

## Introduction: The Discovery of History

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*Nowhere has liberal philosophy failed so conspicuously as in its understanding of the problem of change.*

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*

The various attempts of non-Western cultures to confront and adapt to modern (Western) civilization have been frequently recounted, almost always ending in incompleteness or tragedy.<sup>1</sup> But these stories are usually situated within the same epistemology that guided the attempts in the first place—an epistemology that ignores the limitations and contradictions inherent in such change. These narratives, in other words, do not address the problematic of adaptation itself. Although the liberal and progressive ideals of nineteenth-century Western civilization may have opened new possibilities for some, it constricted, indeed repressed, opportunities for others.

In his search for the causes of the decline of nineteenth-century civilization, Karl Polanyi writes: “Scholars proclaimed in unison that a science had been discovered which put the laws governing man’s world beyond any doubt. It was at the behest of these laws that compassion was removed from the hearts, and a stoic determination to renounce human solidarity in the name of the greatest happiness of

1. Curiously, today those who view Japan as a success story, whose beginning is traced to Commodore Matthew Perry’s opening of Japan in 1853, consider Japan’s Fifteen Year War (1931–45) as an aberration on this linear path.



Fig. 1. The Japanese ambassador confronts the arbitrariness of what constitutes civilization. He confidently asserts to the archbishop of Canterbury, “Then those People, your Grace, I suppose, are Heathen?” The archbishop replies, “On the contrary, your Excellency: those are among our most *Enthusiastic Religionists!*” *Harper’s Weekly*, September 28, 1872, 756.

the greatest number gained the dignity of secular religion.”<sup>2</sup> This statement describes both the problems of West–non-West confrontations and our efforts to study them. We have tried to look at these phenomena using frameworks that seek the certainty of that secular religion, forgetting that it, too, was a part of the historical problem. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Japanese historians had to confront the transformation of the various segments of the archipelago into a modern culture, but as a non-Western place, they also reexamined whether a direct correlation existed between objects and scientific knowledge and whether there is a Truth or a single correct understanding.

An image from the London *Punch* (Fig. 1) illustrates well the complexity of this issue as seen across cultures.<sup>3</sup> Upon witnessing the violence of rioters in Belfast, Japanese elites question the categories of civilized and barbarian. Objective knowledge in this image is conveyed in the attire: the Western gentlemen in modern fashions and the Japanese

2. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (1944; Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 102.

3. From *Harper’s Weekly*, September 28, 1872, 756; explanatory text on 758.

visitors in their quaint and traditional samurai outfits. The picture embeds the epistemological distinctions between Occident/Orient, civilized/barbarian, modern/traditional, rational/nonrational, advanced/backward, knower/known, and so forth. The caption, in turn, raises the problematics of that objectivism. One fundamental problem is seen to emerge from industrial change: the dislocation of human society and loss of compassion in favor of an objectivistic measure—"the greatest happiness of the greatest number." A second lies in the Western definition of itself as the most civilized: the boisterous and violent become the "most *enthusiastic religionists*," while aristocratic Japanese remain heathen. A third problem has to do with the role of religiosity in constructing and maintaining belief in such self-representation. Fourth and finally, what is progressive and objective to one group might be restrictive and arbitrary to those who are objectified. In confronting these issues, Japanese faced the dilemma that is a main focus of this book; how to become modern while simultaneously shedding the objectivistic category of Oriental and yet not lose an identity.

The *Punch* image also displays the cultural specificity of history—the temporality implicit in images of a backward Orient and a modern West reaffirms the superiority of the West over its past, the Orient. Japanese intellectuals of the late nineteenth century recognized the historical nature of the relation between objects and knowledge as well as the centrality of religiosity. But as I will show in this book, this recognition led not to rejection and a different conception of knowledge, usually labeled as traditionalistic, but to an adjustment in which objects and knowledge were made to correspond with a Japanese perspective. The major Japanese historians, in short, accepted the possibility of Truth, objectivity, and progress—a belief in the scientific study of man generally and, more specifically, in Western Enlightenment and Romantic historiography—but not necessarily as set forth by Europeans. *Tōyō* (lit., eastern seas, normally translated as the Orient) became the archives—the pasts—from which history could be constructed. The leading object within that realm was *shina*.

*Shina* is the Japanese appellation for China most commonly used during the first half of the twentieth century. After World War II the name for China reverted to *chūgoku* (Middle Kingdom), a common name from before the Meiji Restoration (1868).<sup>4</sup> Throughout much of

4. A small number of people shifted to the name *chūgoku* during the 1930s, Takeuchi Yoshimi being one of them. However, to the extent that the major domestic newspapers are a guide, general usage did not change until after the war. See Takeuchi Yoshimi, *Chūgoku o shiru tame ni*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1967), 70–81.

Japan's modern period various groups used *shina* to emphasize difference: nativist (*kokugaku*) scholars, for example, used *shina* to separate Japan from the barbarian/civilized or outer/inner implication of the term *chūgoku*; early-twentieth-century Chinese revolutionaries used it to distinguish themselves from the Manchus of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1912); and in early-twentieth-century Japan, *shina* emerged as a word that signified China as a troubled place mired in its past, in contrast to Japan, a modern Asian nation.

While *shina* and *nippon* (the prewar and more nationalistic pronunciation of *nihon*—Japan) represent territorial constructions of nation-states, a broader geocultural notion of territoriality, *tōyō*, was formulated to encompass those parts. In a 1936 article, Tsuda Sōkichi (1873–1961), a historian at Waseda University, while recognizing several different uses of this word before the Bakumatsu period (1853–68), argued that the meaning of *tōyō* after the Meiji Restoration became simply “that which was not the Occident.”<sup>5</sup> As a geocultural entity, *tōyō* is essentially a twentieth-century Japanese concept. In its earliest form, it was most likely used by Chinese merchants to refer to the body of water around Java (the waters to the west along the Indian coast being called *seiyō*, or western seas). The meaning in Japan began to change with growing awareness of Europe. Honda Toshiaki divided the Eurasian continent into *seiyō* (West) and *tōyō* (East) in his *Seiiki monogatari* (1798) when comparing the trade of England and Japan, and by the mid-nineteenth century Sakuma Shōzan used *tōyō* to refer to Eastern values in his often quoted phrase “Eastern ethics as base, Western techniques as means” (*tōyō dōtoku, seiyō gei*). During the 1880s, *tōyō* appeared in a number of publications as an appellation for the culture of the East, and by the twentieth century the term, as used for example by Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944), Tokutomi Sohō (1863–1957), and Shiratori Kurakichi (1865–1942), signified the opposite of the Occident, including especially those characteristics connected with Oriental civilization (*tōyō no bunmei*) and peace (*tōyō no heiwa*), but generally excluding politics and conflict.<sup>6</sup>

In his criticism disputing the existence of *tōyō*, Tsuda pointed to the importance of the relation between history and language in the formulation of the twentieth-century meaning of *shina*. He wrote,

5. Tsuda Sōkichi, *Shina shisō to nihon* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1938), 112. Part two, “Tōyō to wa nanka?” was first published as “Bunka shijō ni okeru tōyō no tokushokusei,” *Tōyō shichō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1936).

6. Katō Yūzō, *Kikō zuisō: tōyō no kindai* (Tokyo: Asahi Sensho, 1977), 149–64.

The odd proclamation that the culture of the Occident is materialist and that of the Orient is spiritual is a conspicuous example [of the continuation of Sakuma's "Eastern ethics as base, Western techniques as means"]. Those making such statements are, at the very least, half Sinophiles, and their so-called *tōyō* is primarily China [*shina*]. They use Chinese thought in opposition to Western thought, but because they are Japanese and the other is labeled Occidental [*seiyō*] thought, they call it oriental thought [*tōyō shisō*]. Therefore there is a latent belief here that Japanese thought developed from Chinese thought, particularly Confucian concepts. As a result, it is subservient [*jūzoku*].<sup>7</sup>

*Shina*, Tsuda has pointed out, was revived historically during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and transformed into an object within Japan's new ideological (broadly construed) space, represented by *tōyō*. In other words, *tōyō* provided the conceptual arena in which to make claims for an area as well as a cultural typology that encompassed and located both *shina* and other Asian entities.

In spite (or perhaps because) of the general acceptance of the term *chūgoku* for China since World War II, some contemporary observers, such as Enoki Kazuo, professor emeritus of Oriental history at the University of Tokyo and director of the Tōyō Bunko (Oriental Library) in Tokyo, remain dissatisfied. In the postscript to his book *Yōroppa to ajia* (Europe and Asia), published in 1983, Enoki discusses the different discursive fields represented in the names *chūgoku* and *shina*, though admittedly with intentions antithetical to this book. Nevertheless, he recognizes the fundamental importance of words in generating a certain understanding and in determining how people act. Enoki argues that the names *chūgoku* and *shina* do not portray neutrality in relations between peoples and nations—specifically, China and Japan. He asserts, moreover, that Japan should replace the current name for China, *chūgoku*, with *shina*, and offers four reasons. (1) *Chūgoku* is a name used by Chinese for their own nation; foreigners don't use it, and Japanese, too, are foreigners. (2) The term *shina* has historical roots in Japan extending far beyond the Meiji Restoration. The term probably entered Japan in the early ninth century in the sutras that Kōbō Taishi (Kūkai) brought back from China, sutras that Arai Hakuseki in turn used to select the characters for *shina* in reporting that Westerners called China *chiina*. *Shina* became popular during the Meiji period (1868–1912) as a name with a broader meaning than *shinkoku*, the name used for the Ch'ing empire (1644–1912). (3) The name *chūgoku* implies centrality. It represents a culturally chauvinistic attitude that China is the center of

7. Tsuda, *Shina shisō to nihon*, 112–13.

the world, is older, and is more civilized than other cultures. That the West does not call China the Middle Kingdom indicates the inappropriateness of that name in the twentieth century. (4) Because Japan uses Chinese ideographs and itself developed from Chinese culture, a distinction between *chūgoku* and *shina* “must be made.”

For Enoki the need for this distinction derives from his belief in progress and a hierarchy of nations:

Today, when we are expected to investigate the conditions and history of a country or region through a global perspective and to weigh how those conditions can be improved for the region and world, the belief that it [China] is a culture that is the center of the world is outrageous and anachronistic. A country befitting the former China [*chūgoku*] certainly does not exist today. No, on second thought, even the social structure of the former China was far from socialistic and democratic in its ideals.<sup>8</sup>

Enoki recognizes the implications of the term *chūgoku*; China is not entitled to a level which suggests that it is superior to any other country—especially modern nations—in the world. More specifically, it is “highly improper” for Japan to use *chūgoku*, a term that implicitly accepts China’s superiority. *Shina*, he argues, is the more accurate and neutral appellation; it derives from the name China used by virtually all countries of the world and is merely a term that had been commonly and unquestioningly accepted since Meiji Japan. In other words, *chūgoku* represents a time when Japan was weak and imported the culture of China for its own development; *shina* should now be used because Japan is a modern nation. It has liberated itself from the antiquity of the Chinese world order.

A different interpretation of the meaning of *shina*, and one that is probably more consistent with modern Japanese views of China up through the Fifteen Year War (1931–1945), can be seen in the following soliloquy repeated in each scene of Satō Makoto’s 1981 rock musical “Night and the Night of Nights” (*Toru to yoru no yoru*):

Watashi wa shinajin  
shinajin de wa arimasen,  
de mo  
shinajin desu.

I am a Chinaman  
I am not a Chinaman,  
nevertheless,  
I am a Chinaman.

One can justifiably argue that the *shina* of this play is an allegory for the alienated Japanese. As a philological object, *shina* deflected the sense

8. Enoki Kazuo, *Yōroppa to ajia* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1983), 319–24; quote from 322–23.

that Japanese held any ideological position over the Chinese and served to indicate the victimization of Japanese, either by the United States or by government in general. The Japanese themselves have become the oppressed, the *shinajin*. Indeed, one scene that includes a figure resembling a victorious General MacArthur suggests the imposition of the American political system on a weak and hapless Japan.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, this soliloquy indicates that the word *shina* was—and in fact is—anything but neutral; whether Japanese or Chinese, the *shinajin* represents an oppressed and victimized group.

It would be difficult to resolve the discrepancy between Enoki's *shina* and that of Satō, but to argue that one is right and the other wrong necessitates a historical narrative that locates the first use of the term prior to its generally accepted locus. My purpose in raising this difference is not to find that first instance, from which I might devise a new narrative. Japan, of course, has a long history of trying to come to terms with its relation to the Asian continent, and there are a number of fine studies which describe different moments of this relationship.<sup>10</sup> But a quest for firsts or a hopeless debate on representativeness and typicality only conflates very different historical periods into one typology, with an undue amount of power thereby conceded to the narrator. A principal theme throughout this book is this power of the historical narrative; it was in the writing of and contestation over the meaning of history that twentieth-century Japanese historians “discovered” the beginnings of Japan's historical narrative in *tōyō*, thereby locating its origins and its relation to *shina*.

My assumption, which goes against the orthodox view of knowledge, is that there is no direct correlation between objects and knowledge and that understanding is constantly recreated. This work is thus part of a growing literature in the social sciences and humanities that questions the possibility of a singular truth. In his book *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*, George Lakoff, a cognitive psychologist, states: “The approach to prototype

9. For a recent book that discusses the success of the American Occupation, see Robert E. Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu, eds., *Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

10. See, for example, David Pollack, *The Fracture of Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); H. D. Harootunian, “The Functions of China in Tokugawa Thought,” in *The Chinese and the Japanese*, ed. Akira Iriye (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 9–36; Hashikawa Bunsō, “Japanese Perspectives on Asia: From Dissociation to Coprosperity,” in *ibid.*, 328–55; and Marius Jansen, *Japan and China: From War to Peace, 1894–1972* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1975).

theory that we will be presenting here suggests that human categorization is essentially a matter of both human experience and imagination—of perception, motor activity, and culture on the one hand, and of metaphor, metonymy, and mental imagery on the other.”<sup>11</sup> On a different spectrum Mikhail Bakhtin, who has become popular in recent years among anthropologists, literary critics, and historians for his concepts of polyphony, carnival, and heteroglossia, describes human mediation through the multiplicity of words:

The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own.<sup>12</sup>

The interpretations of Enoki and Satō agree—though not consciously—in this assumption that categories are constructed and constantly change; both argue that the word—that is, its meaning—was created. If one accepts Lakoff’s argument that human categorization is a matter of human experience and imagination, then the exact configuration and meaning of *shina* and *tōyō* are also human constructions that locate, order, and circumscribe geocultural regions. Giving a territory specific meaning is far from a neutral act.<sup>13</sup> Enoki’s claims to neutrality necessitate the acceptance of underlying concepts and facts that support his notion of truth. Although claiming objectivity, Enoki advocates the recreation of a *shina*—based on a narrative of the past—that indicates the superiority of a modern Japan over China. In fact, his attempt to rename China as *shina* can be seen as an effort to return this part of the Japanese language from that which serves “other people’s intentions” to his—that is, Japan’s (especially prewar Japan’s)—own.

11. George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 8.

12. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 293–94.

13. For the notion of territoriality, see Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Sack defines territoriality, which he describes as “a primary geographical expression of social power,” as “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (5, 19).



Satō, too, recognizes that the meaning of *shina* is historical, external, and restrictive. In the final soliloquy to his musical, the protagonist exclaims,

Mukashi kara  
shinajin to yobarete imasu, ga  
shinajin de wa arimasen;  
de mo  
shinajin desu.

Since long ago  
I have been called a Chinaman,  
but I am not a Chinaman;  
nevertheless  
I am a Chinaman.

A second similarity between Enoki and Satō's protagonist (who is portrayed by different actors using the same mask) involves the powerful ideological implications embedded in the name *shina*.<sup>14</sup> Enoki can claim the neutrality of *shina* only because he assumes a certain relationship—the superiority of a modern Japan over an unchanging China—which to him this word embodies. Neutrality requires the acceptance of this temporal hierarchy, which locates constantly changing worlds within fixed categories. The resistance of Satō's protagonist to being a Chinaman likewise indicates the powerful meaning of the word *shina*. It has been applied by an outsider—Japan—and defines the nature of China and the Chinese. Moreover, it denies the “Chinaman” a voice, who is therefore powerless to escape from its constraints except, at the end of the play, through death.

The scholars who inform the structure of this book are concerned in some way with this tendency of language to unify. A common theme running through the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, and Emmanuel Levinas concerns the boundaries of a dominant ideology—what Levinas has called a totality—and the restrictions and possibilities for autonomy given that ideology.<sup>15</sup> My purpose in using these scholars is not to deify them as “correct” thinkers. Each concentrates on different aspects of knowledge: Bakhtin on the

14. This play depicts thirteen moments in the thirty-six-year life of a person in Tao City. A different actor or actress portrays the protagonist in each scene, using a mask when playing this role. The thirteen actors and actresses also take turns playing the narrator, the *shinajin*.

15. See, for example, Bakhtin, *Dialogical Imagination*; V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973); Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Michael Masumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); idem, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1973); Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

issues of finding and maintaining diversity in society; Foucault on the predominant systems of thought that underlie modern Europe; Certeau on those who act both within and beyond the discourse Foucault describes; and Levinas on the oppression of Truth. Neither does their presence in this work derive from a penchant for “abstract” theory; the goals of these intellectuals are strikingly similar to those of many early-twentieth-century Japanese intellectuals. Each seeks to uncover the fundamental system of thought in society, to analyze that thought through language, and to explore how people can function both as part of that system and as autonomous entities. Bakhtin, who went to the university during the Russian Revolution and was exiled to Siberia during the 1930s, succinctly describes the authority of language: “We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life.”<sup>16</sup> The early debates on the compatibility of the Japanese language to modern society, the drive to unify the Japanese language through education, and the obsession with the origin of the Japanese language are examples of this concern over the relation between language and culture in late-nineteenth-century Japan.<sup>17</sup>

Implicit in this view is the idea that language constantly changes; the meaning contained in words can change depending on the speaker, time, and space. In short, in the very appropriation of words and language, new meanings and contexts are created. Vološinov, a colleague of Bakhtin, states:

This social *multiaccentuality* of the ideological sign is a very crucial aspect. By and large, it is thanks to this intersecting of accents that a sign maintains its vitality and dynamism and the capacity for further development. A sign that has been withdrawn from the pressures of the social struggle . . . inevitably loses force, degenerating into allegory and becoming the object not of live social intelligibility but of philological comprehension. The historical memory of mankind is full of such worn out ideological signs incapable of serving as arenas for the clash of live social accents. However, inasmuch as they are remembered by the philologist and the historian, they may be said to retain the last glimmers of life.

16. Bakhtin, *Dialogical Imagination*, 271; italics in the original.

17. See, for example, William Braisted, trans., *Meiroku zasshi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); for questions related to the origins of the Japanese language, see, for example, Roy Andrew Miller, *Origins of the Japanese Language* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980).

The very same thing that makes the ideological sign vital and mutable is also, however, that which makes it a refracting and distorting medium. The ruling class strives to impart a supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign, to extinguish or drive inward the struggle between social value judgments which occurs in it, to make the sign uniaccental.<sup>18</sup>

While Vološinov recognizes the temporality of words, he considers historians merely recorders of the past. Yet such social memory is not the same as the histories written by modern historians. Such histories—or History—are not as mutable as memory. By reviving certain “worn out ideological signs,” historians play a crucial role in imparting a “supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign.” In this context the historian is not just a recorder, but one who creates or affirms a single truth through use of objective facts, a truth that eliminates the contention over meaning and gives the sign its uniaccental character. In this way, Vološinov’s statement can be seen as a summary of the emergence and acceptance of the discourse on *shina* in modern Japan.

The vitality and dynamism of the sign was most pronounced in the early twentieth century, when discussion of Japan’s own sense of self in relation to Asia, Europe, and the United States was prevalent. As Tsuda has pointed out, the spatial locus of *shina* takes its meaning within Japan’s formulation of a new geocultural entity, *tōyō*. My argument is that concepts embodied in the word *tōyō* served to unify the varied and disparate tendencies that existed in Japan during this period. The debate surrounding this term was not the first or only such discourse, nor was it farther reaching than others, but it did render a unitary language that gave Japan a new sense of itself and its relations with the outside. Through this concept, which contained and ordered the pasts of Japan and *tōyō*, the Japanese created their modern identity. As David Lowenthal states, “By changing relics and records of former times, we change ourselves as well; the revised past in turn alters our own identity. The nature of the impact depends on the purpose and power of those who instigate the changes.”<sup>19</sup>

While *tōyō* was not created by academicians, this “new” entity received its historical and scientific authenticity in the academic field of *tōyōshi* (lit., Oriental history), which emerged at this time. Japanese scholars such as Shiratori Kurakichi, the principal architect of *tōyōshi* and professor of history at Tokyo Imperial University, used various

18. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 23.

19. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 411.

pasts—those of Asia, Europe, and Japan—to “impart a supraclass, eternal character” to the concept of *tōyō*. In a rather self-congratulatory but largely accurate statement in the centennial history of the University of Tokyo, the author states, “One can say that Oriental history [*tōyōshi*] . . . established the historical perspective [*rekishikan*] of the Japanese, and the Department of Oriental History of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Tokyo has played virtually the decisive role.”<sup>20</sup> *Tōyō* enabled the Japanese to fit the changes since the latter part of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868)—the decline of China, the arrival of the West with all its technical and cultural baggage, the new question of universality in human affairs, and the issue of cultural identity—into a comprehensive ideological system, the uniaxential. The importance of this system was that it established—through a unitary, or monological, language—order and the ability for Japan to act autonomously. It defined their history.

The terms *tōyō* and *tōyōshi* present difficulties in translation, for they were a manifestation of the ambiguity of Japan’s view of itself and position in the world. For the following reasons, therefore, I have chosen to leave these terms untranslated. On the one hand, *tōyōshi*, which developed to fill the void of the Enlightenment’s “world histories” and supplement Western history (*seiyōshi*), can be seen simply as Japanese oriental studies (a contradictory appellation in itself).<sup>21</sup> Numerous Japanese historians turned to Japan’s, China’s, and even Asia’s past to locate the artifacts that might narrate Japanese and Asian history—the progressive development of the mind—as defined by Enlightenment historians. By emphasizing the history of the East, as opposed to the West, these historians accepted and maintained a geocultural distinction between the two regions. But unlike the West’s Orient, the term *tōyō* assumed merely cultural difference, not inherent backwardness.<sup>22</sup> The creation of *tōyōshi* thus authorized a particular Japanese view of Europe and Asia as well. It established modern Japan’s equivalence—as the most advanced nation of Asia—with Europe, and also the distinction from and cultural, intellectual, and structural superiority over China. While Europe, as the West, became an other, that against which

20. *Tōkyō daigaku hyakunenshi, bukyōkushi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1986), 625.

21. For a fine study on the epistemological and ontological distinction between the Occident and Orient, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

22. Where it is awkward to use a variant of *tōyō* to refer to Japan’s orient, as opposed to the Western Orient, I have rendered the word in lower case: *orient*, *oriental*, and so forth.

Japan compared itself, *shina* became a different other: it was an object, an idealized space and time from which Japan developed.

The role of an idealized East in countering the negative aspects of Western (modern) society is quite evident in Okakura Tenshin's (1862–1911) *The Ideals of the East* (1904). The Asiatic culture that Okakura described possessed variations of science and liberalism but was free of the fragmentary, particularistic, and atomistic tendencies of Western societies. In many ways Okakura's Asiatic culture was a precursor to the notion of *tōyō*: it encompassed India, China, Japan, and the peoples in between; Asiatic culture was transmitted from India to China and finally to Japan; the Asiatic nature was characterized by its gentleness, moral ethics, harmony, and communalism; Japan's genius lay in its ability to adapt creatively only those Asiatic characteristics that were harmonious with its own nature; and Japan thus became the possessor of the best of Asia (it was a "museum of Asiatic civilization")—especially Buddhism, Confucianism, and art from ancient India and T'ang China. Moreover, it was Japan's destiny to revive Asia; Okakura proclaimed Japan to be "the new Asiatic Power. Not only to return to our past ideals, but also to feel and revivify the dormant life of the old Asiatic unity, becomes our mission."<sup>23</sup>

The broad outlines of Okakura's and Shiratori's notions of *tōyō* were quite similar. Certainly, there was no dispute that a *tōyō* existed: as Okakura's statement indicates, it was accepted as Truth. The question was how to revitalize that former state. But whereas Okakura's Asiatic culture involved a return to a past to regain a lost beauty of Asia and to counter negative and conflictual Western influences, the construction of the concept of *tōyō* was an attempt to extract from the past the datum for a positivistic history. In this regard, the notion of *tōyō* bears several key similarities to changes occurring in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in particular the emergence of Romantic historiography and the European (especially German) "discovery of the Orient." In Europe, the neoclassical conception of historical time (chronologies and stories) was disturbed by the Enlightenment—the epistemological change from a finite world to a probable world. A history that amplified the finite world of states, major events, or persons was superseded by a new history that sought meaning. This it did in two ways: by separating the present from the immediate past and by searching for origins. As Lionel Gossman states, "The Enlightenment

23. Okakura Tenshin, *The Ideals of the East* (1904; Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1970), 223.

attack on tradition, the attempt to cut the present adrift from the past, was by no means incompatible with the idea that being cured of what was perceived as an alienated and weary traditional culture might involve a journey back to origins."<sup>24</sup> The student of modern Japan will recognize the parallel with Europe: the clear separation of the new Japan from its immediate past, the Tokugawa period; and the search in the ancient period for the "real" Japan (thus the Meiji "Restoration"). Whereas Romantic historians looked to the Orient for their origins, Japanese historians found them in *tōyō*.<sup>25</sup>

The formulation of *tōyōshi* and the development of the discourse on *shina* at this time should come as no surprise. By the Taishō period (1912–26) many of the domestic and international goals of the Meiji Restoration had been achieved. Yet all was not well. Tetsuo Najita describes the Japanese discomfort with turn-of-the-century changes:

A new discourse thus came into existence in post-industrial and post-constitutional Japan that in its basic character differed radically from the one articulated during the Restoration period, and that may be seen as the defining of a new system of action. Conflict was seen as a datum in everyday social and legal reality. At the micro level, expectation of achieving success and the fear of failure were viewed as constantly present in a new pluralized field of competition. At the macro level, dissension and consensus were seen as continually present along a broad range of organized conflicts. There was an awareness that the new constitutional arrangements had become a permanent fact; there was the recognition that through organized, legally sanctioned means legitimate political and social goals might be achieved; there was a general, albeit diffuse, sense of "failed expectation" about the course of modern development after the Restoration, and the belief that within the new order improvements were possible and overdue. In short, it was felt, all of society should be involved in reflection and action within the formal system of law in order to create legitimate and permanent spaces for justifiable goals, thereby interpreting the contours of the legal order in such a way as to make them less constraining and more encompassing of society's wishes and expectations.<sup>26</sup>

Internationally, Japan had nearly achieved the goals set out at the beginning of the Meiji period: the unequal treaties were renegotiated, the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) gained Japan respect as a power in Asia,

24. Lionel Gossman, "History as Decipherment: Romantic Historiography of the Discovery of the Other," *New Literary History* 18 (Autumn 1986): 29.

25. See also Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

26. Tetsuo Najita, "Introduction: A Synchronous Approach to the Study of Conflict in Modern Japanese History," in *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*, ed. Tetsuo Najita and J. Victor Koschmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 16.

while the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) was seen to signal Japan's entry into the elite group of major world powers. Despite these gains, Japan had not achieved actual equality, nor had it alleviated conflict and differences with the European powers. Furthermore, these gains complicated its relations with the continent. Domestically as well, the promulgation of the constitution, the professionalization of the bureaucracy, and the broadening of the educational system did little to reduce political and intellectual conflict. Instead, conflict was construed as natural, but the arena in which it occurred had to be restricted. Najita states, "The problem, in other words, was no longer to eradicate conflict but to regulate it so that it would not be destructive to the national well-being, as might occur with an anarchic and mindless war of all against all."<sup>27</sup> This concern for regulation of conflict is apparent through what Carol Gluck has called the "Meiji ideology." The concern for morals, proper behavior, good citizenship, loyalty to the emperor, and so on were emphasized for fear of discord and disintegration.<sup>28</sup> *Tōyōshi*, too, was an integral part of this attempt to regulate conflict.

History here allowed the historian to "contemplate his origins—everything he has forgotten or repressed—without being destroyed by them." For the historian, the present was both the "child of the 'maternal' past and the architect of a 'paternal' future." As a child of the past, the historian was able to use history to avoid its pitfalls.

By making the past speak and restoring communication with it, it was believed, the historian could ward off potentially destructive conflicts produced by repression and exclusion; by revealing the continuity between remotest origins and the present, between the other and the self, he could ground the social and political order and demonstrate that the antagonisms and ruptures—notably the persistent social antagonisms—that seemed to threaten its legitimacy and stability were not absolute or beyond all mediation.<sup>29</sup>

But while the past could offer a sense of growth or progress, it also asserted a "paternalistic" mission to help the less fortunate. From this attempt to regulate conflict and bring a sense of order in a variety of realms—domestic, international, political, intellectual, and cultural—the centripetal tendencies led toward a unified language of *tōyō*.<sup>30</sup>

27. *Ibid.*, 18.

28. Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

29. Gossman, "History as Decipherment," 25, 24.

30. Bakhtin describes the ideological nature of this unified language thus: "A unitary language is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence posited [*zadan*]"—and

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I have divided this study into two parts. Each is intended as an exploration of the relation between historical knowledge and contemporary issues, rather than a narrative of discovery, a last word, so to speak, on *tōyō*. Part One addresses the formulation of the notion of *tōyō* in Japan, especially in relation to the West (it is impossible to discuss the concept in isolation). Part Two focuses on the various attempts that were made to avoid a contradiction in *tōyō*. That is, while the concept was meant to give Japan a history as an Asiatic place, it also obscured Japan's distinctiveness vis-à-vis Asia, necessitated the construction of narratives that distinguished Japan from the continent, and, ultimately, became separated from its rapidly changing object of study.

In Chapter 1 I will discuss the changing conception of knowledge about Japan's pasts—from a recounting of notable events and people to a study of history as an objective and scientific discipline. This reappraisal took place within a vastly expanded intellectual realm, one not unlike that which found new importance in Neo-Confucianism during the early Tokugawa period.<sup>31</sup> The different frameworks for ordering time and space in the world histories of Europe offered early-Meiji intellectuals a new authority to reorder and explain their own history and culture. It is important to keep in mind, however, that Japanese were not attempting to adapt themselves to the new knowledge of the West, but rather to understand and incorporate that knowledge into their received knowledge and institutions. In his excellent discussion of the problem of nationalism in non-Western cultures, Partha Chatterjee describes this problematic: "The search therefore was for a regeneration of the national culture, adapted to the requirements of progress, but retaining at the same time its distinctiveness."<sup>32</sup>

Regeneration and adaptation reopen all a nation's different pasts, and spark contestation in selecting what is most appropriate to a new vision of the nation, the uniaxential. Despite the diversity of explorations into Japan's past in the 1890s, a common feature was a movement

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at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity—the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, 'correct language' (*Dialogical Imagination*, 270).

31. Tetsuo Najita, "Intellectual Change in Early Eighteenth-Century Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 34 (August 1975): 931.

32. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed Books, 1986), 2.