

Race, Civilization, and National Security: The Meiji Intellectual Origins of the Annexation of Korea

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At first glance, the process that led to Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 was relatively simple. In 1876, Japan imposed an "unequal treaty" upon Korea, one that resembled the agreements Japan had been forced to sign with Western powers some twenty years earlier. This "opening" of Korea marked the beginning of a dual process: on one hand was the growing involvement of Japan with the neighboring peninsula, and on the other hand was the strengthening of other countries' power, which would be used by the Koreans to counterbalance Japan. The first of these countries was China, which Japan defeated in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. The second was Russia, which Japan defeated ten years later in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. It was in the aftermath of that second conflict that Korea became a Japanese protectorate in 1905, before being annexed in 1910. If we focus only on major events, we can see a clear chronological framework.

- 1876 : Opening of Korea and the beginnings of modern Japanese involvement in the peninsula
- 1894–1895: Sino-Japanese War; China's influence in Korea is ended
- 1904–1905: Russo-Japanese War; Russia's influence is ended
- 1905 : Korea becomes a protectorate of Japan
- 1910 : Korea is annexed to Japan, and becomes *de facto* a colony of Japan

However, it is doubtful that the path to annexation was quite so straightforward. In 1876, very few Japanese were able to imagine that one day their country would absorb Korea. However, the Korean collective memory of those years depict an inevitable progression of an unstoppable Japanese will, leading straight from the 1868 Meiji Restoration to the 1910 annexation.

The purpose of this paper is to go beyond this debate by moving away from the chronological track, and instead to trace the intellectual origins of the annexation. Some of the deeper causes of the annexation indeed belong to the field of representations or worldviews. On the eve of the centennial of the annexation, it is essential to map these ideas and analyze them in a broad perspective.

Three main views of Korea emerge from the huge quantity of writings on the Korean question (*Chōsen mondai*) published during the Meiji period (1868–1912). The first, the strategic view, saw Korea in a national security context. The second, the civilizational view, opposed a backward Korea to a civilized Japan. The third, the racial

view, considered the Koreans as the racial brethren of the Japanese. These views were linked to each other and fed one another, though they were not translated into consistent lines of action. Nevertheless, examining these views sheds light on some of the primary factors that led to annexation.

The Strategic View: Korea as Japan's First Line of Defense

The idea that the Korean peninsula was vital to Japan's security appeared at the end of the eighteenth century. At the beginning of the Meiji period, and particularly after the opening of Korea in 1876, Korea was often defined as Japan's first line of defense against Russia. This view became standard by the end of the decade. Many press articles stated then that the Japanese–Korean relationship was based on national defense.¹⁾

For example, in August 1880, the *Chōya shinbun* drew a comparison between the opening of Japan by the West and the opening of Korea by Japan. These two events might be similar in appearance, wrote the newspaper, but actually they were completely different. Japan drew interest from Western countries for economic reasons, whereas Japan's interest in Korea was strategic. By securing Korea's independence, Japan was actually building its own Great Wall against Russia and China.

Korea is at a strategic location in the Orient. If you consider its close proximity to Japan, it is a country with which we are closely linked. If China makes Korea part of its territory and seeks to extend its power, Japan will be at great disadvantage. If Korea is absorbed by Russia, we might lose our control on Tsushima and the Oki Islands, and Kyūshū and Chūgoku will find themselves facing a powerful Russia. Thus, our national interest requires that we lend support to the independence of Korea, so that Korea is neither absorbed by Russia, neither subject to the control of China. ... Korea is currently in a situation similar to what Japan experienced in the past. Nevertheless, Japan's interests in Korea differ from those other countries had in the past in respect to Japan. While their objective in maintaining relationships with us were purely commercial, our goal in establishing relations with Korea is different. By enhancing the independence of Korea, we are building our Great Wall.²⁾

It should be stressed that we are not examining here the *real* nature of the Russian or Chinese threat to Japan or the *real* importance of Korea to Japan's security. What interests us is the perception Japan had of these threats and the importance of Korea for its own security. By the end of the 1870s, the view of Korea as Japan's first line of defense was becoming axiomatic. No one in Japan doubted its veracity.

Even people opposed to Japan's growing involvement in Korea did not doubt the importance of Korea to Japanese security. What they contested were the means, not the goals. The independence and stability of Korea were of such importance to Japan, they said, that Japan had to be most careful in dealing with Korea. Japan had to do everything to avoid a Russian attack on its soil. Some even went as far as to say that even if Russia attacked Korea, Japan should not intervene, but stay neutral.³⁾

In the long term, such an attitude was unsustainable. If Korea was so important to

Japan's security, how could Japan stay neutral if Korea came under attack? This might explain why opponents to Japanese involvement in the peninsula in the 1870s lost their influence and even strengthened the position of their adversaries.

The events of 1882 and 1884⁴⁾ reinforced and extended this strategic view. Government circles began to fear that Korea would, one day, fall under Chinese or Russian control and turn into a sword, which would directly threaten Japan's heart. To avoid such a situation, Japan endeavored to find a diplomatic solution to the "Korean problem" and to turn Korea into a neutral border country, one much like Belgium or Switzerland in Europe.

This approach to the Korea question reached its peak in 1890 with the Memorandum on Foreign Policy (*Gaikō seiryakuron*) of Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo. Addressing the new Diet, Yamagata defined two lines of defense that each country must secure: the line of sovereignty (*shukensen*), made of that country's sovereign territory, and the line of interest (*riekisen*), that is, the area from which foreign troops were able to threaten the above line of sovereignty. Having proposed these theoretical premises, Yamagata then stated that in the case of Japan, Korea constituted the center of its line of interest. He therefore proposed placing the neighboring country under international protection so that it would remain neutral. Yamagata was thus giving official and theoretical legitimacy to ideas that had been circulating for quite some time.

There are two ways to secure a country's independence and security. The first is to protect its line of sovereignty so nobody infringes upon it. The second is to defend its line of interest, so as not to lose its strategic space. The line of sovereignty is the territory. The line of interest is the area from where the armed forces of neighboring countries are able to challenge the safety of the line of sovereignty. ... As for Japan, Korea is at the center of its line of interest. ... Therefore, the neutrality of Korea is crucial to Japan's security.⁵⁾

Korea's neutrality should be jointly guaranteed by Japan and China, suggested Yamagata, adding that such a Sino-Japanese agreement would itself be placed under international sponsorship. Japan and China would thus become the "common protectors" (*kyōdō hogoshu*) of Korea, and thereby establish a "balance of power" (*kinsei*). Such a neutral and independent Korea would be similar to Switzerland, Belgium, Serbia, or Luxembourg, and would be the best guarantor of peace and stability.

This address by Yamagata was the culminating point of the strategic view of Korea. Japan's prime minister, the man who created the modern Japanese armed forces, was officially declaring that Korea was Japan's first line of defense, and that any threat to its independence would be a direct threat against Japan's security. Moreover, Korea was viewed as a dependent country, unable to autonomously guarantee its own neutrality.

These ideas would later trigger the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. Japan had tried to take matters into its own hands in Korea, and the end of this story is well known. The Japanese victory over China did not solve anything. After the Chinese came the Russians, and their advance into Manchuria and Korea increased Japanese concern in the region. In 1904, Japan and Russia were at war. At the end of the war,

in 1905, Korea became a Japanese protectorate. The strategic view of Korea was the cause of two major wars, and of hundreds of thousands of deaths, and eventually led to the loss of Korean independence.

The Civilizational View: A Barbarian Korea vs. a Civilized Japan

The annexation of Korea in 1910 did not stem only from strategic considerations. A civilizational view of the neighboring country also developed in Meiji Japan. This conception opposed a barbaric and backward Korea to a civilized and advanced Japan. Korea was still barbaric (*yaban*), while Japan was already civilized (*kaika*).

This view can be traced back to before the opening of Korea in 1876. The neighboring country's barbarity was then virtual and axiomatic, and not based on any concrete knowledge of present-day Korea. Except for a handful of traders from Tsushima and the small delegation confined inside the Japan House (*Waegwan, Wakan*) in Pusan, there was no contact between Japanese and Koreans at that time. The Tsushima trade had been in constant decline since the last quarter of the eighteenth century, no Korean official delegation had visited to Japan since 1811, and that last delegation did not go farther than Tsushima.

Despite this absence of concrete knowledge, Korea was almost unanimously described as a barbaric country. Like the strategic view of Korea, the civilizational view was used for opposing purposes. It could serve as a justification to intervene in Korea, and to justify calls not to intervene in Korea. In the first case, it was argued that a vigorous policy toward the neighboring country would help make Japan equal to the Western Powers. Korea was an opportunity Japan could not overlook.⁶⁾ In the second case, the argument was that the Japanese should not sacrifice themselves for a barbaric people. Korea could not be a partner of Japan; the Imperial flag should not be raised in front of human beings that resemble animals. Pursuing such a policy would be a national humiliation. Japan had also not yet reached the highest degree of civilization, so consorting with barbarians such as the Koreans could cause Western countries not to make the distinction between Japanese and Koreans.⁷⁾

With the opening of Korea in 1876, Korean barbarity acquired a concrete dimension. Japanese journalists went to Korea and reported from there. On March 7, 1876, the *Tōkyō akebono shinbun* published one of the first modern Japanese reports on Korea. It read as follows:

Here is a concise relation of the conditions reigning in Korea.

The Koreans are extremely afraid of the Japanese; when we first cast anchor in Kanghwa, we saw the natives carrying our luggage running away. Finally, after they understood our feelings, they calmed down, but although some eventually returned, we did not see any beautiful young ladies; they were all hiding in the houses and did not come out.

In Kanghwa, one can find only bare mountains, and trees are rare. Most of the houses are small; they do not exceed four or five *shaku* in height [1 *shaku* is about 30 centimeters] and are made of much earth and some wood. Under the floor is a solidified trench, where you burn fire, and the rising heat protects from

the heavy cold. The common people do not use any blankets to sleep, but wrap themselves in a thing similar to what can be found in distant Ryūkyū. It is reminiscent of the inhabitants of the deep mountains of Japan, who sleep together near the fire and do not use any bedding. The city is unhealthy, and numerous people are affected by these conditions.

Our temporary delegation building is a spacious place, a lordly house among the best in Kanghwa, nevertheless it is made only of four pillars. As there are no seats on the ground, one has to spread blankets to sit and lie down, and after several days, one feels strong pains in the back and the knees. Furthermore, there is neither rag nor broom; dirt and dust cover the ground, and one absorbs these together with food and dust. The Koreans do not, out of laziness, clean their houses or bathe themselves. These people do not take more than three or four baths a year.

Beginning with the ambassador, we do not consume any Korean products. Rice, miso, vegetables, fish; one uses only things brought from afar.

The Koreans, having surmounted their fear of the Japanese, gather every day in front of our temporary building, and when we go to town, the roads are filled with children following us and with people coming to see us. They are amazed by the strangeness of our flat hats, our narrow sleeves, and our general look, as was the case with the Americans when for the first time they cast the anchor in Uraga during the Kaei era [1848–1854].

The clothes of the Koreans look like those of the inhabitants of Nanjing, which must be the ancient Chinese fashion. Their headgear is often made from a kind of straw, and the warriors carry a sword on their back.

In spite of the despicable aspect of the character of all classes, there are many schools. However, they preserve everywhere Chinese studies, and no one has any view of current Western science. It is therefore unavoidable that in all fields stagnation and rigidity prevail. Production consists of ginseng, and they also grow in small quantity a sort of tobacco. I do not think we will benefit from the opening of their ports.

The Americans and the French attacked Korea some years ago, but in view of the conditions, withdrew their troops. The barbarity of the people and the lack of wealth of the land made them understand that there was neither value in defeating this country nor profit in subduing it.⁸⁾

Korea was a primitive and backward country, devoid of resources. Japan could not expect any profit from exchanges with the peninsula. Such was, roughly speaking, the image conveyed by this report.

The backward aspect of Korea was exposed from several angles. The conditions of life were analogous to those in Okinawa or the most remote parts of Japan. The Koreans were scared by foreign things and amazed by new and modern objects. Their educational system, although quite developed, was anchored in the Chinese tradition, and ignored the science of its time. Agriculture, reduced to ginseng and a type of tobacco, was also very primitive. As the article concluded, there is “neither value in defeating this country nor profit in subduing it,” which the Americans and the French

had already understood.

This description of Korea's backwardness, which was common to almost all the Japanese reports of the time, transposed the image of a barbaric Korea from the axiomatic sphere to that of reality. Between the Meiji Restoration and the Kanghwa Treaty, Korea was generally perceived as a small "barbaric" country, as opposed to "civilized" Japan, or more precisely, Japan on the path to civilization. This Korean barbarism did not originate in any real description of the conditions in the peninsula. In the article quoted above, Korea was described as a primitive and unhealthy country and the Koreans as unintelligent, oppressed, and fearful people. They knew nothing of civilization, and China was their supreme reference. The old formulas thus acquired a concrete substance, a real dimension, and a new force of persuasion.

The civilizational view of Korea will be translated into reality in two different ways, which are opposite but basically linked:

1. A will to civilize Korea—in order to lead Korea on the path that Japan has already followed successfully;
2. A will to cut the link with Korea, to abandon the neighboring country to its fate and to treat it in a Western fashion.

The best illustration of these two incarnations can be found in the same man, Fukuzawa Yukichi. Fukuzawa's greatness may come less from the originality of his thoughts than from his ability to express, better than anyone else, the deep currents that were at work inside Japanese society. Through Fukuzawa, we can therefore witness the evolution of the civilizational view of Korea.

The contacts between Fukuzawa and the Korean reformers at the beginning of the 1880s are well known. Fukuzawa took in a number of Korean students at the Keiō Institute, and became especially enthusiastic about one of the reform leaders, Kim Okkyun. Fukuzawa and the Korean reformers believed that Korea should become a fully independent country, and that reforms should be enacted.

Fukuzawa explained his stand using an allegory about two bordering houses, one made of stone and the other of wood. If the owner of the stone house wishes to fully protect his dwelling from a possible fire, he has to persuade his neighbor to build his house of stone, too. Otherwise, a fire that would erupt in the wooden house might spread and also endanger the adjacent stone house.⁹⁾

Fukuzawa's strategic view was that a stable and modern Korea would be a vital component in Japan's security. However, Fukuzawa was not content with this pragmatic argument. In a letter from the same period, he disclosed a less well-known side of his approach to Korea, a sentimental and nostalgic view:

At the beginning of this month, a number of Koreans came to Japan in order to observe the conditions in our country, and two young men among them were admitted to our institute. I had them settled in my place, and I will apply myself to guide them gently. Truly, when I remember how I was more than twenty years ago, I cannot stop feeling sympathy and compassion for them. ... When Koreans, elevated or humble, come and visit me, and when I am listening to them, it is the Japan of thirty years ago that reappears in front of my eyes.¹⁰⁾

Fukuzawa was altogether sentimental and pragmatic, idealistic and realistic. There was no contradiction. These young, enthusiastic Koreans reminded him of his youth, and he wished to guide them “gently” (*yasashiku*), a rare word in his vocabulary.¹¹⁾ Why? Because today’s Korea was the Japan of the past, the Japan of thirty years ago, the Japan on the eve of the opening of the country, the Japan before the Meiji Restoration and before the great reforms. On one hand, Fukuzawa wanted to stabilize Korea for Japan’s security. On the other hand, he viewed the neighboring country as a kind of Japan from the past. Korea was altogether a shadow of the past and an object ripe for civilization.

The practical consequence of this dual approach would be the moral and material support Fukuzawa would grant and try to obtain for Korean reformers. When these same reformers failed to fulfill his expectations after the fiasco of the 1884 coup d’état, Fukuzawa would reverse his stance. His famous call “to escape from Asia” (*datsuaron*) did not mention Korea,¹²⁾ but it originated in his disappointment at the neighboring country’s progress. By accepting the premises of Western civilization, Japan, Fukuzawa argued, had acquired the right to lead the East on the path of civilization. However, if its neighbors, especially Korea, refused to join Japan on this path, Japan had the right to step away from them, to abandon them to their fate, and to consider them as Westerners would. If Korea wished to remain the Japan of the past, it was free to do so, but in that case, Japan of the present would not attempt any further to contribute to the country’s progress.

In the following years, the civilizational view would continue to prosper, oscillating between the two alternatives of active involvement and disengagement, until the Sino-Japanese War tipped the scales definitively toward greater Japanese involvement in Korea. From then on, the civilizational view would be used to justify Japan’s penetration of Korea. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the economist Fukuda Tokuzō transformed this view into a scientific explanation he called the “theory of stagnation” (*teitairon*).¹³⁾ This concept emerged from Fukuda’s German Ph.D. dissertation in which he argued that the existence of a feudal stage in the histories of Japan and the West explained their similar economic evolution. Modern economies could emerge in Japan and the West because both had followed similar historical patterns of development.

Fukuda tried to prove this point by studying the economic development of Korea. He traveled in the peninsula in 1903, and upon his return to Japan published a series of articles entitled “Economic Organization and Economic Units in Korea” (*Kankoku no keizai soshiki to keizai tani*),¹⁴⁾ in which he explained Korea’s backwardness as due to the absence of a feudal stage in the country’s historical development. Therefore, he argued, contemporary Korea corresponded to Japan during the Fujiwara period (from the end of the ninth century to end of the twelfth century). Korea was still “stagnating” at a pre-feudal stage and the country was unable to enter a process of autonomous development. Fukuda concluded that Japan’s duty was to assist in making Korea similar to Japan.

This theory would play an important role after the annexation, but Fukuda not only represented the seed of the future, he was also the outcome of the past. He justified with theory ideas that had been circulating in Japan since the 1870s. Historically

speaking, Japan was indeed different than its neighbors, but this meant that Japan bore a responsibility to them. Since Korea is similar to Japan of the past, to pre-feudal Japan, Japan of the present must help the peninsula bridge the historical gap. Fukuda was echoing the widespread views of Japan itself. By despising their “primitive” Korean neighbor, the Japanese were expressing the rejection of their own past and the confidence that their own accomplishments might too become, tomorrow, Korea’s achievements.

The Racial View: A Common Origin of Japanese and Koreans

There was one more view of Korea at the core of the annexation, the racial view. While the civilizational view stressed differences between the Japanese and Koreans, the racial view highlighted similarities between the two peoples. This view was thus inclusive, and would naturally be used to justify annexation.¹⁵⁾

Western racial theories forwarded in the nineteenth century were widely accepted in Japan. Mankind was divided into various races, among them the “yellow” and “white” races. In 1869, Fukuzawa published *Pocket Atlas (Shōchū bankoku ichiran)*, in which he described the earth and its inhabitants for the new modern Japanese. Fukuzawa simplified a portion of the Western racial theories and associated each continent with only one race. White people were in Europe, yellow people in Asia, red people in America, black people in Africa, and brown people on the Pacific Islands. He also clearly defined the attributes of each race: “The white race is the finest. It is characterized by its intelligence, and is able to achieve the highest degree of civilization. The yellow race is industrious and able to endure hardships, but its talents are limited, and it progresses very slowly.” The red, black, and brown races were respectively defined as severe and bitter, indolent, and violent and vengeful.¹⁶⁾

Fukuzawa was not so much interested in the races as in the successive four stages of civilizational development: chaotic (*konton*), barbaric (*yaban*), primitive (*mikai*), and developed (*kaika*).¹⁷⁾ The white race was not only located at the top of the racial scale, but also at the apex of the civilizational hierarchy.¹⁸⁾ This white superiority (and therefore yellow inferiority) dogma was commonplace in the early Meiji period, and sometimes even lead to proposals for enforcing a policy of miscegenation. However, those suggestions generally provoked fierce reactions, and these racial ideas eventually developed in a different direction. After all, no human group will ever agree to permanently consider itself as inferior. This can only be a temporary expression of a profound identity crisis. Identity will eventually be assumed and placed at the service of new ideals.

This is what happened in Japan. Together with the civilizational view of Asia appeared a racial view with opposite consequences. If the former resulted in a will to depart from Asia and to assimilate into Western culture, the later brought about a quest for a national identity connected to Asia, a feeling of Asian solidarity directed against a common white enemy.

Tarui Tōkichi was the first to fully apply these ideas to the Japanese–Korean situation when he envisioned in 1890 the creation of a Japanese–Korean federation. “The white people want to exterminate us. ... The only way to defeat them is to create a united force, made of members of the same race.”¹⁹⁾ The Japanese and Koreans are

“racial brethren” (*dōshu no kyōdai*) lost on a boat adrift. They should unite into a federal state that would enable them to prevent Asia from falling further under what he called the sway of Western slavery.²⁰⁾

This quest for Japanese–Korean solidarity was not only the result of a racial view of the world, but also of a civilizational vision of human evolution. Japan, being more civilized than the peninsula neighbor, was responsible for guiding Korea along the path it had already successfully followed. The federation envisioned would thus serve as a model for the region and the entire Asian continent.

Japanese historians and linguists theorized this proximity of Japanese and Koreans. Since the beginning of the 1890s, some prominent scholars endeavored to demonstrate the common origin of the Korean and Japanese people and their languages. The historians Hoshino Hisashi and Kume Kunitake were particularly active and prolific.²¹⁾ They were positivist historians, and were proud of their independence of mind. Together with Shigeno Yasutsugu, they are considered to have been the founders of modern Japanese historical science. In 1892, Kume was fired from Tokyo Imperial University after publishing a study that considered Shintō within the context of other East Asian popular beliefs. The assertion of common Japanese–Korean roots was also the result of this quest for origins. This is well illustrated in a three-part article on the formation of the Japanese state that he published in 1889 and 1890 in the first issue of the history journal *Shigakkai Zasshi*.²²⁾

In that article Kume claimed that the ancient Japanese were an indigenous race that had spread across the region, including the Korean peninsula. Ancient Japan was much larger than present Japan and extended to the continent. Kume’s narrative was based on racial and cultural proximity to the mainland. Japan and Korea were associated since time immemorial, and Japan repeatedly rescued Korea in the distant past.

Hoshino reached even bolder conclusions. In an article published in 1890, he examined the source of the imperial lineage and concluded that the imperial household originated from immigrants from the Korean state of Silla. In ancient times, rulers who belonged to the same genealogy governed the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago. “Japan and Korea was home to the same race and shared the same language.” The two countries formed a single region and there was no boundary between them.

This unity ended later. The rivalry between the two components of the country increased and escalated into violence. The Korean campaigns of the Empress Jingū were part of the international upheavals of the time—the three Korean kingdoms, the reversal of the alliance between China and Japan, and the final separation of Japan from the mainland. According to Hoshino, documents attesting the common Japanese–Korean origin existed but were destroyed by Emperor Kanmu in the eighth century. Hoshino was taking a great risk. He could have been accused of dishonoring the imperial house. This might explain the long and somewhat extravagant title of his article, “I Express My Opinion on Our Race and Language and I Inquire into the Hearts of Our Patriots.”²³⁾ Hoshino meant to show that the archipelago and the peninsula once formed a single entity, with a common language and race, governed by the ancestors of the Japanese imperial dynasty. What would be more natural than to return to this historical situation and restore the authority of the Japanese emperor

upon Korea? Korea was a part of Japan which was lost in antiquity and which should now return home.²⁴⁾

These patriotic arguments could not diminish the ambivalence of Hoshino's position, which implied a breach of the sacred origins of the imperial house. Hoshino was strongly criticized, and in 1892, he resigned from his academic position. Nevertheless, despite the criticisms and scandals, the belief in a Japanese–Korean common origin spread in the 1890s. From now on, historians and anthropologists ardently discussed these racial issues. As a result, the idea that Koreans and Japanese were somehow connected would penetrate school textbooks and popular publications, and become deeply ingrained among Japanese.

The logical implication of this Japanese–Korean link was that the separation of the two groups was contrary to nature. These ideas would constitute the ideological basis of annexation, which would be presented as the restoration of an original racial unity, the return of a collateral branch (*bunke*) to the main branch (*honke*).²⁵⁾

Language scholars reinforced the common origin hypothesis. The first modern scholar to see a relationship between the Japanese and Korean languages was the British diplomat W. G. Aston in 1879. A decade later, when Kume and Hoshino were publishing the articles above, the idea was taken over by Japanese scholars, the most prominent being Kanazawa Shōzaburō. Kanazawa was a brilliant young linguist. He had been fascinated by the commonalities between the Japanese and Korean languages since his studies at Tōkyō Imperial University in the 1890s. He traveled repeatedly to Korea, publishing his findings in the form of articles. His book *The Common Origin of the Japanese and Korean Languages* (*Nikkan ryōkokugo dōkeiron*) was published in 1910 and widely used to justify annexation. The title of his 1929 book, *The Common Origin of Japanese and Koreans* (*Nissen dōsoron*), coined the expression that still describes the web of ideas on common Japanese–Korean origins.

This broad survey of the main views of Korea in Meiji Japan shows how all of these ideas progressively converged toward a similar conclusion—Japan must rule Korea. Japan must rule Korea to protect its own security, to fulfill its duty to its neighbor as a civilizer, and to bring home the little brother who strayed. These views were, perhaps mainly, a reflection of the Japanese preoccupation with security, politics, and identity. The discourse on Korea in Meiji Japan was very often a discourse about Japan itself. Korea acted as a foil, an “other,” and helped elaborate the different images of an ideal, modern, and civilized Japan.

Notes

- 1) For example, “Chōsen shobunron 1–3,” *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun*, May 27–29, 1879.
- 2) “Chōsen o shosuru senryaku o ronzu,” *Chōya shinbun*, August 26, 1880.
- 3) Examples of this attitude can be found in editorials published by the *Chōya shinbun* and *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* on October 3, 1875, and October 4, 1875, respectively.
- 4) These two events are the anti-Japanese riots of 1882 (*jingō gunran*) and the failure of the attempted reformist coup of 1884 (*kōshin seihen*).
- 5) Yamagata Aritomo, “Gaikō seiryakuron,” in Shibahara Takuji, Ikai Takaoki, and Ikeda Masahiro, eds., *Taigaikan*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), 81–86.
- 6) See for example “Chōsen o utsu beki o ronzu,” *Tōkyō akebono shinbun*, October 6, 1875; Shibahara et al., eds., *Taigaikan*, 332–333.
- 7) Some examples are *Chōya shinbun*, October 3, 4, 20, 22, and 23, 1875; *Yūbin hōchi shinbun*, August 20,

- October 5, 10, and 19, 1875. One of the strongest opponents of intervention in Korea was Fukuzawa Yukichi. See his article in the *Yubin hōchi shinbun* of October 7, 1875, entitled “Ajia shokoku to no wasen wa waga eijoku ni kansuru naki no setsu” (See Kinefuchi Nobuo, *Nikkan kōshōshi: Meiji no shinbun ni miru heigō no kiseki*, (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 1992), 32).
- 8) *Tōkyō akebono shinbun*, March 7, 1876; Kinefuchi, *Nikkan kōshōshi*, 44–45.
 - 9) Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Kokken no koto,” *Jiji shōgen*, 4; Takasaki Sōji, “*Mōgen*” no genkei: *Nihonjin no Chōsenkan*, (Tokyo: Mokuseisha, 1996), 11.
 - 10) Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Koizumi Nobukichi-ate shokan,” in Kamigaito Kenichi, “Meiji zenki Nihonjin no Chōsenkan,” in *Nikkan-Kannichi bunka kōryū kikin gōdō gakujutsu kaigi*, 1994, 7.
 - 11) Kamigaito, “Meiji zenki Nihonjin no Chōsenkan,” 7.
 - 12) Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Datsuaron,” *Jiji shinpō*, March 16, 1885.
 - 13) Hatada Takashi, “Chōsenshizō to teitairon,” in Nohara Shirō et al., eds., *Kindai Nihon ni okeru rekishigaku no hattatsu*, vol. 2, (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1976), 78–79; Kang Sangjung, “Fukuda Tokuzō no ‘Chōsen teitashikan’,” *Sanzenri* no. 49 (1987), 80–87.
 - 14) Published in *Naigai ronsō* in 1903–1905.
 - 15) Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895–1910*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 413–423.
 - 16) Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, vol. 2, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958–1971), 461–463.
 - 17) *Ibid*, 463.
 - 18) Kang Sangjung, “Fukuzawa Yukichi: Bunmeiron to orientarizumu,” in *Rekishigaku kenkyūkai*, ed., *Sekaishi*, vol. 7, (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1996), 361–372.
 - 19) Tarui Tōkichi, *Daitō gappōron*, Tokyo: Chōryō Shorin, 1975.
 - 20) Tarui Tōkichi (1850–1922) was a pioneer of pan-Asianism. In 1882, he founded the short-lived Oriental Socialist Party (*Tōyō shakaitō*), the first Japanese political party to call itself “socialist.” He knew Kim Okkyun, and the lessons he drew from the failure of the 1884 reformist coup d’état in Korea were that Japan and Korea must become a united federal country. Only together would they be able to resist Western imperialism. He published his ideas in 1890–91 in Nakae Chōmin’s review, *Jiyū byōdo keirin*, and as *Daitō gappōron* in 1893.
 - 21) Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 71–75.
 - 22) Kume Kunitake, “Nihon fukuin no enkaku,” *Shigakkai Zasshi* nos. 1, 2, and 3 (December 1889–February 1890): no. 1, 15–20; no. 2, 10–17; no. 3, 9–17; Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient*, 71–74. The name of this journal was changed to *Shigaku Zasshi* in December 1892.
 - 23) Etsuko H. Kang, “Kita Sadakichi (1871–1939) on Korea: a Japanese ethno-historian and the annexation of Korea in 1910,” *Asian Studies Review* no. 21 (1997), 49; Hoshino Hisashi, “Honpō no jinshu gengo ni tsuki hikō o nobete yo no shinshin aikokusha ni shitsusu,” *Shigakkai zasshi* no. 11 (1890), 17–43; Oguma Eiji, *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen*, (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1995), 89–91.
 - 24) Oguma, *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen*, 90.
 - 25) Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, 417–423.