not to provoke unnecessary foreign opposition, the "ostensible object" of the expedition would be to punish the aborigines who had murdered the Ryūkyūans in 1871, while "its real object will be the annexation of Aboriginal Formosa."' See Robert Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan', *The American Historical Review* (vol. 107, no. 2, April 2002, pp. 388-418), pp. 396-397.

³⁰ It appears that the Western powers were not ignorant of this either: Robert Eskildsen notes that '[l]eaks about the expedition plagued the government in April, and the expedition's colonial purpose seems to have been an open secret among the foreign community throughout the treaty ports of East Asia'. Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', pp. 397-398. British Minister to Japan, Sir Harry Parkes, seems to confirm Eskildsen's point in his despatch to Thomas Wade on 4th April 1874, where he noted: 'I believe that if the present expedition succeeds in securing a footing, it will be followed by a large force of the unemployed samurai, and that the occupation of so much of Formosa as they can take will follow.' Parkes was quite critical of the Japanese efforts (this could have been connected to his interest in safeguarding British commercial interests in East Asia), stating in the same despatch: 'To my mind, the Japanese are making a false step; in order to gratify national conceit they are incurring unnecessary expense, and are risking collision with the Chinese'. See Ian Nish (ed), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (Part I, Series E, Vol. 21: Treaty Revision and Sino-Japanese Dispute over Taiwan, 1868, 1876). (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1994), p. 234

³¹ Robert Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', p. 397. The author of this memorandum is unknown.

³² Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, p. 123

These studies have added much to our understanding of the political processes leading up to the Taiwan incident, but they have deficiencies. The most conspicuous shortcoming is that these accounts give an incomplete picture: they decouple Japan's domestic politics from the international context in which the decision to send the expedition took place. Political decision-making takes place as a result of an interaction between domestic and international political spheres;³³ a consideration of international factors is necessary in discussing the Taiwan expedition of 1874. Domestic-centred arguments presented above ignore how the imperialist intellectual climate of the late-nineteenth century affected Japan's decision to send troops to Taiwan.³⁴

This approach consequently portrays a leadership somehow able to instrumentally use 'foreign expansion' as a means to protect its interests. In this sense, the Meiji leaders are seen as totally detached from the international normative context of the time. While Gordon and Mōri do mention that colonial desires towards Taiwan certainly did seem to pervade the Japanese leaders' minds, they do not explain 'why colonial desires [towards Taiwan] remained so deep-rooted among the Japanese leaders'.³⁵ This point becomes more salient when we consider the fact that there were moves among the Meiji leadership to send a military force to Taiwan *before* one of the first large-scale samurai rebellions, the Saga rebellion, broke out in February 1874.³⁶

The argument presented here is that as an aspirant member of the Society, Japan also sought to adopt an identity of a 'civilised' Great Power. While the expedition to Taiwan did indeed have its uses within Japanese domestic politics, internationally, it also constituted a move to reinvent Japan's identity within European International Society. In this sense, the expedition was not only a matter of the Meiji government shoring up its domestic legitimacy as Mōri argues; it was also an attempt to secure *international* legitimacy as a 'civilised' member of the Society. In adopting this particular interpretation, this study aligns itself with the argument forwarded by Robert Eskildsen that 'Japanese colonialism happened concurrently with and contributed much

³³ The domestic-international divide and the need for an integration of the two levels of analysis are, for example, discussed in Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations*, pp. 29-36 and C. W. Braddick, *Japan and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1950-1964: In the Shadow of the Monolith*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 3-6.

³⁴ This point is also made by Robert Eskildsen, 'Meiji nana nen taiwan shuppei no shokuminchiteki sokumen' in Meiji ishinshi gakkai (eds), *Meiji ishin to ajia*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2001), p. 62

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Sophia Su-fei Yen, *Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations 1836-1874*. (Hamden: The Shoe String Press, 1965), p. 210

to Japan's modernizing process',³⁷ and attempts to place early Japanese imperialism in its proper international historical context.

The Taiwanese question: the early diplomatic phase

The origins of the expedition to Taiwan can be traced back to 1871, when a group of Ryūkyūans encountered a severe storm while on sea. They eventually reached Taiwan, where the native tribes (牡丹社 known in Japanese as *Botansha*, or *Mudanshe* in Chinese) murdered 54 out of 66 of them. The survivors were eventually rescued by the Qing authorities and handed over to the Ryūkyūan trading house in Fuzhou in July 1872. The incident first came to the attention of the Japanese government around May 1872, after Japanese diplomat Yanagiwara Sakimitsu (柳原前光 also known as Yanagiwara Zenkō) discovered a report of the incident in the official Beijing Gazetteer (京報 *jingbao*) and forwarded it to the foreign minister Soejima Taneomi back in Tokyo. While Yanagiwara himself does not appear to have regarded the incident as particularly important at the time,³⁸ the incident was soon taken up by a number of politicians and military personnel,³⁹ who demanded that Japan send a punitive expedition to the islands to punish the Taiwanese 'savages'. These demands were based on the assumption that the Ryūkyū Kingdom and its people were Japanese citizens.

Japanese colonial intentions became increasingly evident with the arrival of American Charles W. LeGendre to Japan. LeGendre, who had served as U.S. consul in Amoy between 1866 and 1872,⁴⁰ had experience of seeking compensation from the Qing for the murder of U.S. citizens on Taiwan, where he had argued 'from international law that, unless China sustained the exercise of its jurisdiction over the aboriginal territory, in other words unless China civilized the savages who lived there, it could not claim sovereignty over the territory.'⁴¹ Although he failed in his objectives, he gained considerable knowledge of Taiwan in the process. In October 1872, en route to Washington, LeGendre stopped over in Japan, where American Minister Charles

³⁷ Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', p. 389

³⁸ See Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, pp. 3-4.

³⁹ This included Ijichi Sadaka, Kabayama Sukenori, a military officer of Kagoshima who later became Taiwan's first Japanese governor, and Saigō Tsugumichi, the brother of Saigō Takamori.

⁴⁰ Present day Xiamen (廈門).

⁴¹ Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', p. 395. Eskildsen has also gives a detailed overview of LeGendre's negotiations with the Chinese during his tenure as consul of Amoy. See Eskildsen, 'Meiji nana nen taiwan shuppei no shokuminchiteki sokumen', pp. 63-66.

DeLong introduced him to foreign minister Soejima.⁴² Here, DeLong pointed out Taiwan's good climate and abundant natural resources, and claimed: 'because of geographical advantage, many foreigners have their eye on the island. Even though China does claim it as hers, if its orders cannot be carried out in the island, it is unoccupied, and is there for the taking.'⁴³ While it is difficult to assess the true intentions behind DeLong's statement,⁴⁴ Soejima's interest in colonising the island was ignited. He declared that 'Japan would also desire the island (我にても所望の地に有之候)', to which the U.S. Minister replied rather vaguely that although the 'U.S. did not occupy foreign lands it was quite happy to see states friendly to [the U.S.] occupy others' lands and develop them.'⁴⁵ Japan's colonial ambitions began to take a more concrete form once they decided to employ LeGendre as a foreign policy advisor. LeGendre subsequently submitted a series of memorandums for Soejima. His memorandums written in late 1872 gave detailed plans for the colonisation of the east coast of Taiwan. LeGendre's colonisation proposals referred to the necessity to 'civilise' the 'savage' lands. It justified Japan's sending of troops by claiming that 'in accordance with international law, a Great Power could take over the sovereignty of "savage lands", provided it introduced the trappings of "civilisation"'.⁴⁶

LeGendre's arguments mirrored the norms of the 'civilising' mode of interaction in European International Society, which allowed for 'uncivilised' entities' sovereignty to be divided. In utilising these arguments for the Taiwanese case, 'LeGendre introduced into Japanese government discourse the idea, derived from international law, that bringing civilization to the "savages" of Taiwan justified colonizing the territory.'⁴⁷ LeGendre's memorandum assumed (regardless of the actual collective judgement by the members of the Society) that Japan had a level of 'civilisation' on par with those of the European powers, while it denigrated the Taiwanese natives to 'barbaric' status. It was this elevated social status which allowed the Japanese the prerogative of sending troops in the name of 'civilisation' and justifying their entitlement to sovereignty over Taiwan.

⁴² DeLong appears to have done this to curry favour with the Japanese government and increase his and American influence over Japan. See Yen, *Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations 1836-1874*, p. 160

⁴³ Gaimushō chōsabu, *Dainippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 7). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai kyōkai, 1939), p. 5

⁴⁴ Mōri Toshihiko, for instance, claims that DeLong did not intend to encourage Japanese colonial ambitions on Taiwan. Such a move, he contends, could potentially upset the balance of power in East Asia, and cause considerable jealousy.

⁴⁵ Gaimushō chōsabu, *Dainippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 7). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai kyōkai, 1939), p. 6

⁴⁶ Eskildsen, 'Meiji nana nen taiwan shuppei no shokuminchiteki sokumen', p. 71. Also see Yen, *Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations 1836-1874*, p. 179

⁴⁷ Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', p. 396

The Meiji leaders, for their part, 'accepted the link [proposed above by LeGendre] between sovereignty, effective governance and civilisation, and their policies towards Taiwan did not alternate from this fundamental principle.'⁴⁸ The utilisation of LeGendre's arguments would bring them two advantages. First, the invoking of the normative principles of European International Society could help demonstrate Japan's 'civilised' status to the Society's members. Second, the Japanese would also be able to shore up their claims to 'civilised' status by *legally* occupying Taiwan and obtaining a colony, a hallmark of a 'civilised' state.

Demonstrating 'civilised' identity in China: Sino-Japanese talks over Taiwan and the military expedition

Before the military expedition could be sent, however, it was necessary for the Japanese government to lay the diplomatic groundwork. As any military adventure overseas would be subject to close scrutiny by the Western powers, if Japan was to be deemed a 'civilised' state, it was necessary for the Japanese elite to couch their reasons for their invasion of Taiwan in terms of international law. The Japanese government's claims to legitimacy in sending a military mission to Taiwan (and even colonising the island) was based primarily on LeGendre's suggestions, which were based on the stipulations of effective sovereignty. The Japanese leaders needed to demonstrate that Taiwan was indeed not 'effectively' governed by the Chinese authorities, and to this end, 'it was thought best to seek a clarification from the Chinese government about its position regarding aboriginal Formosa'.⁴⁹

The Japanese diplomatic mission to China, which was despatched in March 1873, was led personally by the foreign minister Soejima Taneomi. Soejima's ostensive objective was to congratulate the Tongzhi emperor on reaching maturity and ratify the Sino-Japanese treaty of friendship, concluded on September 1871. However, the mission had other objectives, many of them with direct implications on the Tributary System. Apart from clarifying the Qing's relationship with Taiwan, Soejima also intended to assert Japanese claims to the Ryūkyū islands and question Korea's relations with the Chinese empire (to be discussed later).

⁴⁸ Eskildsen, 'Meiji nana nen taiwan shuppei no shokuminchiteki sokumen', p. 66

⁴⁹ Wayne C. McWilliams, 'East Meets East', p. 242

Soejima also used his trip to China as a stage to demonstrate Japan's new status as a 'civilised' power to its Asian neighbour, as well as the Western powers. Soejima's foreign policy has conventionally been known as '*kokken gaikō* (国権外交 national rights diplomacy)'. This has generally been understood as a nationalistic policy aimed at redressing Japan's national humiliations and restoring Japan's sovereign rights and international 'prestige' in order to allow her to stand on an equal footing with the Western powers.⁵⁰ What is noteworthy here is that this was done by referring to the social standards of European International Society. While Soejima had a Confucian intellectual background and was famous for his loyalty towards the imperial throne, this did not mean that he was bent on reasserting Japan's honour on the terms of Japan's traditional foreign relations. Indeed, despite his intellectual upbringing, he was by no means a die-hard traditionalist. He had received instruction from the missionary Guido F. Verbeck and was not adverse to Western intellectual influences; he favoured modernisation and admitted to the superiority of certain Western institutions. More importantly for our discussion, Soejima appears to have wanted to restore Japanese prestige on the terms of the social norms of European International Society. He was 'committed to conducting Japanese diplomacy according to international law, and made great efforts to become more thoroughly acquainted with these standards of diplomacy which were essentially western.'⁵¹

Soejima's agenda of demonstrating Japan's newly-acquired 'civilised' identity was clear from the outset. He set sail to China (accompanied by LeGendre) in Western-style gunboats manned entirely by a Japanese crew. Upon arrival in Tianjin, Soejima and his entourage even opted for Western-style accommodation (much to Li Hongzhang's disgust),⁵² a move calculated 'to accentuate the modernity of [Japan] and draw a contrast between Japan's progress and China's stolid traditionalism.'⁵³ Once in Beijing, Soejima became involved in a diplomatic wrangle over the etiquette for the audience with the emperor. While the Chinese insisted Soejima perform the *kowtow*, the latter refused resolutely, claiming that it was far too humiliating for a representative

⁵⁰ This is based on the discussions of Soejima's '*kokken gaikō*' in Mayo, 'The Korean Crisis of 1873 and Early Meiji Foreign Policy', p. 804, and McWilliams, *Soejima Taneomi: Statesman of Early Meiji Japan, 1868-1874*. (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1973), pp. 139-140

⁵¹ Wayne C. McWilliams, *Soejima Taneomi*, p. 142

⁵² Li Hongzhang was then serving as viceroy of Zhili province, and resided in Tianjin. As he was one of the most powerful and diplomatically experienced high officials, foreign dignitaries made a point of making a call upon Li at his headquarters. In this particular instance, Soejima did the same.

⁵³ McWilliams, 'East Meets East', p. 248

of a sovereign state to show symbolic subservience to the Chinese emperor.⁵⁴ Here we see Japan's attempts to incorporate the organising principle of sovereignty of European International Society, which was based on 'sovereign equality'; it was imperative that Japan be seen as either superior or 'equal' with the Qing. Soejima also argued that, as ambassador, he outranked all the Western diplomats based in Beijing, and was entitled to an imperial audience first. Soejima liberally cited international law to bolster his arguments, and lectured the Chinese on their conservatism and lack of knowledge of Western diplomacy. The Chinese eventually gave way, and Soejima was eventually to meet the Tongzhi emperor ahead of the Western ministers.

While much of his time in Beijing with the *zongli yamen* ministers was taken up with arguments over the audience question, Soejima had not lost sight of his earlier mission of clarifying the Taiwan issue with the Chinese. This took place at the same meeting on 21st June 1873 where the Ryūkyū issue was also discussed between *zongli yamen* ministers Mao Changxi (毛昶熙) and Dong Xun (董恂)⁵⁵ and Japanese diplomat Yanagiwara Sakimitsu.⁵⁶ Yanagiwara demanded to know how the Qing intended to deal with the Taiwanese aborigines, to which the Chinese replied: 'There are two kinds of savages on this island. One type has come under our rule, which we call "ripe savages", and the other is beyond our influence, and we have no means of controlling them (此島ノ蕃民ニ生熟兩種アリ。従前我王化ニ服シタルヲ熟蕃ト謂ヒテ、之ヲ化外ニ置キ、甚ダ理スルヲ為ササルナリ)'.⁵⁷ Yanagiwara replied that since the Qing had failed to punish the savages, 'Taiwan was in danger of being occupied by foreign powers wanting to punish the savages...posing a threat to our southern waters and islands. For this reason, we are preparing to send an expedition [to Taiwan] immediately'.⁵⁸ He left the

⁵⁴ This was somewhat hypocritical of Soejima, for he himself had rejected an objection from a British chargé R. G. Watson in Japan that the Meiji emperor remained seated when the foreign diplomats presented their credentials. This, the latter argued in similar vein to Soejima in China, was against Western protocol and insulting. Soejima had rebuffed these requests: citing international law, he told Watson that a sovereign state was perfectly entitled to decide its own diplomatic protocol without interference from foreign states.

⁵⁵ It will be recalled that Dong Xun was the minister of the *Zongli yamen* that had written the preface for the *Wanguo gongfa*, a Chinese translation of Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law*.

⁵⁶ Soejima himself did not attend. He was still embroiled in a dispute with the Chinese over the appropriate etiquette needed for an audience with the Tongzhi emperor. In order to pressure the Chinese into accepting his demands, Soejima had decided to inform the Chinese of his imminent departure from China. He therefore needed to maintain his tactical withdrawal in order to maintain the impression that he was busy preparing for his journey back to Japan, although with such important agendas such as Taiwan and Ryūkyū to discuss, it is unlikely that he had not given detailed instructions to his juniors.

⁵⁷ 'Soejima taishi tekishin gairyaku' in Meiji bunka kenkyūkai (eds), *Meiji bunka zenshū* (vol. 11): *gaikō hen*. (Tokyo: Nippon hyōronsha, 1978), p. 71

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 71

meeting soon afterwards without reaching an agreement with his Chinese counterparts. This was the last time the Taiwan and Ryūkyū issue was discussed during the Soejima mission.⁵⁹ Despite the fact that both sides had failed to reach some form of agreement to deal with the aboriginals in Taiwan, Soejima's mission was hailed as a great success. For a start, he was successful in resolving the imperial audience question in Japan's favour. In so doing, he demonstrated to China and the Western powers that Japan shared their concern of impressing upon the Chinese 'that the fiction of Chinese universal sovereignty was untenable...and establish once and for all the fact that the Chinese Emperor was but one sovereign among many.'⁶⁰ This was, Wayne C. McWilliams argues:

...in effect declaring Japan's new identity; no longer was Japan to be identified together with China as a tradition-bound, exclusive and isolationist Asian country beyond the pale of international intercourse. Instead, Japan would line up with the nations of the modern West and challenge its reluctant Asian neighbors to abandon the closed world of the past for the brave new world.⁶¹

From the point of paving the way for a military expedition to Taiwan, Soejima was, in the eyes of the Japanese, equally successful. He had managed to get the Qing officials to admit that some areas of Taiwan were beyond their control. The tactics he used can, at the very least, be described as dubious: by threatening a diplomatic rupture over the imperial audience issue, he diverted the attention of the *zongli yamen* officials away from Taiwan (as well as Ryūkyū). Furthermore, the sudden manner in which Yanagiwara had enquired about the two islands caught the officials by surprise, and they were unable to give measured answers. Soejima of course exploited these Chinese slips to his full advantage. Despite the Chinese had not in fact given their consent to sending a military mission to Taiwan, he reported to Tokyo that 'the Qing ministers have answered that the savages and their land [Taiwan] was an area beyond China's influence. They did not have any more to add, and things have gone smoothly for us.'⁶²

Soejima never got to implement his plans for sending an expedition to Taiwan, for he became involved in the controversy over sending troops to Korea (the *seikanron*

⁵⁹ Soejima avoided the topic of Taiwan and Ryūkyū with his conversations with Li Hongzhang, which took place en route back to Japan. Although Li had already been informed of the conversations with Yanagiwara from the *zongli yamen* officials, he thought that the issue had been handled satisfactorily; furthermore, he appears to have been more concerned with Japanese designs on Korea, and does not appear to have seen the necessity for further discussion. McWilliams, 'East Meets East', p. 273

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 252.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 275. Also see Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, pp. 56-57

⁶² Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, p. 57. Also see Yen, *Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations 1836-1874*, p. 189.

controversy), which resulted his resignation from office. The new leadership, led by Iwakura Tomomi and Ōkubo Toshimichi, was dominated by those who had opposed sending the Japanese military to Korea. Nevertheless, the Taiwan expedition itself remained on the leadership's agenda, suggesting that their policy regarding Taiwan would closely follow that of Soejima's. The new leadership continued to solicit the advice of individuals such as LeGendre, Japanese diplomats Yanagiwara Sakimitsu and Tei Einei, American legal advisor to the Foreign Ministry (*gaimushō*) Erasmus Peshine Smith, and Fukushima Tadashige, all of whom, to different degrees, suggested colonisation of the island.⁶³ Indeed, the advice forwarded by these individuals continued in very much the same vein as before. LeGendre, who had stayed on as advisor to the government, continued to argue that '[u]nder international law a civilized country is permitted to bring the uncivilized aboriginies up to a civilized level....Japan, is a civilized country, and now is taking over the task which had been neglected by the Chinese Government';⁶⁴ Smith echoed his sentiments.

Interestingly, Yanagiwara and Tei also noted that Japan's expedition was about introducing 'civilisation' into Taiwan. Their proposals included that Japanese consuls should be sent to the island, where they 'were to undertake "public education" by telling the Chinese in these places the sincere desire of Japan to open up the aboriginal territory and civilize the tribes.'⁶⁵ It was upon these suggestions that the despatching of the troops to Taiwan became policy, following a cabinet meeting on 6th February 1874.⁶⁶ While there were some complications arising from protests by the Western diplomatic

⁶³ See Yen, *Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations 1836-1874*, pp. 194-203 and Eskildsen, 'Meiji nana nen taiwan shuppei no shokuminchiteki sokumen', pp. 77-88.

⁶⁴ Cited in Yen, *Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations 1836-1874*, p. 196

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 202

⁶⁶ Kido Takayoshi was the main dissenter in this meeting. He argued that the costs of expedition would be prohibitively high and should be postponed, although his protests ultimately fell on deaf ears. See Kido's diary entries of 2nd November 1874 (p. 93); 21st November 1874 (p. 100); 6th December 1874 (p. 107) in Kido Takayoshi *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi* (vol. 3) (Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota, trans). (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1986). See also Kurihara Jun, 'Taiwan jiken (1871-1874): ryūkyū seisaku no tenki to shite no taiwan shuppei', *Shigaku zasshi* (vol. 87, no. 9, September 1978, pp. 60-85), pp. 66-67. Masakazu Iwata also argues that it 'is possible that Kido may have agreed to the general principle of the policy, but could not force himself to agree to its implementation...inherent *han* jealousies among Meiji leaders had not abated, and the fact that the Formosa project was essentially Satsuma-inspired was distasteful to a Chōshū man' See Iwata, *Ōkubo Toshimichi*, p. 196. Mōri Toshihiko has also submitted that the *seikanron* controversy was more a factional power struggle rather than a disagreement over policy (Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, pp. 106-121), and this seems to lend some support to Iwata's thesis. However, it should also be mentioned that recent scholarship has noted that 'no records exist that suggest that anybody in the government opposed colonization [of Taiwan] per se.' Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', p. 396

corps,⁶⁷ the chastising of the 'savages' took place as planned. The Japanese troops landed on Taiwan on May 1874, capturing and executing the aboriginal chieftain, eventually securing the surrender of the aboriginal tribe by July.

As in the political elites' pronouncements of Japan's 'civilising' mission towards the Taiwanese aborigines, Japanese newspaper reports of military activities also reflected the demonstrative purpose of the Taiwan expedition.⁶⁸ Woodblock prints portrayed Japanese troops in a 'progressive' light: the soldiers were often depicted in Western clothing and hairstyle, which were 'Eurocentric symbols of power characteristic of the *bunmei kaika*'.⁶⁹ The Taiwanese aborigines, on the other hand, were frequently shown as cannibals, even though there was scant evidence of this.⁷⁰ This exaggerated depiction of their 'savagery' again served to draw a stark contrast between the Taiwanese natives and the Japanese, further enhancing the latter's 'civilised' status. As Robert Eskildsen argues:

The way that commercial sources accentuated the savagery of the aborigines stands out as striking...The systematic and persistent nature of the references to aboriginal savagery show...that the exaggeration could not have been an accident or anomaly...The fact that Japanese commercial sources remain silent about why they exaggerated the aborigines' savagery makes it difficult to draw hard and fast conclusions, but one effect of the exaggeration is clear: it increased the perceived cultural distance that separated the Japanese from the aborigines. In the context of the 1870s, a larger cultural distance helped both to validate Japanese claims for higher status in the Western-dominated international order and to eliminate a middle ground between civilization and savagery that might trap the Japanese in a less than salutary solidarity with other East Asian peoples.⁷¹

Analytical remarks

Japan's early colonial adventure in Taiwan offers a stark example of the effects of socialisation into a dual European International Society. As discussed previously,

⁶⁷ The Western diplomats were concerned that an invasion of Taiwan would precipitate a war between China and Japan and disrupt their commercial interests in East Asia. To this end, they sought to maintain neutrality demanded that any foreign advisers and ships registered in their respective states be withdrawn from use in the expedition. See British Minister to China Thomas Wade's despatch on 30th April 1874, in Ian Nish (ed), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (part I, series E, vol. 21: Treaty Revision and Sino-Japanese Dispute over Taiwan, 1868, 1876). (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1994), p. 227.

⁶⁸ The following section draws heavily on Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages'.

⁶⁹ Robert Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', pp. 406-407. While the domestic contests over Japanese identity is largely beyond the scope of this study, it must be noted that these prints also carried images of symbols which were associated with the traditional samurai, reflecting the often contested, transitional nature of Japanese identity in the 1870s.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 400

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 402

Japan's decision to seek full membership into the Society entailed seeking the identity of a Europeanised, 'civilised' state. This drive, which reached a peak in the 1870s, took the form of 'civilisation and enlightenment', or *bunmei kaika*. One of the international manifestations of this drive was the adoption of the prerogatives of a 'civilised' power in the late-nineteenth century: the right to enlighten 'uncivilised' polities and peoples.

The invasion of Taiwan in 1874 also symbolised a new development in Japan's engagement with its East Asian neighbours; namely the emergence of China and Korea as Japan's 'uncivilised' other.⁷² By contrasting the Japanese as 'civilisers' with the 'savages', the Japanese accentuated their different status in the hierarchical Society. In doing so, they 'eliminated the middle ground between civilization and savagery that might trap Japan in an inferior status to the West.'⁷³ This took place in the context of an increasing sense of superiority over China and Korea in the 1870s, both among the political elite and Japan's civil society.⁷⁴

The invasion of Taiwan can also be seen as a Japanese challenge to the East Asian international order. It will be recalled that prior to the expansion of European International Society, Japan, while challenging China's prestige within the Tributary System, sought to do so *within* the normative structure of the system. It sought to place itself on a higher position within the hierarchy of states by appropriating China's position as the 'middle kingdom' or 'centre of the universe' and seeking tributary relations from its neighbours, the Ryūkyū Kingdom and Korea. While the maintenance of large numbers of tributary states and the observance of elaborate, hierarchical rituals were markers of prestige within the East Asian order, colonial possessions (characterised by outright direct rule) were not. However, by the 1870s, Japan was

⁷² While we must caution against historical essentialism, this particular view of Asia as an 'uncivilised' area which needed to be 'civilised' under Japanese tutelage was one which was to persist into the twentieth century.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 393

⁷⁴ According to Itō Yukio, there was an increasing confidence in Japan's ability to 'modernise' and concurrent disdain towards the Chinese and Koreans as 'stubborn' or 'backward'. Itō Yukio, 'Nisshin senzen no chūgoku, chōsen ninshiki no keisei to gaikōron' in Furuya Tetsuo (ed), *Kindai nihon no ajia ninshiki*. (Kyoto: Kyōto daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, 1994), pp. 111-119. This by no means implies that the Japanese continued to hold these views throughout the Meiji period: while views towards Korea did indeed tend to be condescending, Qing military build-up in the 1880s increased Japan's fear towards China, and resulted in more positive appraisals of China's capacity for modernisation. It is interesting to note that fear for China's embryonic power persists to this very day in the form of the 'China threat' thesis, and continues to be debated among the Japanese today. See for example, Amako Satoshi (ed), *Chūgoku wa kyōi ka*. (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1997).

seeking prestige within a fundamentally different international order, where colonies were an integral part of a 'civilised' states' prestige.⁷⁵

Not surprisingly, Japan's Taiwan expedition was seen as a great threat to China,⁷⁶ and intensified Chinese efforts to 'self-strengthen' and build up the country's military capability.⁷⁷ Two further changes in the East Asian international order also began to take place. First, the Qing altered its governance of Taiwan, which had previously been characterised by relatively weak rule. Theoretically, Motegi Toshio argues, 'Chinese attitudes towards "barbarians" that came under their rule but were beyond the pale of Chinese civilisation was a passive one. They were "placed beyond the pale (化外 *huawai*) and not governed" and left alone.'⁷⁸ While the extent to which this theory was practiced is debatable, Japan's actions certainly had the effect of making this traditional, indirect form of rule both legally and practically impossible. Motegi Toshio argues, 'traditional, indirect rule in the Chinese periphery was not suited for confronting the modern international order and its "power", "international law" and modern territorial sovereignty.'⁷⁹ In recognition of this fact, the Qing strengthened its rule, and took steps to establish a form of a more visible, 'direct governance' on the island. Shen Baozhen suggested that the Fujian governor spend time in Taiwan and 'improve administrative organisations by creating additional prefectures in the north of the island, thereby increasing the penetration of Qing rule throughout Taiwan.'⁸⁰ Mining projects and the laying of telegraphic lines were carried out by Ding Richang between 1876-1877, and migrants from the mainland were invited to settle on the island. In October 1885, Taiwan became a province, and the 'Sinification' of the aboriginals was encouraged.⁸¹

⁷⁵ The emergent differences in both states' identities were increasingly obvious in the Sino-Japanese talks following the invasion of Taiwan. While the Japanese envoy Ōkubo Toshimichi referred to international law in his arguments, the Chinese Grand Secretary Wenxiang proposed not to solve the dispute in accordance with international law, for this was a 'Western concept.' Ōkubo Toshimichi ignored this suggestion. See Gaimushō chōsabu, *Dai nippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 7). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai kyōkai, 1939), p. 230

⁷⁶ Li Hongzhang described Ōkubo Toshimichi, who arrived in China to seek a diplomatic solution to the issue, as 'extremely cunning'. See Li Hongzhang, 'Fu Song Xuefan shi lang', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 6): *pengliao hangao*. (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 3593.

⁷⁷ This can also be seen by Li Hongzhang's calls for greater 'self-strengthening' following Japan's invasion of Taiwan. See 'Fu Guo Zimei junmen', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 6): *pengliao hangao*., pp. 3592-3593.

⁷⁸ Motegi Toshio 'Chūka sekai no "kindai" teki saihei to nippon' in Ōe Shinobu, Asada Kyōji, Mitani Ta'ichirō, Gotō Ken'ichi, Kobayashi Hideo, Takasaki Sōji, Wakabayashi Masatake and Kawamura Minato (eds) *Kindai Nippon to shokuminchi* (vol. 1): *shokuminchi teikoku nippon*. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), p. 70

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 72

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 70

⁸¹ An interesting discussion of the changing symbols of power and prestige in Taiwan following the strengthening of Qing rule and Sinification in Taiwan can be found in Henrietta Harrison, 'Clothing

Second, apart from bringing about important changes in the East Asian international order, the Taiwan incident (coupled with the Japanese annexation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom which took place later) served to further strain Sino-Japanese relations. The incident increased Chinese suspicions over Japanese designs towards its most important tributary state, Korea. It was here where the key actor of the East Asian international order, China, and the new Asian member of European International Society, would finally come to blows for the first time since the sixteenth century.

Dismantling the vestiges of the Tributary System: abolishing the Ryūkyū Kingdom

As Japan's socialisation into European International Society took place, the Ryūkyū Kingdom's position as a tributary state to both China and Japan also began to be questioned. The Ryūkyū Kingdom was experiencing increasing numbers of encounters with European naval vessels in the 1840s. Furthermore, the strategic position of the kingdom was beginning to attract the interest of European diplomats. The turning point for the kingdom's fortunes came with the advent of the Meiji era. The Meiji leadership not only aimed to strengthen Japanese control over the island kingdom; they eventually sought to incorporate it completely into the Japanese sovereign state.⁸² First, the islands' ambiguous status as a 'double-tributary state' (兩属の国 *ryōzoku no kuni*) was altered. The kingdom was forbidden to engage in diplomacy with the Qing, and exclusive Japanese jurisdiction was emphasised. Next, Japan's claims to the islands were consolidated in 1879 by extinguishing the kingdom's separate identity and transforming it into a prefecture of Japan. The islanders were systematically indoctrinated to become loyal citizens of the Japanese state.⁸³

Why did the Ryūkyū Kingdom, which had previously existed with its ambiguous status intact, have to be abolished in the Meiji era? Why did this particular form of 'organised hypocrisy' become increasingly problematic for Japan? One reason that has been forwarded by conventional historical studies is that territorial ambiguities could

and Power on the Periphery of Empire: The Costumes of the Indigenous People of Taiwan', *Positions: East Asian Cultural Critique* (vol. 11, no. 2, 2003, pp. 331-360)

⁸² This is not to say that the process of incorporating the Ryūkyū Kingdom was a linear process: Oguma Eiji states that Meiji leaders such as Ōkuma Shigenobu or Kido Takayoshi did not consider the Ryūkyūans to be 'Japanese', and Itō Hirobumi was of the thought that 'it would be better for Ryūkyū to be incorporated into Japan as a [separate] kingdom.' See Oguma Eiji, *'Nihonjin' no kyōkai*. (Tokyo: Shin'yō sha, 1998), p. 21

⁸³ While an analysis of the process of indoctrinating the Ryūkyūans is beyond the scope of this chapter, a detailed analysis of this process can be found in Oguma Eiji, *'Nihonjin' no kyōkai*. (Tokyo: Shin'yō sha, 1998).

lead to loss of what the Japanese considered to be their territory or spheres of influence.⁸⁴ As the notion of ambiguous borders did not (at least in principle) exist within nineteenth-century European International Society, international law stipulated that such areas could be claimed by another state.⁸⁵ Emmerich de Vattel stipulated in his treatise that '[w]hen...a nation finds a country uninhabited, and without an owner, it may lawfully take possession of it: and after it has sufficiently made known its will in this respect, it cannot be deprived of it by another nation.'⁸⁶ What was meant by 'inhabited' was naturally decided by the Europeans, and 'meant settled and cultivated in the European manner'.⁸⁷ Neither Japan nor China were in a position to effectively oppose the Society in its imposition of this criterion. If they did not satisfy European standards for 'effective governance', they were in danger of losing their claims over what it considered to be its territory or spheres of influence. Under the stipulations of international law, the ambiguous status of the Ryūkyū Kingdom signified Japan had failed to establish effective sovereignty over the islands. This meant that the Chinese – or even worse, the Western powers – could equally lay claims to the islands, thus reducing Japan's line of security against the 'rapacious' European powers.⁸⁸

This fear of 'losing' Japan's periphery was connected to perceptions of the Society held by many of the Japanese elite at this time. Even in the late Tokugawa period,

⁸⁴ Maehira Fusaaki, 'Jūkyū seiki no higashi ajia kokusai kankei to ryūkyū mondai' in Mizoguchi Yūzō, Hamashita Takeshi, Hiraishi Naoaki and Miyajima Hiroshi (eds), *Ajia kara kangaeru* (vol. 3): *shūen kara no rekishi*. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1994), p. 260

⁸⁵ An excellent discussion on the legal aspects of European conquest can be found in Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

⁸⁶ Cited in Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, p. 101

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Indeed, the Japanese had earlier experienced challenges to their claims to the northern island of Ezo (蝦夷 present day Hokkaidō 北海道) by the Russians on the grounds that they had not established effective governance over the area. Similarly, the Japanese political leaders had found that the Bonin Islands (小笠原諸島 Ogasawara shotō in Japanese) surrounding Japan were equally vulnerable to being claimed by the European states on the grounds that they were 'uninhabited'. Indeed, the Bonin Islands were claimed as British territory by explorer Frederick William Beechey in 1827, and British Minister to Japan Sir Rutherford Alcock had pointed out in 1862 that 'the islands had been formally declared the property of the British Crown' and '[i]nasmuch as the islands had been uninhabited at that time...whatever rights Japan might have had to them were considered to have been forfeited.' See Hyman Kublin, 'The Ogasawara Venture (1861-1863)', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (vol. 14, no. 1/2, June 1951, pp. 261-284), p. 277. In a dispute with Japanese officials over ownership over the Bonin Islands, British Minister Harry Parkes stated that geographical proximity did not constitute a legitimate claim if the territory was not effectively governed. Moreover, Parkes added that 'if geographical proximity were to be the deciding factor for territorial claims, it could be argued that Ryūkyū belonged to China'. Cited in Maehira Fusaaki, 'Jūkyū seiki no higashi ajia kokusai kankei to ryūkyū mondai', p. 262. A detailed discussion of the negotiations surrounding Japan's 'sovereignty' over Ezo/Hokkaidō can be found in Uemura Hideaki, '“Hokkaidō”, “Okinawa” no shokuminchika to sono kokusaihō no ronri', *PRIME* (no. 12, March 2000, pp. 55-82) and Taijudō Kanae, 'Meiji shonen ni okeru nippon ryōdo no kakutei to kokusaihō', *Hōgaku ronsō* (vol. 100, no. 5/6, March 1977, pp. 184-211).

rumours were circulating about an impending occupation of the Ryūkyū islands by the Western powers. The members of the Meiji leadership often saw the Western powers and European International Society in threatening terms. Since Japan could not (as yet) match the military prowess of the 'civilised' states, there was a strategic 'need to draw national boundaries as far away from the mainland as possible, and secure a base for national defence'.⁸⁹ Regardless of the Ryūkyū Kingdom's separate identity, the Japanese considered the island kingdom as its sphere of influence that it could little afford to lose to any foreign power.

This chapter, however, introduces a second reason. While not denying that the factors discussed above were important, its main contention is that the continued existence of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, and by extension the vestiges of the Tributary System were becoming increasingly incompatible with the new identity Japan was in the process of adopting. This point has been touched upon to a certain extent by historical studies. Akira Iriye, for instance, notes the importance of state identity, albeit at the domestic level. He defines a 'modern state' as 'a territorial entity in which center and periphery are united in a conception of national unity and defense.'⁹⁰ According to this perspective, it was/is necessary for a government to have clearly defined territorial borders because '[n]ationalistic sentiment could easily be mobilized through propaganda and the press whenever it was felt that a country's justifiable territorial claim was being violated; on the other hand, the government would be held accountable...and its authority...seriously undermined' in the case of failure.⁹¹

While this is true, the case of the Ryūkyū Kingdom highlights some limitations to this perspective. First, while Iriye's argument assumes an *a priori* understanding of what Japan's territorial borders were, in the early days of the Meiji era the Japanese leadership themselves were not united in the belief that the Kingdom was *exclusively* an integral part of Japan; the East Asian international order did not necessarily stipulate the need of exclusive jurisdiction. Consequently, while they did believe that the island kingdom belonged to Japan, some members also considered China to have claims over

⁸⁹ Oguma Eiji, *Nihonjin' no kyōkai*, p. 21. Also see Mark R. Peattie, 'Introduction' in Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (eds), *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 8-9, for a brief point about Japan's desire to acquire and maintain certain territorial spheres to ensure the security of the Japanese mainland proper. One of the most famous political statements of this line of thinking was made by Yamagata Aritomo in the context of the fear of a Russian advance and increasing Sino-Japanese rivalry over Korea. See Yamagata Aritomo's statement, 'Gaikō kōryaku ron' in *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho*, pp. 196-201.

⁹⁰ Akira Iriye, 'Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status', p. 286

⁹¹ *ibid.*

the islands as well. Second, the Meiji leaders did not necessarily consider the Ryūkyūans to be 'Japanese'. If this was the case even for the leading political elites, it is difficult to imagine, at least in the early Meiji period, the emergence or existence of popular nationalistic sentiment that would compel the Meiji government to secure the Ryūkyū borders in order to shore up their domestic legitimacy.

The abolition of the Ryūkyū Kingdom may again be conceptualised as an exercise in securing *international* legitimacy and demonstrating Japan's 'civilised' status to both domestic and international audiences. As discussed previously, the Meiji leadership's goals were to 'accept "the laws of the universe [i.e. international law] and enter the modern world where "all countries stood equally amongst each other" and "enhance national prestige"'.⁹² If Japan were to be recognised as a legitimate power that conformed to the norms of European International Society, the uncertain status of the Ryūkyū Kingdom could potentially pose problems. The Kingdom's continuation of tributary relations with China signified its persistent participation in the East Asian international system. This relation was characterised by the systemic procedural norms of ritual justice, as opposed to the legislative procedural norms of European International Society. The Ryūkyū Kingdom's participation in the tribute system could potentially highlight Japan's inability to conform with international law, and consequently its lack of commitment to fully join the international order as defined by the Society. This would, in turn, jeopardise Japan's quest to attain the status of a 'civilised' power as defined by the members of European International Society. The abolition of the Ryūkyū Kingdom thus was not only a process of securing Japan's periphery. It was also a political process of strengthening Japan's commitment to attaining recognition as a 'civilised' member of European International Society.

The first phase of extinguishing the Ryūkyū Kingdom

The 'ambiguous' status of the Ryūkyū Kingdom came under increasing scrutiny following the expansion of European International Society to the Japanese archipelago and its surrounding islands. The Ryūkyū Kingdom's full encounter with European International Society took place in 1854, when the kingdom established Treaty Relations with the United States in June. The Dutch quickly followed suit, signing a trade treaty in 1859. It is significant that the United States treated the kingdom as capable of

⁹² Motegi Toshio, 'Chūka sekai no "kindai" teki saihen to nippon', p. 63

entering diplomatic agreements on its own accord; in this sense the Ryūkyū government was treated as an independent, sovereign entity.

This, however, does not mean that the European powers were unaware of the ambiguous (at least by the norms of European International Society) status of Ryūkyū. In his report to the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Matthew C. Perry claimed that while the Japanese insisted that the Ryūkyū Kingdom was a vassal of Japan, 'its actual sovereignty was disputed by China.'⁹³ This confusion was evident on the Japanese side as well. When queried on the status of the islands by the British in 1860, the Tokugawa shogunate officials' replies were evasive. In response to further enquiries by British diplomats, the shogunate claimed that the kingdom 'has belonged to Japan for many years', but also stated that Ryūkyū had 'ties with China for many years. Because of this, some of its institutions were based on those of China, but we allow them to follow their customs'. This constituted 'Japan's desire to claim the Ryūkyūs, while at the same time officially admitting to the kingdom's continued Tributary ties with China.'⁹⁴

This confusion continued even after the Tokugawa shogunate was overthrown. While the Meiji government, like the Tokugawa leaders, regarded the Ryūkyū Kingdom as a part of Japan's sphere of influence, the incorporation of the kingdom did not take place immediately. Indeed, Gabe Masao states that the government's earliest indications to 'assume a larger role in Ryūkyūan affairs' came only in April 1871,⁹⁵ when Inoue Kaoru submitted a memorial claiming that the ambiguous status of the kingdom needed to be amended and fully brought under Japanese control. However, even at this point, it was obvious that some confusion remained, for a legislative organ of the Meiji government, the *sain* (左院) submitted a response to Inoue's arguments, stating that 'the Ryūkyū king was a Ryūkyūan, and should not be confused as a person of Japan',⁹⁶ and that the kingdom should be allowed to come under both Chinese and Japanese sovereign authority.

The Meiji leaders, however, were certainly not prepared to 'lose' the kingdom. They proceeded to take steps to ensure the lingering features of the East Asian international system were eliminated in the Ryūkyū Kingdom's relations with China and Japan. The first step came in 1872, when the Ryūkyūan envoys arrived in Tokyo to

⁹³ Maehira Fusaaki, 'Jūkyū seiki no higashi ajia kokusai kankei to ryūkyū mondai', p. 252

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 259

⁹⁵ Gabe Masao, 'Nippon no kindai to okinawa', in Ōe Shinobu et al (eds), *Kindai Nippon to shokuminchi* (vol. 1): *shokuminchi teikoku nippon*. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), p. 104

⁹⁶ Cited in Oguma Eiji, '*Nihonjin' no kyōkai*, p. 20.

congratulate the Meiji emperor on his accession. The Japanese leaders used this occasion to appoint the Ryūkyū king Shō Tai (尚泰) as a member of the Japanese nobility (華族 *kazoku*) and give investiture to him as 'lord of the Ryūkyū fief (琉球藩 *Ryūkyū han*). The kingdom's autonomy was also gradually taken over by Japan. In October the same year, the foreign minister Soejima Taneomi presented a memorial calling for greater Japanese control over the island kingdom. The memorial, amongst others, called for establishing Japanese bureaucratic control over the diplomatic mission the Ryūkyūans maintained in Fuzhou (福州) and the 'gradual promulgation of [Japanese] political institutions' that would lead to the 'integration of tax, local government' with the rest of Japan.⁹⁷ Within a matter of thirteen days, the Japanese government unilaterally declared that all 'treaty and diplomatic matters concerning the Ryūkyū fief were hereafter to be handled by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs'.⁹⁸

The second phase of extinguishing the Ryūkyū Kingdom: from 'domestic' issue to a Sino-Japanese diplomatic dispute

Despite these efforts, the legacies from the Tributary System were difficult to eradicate, and the Ryūkyū Kingdom continued its tributary relations with the Qing, sending missions both in 1872 and 1874. One reason for this is that the Ryūkyū leaders may have been reluctant to abolish a political system that had served their interests well. But while it is tempting to reduce all reasons to the leaders' self-interest, it is equally important to take into account Ryūkyū state identity, to which its interests were inextricably linked. The kingdom's identity was strongly tied to its tributary relations with the Qing; unlike Japan, the Ryūkyū elites were not interested in entering European International Society and cutting traditional ties with China, to which it felt a considerable sense of loyalty. A second reason stems from Japan's own transitional identity at this time, manifest in its policies towards the Ryūkyū Kingdom. While the Japanese moved towards consolidating its control over the territory and monopolising diplomatic prerogatives, they attempted to do so by invoking the traditions of the Tributary System and giving the Ryūkyū king 'investiture'. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Meiji government dispatched officials from the Foreign Ministry and

⁹⁷ Gaimushō chōsabu, 'Ryūkyū han ni taishi waga hanzoku taisei no tettei o kisubeku shochi aritaku mune negaide no ken', *Dai nippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 5). (Tokyo: Nippon kokusai kyōkai, 1939), p. 385

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 392

Finance Ministry to oversee the administration of the islands,⁹⁹ which, as British diplomat Ernest Satow perceptively observed at the time, 'indicate[d] that the islands were not yet regarded as an integral part of the Japanese Empire.'¹⁰⁰

Such behaviour – which seemed to contradict Japan's claims to the Ryūkyū islands – came in the wake of Japan's ongoing dispute with the Qing over the murder of Ryūkyū fishermen in Taiwan in 1871. The fate of the Ryūkyū Kingdom became intertwined with the Sino-Japanese diplomatic row inasmuch as the Japanese leadership's justification for sending troops to Taiwan were based on their claims that they were punishing the Taiwanese 'savages' for the murder of *Japanese* citizens. This of course implied that the Ryūkyūans were actually Japanese. For the Meiji leaders this was a crucial issue that they could not choose to ignore. As Akira Iriye points out, if the murdered Ryūkyūans

...were to be considered Japanese citizens, it would be incumbent upon the government to seek satisfaction for their tragedy from the Chinese government, which had control over Taiwan...If they were not viewed as Japanese citizens, Japan's claim to the Ryūkyūs would, of course, be destroyed.¹⁰¹

Sino-Japanese negotiations on this matter took place during the Soejima mission's visit to China in 1873. Soejima's mission, amongst others, was to make the Chinese recognise Japan's claims to Ryūkyū, thus laying the foundations for sending troops to Taiwan in the future. The discussions took place on 21st June 1873, between Japanese diplomat Yanagiwara Sakimitsu and Mao Changxi and Dong Xun, ministers of the *zongli yamen*. The talk was 'extremely significant for it was on this basis of this discussion alone that Soejima' – and the Japanese government – 'would later claim that the Chinese government recognized Japan's intention to send an expeditionary force to Formosa'.¹⁰² Here, Yanagiwara berated the Chinese for their inability to control the 'barbarians (土蕃)', who 'operated more or less independently and killed our citizens who had been shipwrecked there last winter 蕃人自ラ独立ノ勢ヲ張リタルカ、一昨年冬、我国ノ人民彼地へ漂泊セシヲ掠殺ス'.¹⁰³ The *zongli yamen* ministers, for their part,

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum by Ernest M. Satow, 6th July 1879. *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (series E, vol. 2: Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, and North-East Asia, 1875-1888). (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1989), p. 63

¹⁰¹ Iriye, 'Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status', pp. 288-289

¹⁰² McWilliams, 'East Meets East', pp. 263-264

¹⁰³ The minutes from this meeting are recorded in 'Soejima taishi tekishin gairyaku' in Meiji bunka kenkyūkai (eds), *Meiji bunka zenshū* (vol. 11): *gaikō hen.*, p. 70.

replied that while they had heard that Ryūkyūans had been murdered by the Taiwanese 'barbarians', they 'did not know that this was connected to Japan. Furthermore, as Liuqiu (Ryūkyū) was a tributary state of China, Chinese officials saved those who had escaped, and sent them back to their country.'¹⁰⁴ Yahagiwara countered this point by asserting Japanese (Satsuma) control of Ryūkyū, which could be dated to the middle ages.

While both states' competing claims to the Ryūkyū Kingdom were revealed in the 1873 talks, this did not immediately become a diplomatic dispute between the two states.¹⁰⁵ The issue resurfaced the following year in 1874, after the Japanese had sent the punitive expedition to Taiwan. In an effort to bring an end to the standoff between China and Japan, the two states signed a treaty in which the Chinese accepted that the Japanese had conducted a punitive expedition to redress the murdering of its own citizens. In the bilateral negotiations that followed, Japan succeeded in getting the Chinese to pay an indemnity for the murder of the Ryūkyūans.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the agreement included a text which stated that the 'Taiwanese savages had wantonly harmed Japanese citizens (臺灣生番會將日本國屬民等妄為加害)'.¹⁰⁷ By implying that the Ryūkyūans were Japanese, the Japanese leaders strengthened their claims over the islands.

However, this did not significantly alter Sino-Ryūkyū relations, despite French legal advisor Gustave Emile Boissonade de Fontarabie's assessment that the agreement would mark a significant step in making the Chinese accept Japanese claims to the islands.¹⁰⁸ Although the Chinese did admit that Ryūkyū belonged to Japan, this did not

¹⁰⁴ 'Soejima taishi tekishin gairyaku' in Meiji bunka kenkyūkai (eds), *Meiji bunka zenshū* (vol. 11): *gaikō hen*. (Tokyo: Nippon hyōronsha, 1978), p. 70

¹⁰⁵ From the benefit of hindsight in the twenty-first century, it seems quite astonishing that the Chinese failed to press the issue further; historians have forwarded several possible reasons for this. Wayne C. McWilliams argues that Soejima's somewhat deceitful (if not cleverly executed) diplomacy may have blinded them to the pitfalls that lay behind Yanagiwara's questions. Furthermore, the Chinese were preoccupied with dispute over Soejima's imperial audience. See Wayne C. McWilliams, 'East Meets East: The Soejima Mission to China, 1873', *Monumenta Nipponica* (vol. 30, no. 3, Autumn 1975, pp. 237-275), pp. 268-269. Marlene J. Mayo claims that while the Chinese could well have been aware of the potential dangers Japan's claims presented to the East Asian international order in 1873, there were more pressing domestic and international concerns that rendered it unable to deal with it adequately. See Mayo, 'The Korean Crisis of 1873 and Early Meiji Foreign Policy', *Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 31, no. 4, August 1972, pp. 793-819), p. 810

¹⁰⁶ This took place on 31st October.

¹⁰⁷ Gaimushō chōsabū, 'Nisshin ryōkokukan gokan jōkan', *Dai nippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 7). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai kyōkai, 1939), p. 317

¹⁰⁸ Note, however, that Boissonade himself also advocated the Japanese government to leave the political institutions of the Ryūkyū Kingdom intact, while controlling Ryūkyū diplomatic prerogatives. This, Oguma Eiji, argues, should be seen as a form of 'indirect rule' based on European colonial experiences. See Oguma Eiji, *Nihonjin' no kyōkai*, p. 25

necessarily mean that they had renounced their claims to Ryūkyū, because within the normative framework of the tribute system, a state/polity could 'belong' to another on the basis of tributary hierarchies, regardless of whether or not effective governance had been established.¹⁰⁹

Sino-Japanese tensions regarding the Ryūkyū Kingdom came increasingly to the forefront following the Meiji government's moves to increase its claims over the kingdom by transferring the administration of the area to the Home Ministry (内務省 *naimushō*). As mentioned above, the kingdom continued sending tributary missions, embarrassing the Japanese government.¹¹⁰ It was in this context that Ōkubo Toshimichi submitted a memorial calling for further Japanese control of the area. Noting that the Ryūkyū elite had still not

...escaped the jurisdiction of the Qing. This is indeed ambiguous, confused, and harms our reputation. However, these [i.e. tributary relations] are customs dating back several hundreds of years, and they [the Ryūkyūans] cling on to them obstinately...At a time when all countries stand alongside each other equally (万国交際ノ今日), if the situation is left as it is, difficulties could arise in the future.¹¹¹

The Japanese moved swiftly to put an end to the island kingdom's ambiguous position. In 1875, a Home Ministry administrator, Matsuda Michiyuki (松田道之), was sent to the kingdom, and wasted no time in issuing a series of orders (14th July).¹¹² While some orders were directed at reforming the domestic institutions of the kingdom, most relevant for our discussion here are the orders that compelled King Shō Tai to terminate Ryūkyū's ties with China. These orders consisted of three parts. First, the kingdom was to terminate its sending of tributary missions to China altogether; second, the king was forbidden to seek investiture from China; lastly, the trading mission the kingdom maintained in Fuzhou was to be abolished. Of particular importance is the fact that these orders were justified in terms of international law,¹¹³ which is indicative of two points. First, it suggests that the Japanese leadership had already begun to consider

¹⁰⁹ Kobayashi Takao, 'Taiwan jiken to ryūkyū shobun (2): rujandoru no yakuwari saikō', *Seiji keizai shigaku* (no. 341, November 1994, pp. 13-32), p. 28 and Motegi Toshio, 'Chūka sekai no "kindai" teki saihen to nippon', p. 68

¹¹⁰ On one occasion, Tei Einei (Nagayasu), acting Japanese Minister in China, demanded to meet and chastise the Ryūkyū representatives, but was rebuffed by the Chinese.

¹¹¹ Cited in Ōyama Azusa, 'Ryūkyū kizoku to nisshin fungi', *Seikei ronsō* (vol. 38, no. 1-2, May 1970, pp. 76-126), p. 83

¹¹² See Inoue Kaoru kō denki hensan kai (eds) *Segai inoue kō den* (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Naigai shoseki, 1934), pp. 398-399, for a full description of the demands.

¹¹³ 'Ryūkyū han ni tsūtatsu seraretaru shokajō ni kanshi setsume ni narabini migi shokajō sumiyaka ni junpō seraru beki mune yōbō no ken', *Dai nippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 8). (Tokyo: Nippon kokusai kyōkai, 1939), p. 328

international law to have some moral legitimacy that could induce some form of compliance from other states. However, the Ryūkyū king was unlikely to see the law as morally binding, and the abolition of tributary relations could plausibly be ordered (and carried out) without invoking international law. This leads to a second, more salient point: the use of international law was also intended to highlight Japan's 'civilised' identity. Ryūkyū adherence to international law would be limited while its rulers continued to regard the law as illegitimate. However, as far as securing the Ryūkyū Kingdom's compliance with Matsuda's orders was concerned, Ryūkyūan disregard for international law did not necessary matter, as there were other means (such as military options) that could bring this about. Rather, the references to international law were intended to demonstrate Japan's acceptance of international law, and facilitate its recognition by the member states of European International Society as a candidate worthy of joining the Society as a 'civilised' member.

These series of actions by Japan, however, were viewed by the Chinese with alarm. The Chinese were already beginning to see Japan as a threat following the latter's expedition to Taiwan,¹¹⁴ and Japanese designs towards the Ryūkyū Kingdom seemed to confirm their fears.¹¹⁵ The Ryūkyū elites also sent a secret mission to the Qing in 1877, begging for their help. The Chinese Minister to Japan, He Ruzhang (何如璋), who received a petition from the Ryūkyūans,¹¹⁶ reported in a letter to Li Hongzhang:

The Japanese have neither mercy nor reason. They are like crazy dogs, bullying others as they please. We could rely on the Sino-Japanese peace; not only will they prevent Liuqiu [Ryūkyū] from sending tribute, they will certainly try to eliminate the kingdom. Furthermore, they will attempt to cause trouble in Korea,

¹¹⁴ See, for instance, Wen Xiang and Li Hongzhang's memorials submitted in 1874 and collected in Ssu-Yü Teng and John King Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 90, 119, respectively.

¹¹⁵ This sentiment was quite possibly strengthened by Ryūkyūan resistance towards the Japanese government's policies. They pleaded with the Japanese authorities to allow them to maintain relations with both their 'mother and father countries'. The fact that their pleas were couched in terms of filial piety is also characteristic of the East Asian international order, where 'the moral purpose of the state, and indeed of all political and social communities from family, tribe to empire' was, in Confucian fashion, 'to promote social and cosmic order and harmony.' Yongjin Zhang, 'System, empire and state in Chinese international relations', *Review of International Studies* (vol. 27, special issue, 2001, pp. 43-63), p. 56. A useful summary of the contents of Ryūkyūan pleas can be found in Nish, Ian (ed) *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (series E, vol. 2: Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, and North-East Asia, 1875-1888). (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1989), pp. 63-64; Ōyama Azusa, 'Ryūkyū kizoku to nisshin fungi', *Seikei ronsō* (vol. 38, no. 1-2, May 1970, pp. 76-126). See also He Ruzhang's letter, 'He Zie lai han' in Li Hongzhang, *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *penglisao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*. (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), pp. 4368-4370

¹¹⁶ These meetings between the Chinese Minister and the Ryūkyūan officials took place in February 1878.

and if they do not do so, they will ask us unreasonable demands. If we listen to them, we will lose our dignity; if we refuse them, war will be unavoidable.¹¹⁷

Li Hongzhang agreed, stating that the Japanese were being 'unreasonable in the extreme (無理已極)'. However, he was pessimistic about the prospects of Japan reversing its policy. Ryūkyū was too far away for China to realistically protect it; even if China 'relied on our brushes and tongues to reason with Japan, the recent actions by the Japanese are, as you [He Ruzhang] mentioned, bullying others freely and are like mad dogs. I fear that they will not listen to us.'¹¹⁸

Li Hongzhang's fears proved correct. Despite Chinese protests, the Japanese were in no mood to renounce their claims to the islands. He Ruzhang's protests to the Japanese in 1878 were rebuffed by the Japanese foreign minister Terashima Munenori, who told He that Chinese investiture was no different from papal recognition of European kings; it was merely ceremonial, and did not constitute effective governance of the area.¹¹⁹ Terashima Munenori's denial of the significance of Ryūkyū-Qing tributary relations and Chinese investiture was a rejection of the tribute system's 'systemic norms of procedural justice', in which ritualistic tributary missions signified a states 'vassal' status vis-à-vis the Chinese empire. Rather, Terashima was now basing Japan's claim over the islands on effective governance over the islands – a claim based on the stipulations of international law, a hallmark of European International Society and its systemic norm of legislative justice.

Japanese resolve was strengthened further by Ryūkyū attempts to appeal to the legations of the United States, France, and the Netherlands, with whom they had earlier entered treaty relations.¹²⁰ The Meiji government discovered the plot,¹²¹ and promptly

¹¹⁷ Cited in Li Hongzhang, 'He Zie lai han' in *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *penglisao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*. (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1998), p. 4369

¹¹⁸ 'Fu He Zie', in *ibid.*, p. 4370

¹¹⁹ Ōyama Azusa, 'Ryūkyū kizoku to nisshin fungi', *Seikei ronsō* (vol. 38, no. 1-2, May 1970, pp. 76-126), p. 98. It is also worth noting that the Chinese Minister He Ruzhang wrote a strongly-worded letter accusing the Japanese of renegeing on the Sino-Japanese Friendship Treaty of 1871 and 'suppressing small countries', greatly offending the Japanese side and causing a considerable cooling of relations between China and Japan. See Ōyama Azusa, 'Ryūkyū kizoku to nisshin fungi', *Seikei ronsō* (vol. 38, no. 1-2, May 1970, pp. 76-126), pp. 98-100 and Inoue Kaoru kō denki hensan kai (eds) *Segai inoue kō den* (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Naigai shoseki, 1934), pp. 401-402.

¹²⁰ According to Hanabusa Nagamichi, the petitions thanked the powers for entering treaty relations with Ryūkyū, and asked for their help in persuading the Japanese government to allow the Ryūkyū Kingdom to follow their traditional customs. See Hanabusa Nagamichi, 'Okinawa kizoku no enkaku', *Kokusaihō gaikō zasshi* (vol. 54, no. 1-3, April 1955, pp. 3-40), p. 25

¹²¹ While Gabe Masao claims that this move was based on advice from He Ruzhang, Uemura Hideaki argues it is more likely that the idea to appeal to the Western diplomatic representatives originated from the Ryūkyūans themselves. See Gabe Masao, 'Nippon no kindaika to okinawa' in Ōe Shinobu, Asada Kyōji, Mitani Ta'ichirō, Gotō Ken'ichi, Kobayashi Hideo, Takasaki Sōji, Wakabayashi

ordered the Ryūkyūan officials to close down their official residence and leave Tokyo. The Ryūkyū request for the Western powers' help proved to be an incident that hastened the abolition of the kingdom.¹²² The Meiji government decided they could not afford to allow such independent initiatives by the Ryūkyūans to undermine Japanese claims to the islands. On 11th March 1879, Matsuda Michiyuki was despatched to Ryūkyū for the third time, this time with orders to abolish the kingdom. Sixteen days later, under the threat of military force, the Ryūkyū king was forced to vacate his palace and reside in Tokyo. On 4th April, a brief edict announced that the Ryūkyū 'fief' had been abolished and would henceforth be governed directly by the central government in Tokyo as Okinawa prefecture, thus ending the existence of an important member of the East Asian international order.

Analytical observations

In some senses, the abolition of the Ryūkyū Kingdom and the subsequent Sino-Japanese dispute constituted an early clash between two different international systems. It is true that the Chinese elite were beginning to incorporate some institutional features from European International Society, as its invoking of international law around this period demonstrates. However, in their dealings with Asian states, the Chinese continued to operate predominantly within the social structures of the tribute system.¹²³ The Japanese elite, who were more interested in establishing Japan as a 'civilised' power within European International Society, refused to do so. Despite the still transitional nature of its identity, it strove to apply the norms of the Society in its dealings with its Asian neighbours.

Although it is impossible for us to know how accurately they grasped this, it seems that some members of the Chinese elite were also beginning to appreciate this fact. When discussing the demise of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, Li Hongzhang commented perceptively: 'Japan is adopting many features from Western law, and is now ruling [Ryūkyū] on Western legal lines...there are no rituals based on those between lord and

Masatake and Kawamura Minato (eds), *Kindai Nippon to shokuminchi* (vol. 1): *shokuminchi teikoku nippon*. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), p. 107, and Uemura Hideaki, '“Hokkaidō”, “Okinawa” no shokuminchika to sono kokusaihō no ronri', p. 77

¹²² Uemura Hideaki, '“Hokkaidō”, “Okinawa” no shokuminchika to sono kokusaihō no ronri', p. 77. Li Hongzhang also comes up with a similar analysis in his conversation with former U.S. president Ulysses S. Grant, whose good offices the Chinese attempted to use to resolve the Ryūkyū issue. See Li Hongzhang, 'Yu meiguo ge qian zongtong wutan jie lüe', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *pengliao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*, p. 4405

¹²³ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 142

vassal. Ryūkyū is not permitted to send tribute to either China nor Japan.’¹²⁴ Furthermore, he suggested separately that China should invoke international law to criticise Japan’s actions towards Ryūkyū. Li reasoned that this was because ‘Japan follows the Western states’ – a statement indicative of his recognition that Japan, as the state that was actively striving for membership in European International Society, was far more likely to be receptive to the normative constraints of the Society than those of the Tributary System.¹²⁵

It was because of these different identities of China and Japan that the abolition of the Ryūkyū Kingdom had significant ramifications on Sino-Japanese relations. As stated above, the Chinese still regarded the Ryūkyū Kingdom as its tributary vassal, and the ‘loss’ of the island kingdom in 1879 was a substantial shock to many quarters of the Chinese elite.¹²⁶ While the island kingdom itself was of little economic significance to the Qing, its political importance as a member of the East Asian international order was considerable. As Mōri Toshihiko argues, tributary missions to China signified ‘the virtue of the Chinese emperor’ and served to strengthen China’s central position in the East Asian international order, as well as its domestic legitimacy.¹²⁷ The relations between China and Japan were already tense following the dispute surrounding Japan’s expedition to Taiwan. The Ryūkyū incident constituted a fundamental assault on the East Asian international order, as it stripped China of its vassals and threatened China’s legitimacy. In this sense, it paved the way for the eventual clash between China and Japan over their respective influence in the Korean Peninsula.

The clash of international systems: Sino-Japanese politics over Korea

As Japan increasingly sought to identify itself as a ‘civilised’ member of European International Society, its relations with Korea, which were conducted in terms of the tribute system, also came to the attention of its leaders. In the aftermath of the collapse of the shogunate, the Tsushima fiefdom, which was heavily dependent on trade with Korea, petitioned the new Meiji government to restart diplomatic relations with the

¹²⁴ Li Hongzhang, ‘Lun riben fei liuqiu’, *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *pengliao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*, p. 4390

¹²⁵ Li Hongzhang, ‘Mi yi riben zheng liuqiu shi’, *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *pengliao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*, p. 4367

¹²⁶ See for instance Wang Tao, *Taoyuan wenlu waibian*, pp. 127-130; Xue Fucheng, *Chouyang chuyi.*, pp. 66-70. Cf. Frederick Foo Chien, *The Opening of Korea: A Study of Chinese Diplomacy 1876-1885*. (Hamden: The Shoe String Press, 1967), p. 132

¹²⁷ Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, p. 182

kingdom.¹²⁸ The Meiji government's initial response was a cautious one, perhaps due to the Tsushima fief's warning that '[t]raditionally the Korean dynasty has always been extremely stubborn'.¹²⁹ For the time being, the Meiji leaders decided to utilise the institutions of the traditional international order to communicate with Korea, and in late 1868 sent a message via a Tsushima official, informing the Koreans of the change in government and the Japanese emperor's assumption of political power.

However, these Japanese initiatives were rebuffed by the Koreans. For a start, the Japanese had failed to use the seal issued to the Tsushima fiefdom by the Yi dynasty, which indicated a disregard for the ritual etiquette needed for Japanese-Korean interaction. Another bone of contention (at least in Korean eyes) was Japan's affrontery in using the Chinese character 'huang' (皇), for their emperor (written as *kōjō* 皇上), which was reserved for use only by the Chinese emperor (*huangdi* 皇帝).¹³⁰ To the Yi dynasty, which continued to fully operate within the normative framework of the traditional East Asian international system, Japan's actions constituted an assault on its international order. The 'equating [of] the position of the Japanese ruler with that of the Chinese sovereign would mean an act of high treason',¹³¹ and simply could not be tolerated. Furthermore, the Japanese use of this character implied that the Meiji emperor was superior to the Korean king; 'it would mark the Korean monarch as the vassal or subject of the Japanese ruler',¹³² and was another reason the Koreans rejected the Japanese letter.

Korea's rebuff - which took the form of refusing to accept the letter and demanding the Japanese envoys leave Korea - drew strong responses from the Japanese. It is difficult to ascertain whether Japanese reactions in the 1860s was a result of their increasing association with the social structures of European International Society or sentiments for imperial restoration, prominent among anti-Tokugawa samurai. Key-Hiuk Kim, for example, claims that Japan's attempts to repudiate traditional Japanese-

¹²⁸ Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, p. 67; Ben Quincy Limb, *Sei-Kan Ron: A Study in the Evolution of Expansionism in Modern Japan, 1868-1873*. (Ph.D. dissertation, St. John's University, 1979), p. 77

¹²⁹ Cited in Limb, *Sei-Kan Ron*, p. 79. Mōri Toshihiko believes that this warning was intended to protect the vested interests the Tsushima fiefdom had in maintaining their monopoly over Japanese-Korean relations. The warning was included in a memorial prepared by Tsushima lord Sō Yoshisato (later Shigemasa) and Tsushima official Ōshima Masatomo, and was intended to unsettle the Meiji leadership's confidence in their ability to successfully conduct diplomacy with the Koreans, thus strengthening Tsushima's role as mediator. See Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*, pp. 67-68.

¹³⁰ Fujimura Michio, *Nisshin sensō zengo no ajia seisaku*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), p. 23; Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, pp. 30-31. The message to the Korean king can be found in *Iwakura kōjikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 3). (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), p. 16

¹³¹ Limb, *Sei-Kan Ron*, pp. 83-84

Korean relations – as seen in the use of linguistic terms which so offended the Koreans – was connected to late-Tokugawa imperial restoration ideology. This line of thinking asserted that Japanese-Korean relations 'should no longer be conducted on the basis of the equality of the two countries; they should be "restored" to their "proper" form, which the loyalists believed existed in ancient times when Korea had been a "tributary" of Japan.'¹³³ It is on this basis, Key-Hiuk Kim argues, that Japan sought new diplomatic relations with the Koreans.

By the latter half of the 1870s, however, Japan's increasing exposure and engagement with the social structures of European International Society meant that the normative backdrop of its Korea policy would be less dominated by the ideology of imperial restoration, although the transition was by no means a linear, clear-cut one. By this time, 'Japanese policy towards Korea...was inspired by a chauvinistic desire for aggrandizement abroad and growing zeal to enhance Japan's prestige by emulating the West in international diplomacy.'¹³⁴ Their objectives vis-à-vis Korea had expanded from mere 'punishment of insults' to two other ones: the introduction of political reforms into Korea, and the severing of Korea's tributary relations with China. There appear to be at least two motivations for this policy. Firstly, as Japan increasingly sought to be accepted as a member of 'civilised' European International Society, the necessity to demonstrate Japan's 'civilised' status became greater. A 'civilised' state needed diplomatic relations established on the basis of treaties. As Alexis Dudden Eastwood argues:

...the Korean court's rebuff [of Japan's attempts to enter treaty relations based on the norms of European International Society] raised the question of how the Meiji regime would define its Korean policy. As this question arose during discussions of how to create a wholly new foreign policy, the drafters of Japan's Korean relations...wrote and articulated policies towards Korea that were fluent with the policies they created to engage in Japan with the international arena.¹³⁵

Secondly, there were geostrategic considerations. Although the European powers themselves on the whole not particularly interested in colonising the Korean peninsula,

¹³² Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 31

¹³³ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 115. Tabohashi Kiyoshi also asserts that earlier calls for Japan to establish – by force if necessary – its dominance over Korea 'have some connections with restorationist thought and were often abstract ideas...it would be mistaken to claim such debates as an early manifestation of Japan's near-modern Asian Continental policy.' Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1). Keijō (Seoul): Chōsen sōtokufu chūsūin, 1940), p. 298

¹³⁴ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 254

¹³⁵ Eastwood, *International Terms*, p. 39

the Japanese saw matters differently. Their experience of 'gunboat' diplomacy had amply demonstrated the violent, 'civilising' mode of interaction which existed within the Society. Regardless of actual intentions, the Meiji leaders were sensitive to the possibility of a Western power (particularly Russia) keen to introduce the trappings of civilisation establishing a foothold in Korea,¹³⁶ which was described by a German military adviser to Japan as 'a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan'.¹³⁷ In order to prevent such an occurrence, it was important to get the Koreans to enter into 'modern' treaty relations and begin following the path to 'civilisation'. It was also necessary to demonstrate that the Korean kingdom had begun to repudiate 'semi-civilised' ways by ridding itself of any practices associated with the East Asian international order. This meant that Korea would have to renounce its 'tributary' status vis-à-vis China and be treated as an 'independent' entity. This also overlapped with Japan's need to '[designate] Korea an "independent nation" because the Meiji regime was committed to writing all its foreign relations according to international law and only independent entities could contract legally.'¹³⁸ Furthermore, this would theoretically provide Korea with sovereign independence, and provide legal means by which it could 'protect' itself from any potential attempts by China to obstruct the process of dismantling the normative order of the Tributary System.

Japan's 'Broken Door' policy towards Korea

For the reasons discussed above, the Japanese remained determined to dismantle the vestiges of the Tributary System, despite continuous Korean rejections. A turning point in Japan's policy vis-à-vis Korea took place in the 1870s, when the Meiji leaders unilaterally abolished the Tsushima fiefdom's role in Japanese-Korean relations. This action coincided with Japan's policy of pursuing legitimate membership of European International Society, as well as an increased capacity for dealing directly with the Yi dynasty. It appears that 'the Meiji government realized that Tsushima's retention of any role whatever was not only impracticable but incompatible with the new form of

¹³⁶ See Martina Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875-1885*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), p. 110 and Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 49.

¹³⁷ Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 49; Tsuda Takako, 'Sen happyaku hachijū nendai ni okeru nippon seifu no higashi ajia seisaku tenkai to rekkyō'

¹³⁸ Eastwood, *International Terms: Japan's Engagement in Colonial Control*, p. 49

relations Japan wished to establish with Korea.’¹³⁹ Japan’s foreign policy was henceforth to be conducted in a ‘civilised’ manner as dictated by the procedural norms of European International Society. To this end, the Japanese government now centralised diplomatic prerogatives in their own hands, and dispatched Foreign Ministry officials to Korea. Furthermore, they abolished the Tsushima trading house, establishing a Japanese legation in its place.¹⁴⁰ As Alexis Dudden Eastwood states: ‘A trade house which had existed for centuries far removed from the islands now being articulated as “Great Japan” was newly claimed as a manifestation of “sovereignty rights.”’¹⁴¹ The *waegwan* had become a foothold for the new “civilized” set of institutions through which the Japanese intended to conduct their formal relations with Korea.’¹⁴²

But Japan’s continued attempts to enter more ‘modern’ diplomatic relations with Korea were no more successful.¹⁴³ Within Korea, the retirement of the conservative regent (the *Taewŏn’gun* 大院君) and the rule of King Kojong (高宗) was beginning to result in a gradual shift in Korean foreign policy. The Koreans were aware of China and Japan’s interactions with European International Society through reports from their envoys in China,¹⁴⁴ and had received warnings of a possible Japanese invasion by the *Zongli yamen* following Japan’s expedition to Taiwan in 1874. However, despite King Kojong’s attempts to reopen talks with Japan, progress was hampered by continuous

¹³⁹ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 165. See also Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁴⁰ Interestingly in 1874, Ōkubo Toshimichi and Ōkuma Shigenobu utilised the language of European International Society to explain the *Waegwan*’s new role in Japanese diplomacy. The Trading house, now renamed the *Sōryōkan*, ‘was “associated with our (Japan’s) sovereignty rights (*kokken*). It occupies land for one office, it protects (*hogo*) the officials and secures trade routes.”’ See Eastwood, *International Terms*, p. 41

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 37. Also see Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 166.

¹⁴³ Continuous Korean rebuffs famously gave pretext to the famous debate of invading Korea (*seikanron*) in 1873, which resulted in a split within the Meiji leadership. However, it is important to keep in mind that while the political repercussions within the leadership were significant, the *seikanron* debate of 1873 ‘was neither a defining crisis nor a commitment to annexation’, and Japan’s Korean policy did not change *per se*. See Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 43. The motives behind Saigō Takamori, the chief proponent of the *seikanron* in 1873 has been subject to much debate, indicating a substantial difference of opinion among historians. While this is not the place to discuss the politics surrounding the 1873 political crisis of the *seikanron* debate, a summary of the crisis can be found, among others, in Mayo, ‘The Korean Crisis of 1873 and Early Meiji Foreign Policy’, Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*; Limb, *Sei-Kan Ron*; Mōri Toshihiko, *Taiwan shuppei*; and Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*.

¹⁴⁴ Martina Deuchler reports that the Korean king ‘was startled to learn that the Japanese envoy was received in audience by the Chinese emperor on the same footing as his Western colleagues and that the Japanese were even opening a legation in the Chinese capital.’ See Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, pp. 14-15.

wrangling over diplomatic protocol and conservative opposition within the Korean government.¹⁴⁵

The diplomatic standstill tested the Meiji leadership's patience to the limit. In September 1875, the Japanese warship *Un'yō* (雲揚) entered Korean waters near the strategic location of Kanghwa island, ostensibly to conduct surveys, but in fact almost certainly to provoke the Koreans.¹⁴⁶ As expected, the Koreans attacked the ship with cannon.¹⁴⁷ The Japanese seized this opportunity to take a more assertive stance towards Korea: since attempts to open Korea's door to European International Society had failed, the Japanese would now attempt to break the door open by imposing new diplomatic relations based on treaties, a hallmark of the Society. The Japanese envoys, Kuroda Kiyotaka and Inoue Kaoru arrived in Korea on late January 1876, and used this opportunity to impress upon the Koreans Japan's 'civilised' identity. Like the 1873 Soejima mission to China, they arrived in warships. This point was not lost on a Japanese newspaper, the *Chōya shinbun*, which noted that this had some resemblance to the Perry expedition of 1853.¹⁴⁸

While the analogy with Perry should not be stretched too far, the Japanese envoys also assumed a 'civilised' power's role in introducing an 'uncivilised' state into European International Society. Inoue told the Koreans that a treaty with Japan 'treats your country as independent as well. It relies on the precedent of customary exchange

¹⁴⁵ The differences between the Koreans and the Japanese included issues such as Western clothing, use of Chinese characters in diplomatic correspondence and so on. Although a detailed discussion of Korean domestic policy of this time is beyond the scope of this study, a concise account is given in Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, pp. 15-23 and Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁴⁶ The Japanese were well aware of the possibility of being fired upon, and it is significant that the ship 'had been ordered to sea on its survey mission several days after Moriyama Shigeru, who had been carrying on negotiations with the Koreans at Pusan since early 1875, was ordered to break them off and come home.' Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 44. Kim argues that the incident was 'part of a scheme by the Ōkubo faction to create a situation to be used to its own political advantage at home and to diplomatic advantage in Korea' (Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 232). The island lies off the coast close to Seoul, and was seen as a gateway to the Korean capital. Moreover, it was used by Korean kings as a refuge at times of national crises.

¹⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that in 1876, officials at the *zongli yamen* responded to Japanese claims that their ship had been fired upon by the Koreans by stating: 'If you look at the *Wanguo gongfa* (the Chinese translation of Wheaton's *Elements of International Law*), shores within 10 *li* are classified as territorial waters...you should not have carried out surveys [so close to Korea's shores], that is why the Koreans fired upon you.' To this, the Japanese envoy Mori Arinori merely responded that since Korea had not entered treaty relations, it was beyond the pale of international law. See Li Hongzhang, 'Ribei shichen sen youli shushi zheng yongning laishu wutan jielue', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *pengliao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*, pp. 4228-4229

¹⁴⁸ Duus, *The Abacus and the*, p. 47

among nations and is the just way of the world (天地ノ公道 *tenchi no kōdō*).¹⁴⁹ To the Korean envoys who then asked 'what a treaty was', Kuroda answered that entering a 'treaty [relation with Japan] means opening up your ports and engaging in trade with us.'¹⁵⁰ The Korean envoy pressed further that this had been done for the past 300 years without a treaty, and Kuroda replied: 'Nowadays, there are no countries in the world that do not enter treaty relations if they wish to trade. We [Japan] have signed treaties with many countries and are beginning to engage in trade.'¹⁵¹ The arena of diplomatic negotiation was thus used as a stage to demonstrate Japan's new 'civilised' status. Kuroda and Inoue's continuous references to the norms of the Society in their talks with the Koreans 'offer[ed] an indication that the Meiji diplomats had located a new way to order their world which allowed them to define what they were doing as a departure from past practices.'¹⁵²

The talks resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Kanghwa of 27th February 1876. 'It was', Key-Hiuk Kim argues, 'Western in concept and form, based essentially on the principle of the equal sovereignty of all states.'¹⁵³ Indeed, article 1 stipulated 'Korea is an independent state and has equal rights with Japan; in future friendly relations both sides shall treat each other as equals (朝鮮國自主之邦, 保有與日本國平等之權, 嗣後兩國欲表和親之實, 須以彼此同等之禮相待)'.¹⁵⁴ The treaty thus fundamentally challenged the hierarchical principle of organising sovereignty in the East Asian international order.¹⁵⁵ However, the Treaty also imposed extraterritorial jurisdiction (article 10) which was 'similar in nature to the provisions of the "unequal" treaties which the Western powers had extracted from Japan only a dozen or more years before.'¹⁵⁶ The Koreans did not necessarily see this as a problem, as Japanese had traditionally been tried by their own people under the tribute system. However, under the social structures

¹⁴⁹ Gaimushō chōsabu *Dai Nippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 9). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai kyōkai, 1940), p. 89. Also see Eastwood, *International Terms*, p. 48 and Inoue Kaoru kō denki hensankai (ed), *Segai inoue kō den* (vol. 2). (Tokyo: Naigai shoseki, 1933), pp. 705-706.

¹⁵⁰ Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 464

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 464. Also see Gaimushō shōsabu, *Dai Nippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 9). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai kyōkai, 1940), p. 90

¹⁵² Eastwood, *International Terms*, p. 48

¹⁵³ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 253

¹⁵⁴ The full text of the treaty is available in Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), pp. 504-507 and Gaimushō chōsabu, *Dai Nippon gaikō monjo* (vol. 9), pp. 114-119.

¹⁵⁵ T. C. Lin, 'Li Hung-Chang: His Korea Policies, 1870-1885', *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review* (vol. 19, 1935-36, pp. 202-233), p. 217

¹⁵⁶ C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 17. Details of the talks between the Korean envoys and the

of the Society, 'these obligations took on...the ominous characteristics of the stipulations embodied in the "unequal treaties."' ¹⁵⁷ The Japanese, for their part, were fully aware of the symbolic meanings behind such unequal treaties. Here, we can observe again the use of Japan's Asian neighbours as the 'uncivilised other' in order to demarcate Japan and enhance its 'civilised' qualities. In Key-Hiuk Kim's words, '[a]lthough it...was making little headway in its efforts to revise unequal treaties with Western powers, Japan succeeded in imposing upon Korea an "unequal" treaty....This meant that Japan established the same privileged position in Korea as that held by the Western treaty powers in China and Japan'. ¹⁵⁸

Chinese reactions: early Chinese policies to protect the Tributary System in Korea

While committed to opening Korea, the Meiji leadership nevertheless proceeded to do so with caution. In particular, they were concerned with how the Chinese would react to direct Japanese action on the Korean Peninsula. While the Japanese could not accept China's claim to suzerainty over Korea, they knew of the close relationship enjoyed between the two states, and needed to ensure that the Qing would not intervene. ¹⁵⁹

To this end, Mori Arinori was despatched to China to explain Japan's intentions to send a mission to seek redress for the incident at Kanghwa Island and to probe the Qing's intentions. In his negotiations with the *zongli yamen* ministers, Mori immediately demanded to know the precise nature of the tributary relations between Korea and China. The *zongli yamen* ministers sent a reply to Mori explaining: 'Korea has always protected itself. China leaves Korea to govern itself, and we do not let Chinese interfere in their affairs (朝鮮自有國以來，斤斤自守。我中國任其自理，不令華人到彼交涉).' However, the Chinese also warned that 'in their dealings with Korea, they could not but worry for Korea's security, even though it has never interfered in its internal politics (中國之於朝鮮，固不強預其政事，不能不切望其安全)'. ¹⁶⁰ They also reminded Japan that Article one in the Sino-Japanese treaty of 1871 (ratified in 1873)

Japanese envoys can be found in Inoue Kaoru kō denki hensankai (ed), *Segai inoue kō den* (vol. 2), pp. 704-712 and Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), pp. 433-515.

¹⁵⁷ Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, p. 49

¹⁵⁸ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 253

¹⁵⁹ Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, pp. 25-27

¹⁶⁰ Memorandum by the *Zongli yamen* to Mori Arinori, 14th January 1876, in Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 2). (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1978), p. 368

had stipulated that both countries would not infringe on each other's territory.¹⁶¹ Mori flatly rejected these claims. He replied:

According to what Prince Gong said, 'although Korea is a tributary state of China, its land does not belong to China and we have never interfered with its internal affairs. And therefore in Korea's relations with other countries, we listen to their wishes and do not force them to do things against their will.' From this, it seems that Korea is an *independent* state, and your claims to Korea as a vassal state are nothing but empty words.¹⁶²

In stating that Korea was an independent state, Mori was of course referring to an independent sovereign state as defined by the terms of European International Society. According to this logic, China would legally have no right to interfere with Korean internal affairs; this, in turn, would mean that Japan could freely force open the kingdom's doors without consulting the Chinese. 'Since Korea has in fact the substance of an independent state and has autonomy in its internal and external affairs', Mori consequently announced to the *zongli yamen*, 'we [Japan] will deal with Korea as such.'¹⁶³

This, of course, was precisely what the Japanese proceeded to do (at least on paper) at the Treaty of Kanghwa. Although T. C. Lin argues that the inclusion of the 'independence' clause of the Treaty was interpreted by the Chinese 'as implying no departure from the long established situation or modification of Korea's status as China's vassal',¹⁶⁴ Japanese actions, closely following its earlier expedition to Taiwan, caused considerable concern among the Chinese.¹⁶⁵ The Treaty of Kanghwa

...represented a repudiation of the traditional East Asian concept of hierarchical interstate relations. It drove a major institutional wedge into the surviving

¹⁶¹ The Sino-Japanese Treaty of 1871 was a reciprocal treaty which allowed for equal and limited extraterritoriality between both countries. There was no Most Favoured Nation clause. Article two proved to be the most contentious, as it stipulated that both sides would help each other in the event that they were 'treated unfairly or without respect': this was taken to imply a Sino-Japanese military alliance by the European powers. See, for example American Chag  d' Affaires Charles O. Shepard's letter to Soejima Taneomi and Terashima Munenori in Gaimush  ch sabu, *Dai nippon gaik  monjo* (vol. 5). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai ky kai, 1939), pp. 246-247. The full text of the 1871 Sino-Japanese Treaty can be found in Gaimush  ch sabu, *Dai nippon gaik  monjo* (vol. 4). (Tokyo: Nihon kokusai ky kai, 1938), pp. 203-210.

¹⁶² Memorandum by Mori Arinori to the *Zongli yamen*, 15th January 1876, in Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 2), p. 369. Emphasis added.

¹⁶³ Memorandum by Mori Arinori to the *Zongli yamen*, presumed date 14th February 1876, in *ibid.*, p. 373

¹⁶⁴ T. C. Lin, 'Li Hung-Chang: His Korea Policies', p. 217

¹⁶⁵ In fact, some quarters in the Chinese political elite were already expressing concern of a possible attack on Korea by Japan before the latter occupied Taiwan. Following his talks over Taiwan with Soejima Taneomi in 1873, Li Hongzhang was already expressing his fear of Japanese ambitions towards Korea. See Li Hongzhang, 'Lun riben yu Taiwan chaoxian bilu jiaoshe', *Li Hongzhang quanji* (vol. 7): *pengliao hangao, jiaotang hangao, haijun hangao, yishu hangao*, p. 4087

traditional world order in East Asia and challenged, if it did not openly reject, China's suzerainty over the peninsular kingdom.¹⁶⁶

The Chinese themselves had been attempting to change the Koreans' foreign policy for some time.¹⁶⁷ The Chinese recognised that any problems between Korea, the European powers and Japan could have grave implications. The Yi dynasty's refusal to open its doors to the expanding European International Society could possibly bring reprisals against China: if China was assumed to have suzerainty over Korea by the Western powers, it could be held responsible for Korean conduct. On the other hand, even if Korea was recognised as an independent power by the members of the Society, under the stipulations of a tributary relationship Korea could legitimately ask China for help, possibly dragging her into an unnecessary war.¹⁶⁸ If the Qing was to avoid these two rather unpalatable possibilities, it had two stark options to choose from: it could 'assume the role of an active suzerain and direct the external policy of Korea',¹⁶⁹ or it could do nothing and risk losing its vassal state outright.

The Chinese chose the former approach, as was increasingly visible by 1879 following the annexation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom and growing concern over 'the steady growth of Japanese influence in Korea'.¹⁷⁰ One Chinese tactic was to strongly encourage the Koreans to enter treaty relations with the Western powers. It was hoped, as the *zongli yamen* memorial of 21st August 1879 stated, that once Korea had entered treaty relations, 'if Japan and Korea began fighting in the future, [the other treaty states] could

¹⁶⁶ Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order*, p. 253. Also see Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, p. 127. It should be noted, however, that this was not necessarily the case from the Korean point of view. As Tabohashi Kiyoshi states: 'Japan, of course, interpreted "independent state" as a state with absolute sovereignty within its own territory. Korea, on the other hand, was a vassal of China and not strictly a sovereign state. However, the Qing recognised Korea's domestic sovereignty and had declared so to other states. Therefore, it would be unfair to berate the Koreans for agreeing to the "independence" clause in the Treaty of Kanghwa.' Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 482. A similar point is made in Eastwood, *International Terms: Japan's Engagement in Colonial Control*. (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1998), p. 49

¹⁶⁷ Earlier Chinese attempts to persuade Korea to enter diplomatic relations with the European powers is documented by Mary C. Wright, 'The Adaptability of Ch'ing Diplomacy: The Case of Korea', *Journal of Asian Studies* (vol. 17, no. 3, May 1958, pp. 363-381)

¹⁶⁸ Li Hongzhang aptly pointed out this dilemma in his memorial to the *zongli yamen*, where he wrote: 'Korea is poor and weak and it has no chance of holding its own against Japan in a war. If, based on the precedents set by the Ming dynasty, Korea asks us for help [to fight the Japanese], how would we respond to this?' See Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 2). (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1978), p. 370

¹⁶⁹ Lin, 'Li Hung-Chang: His Korea Policies', p. 213

¹⁷⁰ C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, p. 18. For the influence of the annexation of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, see Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, p. 63 and Lin, 'Li Hung-Chang: His Korea Policies', p. 219

all stand up and admonish the wrong (將來兩國啟釁，有約之國，皆得起而議其非).¹⁷¹ It was a policy which resembled the tried and tested tactic of 'playing barbarians off one another (*yi yi zhi yi*).'

The Chinese got the chance to apply this policy in 1880, when the United States attempted to enter treaty relations with Korea. Despite the fact that the American envoy Commodore Robert Wilson Shufeldt had received some help from the rather reluctant Japanese (who were fearful of damaging both Japanese-Korean and U.S.-Japanese relations should Shufeldt fail to obtain results from Korea he desired),¹⁷² his diplomatic overtures had been met by rejections from the Koreans. While careful not to take an overtly interventionist stance, Li Hongzhang stepped in to play a vital role in securing a treaty for Shufeldt.¹⁷³ He persuaded the Korean envoys that a treaty would be advantageous to protecting Korea, while his political aides Ma Jianzhong and Zheng Caoru (鄭藻如) helped write a draft treaty.¹⁷⁴ One important clause from the Chinese point of view was article 1, which stated that 'Korea is a vassal state of China, but has always enjoyed autonomy in both its internal and external affairs.'¹⁷⁵ While Shufeldt rejected this and the clause had to be dropped from the final draft of the treaty, he did agree to a 'compromise that the Korean king would, after signing the treaty, send a communication to the president of the United States declaring Korea's dependency on China.'¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ This memorial was based on a memorial submitted by Ding Richang. Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 2). (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1978), p. 375. Also see Li Hongzhang's letter to Korean official Yi Yu-wŏn, where he claims that Japan fears the West, and in order to protect itself from Japan, Korea should sign treaties with the Western powers, as if it were to 'use poison to neutralise another poison, using an enemy to attack another enemy'. The letter is collected in Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 2). (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1978), pp. 376-378

¹⁷² However, it should be noted that in his careful study of Japanese policy towards Korea, Hilary Conroy states 'the Japanese acted in good faith' and sought to encourage Korea to establish treaty relations with the United States, and any reluctance on the Japanese part was not an attempt to keep other nations out of Korea. An additional factor for Japan's lack of enthusiasm to act as a mediator could be because of its promise with Korea 'not to transmit letters of other nations to her officials.' Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 100

¹⁷³ It should be noted that the Koreans themselves had requested Chinese help in establishing treaty relations with the United States. They contended that an imperial edict from China would facilitate the acceptance of treaty relations with a foreign power.

¹⁷⁴ The eventual Korean-American Treaty that was signed on 7th May 1882 was a fairer one than the Treaty of Kanghwa. It allowed the Koreans to determine their customs rates. Furthermore, while allowing the U.S. extraterritoriality, it stipulated that the right 'would be relinquished after the modification of the Korean legal system.' Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, p. 88

¹⁷⁵ Cited in Lin, 'Li Hung-Chang: His Korea Policies', p. 223

¹⁷⁶ Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, p. 119. This precedent was followed when Korea signed treaties with Britain and Germany in 1882.

It can be said that the Chinese elites' attempts to confirm Korea's status as a Tributary state were ultimately unsuccessful, as they failed to give this relationship legal status within European International Society. On the other hand, from the point of checking Japan's attempts to dismantle the last vestiges of the East Asian international order, the Chinese initiatives did work to some extent. The Japanese recognised this themselves, and were somewhat peeved that China had usurped the emerging 'civilised' power, Japan, and demonstrate their superior position over Korea by bringing about diplomatic reform in Korea. Furthermore, the Japanese 'considered that such a declaration of dependency...would obviously strengthen China's claims to Liuchiu [Ryūkyū].'¹⁷⁷

Sino-Japanese rivalry in Korea: the sending of troops

But while the opening of Korea did serve the interests of the Chinese and the Japanese in some ways, it also brought about unexpected consequences. Many of the ruling Korean elite 'interpreted the [Korean] government's actions as a betrayal of the order and, more directly, attributed the plight of their daily lives to the government's unorthodox policies',¹⁷⁸ and such simmering discontent became increasingly intertwined with power struggles within the Korean court. Foreigners also become targets for such dissent.

One of the first of such incidents was the Soldiers' Mutiny of July 1882 (*Im-o gunlan* 壬午軍亂). The direct cause was resentment arising from the unequal treatment and pay between regular soldiers and the modernised, Japanese-trained corps. The *Taewŏn'gun*, who sought to re-establish conservative dominance in the court, fanned the flames by exhorting the soldiers to attack the reformers and the Japanese. The riot quickly escalated into an attack on the dominant Min clan, the royal palace, and the Japanese legation. Japanese Minister Hanabusa Yoshimoto barely escaped with his life.

Both the Chinese and Japanese reacted swiftly. Back in Tokyo, the Japanese government decided to send Hanabusa back to Korea to demand an indemnity from the Korean government 'within the boundaries permissible under international law.'¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, p.90

¹⁷⁸ Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, p. 130. It is believed that the *Taewŏn'gun* was behind these anti-Western movements. C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, p. 20

¹⁷⁹ Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1). Keijō (Seoul): Chōsen sōtokufu chūsūin, 1940), p. 788. Also see Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea: 1868-1910*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), pp. 102-103. Hardliners such as Soejima Taneomi and

While the Japanese did dispatch a military force to accompany Hanabusa's mission, this was only to protect the mission and other Japanese nationals, and the Japanese foreign minister Inoue Kaoru 'took pains to disavow any aggressive intent on the part of Japan'.¹⁸⁰ The Chinese saw matters differently. They feared that the Japanese would take advantage of the situation to further their ambitions towards Korea.¹⁸¹ In his memorial to the viceroy of Zhili, Zhang Shusheng (張樹聲),¹⁸² Xue Fucheng warned that Japanese ambitions on Korea were nothing new, and there was the possibility that Inoue, 'using crafty, poisonous tricks (以狡毒之計)', would invade the capital and collaborate with the *Taewŏn'gun* and try either to force the Korean king to abdicate or take away the *Taewŏn'gun* to Tokyo.¹⁸³ China, he argued, needed to send troops to Korea to prevent the Japanese from carrying out their plans. The *zongli yamen* was of a similar opinion, arguing that a more assertive policy stand towards Korea was urgently needed, both to strengthen Sino-Korean Tributary ties and ward off Japan.¹⁸⁴ In the event, both countries sent their militaries to Korea, and took measures to ensure their power on the peninsula was preserved. The Chinese detained the *Taewŏn'gun* and hauled him off to Tianjin. The Japanese leaders, for their part, presented the Koreans with additional demands to redress the damage inflicted by the mutiny. The result was the Treaty of Chemulp'o and its Additional Convention, where Japan successfully extracted indemnities and further trading and travelling concessions from Korea.

While the 1882 mutiny may have been quelled, it certainly did not put an end to simmering Sino-Japanese rivalry over the Korean peninsula. The mutiny had resulted in a somewhat uneasy coexistence of Japan and China on the peninsula: while both sides were anxious to avoid a war,¹⁸⁵ both continued their attempts to strengthen their power

Kuroda Kiyotaka demanded for more forceful measures against Korea, but were ultimately overruled by the moderates such as Inoue Kaoru, the foreign minister.

¹⁸⁰ C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, p. 36

¹⁸¹ Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, p. 132

¹⁸² Li Hongzhang, who was the viceroy of Zhili, was at this time mourning the death of his mother, although he continued to exert influence over policy. Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 861.

¹⁸³ Letter from Xue Fucheng to Zhang Shusheng, 12th August 1882, collected in Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 2), p. 390.

¹⁸⁴ See Jiang Tingfu (ed), *Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* (vol. 2). (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1978), pp. 387-388. Cf. C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, p. 36 and Motegi Toshio 'Chūka sekai no "kindai" teki saihen to nippon', pp. 78-79.

¹⁸⁵ In the early 1880s, Qing officials such as Zhang Peilun argued for a much more assertive Korea policy by China. However, top officials such as Li Hongzhang were much more cautious of implementing an overly assertive policy that would arouse the suspicions of Japan and the Western powers. See Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), pp. 861-867 for a detailed discussion of Qing Korean policy around this time.

over the area. It was the Chinese who were initially more successful. In the wake of the 1882 mutiny, they had asserted their tributary rights to justify their intervention, and had amply demonstrated their ability to do so.¹⁸⁶ Now they moved to further consolidate this success, helped by the support of the dominant Min clan within the Korean ruling elite.

Under Chinese encouragement, some measures towards domestic 'strengthening' were undertaken,¹⁸⁷ and loans were provided by China for this purpose. China recommended a foreign advisor (the German Paul George von Möllendorf), who took up his post in 1882. The Chinese also continued their policy of persuading Korea to enter relations with other members of European International Society with the hope of checking Japanese ambitions. During 1883, they played a part in Korea's signing of treaties with the British and Germans, further facilitating the kingdom's entry into European International Society. They also signed a trade agreement with Korea in late 1882, in which China's superior status over the former was reasserted.¹⁸⁸ Consequently, the agreement was framed as an 'imperial favour' to allow Koreans to trade,¹⁸⁹ and the Chinese enjoyed decided advantages over their Korean counterparts, including extraterritoriality and freedom to travel in the interior.

The Meiji leadership continued their policy of keeping a low profile after the 1882 mutiny. As Itō Yukio notes, the 1880s were marked by some guardedness towards the Qing's 'self-strengthening' and its subsequent military build-up,¹⁹⁰ and the Meiji leadership was in no mood to challenge China at this particular stage.¹⁹¹ But this does

¹⁸⁶ This was further demonstrated by the fact that it was the Chinese official Ma Jianzhong who had played an important role in mediating the Treaty of Chemulp'o. However, to Western diplomats, the logic which undergirded Sino-Japanese interactions was somewhat incomprehensible: American diplomats observed that 'in the past, the Chinese had repeatedly disavowed any suzerain relations with Korea, yet...the Imperial edict indicting the Tai-wōn-kun [sic]...showed that China had asserted "sovereignty over Korea"; and the Japanese, who should either have sought compensation from the Chinese Government or refuted China's pretension to Korea, did neither.' See Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, p. 104.

¹⁸⁷ For details of these reforms, see *ibid.*, pp. 130-146 and Deuchler, , pp. 149-171

¹⁸⁸ This, of course, was criticised by the member states of European International Society – but the loudest complaints were heard from the Japanese and American diplomats.

¹⁸⁹ Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, pp. 140-143; Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, p. 121-122

¹⁹⁰ See Itō Yukio, 'Nisshin senzen no chūgoku, chōsen ninshiki no keisei to gaikōron' and Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, pp. 60-61. In 1882, we also see Iwakura Tomomi calling for a rise in Japan's naval spending with reference caution to China's military expansion. Iwakura notes China's recent military build-up, as well as its ill-feelings towards Japan stemming from Sino-Japanese disputes over Taiwan and the Ryūkyū Kingdom. See Iwakura Tomomi, 'Tomomi sozei zōchō ni kansuru ikensho o naikaku ni teishutsu suru koto', *Iwakura kō jikki* (Tada Kōmon, ed) (vol. 3), p. 940.

¹⁹¹ Iwakura's views, which are said to closely reflect those of the Japanese foreign ministry, is available in Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), pp. 902-903. For a detailed account of the interaction between the cautious line of the government and the reformist groups within Japan, see Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, pp. 125-168.

not mean that Japanese attempts to 'civilise' Korea had been abandoned. The Japanese leadership was not particularly thrilled to see Korea entering treaty relations and reforming under Chinese guidance. However, their Korea policy involved seeking 'the further development of [Korea's] opening process, not in Japanese unilateral action, nor in support of Korean progressives, but in collective pressure to be exerted by Japan and other treaty powers'.¹⁹² In this sense, Korea's exposure to 'civilised' European International Society could lead to greater pressures exerted upon her to undergo a 'civilisation' process. As one of Korea's closest neighbours, this could potentially allow Japan to play a role in this process, allowing itself to stand as an equal among the 'civilised' powers.¹⁹³

Furthermore, during this period we see leading Japanese politicians and intellectuals engaged in more private attempts to introduce the Koreans to 'civilisation and enlightenment', which again demonstrates the degree to which the 'civilising' mode of interaction within European International Society had become internalised among the Japanese elite. The Meiji leaders exercised caution in assisting these private ventures,¹⁹⁴ but Korean reformists found welcome supporters such as Fukuzawa Yukichi or his disciple Inoue Kakugorō (井上角五郎), who believed that 'since Japan was the first state to recognise Korean independence, it had the responsibility to support it and its enlightenment and civilisation (*bunmei kaika*), and Qing interference under the auspices of its suzerain relationship, was a political crime.'¹⁹⁵

This in itself symbolises the rejection of the Sinocentric ideology of the East Asian international order, where the 'Middle Kingdom' had the duty to show 'compassion', 'encouragement' and 'nourish' those at a lower social status.¹⁹⁶ Now that

¹⁹² *ibid.*, p. 117

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 135. This makes sense when we consider the historical contest of this time, where attempts to reform the unequal treaties were on the top political agenda of the Meiji leadership.

¹⁹⁴ For instance, Kim Ok-kyun's attempts to raise Japanese for Korean reforms were met with very little success, much to the disappointment of Kim and Japanese progressives. Inoue Kakugorō, a student of Fukuzawa Yukichi, complained that he 'was disappointed to find that the Japanese government, having changed its policy frequently, had no definite policy on Korea.' Cited in *ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁹⁵ Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 908. Also see C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, pp. 42-43. The movements were also intertwined with Liberal movements (*jiyū minken undō*) in Japan to the extent that 'if reform could be achieved on the continent (Korea, China) the reform of Japan would be "automatic."' (Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 133) However, Conroy is not of the opinion that such individuals used the movement to 'civilise' Korea and Korean reformists 'as pawns in a Japanese nationalist scheme to gobble up Korea.' (Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 129). It is worth noting that some of the leading 'liberals' such as Itagaki Taisuke were former proponents of *seikanron*. Although they had such intellectual heritage it was by no means clear that they would advocate overseas expansion in the 1880s.

¹⁹⁶ Mancall, *China at the Centre*, p. 23

both China and Korea were beginning to be seen as 'backward' nations by many Japanese around this time, the degree to which China was 'civilised' was debatable, and brought the legitimacy of Qing prerogatives over Korea into question. On this basis, it was concluded that it was not the 'Middle Kingdom' China that had the duty to 'nourish' Korea; that task fell to 'civilised' Japan. In what may seem as a somewhat paternalistic attitude today, Fukuzawa Yukichi 'noted the similarity between the opening of Japan by the United States and that of Korea by Japan. This gave Japan a rank of "first friendly nation" to Korea and a special concern for the progress of her civilisation.'¹⁹⁷ Japanese progressives thus took it upon themselves to 'enlighten' the Koreans and their country, and came into contact with a number of Korean reformists. Fukuzawa in particular seems to have exerted considerable influence. He was in contact with individuals such as Kim Ok-kyun (金玉均), Pak Yōng-hyo (朴泳孝) and Ō Yun-jung (魚允中),¹⁹⁸ and gave advice on implementing a number of cultural policies.¹⁹⁹ The Koreans also received 'lessons in theoretical politics' that all 'civilised nations' were sovereign, independent states.²⁰⁰

Abortive Japanese attempts at 'civilising' Korea: the 1884 incident

However, Japanese progressives' attempts to 'civilise' Korea were unsuccessful. While they were happy to extend their support to the Korean reformists, the latter often encountered strong resistance back home. As noted above, the powerful Min clan within the Korean court were more inclined to support the more gradual, Chinese-led reforms rather than the Japanese-influenced reformists.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 138

¹⁹⁸ Ō Yun-jung had visited Japan in 1881 as a member of the secret Korean inspection tour (*sinsa yuamdan*) dispatched to learn about political and economic reform abroad. It was during this visit that he met Fukuzawa. Kim Ok-kyun had also visited Japan in summer 1881 and had been introduced to Fukuzawa by Ō Yun-jung. Both Kim and Pak Yōng-hyo visited Japan in 1882 as members of the apology mission sent to Japan following the 1882 mutiny.

¹⁹⁹ One policy was the establishment of a newspaper, which was duly carried out by hiring Fukuzawa's students.

²⁰⁰ See Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 909; Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 138; and Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, pp. 200-201.

²⁰¹ See Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 900. Martina Deuchler takes a dimmer view of the Min clan's motives: for the Min, she argues, 'strengthening themselves was first; strengthening the country was second....The Min's concept of modernization was narrow and self-serving; their concept of foreign relations was traditional.' Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys*, pp. 204-205.

The Korean reformists grew increasingly impatient of the slowness of reforms.²⁰² They began to consider utilising force to implement their ideas; in this, Japanese sympathetic to their cause supported them to varying degrees. Kim Ok-kyun and Inoue Kakugorō began seeking help from the French legation in Japan to back the progressives in Korea.²⁰³ Meanwhile in Korea, Inoue Kakugorō established contact with the Japanese Minister to Korea, Takezoe Shin'ichirō (竹添進一郎) and his deputy Shimamura Hisashi (島村久). Initial contact began during Takezoe's leave of absence, when the reformists managed to get a sympathetic audience from Shimamura. Takezoe himself was far more cautious – he knew that his superior in Tokyo, Inoue Kaoru, was dubious of the reformists and was keen to avoid a conflict with China over Korea.²⁰⁴

Takezoe, however, eventually became more willing to extend his help towards the coup d'état plans by the reformists, asking Kim Ok-kyun 'whether or not the Independence Party had the will to undertake domestic reforms with Japanese help.'²⁰⁵ It appears that Takezoe had decided that he could safely support the reformists without provoking the Chinese.²⁰⁶ China was embroiled in a war with France over Vietnam at the time, causing the withdrawal of some Chinese troops from Korea. This 'apparent weakness of China made some anti-Chinese Koreans all the more restive and aggrieved at the continual Chinese domination'.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, the key Qing officials in charge of foreign policy, Prince Gong and Li Hongzhang had either been dismissed and/or were

²⁰² American diplomat Ensign George C. Foulk reported: 'In October one of the progressive party leaders told me that unless foreign intervention prevented, Korea would soon be irreclaimably in the hands of the Chinese, and with great bitterness went on to say that his small party had not only lost power to proceed further...but they were in actual danger of execution'. Cited in Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 146. This statement may be exaggerated, as execution of the progressives could potentially invite intervention from Japan, and was politically too risky. However, judging from the fact that the attempted coup happened two months later, it does give us a sense of the desperation felt by the reformists.

²⁰³ This took place in the context of increasing hostility between China and France over Annam (Vietnam). It appears that Kim Ok-kyun and Inoue Kakugorō believed that the French would be sympathetic to a cause that would weaken Chinese influence in the Korean peninsula.

²⁰⁴ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 144

²⁰⁵ Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 928. This interview took place on 1st November 1884, and is the first instance where Takezoe indicated extending Japanese help to the progressives' cause. Note that the progressives were also known as the 'independence party (*tongnip tang*)' or the 'party of civilisation (*kaehwa tang*)'.

²⁰⁶ There is some disagreement among historians about the extent to which Takezoe involved himself in the plot. Tabohashi Kiyoshi argues that the possibility of a clash between the progressives and the Min was low prior to Takezoe's return. The plot only began moving after the Minister had returned to Korea from his leave of absence, thus implying that Takezoe had played a decisive role in inciting the coup d'état. Hilary Conroy, on his part, points out to simmering discontent and plans of a revolt before Takezoe's return, and reduces Takezoe's responsibility to a certain extent.

²⁰⁷ C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, p. 44

under severe domestic attack by *qingyi* officials for 'appeasing' the French,²⁰⁸ and it is possible that Takezoe thought that the possibility of Chinese intervention was low.²⁰⁹

The coup, which took place on 4th December 1884, was a dismal failure. Although Japanese troops were supplied by Takezoe to assist the reformists, they were eventually overwhelmed by Chinese troops, and got involved in a brief skirmish in the royal palace. The Japanese legation in Seoul was burnt and Japanese residents in Seoul were killed by angry mobs. Like his predecessor Hanabusa, Takezoe was forced to flee the capital.

The incident highlighted the fundamentally contradictory nature of Japan's policy towards Korea. On the one hand, the Meiji leaders were keen to avoid military conflict with China. However, on the other hand, Japanese policy vis-à-vis Korea also reflected the 'civilising' mode of interaction within European International Society, and also included a policy of promoting Korean 'independence' and 'civilisation'. As Tabohashi points out, this goal was completely at odds with the Qing's policy of maintaining its tributary ties with Korea, and '[t]hose in charge of [this Japanese] policy needed considerable diplomatic and political skills' to avoid a clash with China.²¹⁰

Following the failure of the coup, the Japanese sought redress for the damage caused by the riots, ignoring their Minister's interference in Korean domestic politics.²¹¹ Diplomacy was of course to be conducted in a 'civilised' manner as dictated by the norms of European International Society. Korea was to be treated as an independent state in its own right, and the Japanese representative Inoue Kaoru was insistent on this point. The Japanese government was again demonstrating their determination to separate Korea from its suzerain, despite their continued determination not to get involved in a war with China. The Chinese, for their part, felt entitled to be involved in Korean-Japanese negotiations. For one thing, Korea was their tributary state; furthermore, Chinese troops had been involved in a gunfight with the Japanese. However, the Japanese remained firm. When a Chinese official joined the negotiating table, Inoue Kaoru

²⁰⁸ For a brief summary of the Sino-French war of 1884-1885, see Immanuel Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, pp. 325-330.

²⁰⁹ C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, p. 48

²¹⁰ Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai nissen kankei no kenkyū* (vol. 1), p. 907

²¹¹ The Meiji leaders were indeed aware of Takezoe's involvement and did consider whether or not he should have been punished. However, Inoue Kaoru maintained that Takezoe 'had not been well versed in the situation in Korea and had been taken advantage of by the Independence party, other Japanese, and his own subordinates who were in sympathy with the Independence party.' Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, pp. 158-159

...stood up, shook hands, and said: 'Today I am negotiating with a Korean official. It is not convenient for you to be present today.'...These episodes...indicate rather neatly the Japanese government's emphasis on conducting diplomacy in the Western-style modern way, on standing with progressive nations in a 'wise, prudent, and liberal policy.' Shaking hands with a fellow oriental, ...the emphasis on international law...built into the conferences the same air of firm yet patient teaching of backward people which had characterized the Japanese handling of Korea since 1876.²¹²

However, diplomatic difficulties with China remained. The incident had brought about the clash of Chinese and Japanese troops, and had amply proved that the continued presence of the two armies could easily result in another conflict. Neither side wished war, and a diplomatic solution was sought. In March 1885, Itō Hirobumi was sent to China to thrash out an agreement with his Chinese counterpart, Li Hongzhang. After some bickering over the where the responsibility lay for the Sino-Japanese clash, both leaders agreed to the Convention of Tianjin, signed on 18th April 1885. The convention consisted of three points. First, it stipulated that both Chinese and Japanese troops would be withdrawn from Korea. Second, a Korean peace-keeping force was to be established, and the training undertaken by foreigners apart from Chinese and Japanese. Third, it was agreed that if either China or Japan wished to send troops in the future, it was to give notice to the other party.

The negotiations were not only about raw power politics. Following Japan's policy to carve itself a place among the 'civilised' members of European International Society, Japan again took this opportunity to demonstrate its 'civilised' identity to the Chinese. Itō spoke to Li Hongzhang in English, and peppered his arguments with references to international law. Avoiding the use of Chinese characters for explaining 'independence (自主 *jishu/zizhu*)' or 'sovereignty (主權 *shuken/zhuquan*)', he precluded arguments over the meaning of the terms, which 'allowed the terms of international law to retain their authority.'²¹³ By using the language of a 'civilised' state whose language left less room for reinterpretation of the terms of international law, Itō enhanced the moral authority of his statements, as well Japan's civilised identity and legitimacy in terms of the rules of European International Society; it was another display of 'the Japanese government's desire to transform how power was defined in Asia'²¹⁴

²¹² *ibid.*, pp. 160-161

²¹³ Eastwood, *International Terms*, p. 51

²¹⁴ *ibid.*

Analytical observations: the road to the Sino-Japanese war 1894-1895

Korea was arguably China's most important Tributary state, and was the closest to its strategic borders. It is perhaps no surprise that Japanese attempts to alter the *status quo* there encountered the stiffest resistance from the Qing. Although the Convention of Tianjin did succeed in bringing about a temporary peace, Sino-Japanese rivalry over Korea continued. Japan was not about to give up its quest to 'civilise' Korea and enhance its legitimacy within the Society, and China was equally unwilling to give up its last remaining Tributary state.

Following the signing of the Convention, Qing interference in Korea increased markedly. Yuan Shikai (袁世凱), the new Chinese 'Resident' of Korea, aggressively asserted Chinese control over the peninsula, demanding that all matters of Korean diplomacy be sent to China for approval.²¹⁵ These actions significantly overstepped the traditional boundaries of authority China exercised under the Tributary System, and led to considerable resentment among the Koreans. Ironically, the more the Chinese 'tried to maintain their traditional suzerain ties, the more they came closer to modern [Western] forms of domination.'²¹⁶ Chinese economic penetration also increased. The Chinese gained a monopoly over laying telegraphic lines, and dominated the shipping lines between China and Korea.

The Japanese leadership continued their policy of avoiding conflict with China as much as possible. While there were a number of minor disputes between Korea and Japan,²¹⁷ they continued to adopt a conciliatory tone. They refused to engage in forcible attempts to 'civilise' Korea and to reconstruct her as an 'independent' state for fear of provoking the Chinese unnecessarily. Their policy operated on

...the presumption that the chief ingredient of a realistic policy on Korea was caution, that 'a good outcome' *could* be achieved in a 'conciliatory manner.' In terms of goals they continued to define a good outcome as Korean reform and independence....There was no great hurry....Japanese policy makers had learned by 1885 that they had to take into consideration not only Korean intransigence...but Chinese intransigence as well.²¹⁸

Yet the peace that had been achieved through the Convention of Tianjin was a delicate one. By this time, Japan's quest for 'civilised' identity had posed such a

²¹⁵ C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910*, pp. 65-66; Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 58

²¹⁶ Motegi Toshio 'Chūka sekai no "kindai" teki saihen to nippon', pp. 81-82,

²¹⁷ See Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, pp. 188-198 for details.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 200-201

challenge to the Qing that any further moves by either power in Korea could easily result in a war between the two. The Chinese, having already lost one tributary state and seen its territory invaded, were deeply suspicious of Japan. Japan remained equally apprehensive of the Chinese. China had re-established its power over the Korean peninsula, and was building an impressive military force through its own 'self strengthening'. By the later half of the 1880s, 'the army leadership regarded the Ch'ing [Qing] empire as the chief hypothetical enemy and assumed that any major external war would be fought there.'²¹⁹ Loans were raised to expand the navy; the Meiji leadership even relied on public donations and an imperial donation to fund maritime defences.²²⁰ Sino-Japanese relations now resembled that of a classic security dilemma.

In the end, there were several sparks that ignited the fire and disturbed the precarious peace between China and Japan. First, Japan's Korean policy became tangled up in Japanese domestic political divisions over popular representation. The opposition frequently heaped criticism on the Meiji leaders' foreign policy. Although the government did have the means to silence them by force (censorship and arrests), the opposition was a powerful force that could not be ignored lightly, and could have well prodded the government to consider a more aggressive policy. Second, continuous Chinese domination over Korea convinced the Japanese that a moderate policy was futile to 'civilise' Korea. By the early 1890s, coupled with their increasing confidence in their military power following increased military spending,²²¹ 'the question which had been answered affirmatively in the 1870's posed itself again. Was caution really realistic?'²²²

This factor increased in importance when power struggles among the great powers of European International Society extended to East Asia. In the wake of increasing Anglo-Russian rivalry over Afghanistan, the British occupied the small island of Kōmun-do (or Port Hamilton) on 15th April 1885, fearing that the Russians would attempt to use the Sino-Japanese standoff to extend its power over Korea. While the incident had less to do with Japan, Tsuda Takako argues that the incident prompted fear

²¹⁹ Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 61. See also Yamagata Aritomo's warning of the Qing military build-up (which came as early as November 1880), 'Shin rinpō heibe ryakuhyō' in *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho* (Ōyama Azusa, ed), pp. 91-99 and Itō Yukio, 'Nisshin senzen no chūgoku, chōsen ninshiki no keisei to gaikōron', p. 110-111.

²²⁰ Tsuda Takako, 'Sen happyaku hachijū nendai ni okeru nippon seifu no higashi ajia seisaku tenkai to rekkyō', pp. 28-29; Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, pp. 62-63

²²¹ Itō Yukio, 'Nisshin senzen no chūgoku, chōsen ninshiki no keisei to gaikōron', p. 157; Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, pp. 63-64

²²² Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 207

among the Meiji leaders that any manifestations of European great power politics could easily disturb the peace within the region.²²³ Furthermore, the construction of the Siberian Railway would mean that the Russians could potentially enjoy greater access to East Asia. Thus, 'the pursuit of a good outcome was becoming a more urgent matter than it had been in 1885; something more than caution might be needed if Korea policy were to remain realistic.'²²⁴ It was argued that 'China was likely to strengthen its military and naval position in Korea, perhaps even forming alliances with a Western power',²²⁵ significantly weakening Japan's own security as well. Japan needed to re-establish its dominance over the Korean peninsula, even if it meant ousting China.

It was in this context that the 1894 Tonghak Rebellion took place in Korea. China asserted its rights as suzerain state, and following requests from the Korean government to help crush the rebellion, despatched troops. Japan immediately followed suit after receiving notification from the Chinese in accordance with the Convention of Tianjin. Foreign minister Mutsu Munemitsu claimed that this was to preserve the power balance within the peninsula.²²⁶ The mistrust of the two powers was such that even when it transpired that the rebellion was already put down, both Japanese and Chinese troops continue to operate in the region. Hostilities finally began on 25th July 1894. The Sino-Japanese war, the first full-scale military conflict between the two countries since the sixteenth century, had begun.

Conclusion

The rivalry and eventual military clash which took place between China and Japan in 1894 was in many ways a culmination of the clash of international orders, although it is somewhat ironic that it took place between two states that had both, at some stage, been members of the same international order.

²²³ Tsuda Takako, 'Sen happyaku hachijū nendai ni okeru nippon seifu no higashi ajia seisaku tenkai to rekkyō', pp. 24-25. Conroy takes a more sanguine view, claiming that 'this...affair did not unduly excite Japanese fear of Russia for it was more an expression of the Asia wide Anglo-Russian rivalry than a specific design on Korean territorial integrity'. See Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea: 1868-1910*, p. 210

²²⁴ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 212. This point was perhaps most eloquently expressed by Yamagata Aritomo in 1890, who called for the need to secure the 'cordon of sovereignty (*shuken sen*)' by establishing and defending the outer 'cordon of interest (*rieki sen*)'. Yamagata states the dangers Russia will pose to Korea when the Trans-Siberian railway is completed. Russia, he argues, would threaten Korea, which is Japan's 'cordon of interest' which protects Japan, particularly Tsushima. See Yamagata Aritomo, 'Gaikō kōryaku ron' in *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho* (Ōyama Azusa, ed), pp. 196-201.

²²⁵ Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p. 64

²²⁶ See Mutsu Munemitsu, *Kenkenroku*, p. 7 and Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*, p. 241.

This chapter has argued that Japan's imperialism in the 1870s and 1880s can be interpreted as a component of Japan's socialisation into European International Society and its effort to demonstrate its 'civilised' identity. Nineteenth-century European International Society was a Society for empires, and imperialism was an inherent component of the Society. As well as being a perpetrator of imperialism in Asia, Japan was, to a certain degree, also a victim of European imperialism. In order to escape the threat (whether perceived or real) of European imperialism, the Japanese had decided to engage with the social requirements of the Society, rather than reject it. In the process, they sought to appropriate 'Western civilization in order to challenge Western imperialism and improve Japan's status in the world'.²²⁷ Of course, this 'status' would have to be attained in accordance with the social standards of the Society, provided Japan sought membership of it. Prestige is a deeply social phenomenon which can only be conferred by a social actor's peers. Therefore, if an actor wishes to attain prestige in her environment, she must be seen to be conforming to the norms of the particular social environment she inhabits.

Japan's behaviour during the 1870s and 1880s was therefore aimed precisely at attaining prestige within the dualistic European International Society. For instance, Japan's attempts to punish the Taiwanese 'savages' and even possibly establish a colony were aimed at attaining the prerogatives of a 'civilised' state, and in this sense this form of imperialism 'did not result from Japan's engaging Western civilization; rather, it constituted part of the process of Japan's engaging it'.²²⁸ It will be recalled that the mode of action towards 'uncivilised' states in the Society allowed the European states to divide the sovereignty of 'savage' polities and rule such lands on behalf of the local rulers in order to introduce the trappings of 'civilisation'. In European International Society of the late-nineteenth century, the hallmarks of 'civilised' great powers – those states with 'prestige' – had the right to 'civilise' the 'savages' and, concurrently, colonial possessions. It was precisely these features that Japan tried to attain, and early Meiji imperialism should be seen as an early attempt by the Japanese to do so. Of course, Japan could not just simply invade other countries as it pleased: it had to follow 'civilised', legitimate procedural norms to do so. Hence, Japan's military adventure was justified on the basis of the 'civilising role' the great powers of European International

²²⁷ Robert Eskildsen, 'Of Civilization and Savages', p. 393

²²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 403

Society were allowed to play, and mirrored the dual social structures of the Society in the late-nineteenth century.

In similar fashion to the previous chapter, we see that China was between the 'adaptation' and 'strategic learning stage'. China had still not abandoned its identity as a member of the East Asian international order. This manifested itself in the continuation of Tributary relations with its neighbours. It is for this reason that Japanese actions aimed at dismantling the vestiges of the Tributary System were seen as such a threat. Not only did they imperil what the Chinese considered to be their territory; they also threatened the very basis upon which China's international prestige and identity was based.

It is perhaps for this reason that Korea's position within the expanding European International Society and the receding Tributary System ultimately had to be resolved by war. By 1894, the differences between the two states had become so great that it was probably extremely difficult to avoid a clash. This point was also made aptly by the Japanese foreign minister during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, Mutsu Munemitsu, who wrote perceptively in his memoirs of the war, '[w]hatever form the quarrel [between China and Japan] might take...it was patently clear to all that the real cause of friction would be a collision between the new civilization of the West and the old civilisation of East Asia.'²²⁹ It of course goes without saying that some were uncomfortable with the fact that 'civilising' meant military expansion, demonstrating again that Japan's socialisation was by no means a linear process. Okakura Tenshin summed up this sentiment aptly when he observed shortly after the end of the Russo-Japanese war:

In the days when Japan was engaging in peaceful arts, the Westerners used to think of it as an uncivilised country. Since Japan started massacring thousands of people in the battlefields of Manchuria, the Westerners have called it a civilised country...if we have to rely on the odious glories of war to become a civilised country, we should happily remain barbarians.²³⁰

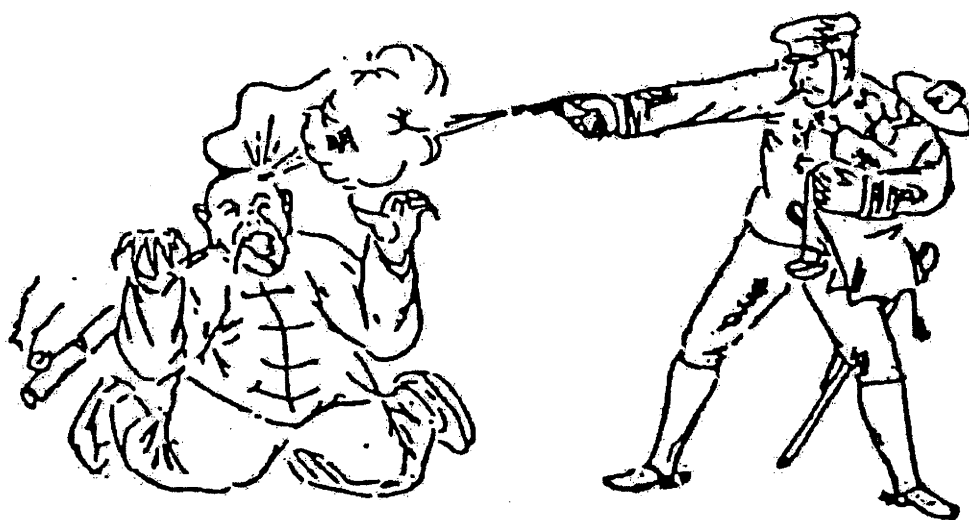
However, in the context of the late-nineteenth century and Chinese and Japanese experiences, failure to adhere to the social standards exerted by the 'civilised' members of European International Society could bring yet more coercion. Despite Okakura's reservations, Japanese politicians such as Mutsu were 'fully aware, as politicians, that if

²²⁹ Mutsu Munemitsu, *Kenkenroku* (Gordon Mark Berger, trans.), p. 28.

²³⁰ Okakura Tenshin, *Okakura Tenshin shū* (Meiji bungaku zenshū, vol. 38). (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1963), pp. 122-123.

they placed Japan's survival at the top of their agenda they would have no choice but to set their foreign policy in accordance with "European civilisation".²³¹ The Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895 was arguably one unfortunate by-product of the expansion of the Janus-faced European International Society, and resulted yet again in stark differences between the two states. Japan acquired its first colony, Taiwan, and began its first steps towards becoming a 'civilised' colonial power. For China, defeat by the new member of European International Society, Japan, signified a shock stronger than its initial encounter with the European powers back in the early nineteenth century. It was to serve as a catalyst for further social and political reforms aimed at adapting to the Society, ultimately bringing about the revolution and the birth of the 'modern' Chinese state in 1911.

Figure 6-1: Shooting China in the name of 'civilisation'



This picture appeared in 1894, the year the Sino-Japanese war broke out. The Japanese soldier is shooting a Chinese man, and the letters 'civilisation' come out of the barrel of the gun. Note that the Chinese man is smoking opium, a symbol of backwardness, while the Japanese soldier is clothed in Western clothing, representing modernity. The child the Japanese soldier carries symbolises Korea. Source: Rekishigaku kenkyūkai, *Nihonshi shiryō*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1997), p. 223

²³¹ Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no ajia: kijiku, rensa, tōki*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2001), p. 47

CONCLUSION

This study has reinterpreted China and Japan's engagement with European International Society. As noted earlier, conventional English School studies of the complex process of socialisation that China and Japan underwent have been characterised by 'thin' accounts. Furthermore, these accounts are characterised by a downplaying of the intricate relationship between the expansion of European International Society and imperialism. They thus have difficulty in explaining why Japan embarked on 'mimetic' imperialistic ventures, and how Sino-Japanese relations became increasingly characterised by suspicion and conflict as a result. The thesis has proposed a fresh examination of the expansion of European International Society by combining the theoretical tools of the English School and constructivist approaches and by utilising primary materials often neglected by scholars of International Relations. Four principal questions were posed at the beginning of this thesis:

1. What was the relationship between European International Society and imperialism in the late-nineteenth century?
2. How did this shape the relations between the Society and China and Japan?
3. Did the expansion of European International Society into China and Japan result in a process of socialisation and a fundamental shift in both states' identities and interests?
4. What are the implications of these findings for the English School approach?

At this point, it would be appropriate to summarise the study's findings to the first three empirical questions and answer the last question by discussing the implications of this thesis.

Summary of findings

European International Society, imperialism, and the 'uncivilised' outsiders

The nineteenth century, when China and Japan encountered European International Society, was a period of imperialism. Riding on a wave of overwhelming material preponderance, the European powers sought to extend their influence and search for markets overseas. The nineteenth century was also a time in which European confidence in their cultural, industrial, political and military achievements reached a highpoint. The by-product of this, as the theoretical literature of the dynamic of 'self and other' distinction has shown, was that the non-European polities and peoples were

increasingly labelled as 'uncivilised' to contrast and enhance European notions of superiority.

A concomitant development was the increasing ideational belief that the 'civilised' states of Europe had the moral duty to introduce the trappings of 'civilisation' into non-European polities. European material preponderance provided the 'civilisers' with ample evidence that non-European polities and peoples were 'backward'. Furthermore, this period saw the emergence of theories which provided 'scientific' evidence that non-White races were inherently inferior. Even the non-European polities whose civilisation had been the subject of admiration by Europeans came to be seen as increasingly stagnant or backward. Such sentiments served both as a pretext and genuine impetus for the European states to either establish informal or complete colonial rule over who they considered to be 'barbarians'. Accordingly, by the time of the late-nineteenth century, non-European states were much less likely to be subjected to the mode of interaction that applied among European states, which at least nominally aimed for coexistence.

This thesis does not ignore historical complexities. In the interactions between the European and non-European states, there were sometimes inconsistencies as to when some polities would feel the full force of the 'civilising' mode of interaction. But there is no denying that polities across the world *were* differentiated on the basis of 'civilisation' and/or race and subjected to differing modes of interaction. In such a patently racist social context, Non-Whites were much more likely to be labelled as 'uncivilised' and subjected to the 'civilising' mode of interaction of the Janus-faced European International Society.

China and Japan's socialisation into European International Society

The Chinese and the Japanese were to witness this coercive side of the Society, as well as the more 'cooperative' side, which promoted 'order and coexistence' among 'civilised' states. Through an examination of Chinese and Japanese elites' written works, this study has revealed that both sides, to differing degrees, understood the dualism inherent within European International Society at the time. On the one hand, as their knowledge of the West and intra-European international relations deepened, the Chinese and Japanese elites began to develop an understanding of the purposes behind the historical evolution of the institutions of the Society. They appreciated that the

institutions often served to maintain some form of order and protect smaller states from the powerful.

Both the Chinese and the Japanese had initially encountered the Society's 'civilising' mode of interaction, however, and the other mode that governed relations between 'civilised' states did not immediately become obvious to them. Their initial reaction was to strengthen their military power, and this was a perfectly understandable response. Military force was an obvious way in which to repel any aggressor. Even when they did become aware of the existence of some form of common identity that qualified a state to enjoy the protection of the Society's institutions, many of the 'civilised' states were also militarily powerful, so 'rich country, strong army', seemed an obvious starting point. Furthermore, it was perceived that powerful states were more able to utilise (or abuse) the Society's institutions to protect their own interests (often at the detriment of weaker states), because of their sheer military preponderance. Many of the Society's institutions remain vulnerable to this, and Realist perspectives still serve as a powerful reminder of this fact.

However, focusing our attention on attaining military power leaves us with an incomplete picture, because military/material power alone did not necessarily help a state enjoy the protection of the Society's institutions. In the context of the late-nineteenth century, the Society was one which demanded homogeneity: if an 'uncivilised' entity wished to enjoy the protection of its institutions, it also had to adhere to the 'standard of civilisation' and transform itself into a 'Europeanised' state, and the military preponderance the European powers enjoyed at this time meant that non-European polities usually had no choice but to conform to these social standards.

In the case of China and Japan, there appears to be a difference in the degree to which they understood the Society's demands for homogeneity. While they both sought to become 'rich and powerful', China and Japan thus took different paths as a result. China sought to become a powerful state by introducing Western technology and industry. This was particularly prominent in heavy industry which could be utilised for military purposes. But China did not seek membership of European International Society, and neither did it perceive the need to adhere to its social norms it thus rejected the Society's demands for homogeneity. Its reforms to become a powerful state were not intended for demonstrative purposes to impress the members of the Society. Consequently, very little was done to remodel the Qing political institutions along the

lines of the 'civilised' European states and attain the same identity as a 'civilised' member of the Society.

A similar argument can be made with regard to China's international behaviour. As previous English School scholars have documented, around this time China had begun to adopt some of the institutions of the Society in their international relations. But this in itself should not be seen as evidence of a deep level of 'socialisation'. Most of these developments were mainly to govern the Qing's relations with the European states, and while some institutions later gained increasing domestic legitimacy, neither can it be denied that China's adoption of them was in part out of expediency. After all, failure to conform to the expected behaviour of European International Society could bring about military intervention, as the Chinese elites well knew. The superficial nature of China's 'strategic learning' was evident in China's continuation of its tributary relations with members of the East Asian international order. In the relative absence of coercion, the Chinese elites saw very little need to conform to the 'social standards' imposed upon them by the 'civilised' European powers. In a sense, then, the Chinese were secure in their identity: the 'impact of the West', for sure, did shake their belief in their superiority. But during the period examined in this thesis, we still observe that the Chinese elite considered themselves *equally* (if not more) 'civilised' as the European powers. Furthermore, if we consider the barbarism committed by the European powers under the name of 'civilisation' and the sacking of the Summer Palace by the British and the French, it does indeed seem unreasonable to expect the Chinese to accept that the European powers were more 'civilised' than themselves.

In contrast, Japan sought to transform its identity from participant in the Tributary System to 'civilised' member of European International Society. Japan was the first non-European state to attain great power status within the Society, and this was in large part a result of historical contingency. The Japanese had the advantage of being able to observe what the consequences would be if they resisted the expanding Society. Furthermore, they had leaders who understood the close connection between a state's level of 'civilisation' and how the Society's two modes of interaction would apply.

The task of transforming Japan's identity was by no means an easy task. The Japanese had witnessed two very different faces of the Society, and their seemingly eager attempts to 'Europeanise' had partly resulted from military coercion, not wholesale admiration for the 'civilised' states of the Society. Gerrit W. Gong puts this nicely when he describes Japan's position as '[c]aught between the Scylla of its Asian

traditions and neighbours and the Charydbis of the European powers with their definitions and standards of "civilization".¹

Consequently, the Meiji leadership's efforts to seek membership in the Society were often shot with contradictions. The Meiji leaders were often genuinely impressed by the industrial and political developments that had taken place in the European states, while simultaneously remaining resentful and suspicious of them. Similar inconsistencies were visible within the broader spectrum of Japanese society too: Japanese in Western clothing lamented the loss of indigenous Japanese culture and ethics, while pan-Asianists called for Asians to unite, while at the same time not questioning Japan's leadership role in introducing modernity into the region to counter the threat of the West. But the leadership was ultimately successful in transforming Japan's identity. This required considerable political will, and when we consider the failures of other non-European states to attain 'civilised' status with the same speed at which Japan had done, it must be concluded that the Japanese case was unique.

The changes which took place within Japan consequently took on a different character from those of the Chinese. Japan sought to become a 'rich and powerful state', as they also knew the coercive face of the Society only too well. Their goal was in part to build up Japan's military power, just like China's. However, in contrast to China, Japan also sought to do so by modelling itself on the 'civilised' European powers. The central difference with China lay in the fact that the policy also was purposely designed to demonstrate Japan's ability to play the role of a 'civilised' power.

Similar developments took place in Japan's international behaviour. Japan fully incorporated the institutions of European International Society into its foreign relations. The degree to which Japan had become socialised into the social structures of the Society is discernible from their policy within East Asia. The Japanese leaders also sought to demonstrate their ability to conduct their diplomacy in a 'civilised' manner. They dismantled the 'outdated' vestiges of the East Asian international order and established diplomatic relations based on legalistic 'treaty relations' among the Society's members. There was, however, another dimension of Japan's socialisation that has to date been underexplored by English School scholars: that was the unexpected consequence of increased Sino-Japanese conflict and Japanese imperialism. As Japan's 'Europeanisation' accelerated and the European International Society's social standards of 'success' became entrenched, the Asian states increasingly came to be seen as

¹ Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, p. 174

'backward'. The effects of the dual mode of interaction within European International Society became increasingly prominent in Japan's diplomatic conduct towards its Asian neighbours. Having engaged with the notion that 'civilised' states had the duty to 'enlighten' the 'barbarous' people, Japan sent military expeditions to 'pacify' the Taiwanese 'savages' and carve themselves a 'civilised' identity. They also began attempts to promote political reforms in Korea, precipitating increasingly hostile Sino-Japanese rivalry.

Implications of the study

Implications for the English School approach

The findings of this study suggest that the English School must seek a better balance between its devotion to providing ways of avoiding the brutish world of power politics and serving as an analytical tool to understanding international politics. As mentioned in earlier chapters, some scholars have noted that the English School approach not only describes *what* states do, it also describes what they *ought* to do.² This is not in itself deplorable. In a world where states still regularly violate international norms (human rights abuse is one that comes readily to mind), surely it is worthwhile having a theoretical/philosophical approach that provides prescriptions for a more ethical life in the international realm.

At the same time, however, this seems to come at the price of producing a somewhat narrow conceptualisation of International Society. The results of this, as we have seen, are either tensions between historical realities and normative commitments or narrowly-defined questions which downplay the coercive mode of interaction within International Society. This permits us to view only one side of the face of International Society, and puts blinkers on interpretive analysis conducted under the theoretical approach of the English School. This hardly seems to do justice to the approach's self-proclaimed potential as a broader theoretical framework for understanding international politics. In recent years, there have been arguments that the English School approach was a forerunner of constructivist approaches;³ this presumably implies that the

² Chris Brown, 'World Society and the English School: An "International Society" Perspective on World Society', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 7, no. 4, 2001, pp. 423-441), p. 438

³ See Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, pp. 7-9, 'The Social Construction of International Society', *European Journal of International Relations* (vol. 1, no. 3, 1995, pp. 367-389); Richard Little, 'The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations', *European Journal*

approach can also serve as a heuristic analytical tool for deepening our understanding of the social context of international relations. I certainly do not intend to forward another dichotomy between 'Realism' and 'Idealism', and neither do I believe that the English School should abandon their normative ideals altogether.⁴ But if we are to broaden the analytical scope of the English School approach, we need to escape the intellectual strait-jacket of conventional accounts of European International Society.

By paying attention to the fact that China and Japan first encountered the coercive, 'civilising' face of the Society, it is hoped that this thesis points the way forward to arriving at a more complete understanding of why both the Chinese and Japanese framed their national interests and goals in militaristic/imperialistic terms, rather than cooperative terms. Furthermore, this analytical framework is able to demonstrate why the Japanese, who defined 'civilised' membership of the Society in terms of imperialist behaviour and used its institutions accordingly to attain this goal, were actually reproducing the Janus-faced nature of European International Society.

Implications for understanding Sino-Japanese relations

This thesis also advocates the need for greater contextualisation in the study of Sino-Japanese relations. Some studies on this topic have claimed that mutual rivalry and ambivalence has historically been present between the two countries. In a typical statement of this kind, Rex Li states in his discussion of contemporary Sino-Japanese relations: '[w]hile Japanese ambitions in the international arena have attracted much attention from Chinese scholars and analysts, it is Tokyo's Asia strategy that causes the greatest concern in China. After all, Japan and China are historical rivals in East Asia.'⁵ The other argument, often espoused by the leaders of the two countries, maintains that relations between the two were fundamentally characterised by peace, only for it to become increasingly conflict-ridden in the late-nineteenth century, after China and Japan's encounter with European International Society, thereby polarising the historical evolution of the bilateral relationship.

of International Relations (vol. 6, no. 3, 2000, pp. 395-422); Barry Buzan, 'The English School: an underexploited resource in IR' *Review of International Studies* (vol. 27, no. 3, July 2001, pp. 471-488)

⁴ In this vein, it is worth noting that constructivists have also had normative arguments that prescribe appropriate behaviour for states. However, they have tended to do so implicitly, and this has also come under some criticism. See Reus-Smit, 'Imagining society: constructivism and the English School', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (vol. 4, no. 3, October 2002, pp. 487-509), pp. 499-502.

⁵ Rex Li, 'Partners or Rivals? Chinese Perceptions of Japan's Security Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region' *The Journal of Strategic Studies* (vol. 22, no. 4, December 1999, pp. 1-25), p. 6

Both sides are correct, but only to a certain extent. This study has demonstrated that Japan's views vis-à-vis China were both characterised by admiration and an attempt to usurp China's position at the apex of the social hierarchy in the East Asian international order: in this sense we can see both states as 'historic rivals'. The Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895 was, however, a turning point in that it took place under very different circumstances. It was not a clash between two states belonging to the same international order, but one which took place between members of two *different* orders. It was arguably more strongly connected with increasing insecurities created by Japan's quest for a 'civilised' identity within European International Society and its subsequent attempts to dismantle the vestiges of the East Asian international order. This seems less connected to 'historic' rivalry, which had previously taken place *within* the same international order. Such arguments give the 'historic' character of Sino-Japanese conflict a remarkably ahistorical character. While rivalries between the two states may have taken place throughout history, we need to further elucidate the different social/historical contexts in which these took place.

Implications for the study of international politics

I would like to conclude with a number of implications for the study of international politics in general. This is a worthwhile exercise, because the violent, coercive manner in which both states were introduced into European International Society had significant implications for the future world order.

This thesis has traced Japan's attempts to become a 'civilised' member of European International Society in the late-nineteenth century, and Japan's labours were to eventually bear fruit; in 1899, it succeeded in abolishing extraterritoriality, and was accorded 'great power' status after its victory over Russia in 1905. Despite these achievements, it seems that the Japanese did not always feel comfortable in the Society. Memories of the coercive, 'civilised' powers persisted, as well as the racist attitudes of the European powers, which continued to demarcate 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' on the basis of skin colour. On 6th November 1918, on the eve of the Peace Conference, Konoe Fumimaro (近衛文麿), future prime minister of Japan (1937-1939, 1940-1941), wrote indignantly of the continued racial discrimination and 'Anglo-American-led pacifism':

As Japanese, it is imperative that we advocate the abolition of the yellow-skinned races. It goes without saying that the United States and the British colonies of

Australia and Canada open the doors of their territories to Whites, while they look down upon Japanese and other yellow-skinned peoples and seek to exclude them from their territories... From the point of humanity and justice, I cannot but call for the Anglo-Americans to deeply regret their arrogant ways in this coming Peace Conference and abolish not only restrictive immigration practise towards yellow-skinned people, but also all other discriminatory practices. I think that the coming Conference is a crucial test of whether or not humanity is capable of reconfiguring the world on the basis of humanity and justice. I hope that Japan will not pay credence to Anglo-American pacifism, and strive to accomplish a true sense of humanity and justice.⁶

Japan, however, saw their proposed Racial Equality Clause quashed at the Conference by the opposition of the White powers. In many ways, this ambivalence towards the guardians of International Society – the ‘great powers’ – led to a weakness of the moral fabric of the Society, at least with regard to Japan. Japanese perceptions of hypocrisy and continued differentiation, as well as its frustration, was partly responsible for the Society’s decreased legitimacy, as well as being partly responsible for Japan’s revolt against the Society in the 1930-1940s, when it proclaimed an alternative order called the ‘Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere’ which it juxtaposed against the ‘Anglo-American world order’.

This problem was to bedevil Japan in its own relations with its Asian neighbours. Just like the European powers had done for the Japanese, Japan played a crucial role in providing a ready model for its neighbours to attain ‘civilised’ status and stand on equal terms with the European states. Many Chinese and Korean students came to Japan to learn the secrets of successful ‘state reconfiguration’, and were often impressed with the changes that had taken place. Japan’s victory over the ‘civilised’ European state, Russia, was also a case for celebration for many Asians, although it should be noted that the Russo-Japanese war was fought over Chinese territory and came at a significant cost to Chinese lives, and is certainly not a case to be celebrated uncritically.

At the same time, Japan had also become a Janus-faced entity, for it was a ‘civiliser’ that forced its Asian neighbours to ‘modernise’ and enter unequal treaties with it. Many Asians thus felt an equal sense of antipathy towards the Japanese, and it is arguable that China’s ambivalence towards Japan is less to do with its historic pride, but rather with its more recent memories of Japan as a ‘civilised’ member of European International Society. These memories have yet to be erased – Japan continues to be an important power of East Asia. It is the only Asian member of the G8, and has one of the largest economies of the world. However, it is still viewed with suspicion from its

⁶ Konoe Fumimaro, ‘Eibei hon’i no heiwashugi o haisu’ in Itō Takeshi (ed), *Seidanroku*. (Tokyo:

neighbours; whenever it attempts to take on the role of a 'guardian' International Society (such as participating in UN peace-keeping operations), its actions trigger an unwelcome response by Korea and China.

These ambivalent reactions towards the great powers of International Society are not limited to China or Japan. There are some similarities between the outlooks of the nineteenth-century Chinese, Japanese, and today's so-called 'Third World' states. The continuous problem of so-called 'failed states' and states with appalling records of human rights abuse often call into question whether or not it is necessary for contemporary International Society to utilise its 'civilising' mode of interaction and intervene in such states.⁷ The 'civilising' face of International Society has far from left us, and suspicion towards contemporary International Society and its institutions are still visible today in the form of resistance to any perceived form of 'cultural imperialism' or 'Western intervention'. It is not particularly surprising that these voices come from so-called 'Third World' states that were most exposed to the 'civilising' mode of interaction.⁸

The issue of whether or not International Society has the responsibility to extend its version of 'civilisation' is a contested topic, and usually takes the form of debates over 'humanitarian intervention'. The tension over the protection of state sovereignty or humanity need not be resolved here. But we should be mindful of the fact that states' engagement with the 'civilising' mode of interaction can have unintended consequences, as Japan's imperialism so starkly demonstrates. A more contemporary example of this may be many non-European states' suspicion of the 'industrialised states' – the modern 'civilised' states – which often results in a labelling of various international norms as 'cultural imperialism' and a refusal to comply with them, thus threatening the fragile international order. To attain a truly universal international order – for states and its peoples – we need to accept the fact that International Society has been and still is a Janus-faced one, for better or for worse. The future task is to ensure that its 'civilising' face attains greater legitimacy.

Chikura shobō, 1936), pp. 240-241

⁷ See for example Stephen D. Krasner, 'Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States', *International Security* (vol. 29, no. 2, Fall 2004, pp. 85-120)

⁸ Again, although this problem need not be solved within this thesis, this legacy of imperialism is reflected in the fundamental tension which exists in the 'pluralist' and 'solidarist' debate. This debate, albeit with a greater sympathy to the 'solidarist' position, is discussed in Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

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