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Fish, Subterfuge and Security in North Korean and Soviet Institutional Interactions in the 1970s

Abstract

By exploring the institutional and political fishing histories of North Korea, this paper traces developments in interactions with the Soviet Union in the 1970s. Drawing on newly found archival material from the Russian State Archive of the Economy and the Soviet Union's Ministry of Fisheries Archive, the paper considers the reality of such encounters. In particular it analyses research exchanges between North Korea and the Soviet Union, the security paradoxes created by these as well as interactions between North Korean and the Soviet Union in the Sea of Okhotsk. Fish, Fisheries Researchers and Fishing Technologies are certainly vibrant, active, lively matters in the landscapes of exchange between these two nations and their complex relationships of socialist fraternity.

Keywords: Development, fishing, North Korea, security, Soviet Union.

Introduction

North Korea is one of the most political spaces on the globe. Its historical narratives are equally riven by political ideology and have been reconstructed anew throughout the last seven decades. North Korea's politics often generates intense geo-political response and feedback and political ecosystems and industries are generated around its containment, restriction and hypothecated eventual destruction. Since the collapse of the world communist bloc and the fracture of the Cold War status quo North Korea as a nation and its citizens have been forced to adopt many new strategies to underpin their own survival, including attempting greater levels of mobility through migration, developing practical elements of enterprise and exchange, many of which have an environmental connection or impact on local or regional ecosystems. New patterns of social and economic organisation at both formal and

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informal levels and at intersections with nature and environment have emerged with accompanying frameworks of practice and interaction.

North Korean histories are therefore interactions with these frameworks and complex relations between a politics of possession and dispossession. In contemporary political and media culture, Pyongyang's rule is marked as a repertoire of dispossession; dispossession of material goods, of intellectual mores, of freedom and liberty themselves. Absence or lack is certainly a key feature of North Korean history, through war, colonial occupation and the frozen conflicts of the Cold War and the Post-Cold War (only in North Korea has the Cold War continued past 1992 in such an acute and concrete fashion), its citizens lack peace and security. However, they also lack material possessions, stores of value and stores of calories. In a manner familiar to South Koreans for much of the twentieth century, North Koreans have been dispossessed by politics, history and nature. Even in the acts of development and production, North Korea and North Koreans experience dispossession. This is of course historically common to much of the globe dominated by capital and capitalism, surplus values extraction, the co-option and appropriation of property, nature and abstract goods. However, in North Korea this appropriation has been more dramatic in form and has historically been much more significant. Ostensibly the work of my research and this paper address histories and geographies of fishing, a developmental sector directly focused on the appropriation of common goods. While engaging with a waterscape once thought infinite, fishing and fishermen have been busy in the 20th and 21st century manufacturing the collapse of a global ecosystem through appropriation and dispossession. This feeds back into North Korea, although the nation has not itself been excluded from this history, often seeking desperately to be a dispossessor and appropriator itself. This paper will deal with this in the context of the institutional relationships between the Soviet Union and North Korea. North Korea certainly sought to dispossess resources belonging to the Soviet Union, to the same extent that the Soviet Union attempted to co-opt North Korean institutional and research organisations into its wider framework of socialist solidarities and fraternity, as well as to prevent North Korea from taking more than or too much of the fishing commons in its sphere of influence and waters in the Pacific. In spite of these connectivities born of the world socialist or communist system, both sides were determined to maintain their own security.

This paper recounts some of the practices of subterfuge North Korea utilised in order to negate the security practices of the Soviet Union and to gain advantage in fishing and other matters. Fishing practices are not rooted in North Korea or the Soviet Union's contemporary ideological frameworks, but in the presuppositions, presumptions and predilections of modernism and colonialism. Fishing technologies and science, which now scours the seas for the last vestiges of maritime life, were born in the Japanese Empire and the Cold War military industrial complex of the United States, in the research centres designed to bring forth total power on behalf of modern capitalism. As committed to Socialism or Communism as the Soviet Union was, its fishing technologies and strategies were similarly sourced from these extractive imperatives and predicated on the fishing science of maximum sustainable yield and other statistical sleights of hand. Whether Japanese, American or Soviet, all fishing institutions of this period were focused on inexhaustible maritime resources and never-ending growth in catches. North Korea in this sense is a bit player in a highly destructive historical, economic, technological enterprise already underway.

North Korean fishing histories are thus not unique or exceptional, *sui generis* in space and place. While much media, academic and popular narrative asserts that North Korea is a place out of time, history and space, it is as connected to the themes of global development and politics as anywhere else, as riven by future crises and struggles as any other territory. Its fishing histories therefore have much in common with others in neighbouring nations, who have been subjected to similar attempts at and processes of dispossession. Small South Korean fishing communities have been dispossessed by the exploitative modes of capital and debt bondage represented by the *Kaekchu* middlemen, at the same time as the larger industrial complex of that nation's fisheries was busy engaging in the global dispossession and despoliation of the deep sea that was the trawling revolution. Chinese communities focused on fishing and sea products were dispossessed by European adventurism in the 19th century and are now crowded out by both the appropriation of space and place by speculative urbanism and rampant vulture and venture capital and by the environmental disaster generated by both global and local developmental agendas.

Literature and Theoretical Frameworks

Before moving on to interactions between North Korean and Soviet fishing institutions, an outline of the non-historical theoretical terrain through which these narratives are considered is necessary. North Korea's politics and culture is regarded as an extraordinary, aberrant conceptual landscape, one which in academic analysis is layered with a multitude of theoretical approaches. This author, despite being a geographer engages with theory derived from political anthropology, holding that North Korea's politics is a culture of charisma and theatre.

When this paper's author utilises the notion of charisma or charismatic politics he is doing so in the wake of much past research and analysis. This particular author holds to Heonik Kwon and Byung-ho Chung's influential channelling of Max Weber and Clifford Geertz in their assertion that North Korea has all the hallmarks of a theatre state,¹ in which performativity is vital to the function of politics. Pyongyang's theatric sensibilities are powered by a Weberian sense of political charisma deployed on a national scale, breaking temporal boundaries and embedding itself within the nation's historical memory and institutional practice. The author of the paper is by academic discipline a human geographer, so for him space, scale, boundaries and bounding are all vital elements within analysis. While performance and memory are important for North Korea's theatric or charismatic politic, the space and place for their performative practice and content is equally vital. Theatric politics will necessarily require a stage for the performance or re-performance of its charisma, and that stage is the physical bounded landscapes of the nation itself. This author therefore twins theories and concepts from anthropology (Benedict Anderson, Heonik Kwon and Byung-ho Chung), with work from geography on the construction of symbolic, political or social landscapes².

Castree's conception of political landscapes in particular,³ dovetails with Eric Swyngedouw's writing on scale as political practice

¹ Kwon Heonik, Chung Byung-ho, *North Korea: Beyond Charismatic Politics*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012.

² Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984 and Denis Cosgrove, *Landscape and Landschaft*, Lecture Given the "Spatial Turn in History" Symposium German Historical Institute, February 19, 2004.

³ Noel Castree, *Social Nature*, Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 2001.

within landscape,⁴ and the author's own on the application of such ideas within North Korean spaces.⁵ In tandem with this political conception of scale and scaling, this paper is also particularly interested in the agency, action and politics of fishing terrain itself. To consider this agency the author utilises the enormously important work of Jane Bennett⁶ and Sarah Whatmore⁷ on the generation and existence of what they have termed 'vibrant' matter or political matter. However Bennett and Whatmore's work on the specifics of non-human or non-sentient vibrancy must be read in tandem with the equally vital work of Jason Moore.⁸ Moore's interpretation of the 'web of life' holds that there can be no externalised Capitalism (or any other ism), acting upon Nature or natures, as both are intrinsically within and around politics and political forms. Nature and natures run through economic, political, cultural and social imperatives, entwining, enmeshing, influencing and reordering them, and are inseparable from the many functions of human life. Of course this must therefore be true of non-Capitalist polities and non-capitalist Nature or nature. North Korea's politics, institutions, cultures, social frameworks and topography must necessarily as much an assemblage of Nature, natures and human endeavours and practice as any other manifestation of sovereignty. Capitalism is in Nature as much as Nature is Capitalism in Moore's reading, could be reconfigured for the North Korean case to read that Juché or Songun is in Nature and vice versa.

Notions of vibrant materiality and lively non-human actors can also connect to previous conceptions of political charisma, themselves of course very active in North Korea. Jamie Lorimer for instance has used Bennett's conceptions to theorise a politics of non-human

⁴ Eric Swyngedouw, 'Excluding the Other': the Production of Scale and Scaled Politics', in *Geographies of Economies*, Roger Lee, Jane Wills (eds.), London: Arnold, 1997, p.167-176 and Eric Swyngedouw, *Liquid Power*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2015.

⁵ R. Winstanley-Chesters, 'Patriotism Begins with a Love of Courtyard: Rescaling Charismatic Landscapes in North Korea', *Tiempo Devorado (Consumed Time)* Vol. 2, No. 2, 2015, p.116-138.

⁶ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

⁷ Sarah Whatmore, Bruce Braun, *Political Matter: Technoscience, Democracy and Public Life*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

⁸ Jason Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*, London: Verso, 2015.

charisma,⁹ which he uses primarily within the field of environmental and species conservation, but which underpins this author's examination of the role of topography within North Korea's politics, history and culture. The reader should perhaps also consider the work of Thongchai Winichakul, especially addressing Thai state development on notions of the eco-body, in which topographic features, and a sense of local natural sensibilities become entwined and enveloped by the processes of nation building and state formation.¹⁰

Concepts of a North Korean 'eco-body' were particularly important following the end of the Japanese colonial period. The reader can certainly consider the fish, fishing ecosystems and perhaps even fishing infrastructures of North Korea in this light, as vibrant, lively participants with their own intrinsic charisma, active in the theatric politics and history of the nation. In tandem with the theories of space, place and vibrant matter through which North Korea's fishing histories will be encountered, it is vital to touch on the histories or sparsity of histories of fishing in the Asian context.

The paucity of history or historiography has been one of the most surprising findings of the author's exploration of fishing communities and fishing cultures. The majority of histories that exist focus on whaling practices and histories and fishing in the North Atlantic. While it might be expected that colonial or post-colonial histories would seek out and uncover the stories of fishing communities, this generally has not been the case. This may be because the object of these communities' enterprise and interest and often the communities themselves are remarkably transient and temporary. Fish and maritime resources often disappear or reappear with little rhyme or reason, the communities that seek them then being forced to move or reconfigure their life practices and home lives in order to catch up. In our age of industrial exploitation, climate change and environmental crisis this has become common and with rising sea temperatures can only become more so. Histories with a wide geographic or temporal span addressing the Pacific include Carmel Finley's important work on fishing history and technological development in the Pacific framed by the power of

⁹ J. Lorimer, 'Nonhuman Charisma' *Environment and Planning D*, *Society and Space*, Vol. 24, No. 5, 2007, p. 911-932.

¹⁰ Winichakul Thongchai, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

American and Japanese interests following the end of the war in the Pacific in 1945.¹¹

On the other side of the ocean is Ryan Tucker Jones' work on Russian efforts at sealing, fishing and whaling in the far north prior to the creation of Soviet Union.¹² Micah Muscolino's work on the development of fishing technologies and commodification of commons and resources in the Zhoushan archipelago, what he terms 'fishing wars' is also vital for work closer to East Asia.¹³ Aside from theoretical material this paper also encounters North Korea through archival material from the various Fisheries Commissions in the Pacific held by Australian National University, CSIRO (Black Mountain), the Australian National Library and the University of Hull. Archival material has also been sourced from the Soviet Union's Ministry of Fisheries Archive held within the Russian Federation State Archive of the Economy. North Korean material has been sourced from collections at the University of Leeds, Australian National University and the National Library of Australia.

Political Fishing Histories of North Korea

This paper will not go extensively or at length into the history of North Korean fishing. This author has already published a fairly comprehensive account of the strategies, processes and themes of North Korea's approach to the sector.¹⁴ It will not surprise the reader to hear the suggestion that fishing for North Korea was deeply connected both to the various periods of its political and ideological development, and as a developmental sector essentially aimed at a resource of the commons and therefore for the most part free, vital to its developmental strategies. It must be said categorically any efforts focused on the construction of a coherent periodisation of North Korean fishing and

¹¹ Carmel Finley, *All the Fish in the Sea: Maximum Sustainable Yield and the Failure of Fisheries Management*, Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2011 and Carmel Finley, *All the Boats in the Ocean: How Government Subsidies Led to Global Over Fishing*, Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2017.

¹² Ryan Tucker Jones, *Empire of Extinction: Russians and North Pacific's Strange Beasts of the Sea, 1741-1867*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

¹³ Micah Muscolino, *Fishing Wars and Environmental Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University East Asia Centre, 2009.

¹⁴ Robert Winstanley-Chesters, 'Politics and Pollack: maritime development paradigms under the Kims' in *Change and Continuity in North Korean Politics*, Roger Winstanley-Chesters, Adam Cathcart, Christopher K. Green (eds.), London: Routledge, 2016.

fishing practices can only be termed political fishing histories. In North Korea all aspects of life, development, social practice, invention and governmentality are imbued and enmeshed with politics and ideology, there is virtually no escape from this for North Koreans living in North Korea and in this historical process, for the fishing sector this is also the case.

Fishing was vital to Kim Il Sung's ambitions from very early on in North Korea's history, in part to both build a new economy and to deconstruct Japanese efforts to Japanise Korean fisheries during the colonial era. Fishing development was delayed by the chaos and destruction of the Korean War, but soon after the war institutional focus returned to the sector, in close relation to North Korea's close ally in its early years and technical supporter even in more complicated diplomatic times. Kim Il Sung even remarked on North Korean-Soviet interactions in 1957: "We invited Soviet scientists who were engaged on maritime research in the Far East. They came to our country under an agreement reached when our Government delegation visited Moscow last year."¹⁵ While the Soviet Union may have influenced North Korea's initial efforts on the seas and some of its first efforts at planning extractive goals, Stalin's death in 1953 drove a geopolitical turn towards Maoism and the People's Republic of China.¹⁶ The implications of this for the wider strategies in North Korea's development have been also noted by analysts from the period.¹⁷ The Chollima movement, North Korea's developmental movement and response to Maoist urgency, would generate statements on fishing such as; "We must intensify ideological education among the fishery officials and eradicate mysticism, empiricism and all other outdated ideas so that they will improve the fishing method zealously with the attitude of masters,"¹⁸ and "Fish culture is a not a difficult job. A little effort and everyone will be able

¹⁵ Kim Il Sung, *On the Development of the Fishing Industry*, *Works*, Vol. 11, Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957, p. 96.

¹⁶ J. S. Prybyla, 'Soviet and Chinese. Economic Competition within the Communist World', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1964, p. 464-473.

¹⁷ Y. T. Kuark, 'North Korea's Agricultural Development during the Post-War Period' *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1963, pp. 82-93.

¹⁸ Kim Il Sung, 'On the Tasks of the Party Organizations in South Pyongan Province,' *Works*, Vol. 14, Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960, p. 38.

to,” suggest that it was so in these acute, urgent times.¹⁹ This was not a time for fishing ‘experts’.

North Korea more generally quickly attempted to avoid the collapse of the Great Leap Forward and the famine period following it in the PRC, reconnecting more fully with partners in the Soviet Union, while exploring further afield for new contacts among the non-aligned nations. In the fishing sector North Korea’s strategy focused on reconfiguring its goal setting and institutional structures in a more coherent manner, especially focusing on technical capacity.²⁰ The size, tonnage and capabilities of fishing boats and other fishing technology for North Korea has always been problematic. Pyongyang has always found it hard to manage the development of larger or more complicated boats, as well as the infrastructure required to produce such boats. For many years North Korea sought to obtain these from before, but in the late 1960s this to became problematic: “The 450-ton trawler we are now producing has many shortcomings. [For example,] it can be used for fishing only in the Black Sea or the Baltic Sea... [and] it cannot be used in the Pacific Ocean where the waves are moderate.”²¹ By the early 1970s North Korea was engaged in reconfiguring its institutional framework and trying to carefully manage a few centres of maritime industrial excellence—for example, the Ryukdae Shipyard in the Komdok Island area. This shipyard was to serve as such a centre for the industry in the East Sea.²² The primary site for this renewal of North Korea’s fishing fleet and accompanying infrastructure was located at Chongjin’s historically important port, where apart from Ryukdae’s efforts to build mid-range ships of some 600–1,000 tons, North Korea sought to construct much larger vessels of between 3,000 and 10,000 tons.²³ From the perspective of 2018 it is possible to say that in fact North Korea never managed to reach these heights of boat and infrastructure production. Even in contemporary times of the Great Fish

¹⁹ Kim Il Sung, ‘On the Tasks of the Party Organizations in South Pyongan Province,’ *Works*, Vol. 14, Pyongyang, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960, p. 39.

²⁰ Kim Il Sung, ‘For Bringing About Rapid Progress in the Fishing Industry,’ *Works*, Vol. 22, Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, p. 261.

²¹ Kim Il Sung, ‘For Bringing About Rapid Progress in the Fishing Industry,’ *Works*, Vol. 22, Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, p. 55.

²² Kim Il Sung, ‘For Bringing About Rapid Progress in the Fishing Industry,’ *Works*, Vol. 22, Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, p. 55.

²³ Kim Il Sung, ‘For Bringing About Rapid Progress in the Fishing Industry,’ *Works*, Vol. 22, Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, p. 57.

Hauls as announced in 2015's New Year's Address, fishing boats and processing technology are still a huge problem for North Korea.

North Korea Fishing Interactions in Soviet Institutional Archives and Memory

The previous section has addressed the political histories of North Korean fishing up to the early 1970s as can be gleaned from the extensive documents and publications of Pyongyang itself. It has been to this point nigh on impossible to get a coherent sense of the reality of North Korea's historiography or the aspirations within it for development and success in the sector. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) fisheries statistics are notoriously complicated and troublesome from this period, methodologies being reconfigured every few years anyway.²⁴ When it comes to North Korea, the FAO received one set of statistics in 1957 which were so outlandish that from that point until now the organisation simply estimated and extrapolated the nation's statistics. Looking elsewhere to the statistics of the various commissions which manage the pelagic and anadromous fishing stocks of the Pacific, such as the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), North Korean boats make no appearance, not even as illegal fishers (Taiwanese boats being the prime concern of the authorities of Japan, the United States and Canada). Thus while boats from the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Poland are all accounted within the documents by the NPFC, Pyongyang's boats are nowhere to be found.²⁵ Fish for North Korea were important, lively matter, but perhaps Pyongyang was not successful at all in connecting with their vibrancy. This paper however recounts for the first time (that is known) in English, an encounter with the fisheries archives of the Soviet Union, which most certainly has a place for the North Korea of the 1970s within their historical narrative.

The author's interest in Soviet archives was first piqued a couple of years ago when Rodong Sinmun reported on the meeting of the Joint Fisheries Commission of the Russian Federation and North Korea. A reading of past North Korean media reports suggested this commission had met for many years, but its publications and minutes were never publicly available and certainly not made available by North

²⁴ FAO, *Fisheries Statistics Yearbook*, United Nations: Geneva, 1972.

²⁵ North Pacific Fisheries Commission, *Annual Report 1972*, NPFC: San Francisco, 1972.

Korea. North Korea and the Soviet Union in fact set up the predecessor to the currently constituted Commission in the late 1960s following some twenty years of attempts at engagement on Moscow's part. This author had in fact never seen any of the reports issued by these committees, however recent visits to the Russian State Archive of the Economy has allowed access to all of the committees' previous reports and the documents that surround them. These certainly give an external, Soviet perspective on North Korea's fishing history and especially its success or otherwise in Moscow's institutional eyes.

Interestingly, Soviet efforts towards conservation and the management of fisheries stocks were, counter to the imperatives of Socialist or Communist rationalism not designed simply to extract resources from the sea at this time (though of course they may have been in the past), so cannot be classified as seeking to dispossess the great treasury or commons of the ocean. The Soviet Union it seems had been very concerned to support North Korea's own efforts to develop its capabilities and capacities, perhaps to mitigate the cost of the various loans, credits and exchanges offered to Pyongyang by Moscow following the Korean War and to support relations between the two during the difficult politics following the death of Stalin and North Korea's dalliance with Beijing. Reports from the Ministry of Fisheries and VNIRO (Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography) suggest that the Soviet Union had sought to connect with North Korean fisheries throughout most of the 1960s, especially to engage in researcher swaps and exchanges on each other's boats and ships.²⁶ But contrary to Kim Il Sung's assertions in previous decades, they had never happened. Vladivostok's branch of VNIRO and the Russian Academy of Sciences Fisheries Section especially were concerned to develop joint projects in the Sea of Okhotsk, knowing that North Korea sought snow and other crabs for their value and for local markets and that stocks had declined within its territorial waters.²⁷ There were it seems also a number of instances of illegal and dangerous fishing practices by North Korean boats in or near Soviet declared or territorial waters. After much negotiation and many false starts North Korea and the Soviet

²⁶ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 3. Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-20-2323.

²⁷ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 2.

Union signed a protocol on the September 5, 1969 which established the joint Soviet-North Korea Fisheries Commission.²⁸ The first meeting of the commission was delayed by Pyongyang's preparations for a Workers Party of Korea Congress (the 5th, eventually held in November 1970), but was held between February 26 and March 10, 1970.²⁹

Soviet reports on the commission's meetings give a fairly thorough if frustrated view of what sounds like a complicated and difficult series of exchanges. North Korea's representatives are described as intransigent, setting the agenda ended up taking an entire day and that the Korean's were extremely reluctant to discuss procedure.³⁰ The Soviet Union on the other hand had wanted to discuss the granular details of fish stocks and the North Koreans' perception of their own stocks and the framework of management and administrative principles governing joint exercises, whereas the North Koreans were determined to discuss potential joint collaboration and interactions as soon as possible.³¹ The Soviet Union already had, it seemed, a careful and complicated network of restrictions and management around Kamchatka, the Sea of Okhotsk and Sakhalin and even joint agreements on stock capacity with Japan (with whom, even in spite of very difficult relations given the post-war status quo on Sakhalin and the Kuriles, the Soviet Union had a joint fisheries commission), which North Korea was keen to avoid being constrained by.³² After much discussion the North Korean side agreed to abide by the wider restrictions on salmon fishing across the western Pacific which the Soviet Union subscribed to in collaboration with the Japanese (also quite possibly to avoid complicating relations with the United States and Canada on the subject of fishing for migratory species in the Pacific), as well as restrictions on crab fishing around Kamchatka, trawling the mid sea on the west coast of Kamchatka and herring fishing in the Gulf of Shelikov between mid-

²⁸ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 1.

²⁹ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 4.

³⁰ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 5.

³¹ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 6.

³² 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 7.

April and mid-July (herring fry season).³³ In exchange the Soviet Union allowed Pyongyang to access the inshore waters of the Commander Islands, fish for flatfish around Kamchatka and Sakhalin and access the herring fisheries of the Soviet area of the Bering Sea.³⁴

In exchange for these supplementary rights North Korea supplied the Soviet side with the details of its fleet and catch. According to the Korean side, its fishing fleet in 1969 had been some 35 boats, half medium sized trawlers and some purse seine boats³⁵. North Korea also claimed to have four mother ships and four transport ships (having even bought two mother ships from the Netherlands) and had plans to two large trawlers with refrigeration capacity.³⁶ These boats had caught in 1969 according to the North Korean fishing experts, some 11,000 tons of flatfish and 25,000 tons of herring in the Sea of Okhotsk. In the Sea of Japan, North Korea claimed to have caught 1,000 tons of pink salmon, 400,000 tons of pollack, up to 60,000 tons of squid and 15,000 tons of crab (both hairy crab and snow crab).³⁷ The Soviet side thought these figures an understatement and that North Korea, in spite of its consent to restrictions, was seeking to exploit Pacific salmon resources as much as possible and to exploit the highly endangered fur seal populations on Tyuleniy Island off Sakhalin.³⁸

Despite their own concerns and lack of trust in the North Koreans, the Soviet Union in the joint commissions sought to negotiate joint research collaborations between fishing experts from both countries in 1970. While this seemed very difficult to set up in 1970 owing to the demands of the forthcoming Workers Party Congress on North Korea's scientific bureaucracy, the commission managed to come to an arrangement.³⁹ Many complex challenges were overcome when it

³³ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 8.

³⁴ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 8.

³⁵ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 7.

³⁶ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 7.

³⁷ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 7.

³⁸ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 7.

³⁹ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p. 4.

came to matters of responsibility and lines of control and even on the issue raised by the North Koreans, that Soviet ships in the Pacific were subject to mandatory boarding rights in certain areas by foreign powers and Pyongyang was absolutely keen to avoid any circumstance where hostile or unfriendly agencies might have access to North Korean workers and operatives on board Soviet ships far from its control. These joint exercises were to begin in late September 1970, the culmination of many years of effort on the part of the bureaucrats, diplomats and scientists from the various Soviet institutions.⁴⁰

These efforts were to be severely challenged on September 28, 1970 when a highly urgent telegram found its way onto many desks across the Soviet Union. In the week that research cooperation efforts were supposed to begin on ships of both the USSR and North Korea, the telegram reported that a North Korean purse seine boat with its identifying marks illegally disguised had attempted to set its own nets across and above the nets of the Soviet Union's chief research ship, damaging the them and the Soviet boat's floats beyond repair.⁴¹ Responses to the initial telegram revealed that this was not an isolated incident and that in fact North Korean boats had been repeatedly disguising their identification marks and using incorrect or impossible to decipher marks on their nets and floats in the Sea of Okhotsk.⁴² Further telegrams from 'Far East Fish' the 'Fishing Cooperative of Kamchatka' reported near collisions and other dangerous interactions between North Korean boats and tugboats, an ocean-going barge, the Dagystanka and a fishing trawler, the Kammeniy. Unsurprisingly interactions between the research institutions of the Soviet Union and North Korea which had been very carefully organised and negotiated earlier in the year were for

⁴⁰ Urgent Telegram from USSR Ministry of Communications 'Urgent Moscow harbour to Ishkov Dal'ryba (FarEastFish) to Starzinskiy,' 28th September, 1970, Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-20-2323.

⁴¹ 'Letter to D. Gafin from Volkov A.A,' 28th September, 1970, Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-20-2323.

⁴² 'A list of violations committed by DPRK boats fishing in the Sea of Okhotsk regarding the Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and the fisheries regulations,' October, 1970, Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-20-2323.

the moment curtailed while authorities in Moscow reconsidered how to approach and engage a partner like Pyongyang.⁴³

While activities at sea were restricted in 1970 the Soviet Union decided to allow North Korean researchers to engage on land with the Ministry of Fisheries institutions near Vladivostok in Nakhodka. North Korean researchers were in the Soviet Union between December 15, 1970 and January 16, 1971 for what was a fact finding mission for the Koreans and an exercise in epistemological training from the Soviets – according to the accounts it was an extremely difficult month.⁴⁴ The events of the previous year, which the Soviet institutions had essentially put down to some form of industrial sabotage, coupled with the complication of the discussions surrounding the joint research efforts had soured the mood between the two nations. The Soviet side considered the reasons for some of the more difficult moments in the discussions, such as North Korea's lack of willingness to allow any reciprocity in contract arrangement and complex negotiation over the legal framework and responsibilities for any of that nation's citizens on Soviet boats as exposing its institutions to moral hazard.⁴⁵ It appeared that there was a high security risk in engagements with North Korean institutions and that under the guise of an interest in fishing, Pyongyang could send intelligence operatives and engage primarily in industrial espionage on Soviet infrastructure and factories in the far east, but also to extract knowledge not available to it on fishing stocks and fishing areas in the Sea of Okhotsk and in the wider Pacific.

The exchange in 1970/1971 certainly did not begin in the most comfortable manner. In order to avoid issues of subterfuge, espionage and security threat the Soviet Union stipulated that none of the researchers or technicians sent by North Korea should have visited the area before or been involved in the institutions on the Soviet side in the past. Certainly none should have security or intelligence background and

⁴³ 'A list of violations committed by DPRK boats fishing in the Sea of Okhotsk regarding the Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and the fisheries regulations,' October, 1970, Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-20-2323.

⁴⁴ 'A report on the work with Korean delegation during a period of 15 December 1970 until 16 January 1971,' 29th January, 1971, Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-22-468.

⁴⁵ 'The Soviet Union delegation's account of work on session of Joint Soviet – North Korean Fisheries Commission' 1970, p.4. Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-20-2323.

essentially all should have fishing and fishing research experience. Of course, North Korea claimed that none of its researchers had ever been in the Soviet Union before and all were trained and experienced fishing experts, but Soviet intelligence soon reported that one had been to college in the USSR and two had worked in their consulate in Vladivostok – a fourth member of the Korean team it was decided actually had nothing to do with the fishing industry and knew nothing about fishing at all. The Ministry of Fisheries efforts to entertain the North Koreans continued to be combined with a concern for security and the obvious dangers of their potential efforts at subterfuge and espionage, concern which only grew when the Koreans appeared to be fairly consumed by the technological aspects of their visit to the extent that when they demanded the blueprints and layouts for the machinery in the various canning and preparation facilities they visited, the Soviet side actually restricted access. Eventually a reasonable negotiation of the problems was done by the Soviet side, with extensive reports in the documents of the North Korean's being refused visits to irrelevant infrastructure and careful management of their visits to technical or research institutions, so that they could not extract data or spend too long with technology that was delicate when it came to security matters. Of course the documents also report a number of moments of push back from the North Koreans and frequent returns to their hotel rooms after difficult moments with their hosts, to review material at length or to communicate with North Korea.⁴⁶ Finally in scenes familiar to watchers of North Korea in the present, the researchers aside from their focus on machinery and technology, were fascinated by shopping opportunities in the fishing towns they visited-the Soviet Union's Ministry of Fishing even sent the North Koreans back to their own country with an extensive supply of Soviet Crab, Caviar, Shrimp and Herring.⁴⁷

The records of the Joint Soviet Union North Korean Fisheries Commission, which met on average every four years following the initial 1970 meeting, show more or less similar interactions between the two countries and their fishing industries for the next two decades. Undoubtedly on the surface Soviet efforts to develop North Korea's

⁴⁶ 'A report on the work with Korean delegation during a period of 15 December 1970 until 16 January 1971,' 29th January, 1971, Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-22-468.

⁴⁷ S.Y.Hong, 'Marine Policy in the Republic of Korea,' *Marine Policy*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1995, p. 97-113.

behaviour and technical capacity worked to mitigate the security and espionage risks it generated, but Pyongyang's desire to fish illegally and exploit what was not within its property or remit for the 1970s (though it could never seem to diminish Pyongyang's ambition to extract whatever it could from Japanese stocks), although it cannot be said that efforts from Moscow's researchers and academics supported much in the way of practical development when it came to North Korean fishing capacity. Nor can it be said that North Korea ever managed to extract by means of subterfuge or espionage any information or technology that would later drive success or development in its fishing industry or its fishing catches.

Conclusion

North Korea, as the reader of this paper may know, was never able to reach the heights of extraction from the common seas managed by the Soviet Union during its existence. The Soviet Union and perhaps unlikely partners such as the Polish Democratic Republic and the German Democratic Republic would join the United States, Japan, South Korea and Canada in the 1970s and 1980s as a global fishing power, the ships of these nations found across the seas of the earth and at their farthest reaches. North Korea, in spite of efforts made in the 1970s as recounted by this paper and later in its history would never be a great success. However, this has never stopped it aspiring to such success, as seen in 2015's New Year's Address from Kim Jong Un, and in the following years, which features seas (and mountains) of gold as developmental imperative.⁴⁸ As much as Kim Il Sung wanted, desired and demanded it, North Korean fishing success on a global scale has never happened. The institutional redesign, scientific focus and technological jump required by North Korea's fishing strategy in the late 1960s and 1970s produced very little. North Korea fishing boats seldom top 1,000 tonnes (whereas South Korea's are in the tens of thousands). When North Korea finally successfully joined the West and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), (an organisation set up to manage the tuna and migratory fish in the waters around the Federated Republic of Micronesia, Vanuatu, Nauru and the other island archipelago nations of this area of the Pacific), in 2014 after many years of trying and diplomatic push and pull, its first membership of such an

⁴⁸ Kim Jong Un, 'New Year's Address, 2015', *Rodong Sinmun*, January 1st, 2015.

organisation, it was required to submit useful and legitimate data on its fishing efforts in the area.⁴⁹ Extraordinarily this North Korea did, providing what to this day are the only reasonable and functional statistics on its fishing efforts and catch size in the wider Pacific area since its submission to the Soviet Joint Commission in the 1970s. These statistics reveal the miniscule scale of North Korea's contemporary fishing capabilities and efforts in the area, comprising only two small purse seine boats and one long line boat, collecting in total a sum of some 368 tonnes of tuna in 2014.⁵⁰

While North Korea's fishing history it seems therefore has not by any means met any goal it set itself in the 1970s, it has certainly not been for want of trying. Evidence from the Soviet archives revealed here for the first time suggests Pyongyang made great efforts to connect to the Soviet Union's enormous infrastructure of fishing research and marine technical research and at the same time blatantly trying to cheat Moscow when it came to protected areas and stocks and to use subterfuge and espionage to extract scientific and technical knowledge. Reports from the very end of the Soviet Union in 1989 and 1990 suggest that North Korea has never given up trying, recording that Pyongyang had engaged in efforts during research exercises in the 1980s to breach Soviet information security in Nakhodka and Vladivostok.⁵¹ North Korea had also developed an elaborate ruse by buying small trawlers from Japan and crewing them with Japanese fishermen who were instructed to insist that they were working on behalf of Japanese companies and to fish illegally in Soviet waters of Sakhalin and Kamchatka. When this was discovered the Soviet Union fined North Korea millions of US dollars for such an extreme breach of protocol and restricted any further collaborative efforts. Whatever its own lack of capability, North Korea placed a huge value on attractive and valuable maritime species such as Snow Crab and Pollack and was willing to engage in all manner of behaviour to get them with whatever resources

⁴⁹ Western and Central Fisheries Commission, *Report on admission of North Korea*, August, 2014, Phonpei, Marianas Islands.

⁵⁰ Western and Central Fisheries Commission, *Report on admission of North Korea, Letter from Ri Hyok, North Korean Minister of Fisheries*, August 5th 2014, Phonpei, Marianas Islands.

⁵¹ "Report on the activities of the [Overseas] Office of the USSR Ministry of fisheries in the DPRK during 1990." 28th January 1991, p.3. Soviet Union Ministry of Fisheries Archive, Russian State Archive of the Economy, Fondy, 8202-23-1869.

it had to hand. Fish and fishing technologies it seems have always been hugely important to North Korea's institutional and developmental mind. The Soviet Union on the other hand was extremely patient and determined to bring Pyongyang into its institutional fold when it came to fishing, perhaps because of the challenges presented by illegal North Korean fishing in its waters, perhaps to reduce the concerns of other nation's focused on the Pacific, perhaps even because of the residual sense of socialist fraternity between the two nations. Even North Korea's absurd acts of sabotage to long negotiated and organised joint projects, a technique, behaviour and practice familiar to those attempting to engage Pyongyang in institutional development the world over throughout its history, and acts of espionage and subterfuge, did not completely stop Soviet interest. Moscow's institutions were instead required to develop new strategies and levels of surveillance and security when working with North Korean boats and institutions. While North Korea is repeatedly dispossessed by circumstance and geopolitical positionality, it appears that Pyongyang was certainly not beneath or beyond dispossessing the common seas or an ally when it came to fishing stocks and resources in the 1970s. Ultimately Pyongyang's efforts in the deep sea have been so small as to scarcely register against the extractive and accumulative ambitions of the great nations of the ocean. In the evidential terms necessary for conventional historical narratives, North Korea is normally entirely opaque and corroboration of events is almost impossible. However, access to the Soviet archives has certainly challenged this frequently used truism for this author and has provided the evidence for this revealing paper.

Gender Acrobatics: The Questionable Liberalism of Popular Culture and the Emergence of Alternative Masculinity Patterns in Late-modern Japan

Abstract

This paper focuses on the skillfully designed and highly merchandised figure of the otokoyaku – that is, the female impersonator of male roles in Takarazuka Revue, a hugely popular musical theatre in Japan, which celebrated its centennial in 2014. Takarazuka Revue's version of *Gone with the Wind* (officially inspired by Margaret Mitchell's novel, but in fact heavily relying on its film adaptation from 1938) is taken as an example of the ways in which producers of popular culture promote patterns of gender and race. The ambivalence of otokoyaku embodies both the struggles of masculinity as an ongoing project of defining the self in its own core identity and the fantasies of feminine power as a field of desire, resistance and negotiation in the modern world – Japan included. Premiered in 1977¹ and subsequently staged repeatedly over the next decades due to its unexpected box-office success, Takarazuka Revue's *Gone with the Wind* displays Japanese visions on love, family, historical heritage, gender roles and race hierarchies, thus transcending its American origins. It employs the otokoyaku in both main characters, the makeup and outfit visually highlighting Rhet Butler's idealised masculinity, on the one hand, and simultaneously reinforcing Scarlett O'Hara's 'failed femininity', on the other hand. In light of current discourses on 'herbivore men' (sōshoku[kei] danshi) and the loss of 'masculinity' in late-modern Japan, Takarazuka Revue version of *Gone with the Wind* from 2013 is critically observed, in the pursuit for answers to the question whether otokoyaku's highly stylised stature is a symbol or a symptom of the process of a fading 'white obsession' and the emergence of a 'masculinity of self-sufficiency' occurring currently worldwide.

Keywords: cultural consumption, Japan, love, *Gone with the Wind*, men's Studies, Takarazuka Revue

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¹*Kaze to tomo ni sarinu* [*Gone with the Wind*, moon troupe], Takarazuka: Takarazuka Kagekidan, 1977.

Introduction: popular culture and the ideal of “the enlightened community”

The Takarazuka Revue was founded in 1913 by Kobayashi Ichizô (1873-1957), one of the most significant entrepreneurs in pre-war Japan. In 2014 it celebrated the 100th anniversary since its first performance in 1914 with *Don Burakko*, based on the famous folk-tale of Momotarô, the boy born from a peach in Japanese folklore. The Takarazuka Revue is today the most popular Japanese musical theatre: its hallmark is an all-female cast, which makes the stress ratio between *otokoyaku* (female impersonators of male roles) and *musumeyaku* (female impersonators of female roles) fundamental for the creation, promotion and implementation of specific gender roles and social models in modern and contemporary Japan.

This paper focuses on the skillfully designed and highly merchandised figure of the otokoyaku: the Takarazuka Revue's version of *Gone with the Wind* (officially inspired by Margaret Mitchell's novel from 1933, but in fact heavily reliant on its film adaptation from 1938 with Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh in the leading roles) is taken as an example for the ways in which producers of popular culture construct patterns of gender and race, as the ambivalence of otokoyaku embodies both the struggles of masculinity as an ongoing project of defining the self in its own core identity and the fantasies of feminine power as a field of desire, resistance and negotiation in the modern world – Japan included. The unsettling androgyny of the otokoyaku is enhanced by 'racelessness', mirroring the instability and ambiguity of Japanese modernity as a reputed monolith and challenging the Takarazuka Revue's self-assigned position as a self-conscious icon of modern Japan and a unique synthesis of Japanese spirit and Western knowledge/technology due to her all-too fluid identity representations.

Premiered in 1977 and subsequently staged repeatedly over the subsequent decades due to its unexpected box-office success, the Takarazuka Revue's *Gone with the Wind* displays Japanese visions on love, family, historical heritage, gender roles and race hierarchies, thus transcending its American origins. It employs the *otokoyaku* in both main characters, the makeup and outfit visually highlighting Rhett Butler's idealised masculinity, on the one hand, and simultaneously reinforcing Scarlett O'Hara's 'failed femininity', on the other hand. In light of current discourses on 'herbivore men' (*sôshoku[kei] danshi*) and

the loss of masculinity in late-modern Japan,² the Takarazuka Revue's version of *Gone with the Wind* from 2013³ has been critically observed in the pursuit for answers to the question of whether *otokoyaku*'s highly stylised stature is a symbol or a symptom of the process of a fading 'white obsession' and the emergence of the 'masculinity of self-sufficiency' occurring currently worldwide, concurrent with the merciless critique of "toxic masculinity", "patriarchal systems" and "white supremacy". The Takarazuka Revue version of *Gone with the Wind* from 2013 is chosen due to its particular ideologically loaded function: staged by the sky troupe, the youngest of the five, having been grounded in 1998, and implicitly the most progressive troupe at the Takarazuka Revue Company's main theatres in Takarazuka (27 September-4 November) and Tokyo (22 November-23 December), with topstar *otokoyaku* Ōki Kaname as Rhett Butler, the secondary *otokoyaku* Asaka Manato as Scarlett O'Hara, and *musumeyaku* Rion Misaki as Melanie Wilkes, it serves as a trend-setter in the Takarazuka Revue's tackling of masculine identity (particularly 2.2. *The otokoyaku: symbol or symptom?*). An exception to the rule of assigning a secondary *otokoyaku* to impersonate Scarlett O'Hara is the version from 2004 also staged by the sky troupe, with the *otokoyaku* Wao Yōka as Rhett Butler and *musumeyaku* Hanafusa Mari as Scarlett O'Hara, a case I come to discuss later in this paper (particularly in 2.3. *Gone with the Wind and the re-formulation of masculinity*).

Along its centennial existence, Takarazuka turned out to be both a faithful mirror of Japanese reality and an influential model for society. Curiously enough, the Takarazuka Revue is simultaneously conservative in its gender representation and progressive in its performance practice, becoming a contradictory symbol of Japanese modernity while standing out as Japan's leading figure in the entertainment industry. The Takarazuka Revue emerged from the syncretic, cross-gender tradition of the centuries-old classical Japanese stage arts such as Nō and Kabuki, and challenged that very tradition through the creative employment of Western music and dramatic plots as well as through its exclusive female casting. This new theatrical art

² Maki Fukasawa, *Sōshoku danshi sedai: Heisei danshi zukan [The Era of Herbivorous Boys: An Illustrated Guide to Heisei Boys]*, Tokyo: Kōbun-sha, 2009.

³ *Kaze to tomo ni sarinu [Gone with the Wind]*, Takarazuka: Takarazuka Kagekidan, 2013; *Kaze to tomo ni sarinu [Gone with the Wind]*, DVD, Takarazuka: Takarazuka Creative Arts, 2013.

reconstructs in a specific way asymmetric interactions between identity and alterity, model and copy, history and geography, obtrusively displayed in sparkling tunes, fairy-tale-like sceneries and gorgeous costumes. The last 44 years – since the world premiere of the blockbuster *The Rose of Versailles* in 1974 – have witnessed an unexpected tendency in the Takarazuka Revue's public appearance, visible both in the lavishness of its performances and in the intensified commercialisation of the increasingly androgynous *otokoyaku* figures. In this paper, I take into account the multiple layers of the Takarazuka Revue's administration and self-orchestration such as performance politics, the economic supervision of brand-related consumption, the socio-cultural management of actresses and fandom (fans and fan communities) as well as the performances themselves. My sources consist of the extensive archive research of Japanese documents and interviews with Japanese producers as well as with Japanese and Western consumers. A major focus of the paper is an in-depth literature review of the emerging field of Men's Studies and its hermeneutic application to the critical phenomenon of Takarazuka Revue's *otokoyaku*. It is both a curious inquiry into the ambiguous (often underlying the suspicion of double-standards) issue of the role and position of men and masculinity – or masculinities – in late modernity, and a theoretically grounded analysis of the challenges, contradictions and limitations that the concept of “man” and “masculinity” are facing in present-day Japan.

For clarity, I have divided the paper into three main parts.

1. Firstly, I'll focus on the socio-cultural context of Japanese masculinity as staged by the Takarazuka Revue in its self-advertised position as an “icon of modern Japan” with its female impersonators of male roles as symbols of masculinity and pioneers of social change. This is embedded within the elaboration of my position as a Western researcher during my fieldwork over the past 3-4 years in this area (men and masculinities, both Japanese and Western).
2. Secondly, a detailed analysis of the Takarazuka Revue's construction of masculinity across the decades is pursued as a critical example of the ways in which producers of popular culture construct and promote intersectional structures and hierarchies in Japan as well as their perception, processing and internalisation by consumers of those products.

3. Thirdly, *Gone with the Wind* is hermeneutically analysed, with particular focus on the performance staged in 2013. The goal is to illustrate the Takarazuka Revue's renegotiation - including its administrators' and directors' - of masculinity and gender patterns in late modernity, within the all-too ambiguous and fluid framework of US-Japanese historical exchanges.

While it has been repeatedly argued that the Takarazuka Revue – a huge institution within the highly corporationist entertainment industry in Japan – represents a typical phenomenon of cultural-intellectual hybridisation which has been occurring since 1868 and dovetails with the prevailing social-political agenda by reinforcing aesthetic-ideological patterns officially endorsed by the Japanese establishment, this paper looks at the Takarazuka Revue's public self-advertisement policy as a “world of love” in which “friendship, hard-work and (individual) excellence”⁴ serve the greater ideal of a dynamic community based of compassion, respect and trust among its members – the supreme goals of any enlightened society in the late-modern era.

The Takarazuka Revue and the cultural construction of masculinity

Within Japan's dynamic modernisation, the Takarazuka Revue emerged as part of the *shinkokumingeiki* (New People's Theatre) movement in the early 20th century. Created along the model of *kokugeki* (National Theatre, coined by the teatrologist Tsubouchi Shōyō in 1904⁵), the Takarazuka Revue underlies the dialectics of the *kokumin'engeki-undō* (movement of the people's theatre), strongly

⁴Yoshitsugu Ueda, *Takarazuka ongaku gakkō* [The Takarazuka music academy], Osaka: Yomiuri-Life, 1976, p. 34.

⁵ Roland Domenig, 'Takarazuka and Kobayashi Ichizō's Idea of 'Kokumingeiki' in Sabine Frühstück, Sepp Linhart (eds.), *The Culture of Japan as Seen through Its Leisure*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, p. 267-284, p. 269; Yoshio Ōzasa, *Nihon gendai engekishi* [The History of Japanese Modern Theater], Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1995, p. 74; Jennifer E. Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual politics and popular culture in modern Japan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 124; see Tomoko Iizuka, Takarazuka Kageki – Rebyū no ōsama: Shirai Tetsuzō, 1900-1983 [Takarazuka Revue – The King of the Revue: Shirai Tetsuō, 1900-1983], in Obara, T. (ed.) *Nihonjin no ashiato – Seiki wo okoeta "kizuna" motomete* [The Footsteps of the Japanese People – On the Quest of the Connections which Have Overcome the Century], Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2002, p. 479-510/p. 490.

defended by Ôyama Isao and Iizuka Tomoichirô, pre-war theatre historians and critics, in the late 1930s as “mass theatre for family entertainment”, in opposition to pre-modern Kabuk. ⁶ The *shinkokumingeiki* was supposed to consolidate Japan’s cultural homogeneity and preserve the construction of the Japanese national identity. Kobayashi rejected specific structures of the Japanese traditional theatre, such as music, which he considered unsuitable for powerful military marches or impressive chorus, and, thus, adopted Western (popular) music, even in Asian or Japanese plots, where popular melodic clichés were mixed with Western sounds. His goals to create a theatre ‘for the people’ and to offer them models of discipline and hard-work, on the one hand, and to support the imperialist levelling efforts, on the other hand, can be summed-up as it follows: “entertainment (*kairaku*), education (*kyôgyô*) and assimilation (*dôka*) of the audiences can be attained through manners (*girei*), social interactions (*shako*) and friendship (*shinwa*)”.⁷ It is within this complex framework that the Takarazuka Revue’s performative construction of masculinity and its powerful impact outside of the entertainment industry are to be observed.

Theoretical background: Men’s Studies into Japanese Studies

The theoretical preoccupation with “men” as a social phenomenon – and roughly half of the world’s population – as well as the definition of “masculinity” in terms of an historical perspective emerged by the late 1970s and early 1980s in Western scholarship as a

⁶ Takarazuka Revue adopted elements such as *ginkyô* (the silver bridge), the cross gender representation, and the concept of a “total art-work” from Kabuki and Richard Wagner’s “Gesamtkunstwerk” (Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theatre – From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism*, Princeton/New Jersey: Princeton University, 1995, p. 273; Jennifer E. Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual politics and popular culture in modern Japan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 29).

⁷ Nobuyuki Takaoka, *Kokumin engeki no tenbô* [A Vision of the People’s Theater], Tokyo: Yoshi Bundô, 1943, p. 194; see Roland Domenig, “Takarazuka and Kobayashi Ichizô’s Idea of ‘Kokumingeiki’”, in *The Culture of Japan as Seen through Its Leisure*, Sabine Frühstück, Sepp Linhart (eds.), Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, p. 267-284/pp. 274-277; Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theatre -From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism*, Princeton/New Jersey: Princeton University, 1995, p. 274; Jennifer E. Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual politics and popular culture in modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 28; Hiroshi Watanabe, *Takarazuka Kageki no hen’yô to Nihon kindai* [Takarazuka Revue’s metamorphose and the Japanese modernity], Tokyo: Shinshokan, 1999, p. 39.

means to re-consider gender roles and gender positions in light of the established Women's/Gender Studies⁸. Its theoretical transfer to Japan as the only non-Western nation that has attained Western standards of civilisation within a record time-framework since its re-opening to the world community in 1868, implies both a geopolitical aspect of Japan's historical development and the sociocultural adaptation of this observation.

While Japan's fixation with masculinity was a contemporaneous obsession of the 19th and 20th century that intersected with Western preoccupations in both the pre- and postwar periods, particular elements in analysing patterns of masculinity/masculinities in late-modern Japan impose an object-oriented endeavour, so that the specific details of the concrete quotidian reality in the field – in this case, Japanese society – do not get lost in the rush of theoretical considerations⁹. There are, in this approach, six main reasons for choosing the Takarazuka Revue as the topic of illustrating the shape and various layers of the project of masculinity construction in modern Japan:

1. As a mass-media phenomenon the Takarazuka Revue has a central historical position in Japanese cultural consumption and is considered a foundation of the Japanese entertainment industry, both ideologically and aesthetically.
2. The Takarazuka Revue continues cross-gender stage representation based on the premodern tradition of all-male stage arts such as Nô and Kabuki, within a very strict hierarchical and educational system.¹⁰
3. Considering the competitiveness of the Japanese entertainment

⁸ see Connell W. Raewin, *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005; Connell W. Raewin, James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', in *Gender and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 6, 2005, p. 829-59.

⁹ see Amano Masako, 'Sôron: 'Otoko de aru koto' no sengo-shi: Sarariman, kigyô shakai, kazoku' ["General introduction: A post-war history of 'being a man': White-collar workers, corporate society and family"], in *Dansei-shi 3: "Otoko-Rashisa" no Gendai-shi [Men's History, Vol. 3: A Modern History of "Masculinity"]*, Abe Tsunehisa, Ôhinata Sumio, Amano Masako (eds.), Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyôron-sha, 2006, p. 1-32; Romit Dasgupta, *Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan: Crafting Masculinities*, London/New York: Routledge, 2013; Tomoko Hidaka, *Salaryman Masculinity: The Continuity and Change in Hegemonic Masculinity in Japan*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010.

¹⁰ It appears among other cross-gender phenomena in late-modern Japan, such as the TV personality Matsuko Deluxe (prompting Japanese citizens to talk about "men, women and Matsuko Deluxe") and a great part of the *visual-kei* movement (boys-bands dressed up as women in glamorous rococo outfits, with glittering makeup and extravagant hairstyles).

system, the Takarazuka Revue's longevity (115 years since its foundation in 1913) is an exceptional phenomenon that warrants further analysis.

4. The Takarazuka Revue's ability to both reflect public opinions and to create new trends to be taken over by other mainstream media (TV and cinema, *anime/manga*, video games, social network channels, etc.) has been repeatedly noticed by scholars of the interactive exchanges between producers and consumers of popular culture, as an unusual example how "artistic value" is the result of a continuous negotiation between these two main parameters of the entertainment industry.
5. The Takarazuka Revue has been fulfilling a major function in mediating non-Japanese content to Japanese audiences (in the vast majority, 95-97%, female citizens between 35-60 years old, belonging to mid- and upper middle class) and impacting upon them in their perceived roles as mothers and primary educators (as well as consumers with a huge financial power).
6. My own preoccupation with the Takarazuka Revue as a cultural phenomenon for more than 15 years, accompanied by long-term extensive fieldwork, pursued mainly from a gender, feminist perspective, and strongly influenced by Cultural Studies.

While observing the Takarazuka Revue in its entirety as a mass-media form either obliterating smaller theatrical agencies or heavily influencing their approach to live-performances and public advertisement, its version of *Gone with the Wind* struck me as particularly powerful in its message of the ambiguous construction of masculinity in modern Japan.¹¹

On a different note, there has been recently a plethora of popular, rather than academic, publications referring to 'herbivore men' (*sôshoku[kei] danshi*) and the loss of 'masculinity' in late-modern Japan, specifically over the past 30 years.¹² As will be discussed further

¹¹ The Takarazuka Revue follows a special business model in comparison to regular mainstream media, relying heavily on a pre-established fan community with specific experiences and expectations, rather than pursuing endless growth and innovation through expansion and conquering new audiences and areas of artistic expression (Iwahori, Yasumitsu. *Isai Kobayashi Ichizô no shôhō: Sono taishû shikô no rejâ keiei shuhô* [The specific business strategy of the genial Ichizô Kobayashi: His mass-oriented leisure enterprise methods], Tokyo: Hyôgensha, 1972, pp. 56-87).

¹² Masako Amano, 'Sôron: 'Otoko de aru koto' no sengo-shi: Sararîman, kigyô shakai, kazoku' ["General introduction: A post-war history of 'being a man': White-collar

below, my question is whether the Takarazuka Revue's version of *Gone with the Wind* from 2013, with a fallible and soft Rhett Butler, while keeping its highly stylised stature, is a symbol or a symptom of the process of a fading 'white obsession' and the emergence of what I call a 'masculinity of self-sufficiency' occurring currently worldwide. The phrase 'masculinity of self-sufficiency' refers to the widening gap between the expectations and experiences of men and women as a consequence of a growing liberalisation of education, workplace and quotidian activities, with both genders becoming increasingly independent of each other while simultaneously complaining about lack of compatibility, inter-gender communication and mutual understanding. Between Rhett Butler (the epitome of classic masculinity, with its sense of endurance and emotional aloofness as well as efforts to prove one's worth by means of external achievements and validation) and Scarlett O'Hara (the supreme model of feminism *avant-la-lettre*, of the "self-made woman" with her obsessively displayed independence, mental coolness and self-asserted sexuality), there is the ambivalence of a strong belief in traditional ideals: the *otokoyaku* as ideological model and embodiment of self-styled idiosyncrasy confirms the identity confusion in postwar Japan, a fact highlighted by the *otaku* phenomenon on a social level. The *otaku*, and its more recent version, "herbivore men," is the individual replication of the historically accomplished transition from premodernity to postmodernity without a sufficient modernisation, as Morikawa Kaichirô put it in 2003.¹³ The *otaku*/"herbivore men" culture is marked by the conscious abandonment of message and focus on media through the projection of one's own emotions upon two-dimensional, symbolic simulacra constituted by separate elements contained in databases, as Azuma Hiroki wrote in 2001.¹⁴ The reality of the *otaku* and of the "herbivore men" is, in fact, the reality of one's own manually crafted metaphorical work, and symbolically pushes forward

workers, corporate society and family"], in *Dansei-shi 3: "Otoko-Rashisa" no Gendai-shi* [*Men's History, Vol. 3: A Modern History of "Masculinity"*], Abe Tsunehisa, Ôhinata Sumio, Amano Masako (eds.), Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyôron-sha, 2006, p. 1-32; Maki Fukasawa, *Sôshoku danshi sedai: Heisei danshi zukan* [*The Era of Herbivorous Boys: An Illustrated Guide to Heisei Boys*], Tokyo: Kôbun-sha, 2009.

¹³ Kaichirô Morikawa, *Shuto no tanjô: Moeru toshi Akihabara* [Learning from Akihabara: The birth of a personapolis], Tokyo: Gentôsha, 2003, p. 53.

¹⁴ Hiroki Azuma, *Dôbutsuka suru posutomodan: Otaku kara mita nihonshakai* [The self-animalising postmodernity: the Japanese society seen from the perspective of the *otaku*], Tôkyô: Kôdansha, 2001, p. 87.

the collapse of the reality of the general society. It is indeed a romantic, friendly metaphorical work softly melting fantasy and substantiality into one. Takarazuka Revue's *otokoyaku* as desire object and projection site transforms the *otaku* cliché into a hero. The *otokoyaku* reacts with the reinforcement of her position as a mirror of the self and a window to the other, the female counterpart, while internalising her position as a female impersonator of male figures.¹⁵ In doing so, the *otokoyaku* metamorphoses into a figure of longing and, paradoxically, belonging – which is the essence of “self-love” as initially postulated by Erich Fromm in *The Art of Loving* more than 60 years ago: a concatenation of self-acceptance, self-compassion and self-respect, compounded by courage and integrity-and kindness.¹⁶

The *otokoyaku*: symbol or symptom?

The most central and mediated structure in the Takarazuka Revue is the *otokoyaku*, the female impersonator of male roles: a site of ambiguous projections and expectations coming from the (predominantly) female audiences, and of artistic expression and curious explorations, as the (overwhelmingly) male producers (composers, directors, trainers, designers, managers) construct it. The *otokoyaku* in her postwar version (since 1945) presented a credible counter-image to all current relativising social and gender roles, positions as well as sexualities and identities, precisely in this stress ratio between producers and consumers. To the disempowered maleness represented by *otaku* and recently highlighted by discourses on ‘herbivore men’ (*sôshoku/kei/danshi*) and the loss of ‘masculinity’ in late-modern Japan, the Takarazuka Revue's *otokoyaku* reacts with romantic masculinity, clinging to classical elements of male existence. As an ideal of the new male in the female imagination, the *otokoyaku* ideologically embodies a male figure which, on a physical level, collects externally all the characteristics of male idols from Clark Gable to James Dean and Elvis Presley (strong bodies, compact attitudes, elegance) and possesses internally all kinds of positive qualities (composed, courteous, kind, considerate, faithful, chivalrous and brave) imposed by the samurai/warrior code of honour. It fundamentally lacks the “bad boy allure”. An *otokoyaku* may not simply contain all these characteristics like a statue, but must also show weakness along the course of her

¹⁵ Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, Paris: Seuil, 1974, p. 145.

¹⁶ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, New York: Harper & Row, 1956.

development and must reach the right decision at the right moment – even when this causes pain, according to a centuries-old romantic codex still present in the consciousness of most audiences. As a blatant antagonism to the image of the *otaku*, which is by now omnipresent in Japan and from Japan has been spreading worldwide, though mostly as a positively connoted site of symbolical belonging, the *otokoyaku* version of masculinity appears as a charismatic individual capable of abnegation and sacrifice, as fans, that is female fans, repeatedly underline in their statements. However, the unsettling androgyny of the *otokoyaku* is enhanced by her ‘racelessness’, which competes with the status of other cross-gender representations, such as *onnagata* in Kabuki (that is male impersonators of female roles), regarded as highly stylised symbols of femininity in premodern Japan and infusing Japan’s reality until nowadays, as well: *otokoyaku* is clearly constructed as a role, and not as a model or role-model. The slender, fragile stature of *otokoyaku* mirrors the instability and ambiguity of Japanese modernity as a reputed monolith and challenges the Takarazuka Revue’s self-assigned position as the self-conscious icon of modern Japan and a unique synthesis of Japanese spirit and Western knowledge/technology due to her all-too fluid identity representations.

This becomes painfully obvious in the character of Rhett Butler from *Gone with the Wind*. Unlike in the original novel and its film adaptation, Rhett Butler turns into the main character, thus replacing Scarlett O’Hara who is downgraded to the status of a secondary character, even below Melanie Wilkes. *Gone with the Wind*, more precisely the version from 2013, becomes Rhett Butler’s life story, and employs the *otokoyaku* in both main characters (Rhett and Scarlett), as commonly dealt with since 1977. Rhett Butler’s struggling masculinity clashes against Scarlett O’Hara’s intimidating personality, while Melanie’s soft vibrant femininity is presented as a standard to be internalised individually and promoted publicly. *Gone with the Wind* is Rhett Butler’s “way of life”, even “the way of life named Rhett Butler”, as officially advertised in the performance poster and on the DVD released after the performance. Moreover, Rhett Butler metamorphoses into the prototype of the “new man”, deeply in touch with his emotions and conflicting loyalties, so that he can face painful realities and take uncomfortable decisions, like breaking up with Scarlett in the aftermath of the death of their daughter, in spite of his feelings of love and affection for her. This reading is revealed in the last song of the entire

performance, “Farewell in the sunset”, performed by Rhett Butler, after he has left Scarlett crying in the living room—a further major change from the US-American versions with Scarlett having the last famous lines (“Tomorrow is another day.”).

The song and the scene in its entirety contain both feelings of sadness and loss and of hope that she is happier and better-off without him. Previous to the final song, Scarlett tries desperately to convince him to stay (as in the novel and the movie), but unlike in other media, the Takarazuka Revue version reveals the impossibility of half-hearted returns, of ethical compromises and of consumption-driven happy-ends, and instead reinforces the tragic necessity of moving forward, both individually and historically. Classical rules of behaviour and identification are no longer valid, and new existential standards require the inevitable flexibility to mentally handle the hardships and to emotionally overcome the challenges.

***Gone with the Wind* and the dialectical re-formulation of masculinity**

By the mid-1970s, simultaneously with Japan’s rise and establishment as an economic superpower, a sensitive shift in the classical display of masculinity via its impersonation in the Takarazuka Revue’s *otokoyaku* took place, particularly since Oscar François de Jarjayes from *The Rose of Versailles* (which world premiered in 1974). On the one hand, there is a sensible softening of male ideals, inaugurated by Hans Axel von Fersen (Marie Antoinette’s lover from *The Rose of Versailles*) and his inability to save his pride as well as his lover from the storms of destiny.¹⁷ On the other hand, Rhett Butler (from *Gone with the Wind*, 1977) is a pathetic character expressing the dissolution of identity borders and the declining definition of humanity in consumer society: in spite of his aggressive masculinity, he is unable to be together with the woman he loves and is eventually compelled to give her up. There is an illusionary attempt in the 1980s at a last revitalisation of male ideals in the figure of Bill Snibson (from *Me and my Girl*, 1987, based on the musical by Douglas Furber, L. Arthur Rose and Noel Gay from 1937); however, he is an import from prewar Great Britain with its artificially preserved aristocracy. The charismatic,

¹⁷*Berusaïyu no bara* [The Rose of Versailles], Takarazuka: Takarazuka Kagekidan, 1974; see *Berusaïyu no bara* [The Rose of Versailles], Takarazuka: Takarazuka Kagekidan, DVD, 2001.

extroverted *Tôto* [German: Tod], interpreted as a death god (*shinigami*) in the Takarazuka Revue adaptation *Elisabeth: The rondo of love and death* (1996) of the Vienna-premiere *Elisabeth* (1992), expresses the failure to reinforce clear ideals in the here and now, followed by the Shinto god of the sea and storm, Susano-o (from the eponymous performance in 2004), who accentuates the crisis of human beings in the era of general liquefactions: of identity, of culture, and of gender.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the employment of classical, archetypal characters as symbolised by Shirasu Jirô (from *Reimei no kaze: Samurai-jentoruman Shirasu Jirô no chôsen* [A morning breeze: The challenge of Jirô Shirasu, the samurai-gentleman], 2008), one of the most important businessmen in postwar Japan, means the acute re-actualisation of the *wakon yôsei* [Japanese spirit, Western knowledge/technology] slogan which he embodies in his synthetic figure. Though educated at famous schools in England, Shirasu Jirô bares his soul for Japan's welfare and defies Douglas MacArthur with the words: "Japan has lost the war, but that doesn't mean Japan has been enslaved." He dashes like a "morning breeze" through the turbulent twentieth century, firmly determined to devote himself entirely to Japan's postwar reconstruction and to the restoration of its sovereignty.

Contrastingly, also starting with Oscar from *The Rose of Versailles*, there is the gradual empowerment of female figures impersonated by *otokoyaku*, and not by *musumeyaku*, as had been traditionally pre-assigned. Performed by an *otokoyaku*, Oscar herself is a girl raised and educated as a boy in order to inherit and protect the family's name and wealth. Oscar's failure to define his/her own identity in the tumult of history is continued by Scarlett O'Hara, symbolising the strong, self-made woman of modernity and her overwhelming energy which erases prejudices, contradictions and obstacles.¹⁹ Scarlett O'Hara is a crucial moment in the Takarazuka Revue's endeavours to define gender and identity: she struggles for the continuity of family and history, but her struggle itself is a negation of traditionally transmitted

¹⁸ Maria Graidian, *Flüssige Identität: Die postmoderne Liebe, die Takarazuka Revue und die Suche nach einer neuen Aufklärung*, Bucharest: National Music University, 2009, p. 274; see Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid modernity*, Cambridge: Polity, 2000, p. 131; Leonie Stickland, *Gender Gymnastics: Performing and consuming Japan's Takarazuka Revue*, Melbourne: Trans Pacific, 2008.

¹⁹ Kenko Kawasaki, *Takarazuka – Shôhi shakai no supekutakuru* [Takarazuka – The spectacle of the consumption society], Tokyo: Kodansha, 1999, p. 81.

family and history. Her inner misconception transforms Scarlett O'Hara into a tragic figure unable to attain her ideals and breaking down under their weight, while desperately clinging to the ideology of "tomorrow, I'll be sad tomorrow" which would deliver later on the foundation for Western feminist pragmatics. Compounded by Scarlett's rapacious drive to constantly move forward and her greed for bigger and flashier outcomes, this mentality of avoiding failure and overcoming difficulties at any cost, instead of possibly leaning back and reflecting upon one's role in the tumult of history and destiny, is what turns her, in the Takarazuka Revue's representation of masculinised femininity, into a classical symbol of meaningless struggles, while missing out on one's core humanity. Her song "When tomorrow comes" summarises this message, and simultaneously offers the solution to a healthier relationship with the self, both individually and as part of a greater whole.

明日になれば

悲しみは明日にしよう
 涙を堪え泣くのは予想
 人の世に別れはあれど
 この世に明日がある
 夜が来れば朝は近い
 冬が来れば春は近い
 明日になれば
 明日になれば
 月は沈み、日は昇る

苦しみは明日にしよう
 唇噛んで泣くのは予想
 人の世に嘆きはあれど
 この世には明日がある
 夜が来れば朝は近い
 冬が来れば春は近い
 明日になれば
 明日になれば
 月は沈み日は昇る

When Tomorrow Comes

Tomorrow, I'll be sad tomorrow.
 I can feel that the repressed tears will
 overwhelm me.
 In the humans' world, there are
 separations,
 But there is also the hope towards
 tomorrow.
 Only when the night falls, the morning
 comes closer,
 Only when the winter comes, the spring
 comes closer.
 When tomorrow comes,
 When tomorrow comes,
 The moon will go down and the sun will
 rise.
 Tomorrow, I'll be in pain tomorrow.
 I can feel that I'll bite my lips and cry.
 In the humans' world, there is pain,
 But there is also the hope towards
 tomorrow.
 Only when the night falls, the morning
 comes closer,
 Only when the winter comes, the spring
 comes closer.
 When tomorrow comes,
 When tomorrow comes,
 The moon will go down and the sun will
 rise.

Within the re-staging series of *Gone with the Wind*, two versions would create the space for the resurgence of the powerfully dialectic version from 2015. Interestingly, both versions took place exclusively as performances in different locations (the Nissay Theater in Tokyo during the nationwide tour), other than the Takarazuka Revue's main theatres in Takarazuka and Osaka, as regular performances, occur: the first one is the version from 2002 (Nissay Theatre, April 6-16 and April 18-29) of the star troupe with Yû Todoroki as Rhett Butler and Asami Hikaru respectively Sena Jun as Scarlett O'Hara in which the extreme display of masculinity patterns on stage by Yû Todoroki's Rhett Butler is counter-balanced by a powerful, aggressive Scarlett who would later become two of the most fascinating topstar *otokoyaku* actresses in

Takarazuka Revue's history. The second version is the one from 2004 (October 16–November 7) of the sky troupe, with Waô Yôka as Rhett Butler and Hanafusa Mari as Scarlett O'Hara, the only one to have a topstar *musumeyaku* impersonating the main female character.²⁰ One of the longest-lasting and popular “golden combinations”, as the pair formed by the topstar *otokoyaku* and topstar *musumeyaku* is formally labeled, provided a warmer and more empathetic Rhett-Scarlett couple, in which relying on each other and cooperating with each other replaced the competition and struggle for power between the two main characters (competitiveness and the effort for domination being two major elements in the classical interpretation of the Rhett-Scarlett duo, in the novel, the movie as well as in all theatrical representations). Thus, the 2013 version of *Gone with the Wind* with its fallible, humble Rhett and its self-reflexive Scarlett appears against the background of the socio-artistic tendency to bring the male and the female genders closer, in a move to teach them the value of mutual compassion, acceptance and curiosity.

Conclusion: towards a new sense of masculinity

It has been argued that throughout the Takarazuka Revue's postwar history and its staging of identity, it was mainly the androgynously charismatic and ambivalent figure of *otokoyaku* that transported its ideals. Indeed, compared to the apparently submissive and conformist *musumeyaku*, the *otokoyaku*'s position suggests a strongly dialectical movement between traditional role models and innovative consumption patterns. To begin with, one recalls Kobayashi Ichizô's statement that audiences should desire the *otokoyaku*, but identify themselves with *musumeyaku*.²¹ While he regarded feminism and women's empowerment or liberation as devious, Kobayashi Ichizô, the founder of the Takarazuka Revue, was aware of the power of femininity as the virtually leading-and procreating-force in society. He envisioned his new theatre as a musical, cultural institution for all social strata, including men, women and children, an entertainment place for

²⁰ *Kaze to tomo ni sarinu* [Gone with the Wind], DVD, Takarazuka: Takarazuka Creative Arts, 2004.

²¹ Ichizô Kobayashi, *Takarazuka manpitsu* [Takarazuka miscellanea], Tokyo: Jitsugyô no Nihonsha, 1955, p. 37; see Yasumitsu Iwahori, *Isai Kobayashi Ichizô no shôhō: Sono taishû shikô no rejâ keiei shuhô* [The specific business strategy of the genial Kobayashi Ichizô: His mass-oriented leisure enterprise methods], Tokyo: Hyôgensha, 1972.

the whole family²², e.g., the Takarazuka Revue theatre in Tokyo, being called “a temple of family entertainment” (*katei kyōraku no dendō*).²³

My main aim is to separate theatre from the grasp of noble people and make it available to everyone. Plays should not be luxurious occasions, but should be an everyday entertainment. I do not want an audience made up of the sons of rich families with their geishas, nor dignitaries who have no care for how much they spend on leisure activities. I want ordinary families to come.²⁴

Intriguingly enough, the audiences eventually became 95% female²⁵, an effect of the all-encompassing consumer society in Japan which emerged in the late 1960s and solidified throughout the 1970s, with very clearly distributed gender roles: since the mid-1970s until recently (ca. 10 years ago), 95-97% of Takarazuka Revue fans would belong to the demographics of married housewives, between 35-60 years old, with 2-3 children of school-age. During those exuberant 1970s, current identificatory models became predominant, so that the objectivisation of the *otokoyaku* as an entity of desire and site of projection-to use Julia Kristeva's terminology²⁶ – transformed the *otokoyaku* from a model of male presence into a mirror of female identity projections: fans' fulfillment in the imaginary world should confirm *otokoyaku*'s magic, and yet place them on the *musumeyaku*'s level.²⁷ Every *otokoyaku*, and with her, the masculinity ideal she embodies, abandons the sphere of her own identity and accedes to the public space; she metamorphoses into a symbol for something which she cannot possibly be and she must obey the limits, rules and circumstances

²² Masao Hashimoto, *Subarashii Takarazuka Kagek-Yume to roman no 85-toshi* [The wonderful Takarazuka Revue: 85 years of dreams and romance], Takarazuka: Takarazuka Kagekidan, 1999, pp. 54, p. 123-125.

²³ Jennifer E. Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual politics and popular culture in modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 36; Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theatre-From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism*, Princeton/New Jersey: Princeton University, 1995, p. 273.

²⁴ Kobayashi quoted in Zeke Berlin, *Takarazuka-A History and Descriptive Analysis of the All-Female Japanese Performance Company*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1988, p. 125.

²⁵ Masao Hashimoto, *Subarashii Takarazuka Kageki-Yume to roman no 85-toshi* [The wonderful Takarazuka Revue: 85 years of dreams and romance], Takarazuka: Takarazuka Kagekidan, 1999, p. 29.

²⁶ Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, Paris: Seuil, 1974, p. 273.

²⁷ Kenko Kawasaki, *Takarazuka to iu yūtopia* [The utopia called Takarazuka], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005, p. 105-108.

imposed upon her from the outside. Like Don Quixote in another spatial and temporal culture – who, in the second part of the novel meets persons having already read the first part of the novel, and who must be faithful to the book which he has himself become and protect it from misapprehensions, counterfeits and apocryphal continuations, to paraphrase Michel Foucault²⁸ – an *otokoyaku* must follow her own discourse and transform herself into an object of the process which she herself as a subject had originally created.

However, since late 1970s, the *otaku* emerged and developed as an important existential alternative to the corporatist masculinity of postwar Japan. Mostly regarded as emblematic for the so-called crisis of masculinity in late modern, highly industrialised nations, in current Japanese slang, an *otaku* describes an obsessive fan of different forms of subcultural models and fashions. Contrary to the established cliché, those described as *otaku* seem to have once been ambitious boys who were particularly affected by the loss of faith in science and technology in the 1970s, as Morikawa Kaichirô observes²⁹, and in the political systems of stability and social networks of safety, during the 1990s. In the character of Rhett Butler and its ambivalent trajectory since the late-1970s, the Takarazuka Revue's administrators employed a powerful, credible alternative to the liquefying tendencies in defining the gender roles and models in late-modern Japan by surcharging it with romantic ideals and pragmatic features.³⁰ In Rhett Butler's fluid, non-controversial figure, with his strong will and innate ability to provide material support, moral orientation to those around him and proven mental toughness in times of turmoil, the predominantly female audiences recognise traditional patterns of relating and identifying, both in their function as mothers and primary educators and in their yearnings for a world of emotional outbursts and explosive passions. On the other hand, independently if an *otokoyaku* impersonates a male or a female character, her dualism reveals the impossibility of following classical rules of behaviour and internal validation as well as the increasing

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines*, Paris: Gallimard, 1966, p. 73.

²⁹ Kaichirô Morikawa, *Shuto no tanjô: Moeru toshi Akihabara* [Learning from Akihabara: The birth of a personapolis]. Tokyo: Gentôsha, 2003, p. 86.

³⁰ Bell Hooks, *The Will to Change-Men, Masculinity and Love*, New York/London: Washington Square Press, 2004; Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

ambivalence of traditionally transmitted ideals: there is comfort in the centuries-old codex of obeying the rules without questioning them or following strong leaders without asking for re-assurance, but late modernity with its challenges and uncertainties dissolves the warm soft protective layer offered by hierarchical structures and requires instead initiative and a sense of discernment. Scarlett's highly masculinised appearance represents highly contradictory alternatives to the on-going project of re-inventing the gender roles and modelling them according to patterns established once again in recent years. More than being a stable entity for the "silent majority" to follow, Rhett Butler's character in the Takarazuka Revue version from 2013 suggests rather a shadow adaptation to the expectations and pressures of that very "silent majority" he was once supposed – or chosen – to lead. On the background of other roles performed by Ōki Kaname while being topstar *otokoyaku* of the sky troupe (2012-2015), such as Gustav III of Sweden in *Oath of the midnight sun* (2014), Edmond Dantes in *The Count of Monte Cristo* (2013), Fersen in *The Rose of Versailles* (2012), Reinhart von Lohengramm in *Legends of the galactic heroes @ Takarazuka* (2012), her Rhett Butler is neither a cool thug profiting from the chaos of war nor an empowered gentleman in the aftermath of civil unrest – he is simply a confused male citizen who cannot figure out his own emotions when confronted with an overwhelmingly strong lady, as Scarlett once more proves to be.

Classical femininity, with its qualities of warmth, patience and softness, disappear in Scarlett despair and reckless resolution to overcome all difficulties by herself. Correspondingly, Rhett loses both his masculine appeal and *raison-d'être*, and must submit to the flow of time. In constructing this type of disempowered masculinity, the Takarazuka Revue reflects for once the prevailing tendencies in Japanese society and suggests, simultaneously, new paths to follow in the character of a slightly emotional, less cerebral Rhett Butler: Still masculine in his opposition to Scarlett, he is complementary to her dialectical femininity in light of social pressures and inter-human challenges, and finds the strength to walk away when his dignity requires it. In doing so, Rhett Butlers leaves the arena of a submissive adaptation to historical upheavals and enters the sphere of self-reflexive acknowledgement that awareness is fundamental in defining masculinity, as it is emotional maturity and intellectual depth. The long way Rhett Butler has left behind as an epitome of progressive

masculinity from Margaret Mitchell's novel through Victor Fleming's movie reaches in the latest Takarazuka Revue's version of *Gone with the Wind* an important stage, with compassion, kindness and (self-)respect, as fundamental elements of his gender identity.

Appendix: Takarazuka Revue Company's stagings of *Gone with the Wind* (selection)

Year	Troupe	Theater
1977	Star	Takarazuka/Tokyo
1978	Snow	Takarazuka/Tokyo
1978	Flower	Takarazuka/Tokyo
1978	Star	National Tours
1978	Moon	National Tours
1978	Flower	National Tours
1984	Snow	Takarazuka/Tokyo
1988	Snow	Takarazuka/Tokyo
1994	Moon	Takarazuka/Tokyo
1994	Snow	Takarazuka/Tokyo
1994	Moon	National Tours
1997	Flower	National Tours
1998	Snow	National Tours
2001	Star	National Tours
2002	Snow	Takarazuka/Tokyo
2002	Flower	Takarazuka/Tokyo
2004	Sky	National Tours
2013	Sky	Takarazuka/Tokyo
2014	Moon	Takarazuka/Tokyo
2014	Star	National Tours

Ōkunoshima and Japan's Chemical Arsenal: 1900-1945

Abstract

Up until 1944, Japan had been developing its own chemical weapons programme. This arsenal was primarily produced in what would become the country's largest facility, on the island of Ōkunoshima. Before the massive casualties inflicted on the continent, Japanese workers had been the first victims of the weapons of mass destruction they had been manufacturing. This paper seeks to provide a short overview of Japan's chemical arsenal, taking into account the workers' wartime conditions on the island. In the context of the rapid development of Western science at all costs, it will also highlight some of the structural deficiencies behind Japan's military endeavours, and their immediate consequences.

Keywords: Chemical warfare, history of sciences, Japan, logistics, World War II.

Between 1927 and 1944, the island of Ōkunoshima—located in Hiroshima prefecture—hosted Japan's largest chemical warfare facility. Production comprised both lethal and incapacitating agents, utilised almost exclusively against China during World War II. Under strict military supervision, Japanese volunteers and conscripts carried out the manufacturing process in dire conditions. Following prolonged exposure to poison gas with little or no protection, workers started developing diseases that would only become apparent throughout the 1950s and beyond, with physical, diplomatic and environmental consequences reaching far beyond the Japanese defeat.¹

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¹ The post-war history of the island is discussed in the author's forthcoming publication. *The research leading to these results has received funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (100011_169861) and from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC grant agreement n° [313382].*

This short overview seeks to introduce the pre-1945 history of the island within the framework of Japan's chemical weapons programme—using some of the most significant research conducted by Japanese scholars—to an English-speaking readership. Besides, Ōkunoshima and Japanese chemical warfare highlight several structural deficiencies; a 'cultural impairment'² that explains the Japanese defeat in a wider context. Among other things, the absence of logistics, institutional weaknesses and lack of cohesion between army and naval forces hampered troops on the battlefield as well as the manufacturing and use of gas more specifically. As a result, the chemical arsenal developed by Tokyo was a structural nightmare with long-lasting significance, both from human and political perspectives.

To be sure, Japanese historians have addressed the history of Ōkunoshima and chemical warfare. Although topics such as cooperation between the military and the private sector remain partially unclear,³ the post-war struggle of veterans to gain recognition and financial help has notably generated an abundant literature, in the forms of associative bulletins and pamphlets.

Outside the field of Japanese studies, however, the facility has been the object of sporadic mentions in chemical warfare-related publication,⁴ but has generally remained unnoticed due to its geographical proximity to the city of Hiroshima, a place shrouded in a worldwide-accepted narrative of 'national victimology'.⁵ The island's post-war image of 'Rabbit Island' (*usagi shima*), following its transformation into a holiday resort in 1963, also certainly contributed to the relative silence surrounding the history of Ōkunoshima.

In 1915, the German army proceeded with the first modern mass use of chemical weapons: during the second battle of Ypres, chlorine left fourteen thousand wounded and five thousand dead on the

² Mark Peattie, 'Japan's Defeat In The Second World War: The Cultural Dimension', in *War and Militarism in Modern Japan: Issues of History and Identity*, Guy Podoler (ed.), Leiden: Brill, 2009, p. 111-112.

³ Seiya Matsuno, *Nihon gun no doku gasu heiki*, Tokyo: Gaifūsha, 2005, p. 85.

⁴ For instance, Yuki Tanaka, 'Poison Gas, the Story Japan Would like to Forget', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 44, No. 8, 1988, p. 10-19. Walter E. Grunden, 'No Retaliation in Kind: Japanese Chemical Warfare Policy in World War II', in *One Hundred Years of Chemical Warfare: Research, Deployment, Consequences*, Bretislav Friedrich et al. (ed.), Cham: Springer, 2017, p. 259-71.

⁵ Takashi Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, Lisa Yoneyama, (eds.), *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(S)*, Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2001, p. 7.

Allied side. Immediately upon hearing the news, Koizumi Chikahiko⁶ pushed for Japan to develop its own chemical arsenal. Fascinated by science at large to strengthen the nation, the Army Medical College (*Rikugun gun'i gakkō*) surgeon had been studying asphyxiant gas since 1911. Under his guidance, a thirty-men research team was formed, resulting in the establishment of the Chemical Weapons Laboratory (*Kagaku heiki kenkyū shitsu*) in 1917, Japan's first endeavour dedicated exclusively to chemical warfare. The creation of this structure was further justified by fears that such weapons could potentially be used against the Japanese Siberian Expedition (1918-1922).

In the context of international cooperation to support the Russian White Army, both Koizumi and military attaché of the London embassy Hisamura Taneki were permitted to visit chemical weapon factories, in order to improve Japanese manufacturing capabilities.⁷ Hisamura's return to Japan in 1919 (Koizumi in 1922) resulted in the creation of the Army Institute for Scientific Research (*Rikugun kagaku kenkyūjo, kaken*), which was to lead to the full-speed development of a chemical arsenal as well as of protective equipment. Koizumi initially considered both defensive and offensive technologies an utmost priority, and the expansion of the *kaken* attests to this. Starting in November 1922, its second section was performing research autonomously; and by 1925, experiments with yperite (mustard gas) had already been conducted in Hokkaido, Kyushu and in Chiba prefecture.⁸

Foreign consultants were hired to speed up the process. Walter Metzner, a student of Fritz Haber—the 'father' of chemical weapons—taught Japanese army and navy scientists between 1925 and 1927. Collaboration with Japanese universities was also frequent. From the 1920s onward—although their exact roles are not clear—several distinguished academics took part in the development of a chemical programme in army laboratories.⁹ By 1945, fifty external consultants

⁶ Koizumi (1884–1945) played a key role in establishing the Ministry of Health (*Kōsei shō*) in 1938. In 1932, he placed Ishii Shirō (1892-1959) as head of what would later become Unit 731. Koizumi was appointed surgeon general in 1934, and committed suicide in 1945, in Kei'ichi Tsuneishi, Asano Tomizō, *Saikin sen butai to jiketsu shita futari no igakusha*, Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1982.

⁷ Kei'ichi Tsuneishi, 'C. Koizumi: As a Promoter of the Ministry of Health and Welfare and an Originator of the BCW Research Program', *Historia Scientiarum*, No. 26, March 1984), p. 95-113.

⁸ Haruyoshi Hasegawa (ed.), *Nihon rikugun kayaku shi*, Tokyo: Ōhikai, 1969, p. 187.

⁹ Tanaka, 'Nihon doku gasu sen no rekishi', p. 212.

from all major academies were working with the military, encouraged by wages up to twenty per cent higher than those of their colleagues.¹⁰ As the world was disarming after the end of World War I, Japan was closing in on the expansion of its chemical warfare programme.

The majority of studies on Japanese chemical weapons focus on the Japanese Imperial Army (JIA). However, the navy developed a similar programme. Research started in 1922 with much more humble beginnings: the study section of the Tokyo naval arsenal consisted of a single officer. Chemical weapons were never deployed at sea during World War I, which partially explains why the navy lagged behind. Moreover, because of the deep rivalry between the heirs of the Meiji-era forefathers of the army (Chōshū) and of the navy (Satsuma), Hisamura's plea for development was met with reluctance. The programme also lacked Koizumi's leadership, and no specific individual seems to have played a similar role in the navy.

The Navy Institute for Technological Research (*Kaigun gijutsu kenkyūjo, giken*) opened in May 1923, but was short-lived. Destroyed by the Kantō Earthquake in September, it was not resurrected before 1930. Furthermore, upon hearing that a phosgene tank leak in 1928 had injured over three hundred civilians in Hamburg, the laboratory was moved from Tokyo to the coastal town of Hiratsuka (Kanagawa prefecture). Research and production were oriented towards general technical supplies such as fire extinguishers, incendiary bombs and torpedoes,¹¹ and the institute acquired a section dedicated solely to the study of chemical warfare in 1934, by which time similar testing was already well under way in the army.

Until the end of the war, the *giken* would continually waver between independent research, rivalry and collaboration with the army. Experiments were occasionally conducted jointly in Narashino (Chiba prefecture), Ōkunoshima and Manchuria, but the *kaken* only allowed the presence of a single navy officer during tests. Similarly, only one army representative was permitted on-board ship during manoeuvres. Overall, mutual distrust and contention seem to have plagued the development of a common programme, just as they prevented the creation of a unified military high command in the larger picture.

¹⁰ Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Doku gasu sen to nihon gun*, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004, p. 46.

¹¹ Harushi Nakane, Michiyo Arakawa, 'Shōgen kaigun doku gasu kōjō no hibi', *Chūkiren*, July 2010, p. 50-59.

Japanese gas manufacturing was initially hampered by a lack of technical abilities, and several industrial conglomerates, commissioned by the government, stepped in to boost the process. Both army and navy manufactured their own gas, but raw materials were mostly provided by civilian companies, without which large-scale production would have been impossible.¹²

Mass-production was first envisaged in 1928 and to this end, Ōkunoshima had already been selected in 1927.¹³ Firstly, the seventy-hectare island, situated forty-three miles southeast of the city of Hiroshima, appeared safer than the Kantō area after the 1923 earthquake destroyed most of the military facilities in the Japanese capital. Secondly, the insular nature of Ōkunoshima predictably guaranteed a certain degree of secrecy. Yet, its proximity to mainland Japan, only fifteen minutes by boat from the coastal town of Tadanoumi, ensured convenient access.

Thirdly, Japanese prefectures were competing to attract military structures in a context of economic crisis. Because his son was head of the Tadanoumi council, Mochizuki Keisuke, Minister of Telecommunications, suggested the location to his friend, Army Minister Shirakawa Yoshinori.¹⁴

Fourthly, the island was equipped with pre-existing military structures, following the plan of the French Military Mission to Japan (1872-1880). By 1902, the island – and several others nearby – had been turned into a fortification network (*geiyo yōsai*) to protect the military bases of Hiroshima (army) and Kure (navy).

Fifthly, Ōkunoshima was blessed with enough running water to give it autonomy. Thanks to its scarce population – three families and two small fisheries – requisition and relocation could be arranged in a discreet and prompt manner. All were moved to Tadanoumi with a compensation of 150 yen,¹⁵ and with construction complete in May

¹² Tanaka, 'Nihon doku gasu sen no rekishi'. 216, Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Doku gasu sen to nihon gun*, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004, p. 14.

¹³ Gunjika, 'Rikugun Zōheishō Kagaku Heiki Seizō Kikan Haichi Ni Kan Suru Ken', 1927, Rikugunshō mitsu dainikki S2-1-9, The National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense, <https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp>.

¹⁴ Tanaka, 'Poison Gas, the Story Japan Would like to Forget', p. 12.

¹⁵ The loss of fishing rights was compensated in 1932, Rikugun shō, 'Gyogyōken Sonshitsu Hoshō No Ken', 8 September 1932, Rikugun shō rikumanfu dainikki, pp. 7-40-49, The National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense, <https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp>. 4.

1929, Ōkunoshima officially became the ‘Army Arsenal’s Tadanoumi Weapons Manufacture’ (*Rikugun heiki heishōka kōshō Tadanoumi heiki seizōjo*).

The inauguration of the complex triggered an ‘Ōkuno boom’. Jobs were scarce in the region, and over six thousand applications were received, for eighty positions initially available. Working in an army factory was not only appealing to unskilled workers. The formation for qualified personnel, not unlike that of civil servant, took three years of unpaid work, but guaranteed a stable position as engineer or technician. Younger workers were also lured by the promise of material luxuries otherwise unavailable, such as coffee, sugar, or sweets.¹⁶

Initially, following Koizumi’s interest in the reinforcement of the nation by technical enterprises, workers were not solely manufacturing gas for offensive purposes. Production of insecticides such as *sairōmu* (potassium cyanide), a descendant of prussic acid, began in 1930.¹⁷ In the late nineteenth - early twentieth centuries, science in Japan was understood as a means to catch up with the West and finalise national maturity. Koizumi emphasised this perspective as early as 1925:

‘Poison gases are very fearful weapons. But we should not forget they take an important cultural role in peacetime. For example, chlorine is a necessity as a disinfectant for water supply and soil and its rarefied gas is recommended as a method to cure bronchitis. [...] Phosgene is necessary for dyes industry, and it is well known that chloropicrin is used to expel harmful insects from rice’.¹⁸

¹⁶ Eiko Takeda, *Chizu kara kesareta shima: Ōkunoshima doku gasu kōjō*, Tokyo: Domes shuppan, 1987, p. 94.

¹⁷ In Germany too, the process for extracting nitrates was used to manufacture fertilisers and explosives, in Kim Coleman, *A History of Chemical Warfare*, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 16.

¹⁸ Kei’ichi Tsuneishi, ‘C. Koizumi: As a Promoter of the Ministry of Health and Welfare and an Originator of the BCW Research Program’, *Historia Scientiarum*, No. 26, March 1984, p. 101.

Strong and clean bodies also allowed for an efficient army, and one of the fundamental causes of this concern can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. During the first Sino-Japanese war (1894-95), disease-induced casualties were ten times higher than fatalities inflicted by the enemy, and over twenty per cent of troops deployed during the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) were afflicted by beriberi, which was at the time thought to be of bacterial origin.

Conversely, Ōkunoshima was primarily a military factory, and rapidly became a mere first step. The *kaken*, responsible for the development of gas warfare, was further expanded in 1941, and employed 715 individuals with an annual budget of 2.9 million yen (1945).¹⁹ These developments led to the launch of formative procedures in the JIA, to instruct selected troops in the use of gas weapons.

The Narashino Army School (*Rikugun Narashino gakkō*) specifically opened to that aim in August 1933. Until 1945, it provided training to an ever-increasing number of men – from 225 in 1933 to 1,371 in 1941.²⁰ The school also coordinated joint tests between the Kwangtung Army chemical weapons section, the Army Medical College, and the chemical section of the China Expeditionary Army (*Shina haken gun kagaku bu*). Trials were conducted on animals, and later on Chinese and Russian prisoners, but starting in 1934, troops were also experimented upon: given various levels of protection, they were exposed to yperite, with occasional fatal outcomes.²¹ Between 1925 and 1945, 41 large-scale tests were conducted all over the empire (Taiwan in 1928, Korea in 1930)²² with gas manufactured on Ōkunoshima.

On the island, the number of buildings doubled between 1929 and 1932, and new quarters were inaugurated in 1939. A year later, the factory was incorporated into the second Tokyo arsenal (*Tōkyō dai ni rikugun zō heishō Tadanoumi seizō jo*), under direct supervision from the Ministry of the Army. In 1933, the neighbouring islands of Awashima, Ōmishima, as well as army barracks in Tadanoumi were converted into

¹⁹ Kei'ichi Tsuneishi, 'The Research Guarded by Military Secrecy', *Historia Scientiarum*, No. 30, March 1986, p. 81.

²⁰ Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Doku gasu sen to nihon gun*, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004, p. 41.

²¹ Gō Miyatake, *Shōgun No Yuigon: Endō Saburō Nikki*, Tokyo: Mainichi shinbunsha, 61, p. 77.

²² Yoshiaki Yoshimi, Seiya Matsuno, *Jūgo nen sensō gokuhi shiryō shū*, Tokyo: Fuji shuppan, 1997, p.14.

warehouses for toxic gas waiting to be transported to the Sone factory. This new plant – set up in Kitakyushu and completed in 1937 – was chosen because of its proximity to the Kokura arsenal, which provided empty shells and bombs, subsequently filled locally with gas before shipping to the continent.

Likewise, the number of employees augmented exponentially. There were 116 staff in December 1933, and after increasing – from 194 to 1,009 – as Japan extended its offensive against China, the number of personnel had reached five thousand by the end of 1937. Five hundred more employees were working in the Sone factory by 1943. In total, the island employed more than 6,800 citizens over a period of sixteen years of activity. In 1929, Japan was making four different types of gas and by 1937; six other varieties were produced on a regular basis.²³ Based on German classification and for secrecy purposes, all were codenamed with colours.²⁴ In 1945, the military controlled twenty-seven factories and research facilities, of which Ōkunoshima had become the largest. If chemical weapons were developed under the seal of confidentiality, they had also become a symbol of imperial pride, unequivocally integrated into the national polity narrative (*kokutai*). The first gas mask was codenamed ‘87’, because it was produced in 1927, equivalent to year 2587 of the Japanese imperial chronology (*kōki*).²⁵ The same year, financial compensation was implemented for troops injured by chemical weapons.²⁶

Similarly, gas was presented as a ‘humane weapon’ (*jindō heiki*). A 1936 military textbook highlights the ability of this new technology to diminish the enemy’s fighting capacity. Trainees were taught that the widespread use of chemical ammunition, just like that of landmines, was the future of combat since gas – men were told – was not lethal. Thanks to what was believed to be an extremely low casualty

²³ Phosgene (blood agent), phenacyl chloride (lachrymatory agent), benzyl bromide (lachrymatory agent), and arsenic trichloride (lewisite component), followed by diphenylcyanoarsine (vomiting agent, 1933), lewisite (blister agent, 1933), French and German yperite (blister agents, 1936), frost-free yperite (1937) and prussic acid (blood agent, 1938).

²⁴ White (fumigants), brown (blood agents), red (vomiting agents), green (lachrymatory agents), yellow (blister agents), blue (pulmonary agents).

²⁵ Matsuno. 31.

²⁶ Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Doku gasu sen to nihon gun*, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004, p. 45.

rate, chemical warfare was 'the weapon of the Emperor's army' (*kōgun heiki*)²⁷, the product of an advanced technology that did not exterminate. This eagerness even extended to the general public, as articles written by military officers started to appear in popular science magazines. The April 1933 issue of *Science Illustrated* (*Kagaku gahō*) featured a cover picture of a gas mask, and an article requesting a gas mask association.²⁸ A chemical arsenal was the quintessence of a 'modern' army, a showcase at the crossroads between science, discipline and humanity.

Statistics confirm this trend. In 1925, Japan only manufactured a hundred kilos of phosgene, and the rest was imported from the *Société chimique des usines du Rhône*. In 1929, production had risen to three tons yearly. As Japan became engulfed in what would soon become total war, combat gas seemed to offer a way out of the impasse. Between 1936 and 1937, yperite production went up from fifteen to 125 tons yearly, skyrocketing to 1,138 tons in 1941.²⁹ Between 1931 and 1945, 6,616 tons of gas was produced on Ōkunoshima.³⁰ In total, the JIA manufactured over two million shells and ammunitions containing lethal gas, and just fewer than five million hand grenades filled with non-lethal agents. In contrast, Japanese Imperial Navy production never exceeded 760 tons for seventy thousand shells. No gas was ever made specifically for naval forces on the island.

To be sure, the destructive capacity of the Japanese chemical arsenal is not to be denied.³¹ However, total production was five times lower than that of the United Kingdom, ten times lower than that of Germany, and twenty times lower than that of the United States. Furthermore, Japanese production pales in significance when compared to World War I figures. Until 1945, the empire produced 2,240 tons of blister agents, whereas Germany used just short of 2,500 tons in Ypres over ten days in 1917.³² Statistics vary according to sources, but until 1918, it

²⁷ *Kagaku heiki no riron to jissai*, 1936, in Kamata, 'Tsūfun no genjō wo aruku kyū nihon gun no doku gasu wo seisō shite ita Hiroshima', p. 32.

²⁸ Hiromi Mizuno, *Science for the Empire: Scientific Nationalism in Modern Japan*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, p. 156.

²⁹ *Rikugun zō hei shō shi* (Tokyo: 1941) in Tatsumi, *Kakusaretekita 'Hiroshima': doku gasu shima kara no kokuhatsu*, p. 171.

³⁰ Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Doku gasu sen to nihon gun*, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004, p. 149.

³¹ For yperite, exposure to 2.7 milligrams (about 1 teaspoon) for thirty minutes is fatal, in 'The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health', Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed 15 October 2017, <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/index.htm>.

³² Tsuneishi, 'Tokushū kenkyū kaigun no kagaku sen kenkyū kaihatu shi', p. 196.

is estimated that the Great Powers produced approximately 190,000 tons of gas, causing 1.3 million casualties. By the end of the war, the United States was producing 140 tons a day, an amount greater than the production of Germany, Great Britain, and France combined.³³ The appeal of gas warfare was obvious if one considers that a ton of yperite caused 36.4 casualties, against 4.9 victims for regular ammunition.³⁴

For the JIA, chemical weapons represented a dilemma. Following the disastrous Siberian Expedition, Army General Staff (*sanbō honbu*) envisaged an offensive, but Army Minister Tanaka Giichi himself buried the idea for humanitarian reasons.³⁵ All major countries were nonetheless developing a similar arsenal. The 1925 Geneva Protocol only applied to countries that signed and ratified the convention, a nuance that undoubtedly reinforced Tokyo's fickleness *vis-à-vis* a document it would only ratify in 1970. It merely prohibited the first use of chemical and bacteriological arms but did not prevent retaliation-in-kind. Moreover, the protocol did not regulate the production, testing and stockpiling of gas, nor did it apply to internal or civil conflicts.

Consequently, the first recorded use of gas by Japan can be traced back to the colonial context: during the 1930 Wushe rebellion (*Musha jiken*) in Taiwan, imperial troops bombed the rebels with prussic acid, phosgene and yperite. The decision, never sanctioned by Tokyo, was taken by the Japanese garrison stationed in the colony. Similarly, the Ministry of the Army authorised riot control agents in 1932 in the puppet state of Manchukuo, but forbade deadly gas at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, for fear of international repercussions.

The year 1937 marked the start of the widespread usage of non-lethal agents, but it is estimated that gas (fatal or not) was used over two thousand times against Chinese troops and civilians alike.³⁶ Particularly

³³ Paul F. Walker, 'A Century of Chemical Warfare: Building a World Free of Chemical Weapons', in *One Hundred Years of Chemical Warfare: Research, Deployment, Consequences*, Bretislav Friedrich et al. (ed.), Cham: Springer, 2017, pp. 379–400.

³⁴ Ramesh Chandra Gupta (ed.), *Handbook of Toxicology of Chemical Warfare Agents*, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2009, p. 18.

³⁵ The first planned use of gas (non-lethal) dates back to the attempted military coup of February 26, 1936. The rebels surrendered before gas was fired.

³⁶ The use of vomiting and lachrymatory agents is difficult to prove and did not necessarily result in lethal outcomes. Estimates vary but some mention eighty thousand victims, in Yamauchi, 'Doku gasu seizō kōjō ato ga tō kagai sekinin: Ōkunoshima doku gasu kōjō ato', pp. 35–36.

between December 1938 and July 1940, Japan made regular use of deadly agents in China – which did not possess the technical ability to retaliate in kind – possibly following the League of Nations' feeble condemnation of the Italian use of gas during the Second Abyssinian War.³⁷ It is however certain that chemical weapons were used with the emperor's approval, and that he was fully aware of the existence of the programme. In 1929, Hirohito visited the Army Medical College, where Koizumi himself lectured him on chemical warfare protection.³⁸

Utilisation of chemical agents against American, Commonwealth and Soviet troops was briefly envisaged in 1944 as a last resort measure.³⁹ To be sure, tear gas was sporadically used, notably against British troops in February 1942,⁴⁰ however, during his term as Prime Minister (1942–44), Tōjō Hideki vehemently opposed the use of lethal gas against non-Asian opponents.⁴¹ Ultimately, following Roosevelt's declarations of 1942 and 1943 threatening to use similar ordnances should imperial troops fire their own, Army General Staff prohibited the use of all chemical shells on July 15, 1944 and withdrew their stocks from frontline storage facilities.

As Japan was plunging into total war, conditions increasingly became tougher on the home front and Ōkunoshima was no exception. The Army General Staff enforced absolute secrecy. Workers, originally all of them volunteers, were hired as military auxiliaries, and the manufacturing process as well as the comings and goings of staff were monitored day and night by the Japanese *gendarmierie* (*kempeitai*). Employees were forbidden to discuss their work under threat of being charged with treason. In 1935, friendship groups and associations were disbanded. The following year, trade unions were prohibited locally, and by 1937, the island had been removed from Japanese official maps. The windows of regional trains with a view of the coastline were obstructed with wooden planks to prevent passengers from seeing the factory.

³⁷ Matsuno, *Nihon gun no doku gasu heiki*, p. 237.

³⁸ *Rikugun gun i gakkō 50 nen shi*, Fuji shuppan [1988] (Tokyo: Rikugun gun i gakkō, 1936), p. 138. See notably Yoshiaki Yoshimi and Toshiya Ikō, *Nana san ichi butai to tennō rikugun chūō*, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995; Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, 1st edition, New York: Harper Collins, 2000.

³⁹ Tatsuya Yamamoto, Daisuke Kusanagi, *Nihon no kagaku heiki I, hōheiyō gasudan no hyōshiki to kōzō*, Gifu: Zen nippon gunsō kenkyūkai, 2010, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Yoshimi and Matsuno, *Jūgo nen sensō gokuhi shiryō shū*, p. 391.

⁴¹ 'Interrogation of General Hideki TOJO, 2 April 1946', p. 2, disc 3, in Shōji Kondō, *Nana san ichi butai, saikin sen shiryō shūsei*, 8 vols, Tokyo: Kashiwa shobō, 2003.

Until 1935, manufacturing was typically limited to two or three months per year, with shifts of thirty to sixty minutes, but the JIA subsequently required staff to work in non-stop shifts of twelve hours. Former employees invoke two main reasons for their relatively short stay on the island. Firstly, most were injured by gas briefly after their arrival, and upon recovery, were immediately sent to the front or discharged. Secondly, with the army in constant need of men, even those who had managed to avoid injuries were shipped to the battlefield, to be progressively replaced by children and teenagers.

In 1937, the first high-school girls had been recruited locally to manufacture vomiting agents and self-igniting smoke devices. Following the creation of the National Patriotic Labour Corps (*Kokumin kinrou houkoku kyouryoku*) in 1941, over three hundred girls and fifty boys were forcibly enrolled on Ōkunoshima. After the start of the Pacific War, the island's training centre was mostly recruiting from schools in Tadanoumi and neighbouring areas, and by 1945, a total of 1,084 youngsters (aged thirteen - sixteen) had served in the factory.⁴²

Before mobilisation, economic concerns had been the primary motive to work on Ōkunoshima. In 1935, a carpenter earned less than one yen per day. Conversely, a worker manufacturing chemical weapons received a minimum of one yen and ten sen daily,⁴³ and was sometimes paid overtime as high as sixty per cent, plus a yearly bonus. The possibility of postponing – or avoiding – being sent to the front also pushed many to apply regardless of the dangers involved.

A small minority of qualified technicians aside, employees were completely ignorant of the finality of the substances they were manufacturing. A teenage girl at the time later recalled: 'I had heard my parents say that Ōkunoshima was the island of toxic gas, but I did not know what a toxic gas was.'⁴⁴ They were simply told to contribute to 'victory',⁴⁵ and the *kempeitai*'s constant surveillance ensured no one would reveal details pertaining to the larger purpose of their labour. This sense of forced secrecy endured well beyond 1945 and was to become a major hindrance for the physicians' initial diagnosis of the strains afflicting former workers.

⁴² Yukutake, *Hitori hitori no Ōkunoshima: doku gasu kōjō kara no shōgen*, p.114.

⁴³ Tanaka, 'Poison Gas, the Story Japan Would like to Forget', pp. 14-15.

⁴⁴ Takeda, *Chizu kara kesareta shima: Ōkunoshima doku gasu kōjō*, p. 87.

⁴⁵ Yasusaburō Sugi, 'Seto Naikai No Doku Gasu Shima', *Bungei Shunjū* 5, May 1956, pp. 238-251.

The 1944 decision to stop using chemical ammunition did not signify the end of forced labour on Ōkunoshima. In July, production was switched from gas to explosives, and until February 1945, children nationwide manufactured balloon bombs (*fusen bakudan/fugō*). These incendiary devices attached to spheres made of paper and konjac fibre were filled with hydrogen, and sent afloat to detonate on the United States Pacific coast.⁴⁶

Logistics play a major part in understanding not only pre-war and wartime Ōkunoshima, but also the Japanese armed forces to a larger extent. Scholars have long recognised the multiple logistics failures of Japan's military, as well as complete disregard for human life, factors responsible for innumerable casualties.⁴⁷ Insufficient intelligence and scarcity of protective and medical supplies were recurring factors behind lost battles. The gas masks of the JIA are a case in point. They were completely ineffective against cyanogen chloride; a gas that the United States envisaged using, had the invasion of mainland Japan been necessary in 1945. In most cases, only officers were offered such a device, and many turned out to be defective. Soldiers lucky enough to be equipped with one seldom received training for adequate use. With nine hundred thousand masks and thirty thousand protective suits for 2.25 million men,⁴⁸ protection towards the end of the war was even more mediocre, to say the least, a situation partially aggravated by the belief that the fighting spirit of troops mattered more than their equipment.⁴⁹

Ōkunoshima was plagued by similar inadequacies, and Japan's stalemate on the continent sounded the death knell of the development of protective measures. Gas had to be produced rapidly, regardless of human and material costs. With the exception of qualified technicians, staff was put to work after four days of elementary training. No manuals were available, and blister agents' decontamination procedures were only incompletely described in a short text issued as late as 1937. Access to protection was also rudimentary, at best. Equipped with

⁴⁶ Ross Allen Coen, *Fu-Go: The Curious History of Japan's Balloon Bomb Attack on America*, Studies in War, Society, and the Military, Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.

⁴⁷ For instance, Jōji Hayashi, *Taiheiyō sensō no logistics*, Tokyo: Gakken publishing, 2013; Akira Fujiwara, *Uejini Shita Eirei Tachi*, Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 2001.

⁴⁸ Takeda, *Chizu kara kesareta shima: Ōkunoshima doku gasu kōjō*, p. 167.

⁴⁹ Peattie, 'Japan's Defeat In The Second World War: The Cultural Dimension', p. 113.

parakeets in cages, the workers' only chance to avoid a gas leak was to run away, should the birds drop dead. Initially, employees were provided with rubber suits they nicknamed 'octopus' (*taco*),⁵⁰ but overalls were impractical in the extreme summer heat, and did not effectively protect from gas. Besides, a large part of the workforce had to remove their gloves to carry out delicate tasks, and protective clothing was already in short supply as early as 1941, forcing personnel to rely on paper masks.

In the context of severe *kempeitai* surveillance, adults and children alike were naturally subjected to psychological and physical disregard. Testimonies recall the case of a boy, injured and hospitalized during gas production, whose parents received six daily visits from the *kempeitai* for weeks, to ensure the victim would come back to work upon recovery.⁵¹ Similarly, most teenagers and women were unable to use the gas masks provided. Not only were they too large, but their poor quality and inadequate shape also prevented them from adhering to the faces.

The primitive configuration of the factory was equally a source of danger. Tear gas solidified in the conduits had to be scraped off manually. Tanks were leaking. Storage containers filled with tons of blister agent were stowed outdoors with bamboo mesh as the sole protection. Gas infiltrated through clothes and buildings, contaminating even toilet paper and lunch boxes. Skin and respiratory diseases were the most common, but eyes, genitals and internal organs also suffered frequent damage.

Ōkunoshima was of course equipped with a dispensary, but medical staff was incapable of handling respiratory and internal injuries. Decontamination was limited to applying bandages and talcum, occasionally followed by a bath. Nurses were instructed to alleviate pain by prompting patients to keep in mind the suffering of soldiers of the battlefield. For extreme cases, an average of three to four weeks rest was granted, but always running at full capacity, the facility's twenty beds were insufficient for a daily intake of seventy patients.⁵² Upgraded to

⁵⁰ The name refers to the round, ocular spaces of the gas mask, reminiscent of the cephalopod's body.

⁵¹ Yukutake, *Hitori hitori no Ōkunoshima: doku gasu kōjō kara no shōgen*, p. 153.

⁵² Tomoji Tatsumi, 'Nihon gun doku gasu iki dan mondai', *Kinyōbi* 46, December 1996, p. 16–17.

a military hospital in 1937, it was never able to treat the ever-growing number of injuries that stemmed from the expansion of the facility. In their haste to develop a chemical arsenal, Japanese armed forces (and companies)⁵³ also neglected the larger-picture infrastructure. Gas was conveyed by ship to the Japanese mainland and subsequently loaded on trains, before reaching the Sone factory by horse coach, a process that amplified the likelihood of incidents. At the end of the war, the extreme scarcity of resources jeopardised production even further: workers started stealing and selling the factory's acid-resistant pipes and remaining parts. By 1945, Ōkunoshima had been dubbed 'treasure island' by the local workforce.⁵⁴

In stark contrast to British and American equipment and policies,⁵⁵ this 'cultural impairment' was also observable throughout the empire. To be sure, following the 1931 invasion of Manchuria, military authorities advocated the development of civilian-use gas masks as part of the general air-raids defence strategy. However, masks were not issued freely, and with inflation rising, such equipment was simply out of reach. The Ministry of Home Affairs' efforts to produce cheaper versions also turned out to be a failure, since masks were simply ineffective. As an emergency measure, the *kaken* proposed that civilians use bamboo tubes lined with cloth and coal to cover the mouth, block their nose with clothes pins, and protect their eyes with swimming goggles should chemical weapons be used against the population.⁵⁶

The Japanese surrender did not bring about the end of the logistics nightmare. Casualties – sometimes fatal – were rife for the workforce in charge of the post-war sanitisation of the island, and deprived from any form of protective gear to handle yperite-loaded bombs, peacetime did not lessen the severity of their injuries.⁵⁷ No clear-cut line divides the wartime and early post-war experiences on Ōkunoshima. Seven decades after the defeat, the ecological, political and social consequences of Japan's chemical warfare endeavours still

⁵³ Matsuno, *Nihon gun no doku gasu heiki*, p. 114.

⁵⁴ Yūji Okano, ed., *Doku gasu tō: Ōkunoshima doku gasu kōjō sono higai to kagai*, Hiroshima: Hiroshima heiwa kyōiku kenkyūjo, 1987. 11. Kikumatsu Inaba, "'Daitōa sensō" no tsumeato Ōkunoshima no jittai', in *Doku gasu no shima*, Higuchi Kenji, Tokyo: Kobushi shobō, 2015, p. 188–99.

⁵⁵ Kim Coleman, *A History of Chemical Warfare*, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 54–55, 59.

⁵⁶ Matsuno, *Nihon gun no doku gasu heiki*, p. 118.

⁵⁷ *Teijin no ayumi*, Vol. 5, Teijin, 1970, p. 194–217.

haunt the area. As late as 2009, cans containing vomiting agents were drifting ashore around Ōkunoshima. Post-war sightings and explosions of gas canisters also afflicted the rest of the archipelago. A 2003 survey indicated that 822 such occurrences had been listed in twenty-two prefectures since 1945.⁵⁸ Countrywide, over two thousand people still suffer from gas-related wounds,⁵⁹ to say nothing of explosions and casualties throughout East Asia.

Ultimately, Ōkunoshima represents a noteworthy case of micro history. Largely absent from the national storyline, its narrative was originally a marginalised one. Recognition of the workers' afflictions was hindered by the geographical location of the island, since any mention of wartime trauma in Hiroshima prefecture was systematically associated with atomic victimhood. The situation was further exacerbated by Tokyo's refusal to fully acknowledge the existence and use of its chemical arsenal until the 1980s. Historical accounts specifically centred on the island would only start to emerge in the 1970s, based both on testimonies and on the work of historians in the larger context of war crimes studies.

As an instance of the weaponisation of science, Ōkunoshima mirrors the Meiji era rapid industrialisation of Japan. In line with the preoccupation to catch up with and integrate Western technology at all costs, the island is a pertinent example of the joint involvement of the State and the industrial sector in times of war and peace. It had become impossible to separate 'warlike purposes from peaceful purposes',⁶⁰ and the late nineteenth century slogan urging to 'enrich the country and fortify the army' (*fukoku kyōhei*) clearly illustrates this aspect. Originally preoccupied with the constitution of efficient, healthy armed forces by scientific means, the military elites favoured policies that eventually brought about opposite results, notably through the elaboration of a chemical arsenal.

As a gas factory, the island verifies both the limited scope and the rapid development of Japanese chemical weapons. Although

⁵⁸ Kankyōshō, 'Shōwa 48 Nen No "Kyū Gun Doku Gasu Tama Nado No Zenkoku Chōsa" Forō-Appu Chōsa Hōkoku Sho', Tokyo: Kankyōshō, 31 March 2003, <https://www.env.go.jp/chemi/report/h15-02/index.html.kan.>, p. 22-43.

⁵⁹ 'Hiroshima Peace Media Center', Hiroshima Peace Media Center, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=52294>, (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁶⁰ Kim Coleman, *A History of Chemical Warfare*, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 60.

Germany never used poison gas on the battlefield during World War II, it had twenty factories, and a monthly production capacity of twelve thousand tons of gas.⁶¹ In contrast, Japan's twenty-seven facilities could only manufacture 2,700 tons per month. The amount of Japanese gas may have been insignificant on a global scale, however, compared to similar endeavours worldwide, Tokyo's arsenal was not only a latecomer created with the most haste, but also the only one ever put to use during World War II.

Perhaps above all, Ōkunoshima represents both the foundation and the consequences of Japan's military structural deficiencies until 1945. Stuck in an inextricable conflict, it never managed to develop new gas-related technology. Emphasis was put on the production and use of weapons regardless of the human factor. This policy would later dramatically impact not only the country's landscape but also its war memories, and spark a national debate on the wartime responsibilities of the military, scientific and industrial elites.

⁶¹ Kim Coleman, *A History of Chemical Warfare*, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 62.

Visualising Poetry in Urban Space: The Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard

Abstract

Literature in general and poetry in particular play a key role in the preservation and transmission of the cultural code. In turn, the cultural code can act to unify a nation. This potential is sometimes used by commercial organisations in socially oriented advertising.

A very interesting example of such advertising is the Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard, which originated in 1991 and is located on the Kyobo Life Building in Seoul, Republic of Korea (RK). At the beginning of each season, new poetic lines appear on the placard. These poetic lines are selected by a special committee as the most consistent with the spirit of the time and to meet the socio-psychological needs of the South Korean people. Using a comparative approach, the author analyses poetic stanzas from the Gwanghwamun Placard, which are remarkable in terms of their implicit content and design, to reveal the “isotopic lines” of the project and contribute to a better understanding of the cultural code of the society toward which the project is oriented.

Keywords: Cultural code, Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard, Korean poetry, social advertising, urban space.

Literature in general and poetry in particular play a key role in the preservation and transmission of the cultural code. In turn, the cultural code can act to unify a nation. Maybe that is why during difficult socio-political times, people – caught in a whirlpool of uncertain reality trying to find solid ground – often turn their attention to literature, specifically to classic literature because it is the bearer of eternal values. This potential is knowingly used by authorities and public organisations in various projects (i.e. reading of famous texts by people on the streets for TV broadcasts) and, sometimes, by the commercial organisations in socially oriented advertising.

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A very interesting example of such advertising is the Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard on the Kyobo Life Building in Seoul, Republic of Korea (RK). This Placard, which originated in 1991, was initially designed to enhance the company's image. However, soon it acquired a social significance on a national scale. For more than a quarter of a century, at the beginning of each season, new poetic lines, which are selected by a special committee as most consistent with the spirit of time and meeting the socio-psychological needs of the South Korean people, appear on this Placard. The ideas, which are concentrated in these highly metaphorical lines from various poems that are well known in the RK, are not always clear to representatives of other cultures, who may only understand Korea superficially.

Why did this project become so important to the Korean people, men and women, young and old? We can assume that the reason lies in the dual visual-verbal nature of the Placard. It is commonplace to talk about "the predominance of visual forms of media, communication, and information in the postmodern world".¹ N. Mirzoeff writes: "Work and leisure are increasingly centered on visual media, from computers to Digital Video Disks. Human experience is now more visual and visualised than ever before..."² Has there been a cultural shift from the verbal and textual to the visual in the postmodern era, or are the written, textual, and visual systems just undergoing a reconfiguration? We see that visual culture is becoming "all-inclusive". W.J.T. Mitchell writes about "the erasure of boundaries between art and non-art, or visual and verbal media"³ in the postmodern era. He states: "Visual culture implies that the difference between a literary text and a painting is a non-problem. Words and images dissolve into undifferentiated representation."⁴

However, for many Asians, such an attitude towards this matter could be likened to reinventing the wheel. In the country where for centuries calligraphy, the art of writing, was the visual art form prized

¹ N. Balkir, 'Visual Culture in Art Teacher Education: A Turkish Case', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2010, p. 609.

² N. Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London & New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 1.

³ W.J.T. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing: a Critique of Visual Culture', *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 2002, p. 165.

⁴ W.J.T. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing: a Critique of Visual Culture', *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 2002, p. 169.

above all others, the Poetry Placard project can be considered as an attempt to revive the role of the “written word” in the postmodern society, now focusing on Hangul texts. Maybe this very (post)modern and at the same time very traditional visual-verbal unity of the placards was the main element that fascinated the bearers of the Korean cultural code.

First, we should say that the concept of “cultural code” itself is open to discussion. The term “code”, as used in semiotics, evinces a fundamental ambiguity that is inherited from the lexical meaning of the word.⁵ In Collins English Dictionary, we see the following definitions of the word “code”: 1) “a set of rules (laws)...” (as it is used in jurisprudence), 2) “a system of replacing the words in a message with other words or symbols...” (for example, “Morse code”), 3) “a group of numbers or letters which is used to identify something”, 4) “any system of signs and symbols that has meanings”, and also 5) “genetic code, the information, which determines the structure and function of cells, and characteristics of all living things”. However, none of the above-mentioned definitions fully describe the phenomenon that the semioticians are talking about.

R. Jakobson was one of the first semioticians to adopt the term “code” from communication theory. In 1953, after reflecting on the correlation between culture and language, he declared: “The most essential problem for speech analysis is that of the code common to both sender and receiver and underlying the exchange of messages”.⁶ Developing this thought, U. Eco stated that communication, including the processes of “signification” and “interpretation”,⁷ is made possible by the existence of codes. For Y. Lotman, the term “code” carried a less all-encompassing idea of “a system without memory”.⁸

⁵ Winfried Nöth, ‘Human Communication from the Semiotic Perspective’ in *Theories of Information, Communication and Knowledge: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, F. Ibecwe SanJuan, T.M. Dousa (eds.), Dordrecht, Heidelberg, New York, London: Springer, 2014, p. 106.

⁶ Roman Jakobson, ‘Results of a Joint Conference of Anthropologists and Linguists’ in *Selected Writings: Word and Language, Vol.2*, Roman Jakobson. Hague: Mouton, 1971, p. 558-559.

⁷ See Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976; Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

⁸ See Yury M. Lotman, *Culture and Explosion* (Tr. by W. Clark), Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton, 2009.

These speculations cannot completely satisfy working interpreters (translators) and language teachers, like myself, for whom it would be more logical to understand “cultural code” as a multilevel dynamic system. This system lets us see, interpret and translate into other languages the meaning that is inherent in the message addressed to the carrier of such a code. The levels that are available for familiarisation to the non-carriers of the code can be identified as the following: 1) a common knowledge about the world, including natural objects and cultural objects, 2) a mentality as a way of perceiving the world and ourselves in it based on some values and anything else, 3) a linguistic picture of the world that implies existence of certain “concepts”, 4) an involvement in various discourses, 5) collective memory, 6) steady symbols, etc. Thus, it becomes clear that to more or less completely understand the text of a foreign cultural code, it is necessary for the interpreter to sufficiently widen his/her “semantic horizon” (the term by G. Gadamer) so that it can “fuse” with the “semantic horizon” of the text.⁹

The identification of the above-mentioned levels and connections between them is a task that is no less intricate than revealing of the South Koreans’ cultural code.

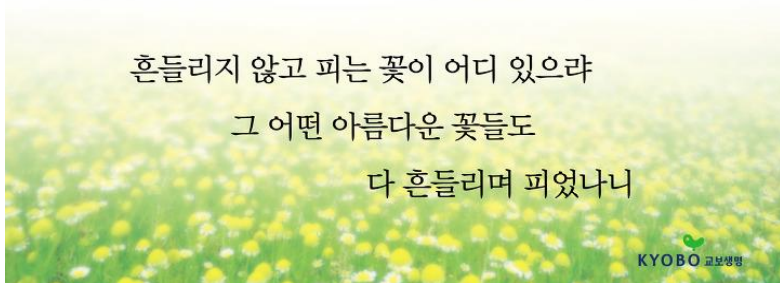
From 1991 to 1997, the Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard mainly featured instructive slogans of a socio-economic character that are not of particular interest in the context of this research. Their design was very simple. However, when the Asian financial crisis (1997-1998) swept through Korea, it was decided in Kyobo Life to use the Placard not only for company promotion but also for giving people moral support. That is when the Placard featured the lines from a poem by Ko Un “*낯선 곳*” “*떠나라 / 낯선 곳으로 / 그대 하루하루의 반복으로부터* [Leave / For an unknown place. / Away from your repeated daily routines]”.

The approximate meaning of these lines is not so difficult for foreigners to understand. However, Koreans also know the last stanza of the poem, where there are the words “*재생*” [rebirth] and “*탄생*” [birth]. These words imply, in particular, religious allusions and a hint that suffering will be rewarded in another life. Even more interesting is the fact that South Korea, due to the consolidated efforts of the nation, successfully overcame the crisis, but the perception of the present as a

⁹ See Claude Mangion, *Philosophical Approaches to Communication*, Bristol, Chicago: Intellect, 2011, pp.147-181.

difficult time, which should be followed by easier times after the achievement of certain results, is constantly actualised even at a trivial level in the form of an unwillingness to admit that life has become better or in the form of constant complaints about various “고생” [difficulties]. In different years, on the Gwanghwamun Placard, we see lines saying that people can move forward and make progress only through ordeals.

It is not a coincidence that the representatives of the Company and the famous people who participated in the selection of lines for the Placard use the words “위로”, “위안” [consolation] and “희망” [hope] when stating the aims of the project. Citizens use the same words when describing their emotional reactions after reading the featured lines. In the article in “The Korea Financial Times” dedicated to the new edition of the book “광화문에서 읽다 거닐다 느끼다” [Read, walk, feel on the Gwanghwamun Square], we read that the Placard “시민들에게 때로는 희망을, 때로는 사랑을, 또 위로를 건네고 있다¹⁰ [gives to the people sometimes hope, sometimes love, sometimes consolation]”.



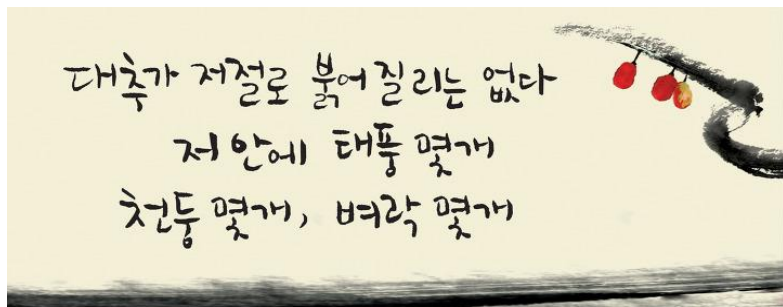
[Where is the flower that blooms without being shaken? / Even the most beautiful flowers / All bloomed while being shaken.]

도종환 [Do Jong-hwan]. “흔들리며 피는 꽃” [“Flower That Blooms When Shaken”]. 2004, Spring.

Although these lines are about difficulties that any flower (i.e., person) experiences in life, a field of flowers in the picture is completely

¹⁰서효문[Seo Hyo-mun], ‘광화문글판’의 잔잔한 울림, 책으로 만나다 [The Gentle Voice of the Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard, Hear it in the Book], *Hanguk keumyung*, August 19, 2015: <http://www.fntimes.com/paper/view.aspx?num=140607&kind=43> (accessed 15.05.2018).

tranquil. Thus, the design of the picture continues and develops in some way the idea expressed by the words, as though saying: “One day, the difficult times will pass”.



[The jujube fruit could not have become red by itself. / In each one, there are a few storms, / A few bolts of thunder and lightning.]

장석주 [Jang Seok-ju]. “대추 한 알” [“One jujube fruit”]. 2009, Autumn.

On this placard, the picture and the text of the same black colour look a bit gloomy, only the bright fruits do not. Does this design suggest that the fruits are always the result of hard work, something gloomy and joyless? For Europeans, this idea may not seem very comforting.

Another isotopic line (the term by A. Greimas) that can be traced through the stanzas from the Gwanghwamun Placard is collectivism. In the autumn of 1998, for example, the following lines by Ko Un were printed on the Placard with almost no design:

모여서 숲이 된다 [Together, we are becoming a forest / grove.]

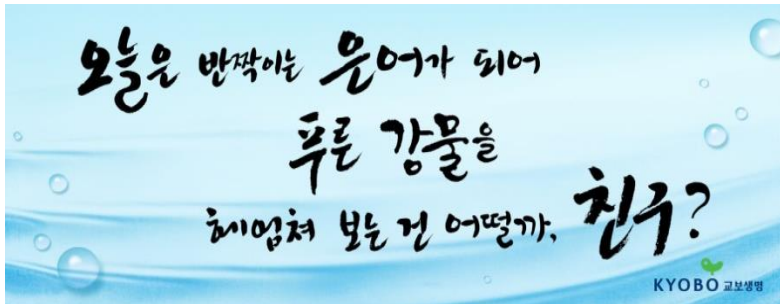
나무 하나하나 죽이지 않고 숲이 된다 [We do not kill a single tree and are becoming a forest / grove.]

그 숲의 시절로 우리는 간다 [We are coming back to the era of the forest.]

For Europeans, the forest is an element of nature that opposes the city (in Korea, it is rather a “산” [“mountain / forest”] than a “숲” [“forest / grove”]). The picture of, for example, rows of tree trunks might help foreigners understand the text correctly. From childhood,

Europeans read in books variations of the story about a father who teaches his sons about unity by offering first to break the bundle of sticks and then easily breaking the sticks one at a time. In the summer of 2015, the lines from the poem by 정희성 [Jeong Hui-seong] “숲” [“Forest”] “제가끔 서 있어도 나무들은 숲이었어 / 그대와 나는 왜 숲이 아닌가 [The trees standing separately are still the forest, / Why are not you and I?]” were printed on the Placard against the background of the green forest. However, those bright dark green leaves make us (Western people) think about the chaos of nature, not about unity.

More interesting is the next example:



[To become a sparkling Ayu fish, / To swim through the blue river water / Are you ready, my friend?]

신해욱 [Sin Hae-uk]. “푸른 강물” [“Blue River Water”]. 2006, Summer.

This stanza appeared on the Gwanghwamun Placard on the eve of the World Cup in Germany, which followed one that had taken place in South Korea and Japan in 2002 and was very significant for Koreans. The country hoped that the Korean players would build on the success they had achieved at their home stadium. However, it was rather a hope than a firm belief. It is worth noting that the following lines from the poem “파도” [“Waves”] by 이명수 [Lee Myeong-su] competed with the chosen stanza during the last round of stanza selection:

쓰러지는 사람아 바다를 보아라 [If you are falling, look at the sea!]

일어서는 사람아 바다를 보아라 [If you are rising up, look at the sea!]

쓰러지기 위해 일어서는 [Falling to rise up]

일어서기 위해 쓰러지는 [Rising up to fall]

The stanza about Ayu fish is not an excerpt but the entire poem. Nevertheless, we cannot understand it without having any knowledge about the behaviour of this fish. It should be noted that Russians, as well as Europeans, do not know much about nature if they are not involved in some way in activities connected with it. This contrasts with the Koreans and other Asian nations. Therefore, we should admit that the area of common non-professional knowledge is an important component of the cultural code. “은어” *Plecoglossus altivelis* – or the Ayu fish – lives in the coastal strip of the northwestern part of the Pacific Ocean, where it swims in shoals. For spawning, it enters the rivers and stubbornly swims against the current.

A simple image of a shoal of fish may have contributed to the understanding of the text. The absence of such an image confirms that the project is oriented exclusively towards the national audience. Thirty, twenty years ago, almost no foreigners in the Republic of Korea spoke Korean, but that has been changing in recent years. There is a certain number of people (university professors, students, well-educated employees that have been living in Korea for many years, Hallyu fans) who can read Hangul texts and are interested in Korean culture.

Anyway, we again see the declaration of such values as collectivism and hard work for the common good, as well as a closeness to nature, which is expressed through the comparison of a human with an element of nature. This closeness to nature is one more isotopic line of the project.

In the verses from different years, we see plants, fish, birds, insects, etc. that live in harmony with nature surviving the hardships of winter and welcoming spring. At first glance, the lines by Yu Jong-ho that appeared on the Placard in autumn of 2004 seem to be of this type:



[Grasshopper, / In the thickets of grass / Keeping awake all the night, / Regain your strength! / Autumn has come, / Spring will come too.]

유종호[Yu Jong-ho]. “시는 죽었다” [“The Poetry is Dead”]. 2004, Autumn.

The picture of a man instead of a grasshopper, where grass and bushes are a part of the urban jungle, supports the comparison of the human world with the world of nature.

In fact, the poem, from which the quotation was allegedly taken, is presented below:

시는 죽었다 [Poetry is Dead]

유종호 [Yu Jong-ho]

시는 죽었다. [poetry is dead.]

神은 죽었다. [God is dead.]

함부로 허락되고 백죄 [And now whatever can]

아무렇게나 시가 되나니. [Become poetry.]

여치야 [Grasshopper,]

번지 없는 풀밭에서 [In the thickets of grass]

밤을 새는 여치야 [Keeping awake all the night.]

인마 [Hey!]

인제 너희 죽었다! [Now you are dead,]

인제 우린 죽었다! [And we are dead.]

The true meaning of the lines on the Placard becomes clear only after figuring out that the poem by Korean poet is a response to a poem by

English poet John Keats (1791-1821). Moreover, the second line includes a hidden quote from Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Thus, what we have here is not just a result of traditional thinking. It is a manifestation of the inclusiveness of Korean culture in world culture.

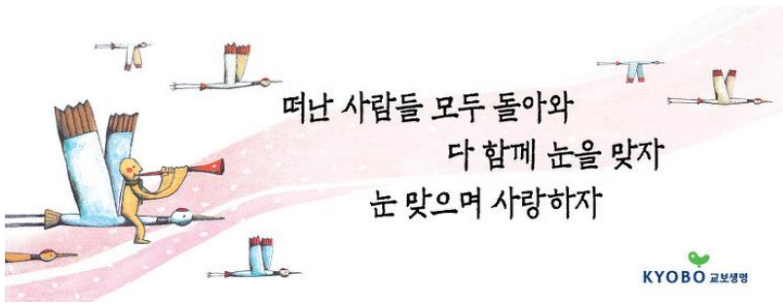
The Grasshopper and Cricket

John Keats

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the Grasshopper's – he takes the lead
In summer luxury, – he has never done
With his delights; for when tired out with fun
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

Native English speakers, in theory, should grasp the allusions concealed in the poem by Yu Jong-ho quite easily, because the title of the cited work of Nietzsche (“God is Dead”) echoes with the words of Keats “Poetry is never dead”. For comparison, in various Russian translations of “The Grasshopper and Cricket” (made by S.J. Marshak, by B.L. Pasternak and others less famous), we cannot find at all a passage that resembles the title of Nietzsche’s work and that is suitable for our purposes.

Alteration of lines and not choosing consequent lines from poems are common for this project. On the following Placard, we also see the alteration of lines and replacement of the explicit appeal to the collective memory about the Korean War with the implicit one:



[Let everybody, who has gone, come back. / Let's welcome the snow. / Under the snow let's love!]

고은 [Ko Un]. “강설” [“Snowfall”]. 2004, Winter.

On the web page of Kyobo Insurance Company that is dedicated to the Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard, these lines are commented as follows: “마음 떠난 사람들, 역경에 빠진 사람들 모두 돌아와 새해에는 분열을 멈추고 한마음으로 화합하자는 메시지를 담고 있음. 또한 사람들이 역경을 극복할 수 있도록 북돋아주고 격려해주어 용기를 얻을 수 있도록 한다는 의미임. 십장생인 학과 새롭고 따뜻함을 상징하는 눈을 통하여 신년의 망과 상서로움을 표현하며 한방향으로 무리지어 날아가는 학의 모습 화합하고 새시대를 개척해 나가자는 의미의 표현임 [They carry a call to the return of those who are to separate or are in difficult circumstances, to putting an end to the controversy in the new year and to unification. The idea is that people should find the strength to overcome circumstances. The crane is one of ten traditional Korean symbols of longevity. Here, cranes along with the snow that symbolises renewal and warmth appear as good omens for the new year. A flock of cranes flying together seems to offer people unity and the start of a new era].”¹¹ The relations between South and North are not mentioned anywhere. However, the lines on the Placard are a modified quotation from the poem by Ko Un “강설” [“Snowfall”].

강설 [Snowfall]

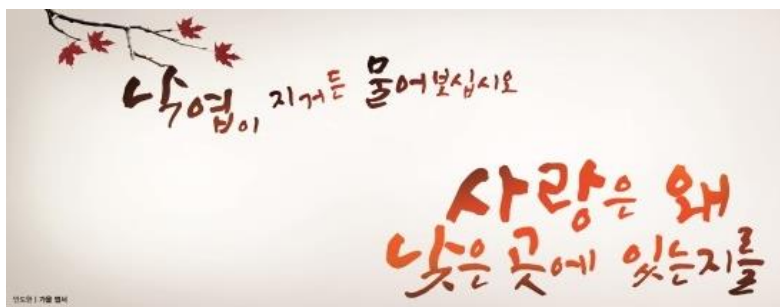
¹¹ Kyobo official site: <https://www.kyobo.co.kr/ci/gb/gb/SCIGBNLM003R01.form#> (accessed 10.02.18).

고은 [Ko Un]
 폐허(廢墟)에 눈 내린다. [Snow is falling on the ruins.]
 적(敵)도 동지(同志)도 [Enemies and friends,]
 함께 모아자. [Let's get together!]
 함께 눈을 맞자. [Let's welcome the snow!]
 눈 맞으며 껴안고 울자. [Under the snow, let's hug and cry!]
 폐허(廢墟)에 눈 내린다. [Snow is falling on the ruins.]
 우리가 1950 년대(年代)에 깨달은 것은 [In 1950s we
 comprehended]
 인산인해(人山人海)의 죽음이 아니라 사랑이다. [Not the death of
 a myriad but love.]
 눈이 내린다. [Snow is falling.]
 눈이 내린다. [Snow is falling.]
 모든 죽은 사람들까지도 살아나서 [All dead people, revive!]
 함께 눈을 맞자. [Let's welcome the snow!]
 눈 맞으며 울자. [Under the snow, let's cry!]
 우리는 분명 죄(罪)의 족속(族屬)이다. [We are a clan of
 criminals.]
 눈을 맞자. [Let's welcome the snow!]
 눈 맞으며 사랑하자. [Under the snow, let's love!]

Clearly, the poet talks about the people who have gone to another world not just somewhere else. Moreover, he uses the verb “죽다” [“die”] instead of the euphemistic phrase “세상을 떠나다” [“leave this world”]. In 2004, South Korea was governed by President Roh Moo-hyun who conducted the Policy of Peace and Prosperity with regard to North Korea. In general, this was a continuation of Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy. Negotiations on the meetings of separated families moved very actively. However, in the book “The History of Korea: from Antiquity to the Beginning of the XXI Century”, S.O. Kurbanov writes: “in <...> the programmes of two South Korean presidents, Kim Dae-jung and Rho Moo-hyun, North Korea was presented as a *passive* object, which should be provided with support and *be led* in the direction of

South Korea's policy on inter-Korean relations".¹² However, Ko Un in his poem uses propositive final endings, which suggests a meeting of equals. He writes: "enemies and friends... we are a clan of criminals". In addition, the collective memory of the South Koreans about the war as a disaster, from which everybody suffered and for which everybody is to blame, allows them to see deep philosophical and political meaning in the poetic lines. The design of the Placard is very important. The crane is a symbol of longevity, which makes readers think about life and death, not just about separation.

Unfortunately, at that time, the hopes of many people in the South for rapprochement with the North did not come true for various reasons. However, life went on. When South Korea acquired economic and social stability, the Gwanghwamun Placard began to more frequently feature stanzas about love and paying attention to each other. These stanzas were usually easy to understand without explanations. Nevertheless, among them we can find very interesting examples:



[As the leaves are falling, ask / Why love / Prefers lowly places.]

안도현 [An Do-hyeon]. “가을 엽서” [“Autumn postcard”]. 2012, Autumn.

Even after reading the entire poem, the meaning of the lines remains not obvious for the foreigners.

¹² Сергей О. Курбанов, [Sergei O. Kurbanov], *История Кореи: с древности до начала XXI в.* [History of Korea: from Antiquity to the Beginning of the XXI Century], Saint-Petersburg: Saint-Petersburg State University Press, 2009, p. 626-627.

가을 엽서[Autumn Postcard]¹³

안도현 [An Do-hyeon]

한 잎 두 잎 나뭇잎이 [One by one leaves]

낮은 곳으로

자꾸 내려앉습니다 [Keep falling, settling]

[In lowly places.]

세상에 나누어 줄 것이 많다는 듯이 [They seem to be saying
there's plenty to share in life.]

나도 그대에게 무엇을 좀 나눠주고 싶습니다 [And I long to share
something with you.]

내가 가진 게 너무 없다 할지라도 [I have very little to offer, but
still]

그대여

가을 저녁 한때 [One autumn evening]

낙엽이 지거든 물어보십시오 [As the leaves are falling, I want]

[You]

사랑은 왜 [To ask why love]

낮은 곳에 있는지를 [Prefers lowly places.]

On the Placard, we do not see the key word of the poem “share”. The tree shares the leaves with the ground. These leaves rot and fertilise the ground on which the tree grows. This image is closely related to the idea of involvement of a human being as part of the nature in the endless cycle, where willingness to donate results in obtaining much more. Therefore, the theme of love in some way echoes the theme of the common good of the collective. It is noteworthy that when explaining the choice of these lines, the representative of Kyobo Life said: “저마다 자신의 욕망을 추구하는데 바쁜 세태를 경험하지만 낙엽을 통해 사랑과 희생의 진정한 의미를 생각해 보자는 뜻에서 광화문글판 가을편의 문구를 선정했다 [Vanity reigns in this world, where everyone is realising his/her ambitions; we have chosen these lines for the autumn placard so that people, when looking at the falling leaves,

¹³ The translation was taken from the Internet (unknown translator): <http://kari-ohaayoo.tumblr.com/post/40452846546/autumn-postcard-by-ahn-do-hyun-one-by-one-leaves> (accessed 23.05.2016).

would think about the importance of love and sacrifice]”.¹⁴ Korean society is changing and becoming involved in global processes. Maybe now, people need to be reminded even about these conceptual ideas.

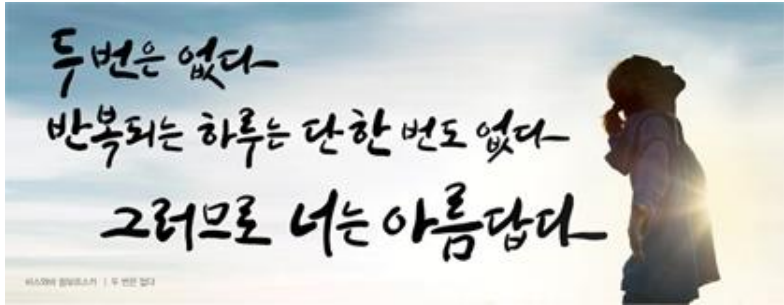
From the above-mentioned examples, it can be seen that the most important isotopic lines of the project for many years were:

- 1) non-accidental attainment of the good as a result of daily efforts and overcoming difficulties,
 - 2) collectivism,
 - 3) closeness to the nature,
 - 4) love as attention, care about each other.
- Later, another line started becoming more and more distinct:
- 5) non-conspicuous uniqueness of each person and each day lived by him/her.

It is not a mere coincidence that during voting (2011) among Korean Internet users on the Gwanghwamun Placard, first place was taken by the line “사람이 온다는 건 / 실은 어마어마한 일이다. / 한 사람의 인생이 오기 때문이다 [Coming of a man / Is a great event / Because a whole life comes with him]”. 정현중 [Jeong Hyeon-jong]. “방문객” [“The Visitor”]. 2011, Summer. The design of the placards dedicated to this topic usually supports the text very effectively. For example, the design can be a simple delicate flower that a person is compared to, such as on the placard (2012, Spring) with the lines by 나태주 [Na Tae-ju] “풀꽃” [“Wildflower”]: “자세히 보아야 예쁘다. / 오래 보아야 사랑스럽다. / 너도 그렇다 [You have to look closely to see that it is pretty. / You have to look for a long time to see that it is lovely. / You are the same]”.

In winter of 2015, the following lines by Polish poetess Wislawa Szymborska, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1996, were presented on the Placard with a photo of a woman meeting a new day:

¹⁴박기주[Park Gi-ju]. “교보생명 광화문글판, 안도현 시인의 ‘가을엽서’로 새 단장 [The Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard on the Kyobo Life Building, The New Stanza is from the Poem by An Do-hyeon “Autumn postcard”]”, *JoongAng Ilbo*, September 03, 2012, <http://news.joins.com/article/9217901> (accessed 11.06.2018).

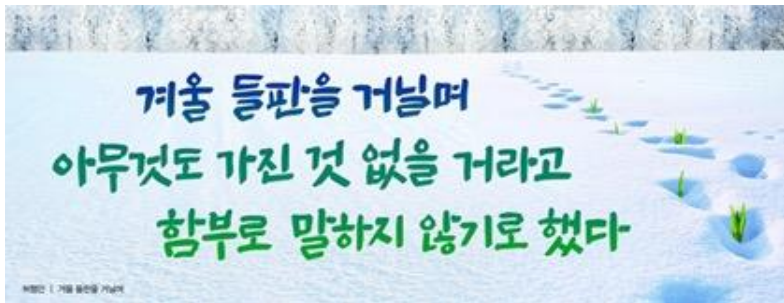


[Nothing can ever happen twice / No day copies yesterday / So you are beautiful.]¹⁵

Wisława Szymborska. “Nic Dwa Razy” [“Nothing twice”]. 2015, Winter.

Since the end of 2017, the idea of 6) hope / readiness for a better future came to the forefront. In reality, this idea is not completely new for this project. For example, it was presented in the above-mentioned lines by 유종호 [Yu Jong-ho] from “시는 죽었다” [“Poetry is Dead”].

The picture helps understand the message of the stanza on the 2017, Winter Placard. Here, green sprouts are growing through the snow as if telling us: “It is winter (hard times) now, but spring (better times) is ahead”.



[Walking through the winter field / I decided not to rush to say / That there is nothing special here.]

¹⁵ Translation of the first two lines was taken from Wisława Szymborska, *Poems new and collected: 1957-1997* (Tr. by S.Baranczak & C. Cavanagh), Orlando, etc.: A Harvest Book Harcourt Inc., 1998, p. 20.

허형만 [Heo Hyeong-man]. “겨울 들판을 거닐며” [“Walking through the winter field”]. 2017, Winter.

On the next Placard, there is a poem by 김광규 [Kim Gwang-gyu], “오래된 물음” [“Old question”].



[Children’s buoyant spirit, / Bodies full of life, inexhaustible energy / Where do [they] come from?]

김광규 [Kim Gwang-gyu], “오래된 물음” [“Old question”]. 2018, Spring.

Maybe this hope for new, better life, readiness to start with new energy from the beginning are now the most needed things for South Koreans who have lived through political crisis and impeachment of the President, Park Geun-hye, and are now looking forward to improvement of inter-Korean relations.

Conclusion

The Gwanghwamun Poetry Placard has evolved throughout its history in terms of both content and design. New isotopic lines were added to those which were distinct from the beginning. There has been to some extent a shift in emphasis from collective toward individual perspectives. Design has become increasingly important. However, it is still impossible to say that in most cases the picture contributes to a better understanding of the message that the Placard carries; more often it simply supports the text. This is probably due to the fact that the project is oriented exclusively towards the national audience, which is presupposed to possess the common cultural background.

Foreigners who more or less understand the Korean face difficulties when trying to comprehend, firstly, the meaning of the lines taken out of context, and secondly, the message that the Placard carried in a particular time. An analysis of these difficulties helps reveal several levels of the cultural code as such and realise how great the cultural differences between nations are. Despite the emergence of a global culture, these differences do not lose their significance. This should be kept in mind when building cross-cultural communication.

Precursory Study on South Asian Security and Geopolitics

Abstract

Abstract

Security issues in South Asia could be the key to world peace. Understanding the particular dynamics of security creation and its provision in the region has therefore become extremely important. That said, there are major hurdles to a proper comprehension of the underlying complexities. Most of the home-grown security studies and analyses are sponsored or directly provided by the security establishment, focusing mainly on the tactical capacities of the military apparatus. The outside academic community, mainly the Singapore-Australia-USA triangle, tend to concentrate on the global perspectives with predominance given to the India-China aspect of the security configuration. For these reasons, vital and insightful concepts are missing for the proper and realistic understanding of the security policies and configuration of South Asia. The purpose of this essay will be to introduce some of these analytical concepts and give a deeper understanding of the issues at work, in short to provide a historic background to the conflict and security configuration of South Asia.

Keywords: Bengal, Curzon doctrine, geopolitics, India, Indian Ocean, South Asia.

Introduction

South Asia is a sphere of multiple and multi-layered ambiguities, a treasure trove of misconceptions and dislocated realities in space and time. In most subjects it is difficult to dissipate the clouds of confusion and falsification from the inherent realities. The difficulties increase as one moves to more rigid topics like security policies, strategic outlays and configurations. When we talk about strategic thinking and its implications on geopolitical realities, we have to be sure of knowing certain key elements of it. South Asia is no different in

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terms of this primary demand. We, as historians, academics, analysts and related public have to know: who is providing the security to a specific geographic entity? Based on what priorities? And to whose benefit and at whose expense? Paradoxically, some historians and ultra-nationalists on the one side stress the indivisible civilisational nature of South Asian tradition and society, upon which all their argumentations or justifications are based; and at the same time they over-emphasise the irreconcilable nature of the now existing state structures with one another. For example, throughout the millennial history of South Asia, Bengal as a whole was a single and strong entity, but today West Bengal is irreconcilable with East Bengal (now Bangladesh).

The consequences of these perceptions for strategic thinking is as follows: Firstly, if we take a civilisational perspective then South Asia is in a state of civil war. And as happens with all civil wars, they have to end one day and the myriad of concerns are rarely particularistic, with South Asia as a whole taking centre stage. If we see things from this angle, taking into account the eventual unification of South Asia, the nationalist outlay of policies is self-defeating because they are mutually destroying all the irreplaceable strategic options of the South Asian subcontinent. Secondly, if we accept the continued digressions into particularistic nationalist narratives, conquest and war become inevitable since no one country can ultimately defend its territory without the territorial integrity of the whole of the South Asia, a situation where the strongest state becomes structurally imperialist.

Geographic delineation and definition

There is no one way to delineate South Asia. As mentioned earlier, ambiguities abound in geographical and geopolitical terms. The fairly recent European tradition bequests borders everywhere, especially when security policies are concerned. After all, the defence of a country's borders is considered the first and foremost priority of the state. Just as in the dominant religious beliefs in the west, theoretically there exists a clear boundary between good and bad. In Asia, and especially in South Asian political and philosophical tenets, the notion of borders is relatively ambiguous. Yes, the idea of borders is not new to Dravidian philosophy and political theories but it is a more dynamic notion than the static western conception. In the South Asian conception everything depends upon the hierarchy of power and civilisational expansion of a paramount power. During the reign of emperor Ashoka

(265-238 BCE) on the western flank, border regions were assumed when South Asia's civilisational expansion came into contact with the Greek or Persian civilisations, where a certain equality of status was assumed. In the north and east, for example, much of these territories came under Ashoka's civilisational paramountcy with the exception of a local civilisational temptation by the Tang dynasty, which was exclusively northern. Although, British colonial policy was designed to secure more or less well defined borders, it was nonetheless obliged to follow the traditional South Asian notion of border regions. This is very much what the so-called Curzon Doctrine (1904-1905) bequeathed. After Independence, something strange happened, learned as they were, the incoming elite decided to partially abandon the notion of "South Asia" and its civilisational sovereignty.

A strict physical geographic definition of South Asia

In physical geographic terms the definition of South Asia could be easiest to establish, although here too there are ambiguities to be dealt with. If the definition of a 'continent' is a continuous stretch of land mass, then one can easily assume a 'sub-continent' to be a sub-system of this with particular characteristics that distinguish it from the greater part. In this sense, geographers tend to base their analysis upon the work done by geologists. It has now been established that for millions of years the Indian tectonic plate crossed the Indian Ocean encrusting itself into the larger Eurasian Plate, and the movement is still continued, in the process giving the Himalayas a few centimetres in height each year. This geological collision has overtime reinforced the Indian plate's past as a virtual island, with the creation of high mountain barriers across its Eurasian encounter. Although adjoined to the larger Eurasian continent, the Indian subcontinent not only maintained its specific geographic characteristics, it further added others to make its specificity much stronger. South Asia, for millennia, had remained an impregnable fortress and to this day it retains this character.

In an ongoing debate on what belongs to South Asia and what doesn't varies ranges from ethnical to socio-religious reasons and I am sure that the debate will continue. However, we can make some logical assumptions. When the Indian tectonic plate nested itself into the Eurasian plate, it created a range of mountains. The logical question is: can we separate these ranges, geographic and geological elements from the region that was the basic cause of their creation? The answer to this

question has far-reaching consequences in terms of South Asia's geopolitical situation and thus on the security implications of the region. Like the Carpathian basin in central Europe, it becomes extremely difficult to defend the lowlands if someone else is located on the mountain ranges that form the northern arc over the subcontinent. Beyond security issues, the livelihood of millions in the subcontinent depends upon resources from these mountainous regions, an essential part of the natural and productive cycle. Indeed, the monsoon that is synonymous with South Asia, makes these ranges a vital catchment area of rain water forming reserves above and underground. For South Asia, delineation is not an appropriate term.

It was probably to circumvent this problem that the renowned British military geographer, Sir Thomas Hungerford Holdich, talked of a 'frontier', 'borderland' and 'transfrontier'¹ rather than the simple, straightforward and mean 'border'. The many decades that Hungerford Holdich spent in the Subcontinent were actually spent mapping out the borderland, which sometimes took him into lands that were more than 500 miles beyond what was actually British India. In effect what Hungerford Holdich is saying is that if we can envisage South Asia as a house, the walls naturally belong to it, and it is not unreasonable to think that the perimeter of the land that surrounds the house belongs to its natural environment. If we consider the walls to be part of the house, which is evident, and the land surrounding it as an integral part, then the whole system becomes one indivisible unit. So it is with South Asia and the regions surrounding it, that they become part and parcel of the South Asian eco-system. It is not a question of core and periphery but one integrated functional system. Other authors and historians have taken a similar attitude when pushed to define the perimeters of South Asia. It was with this in mind that the veteran geographer, Hungerford Holdich, summarised the situation as follows: "A boundary is but an artificial impress on the surface of the land, as much as a road or a railway, and, like the road or the railway, it must adapt itself to the topographical conditions of the country it traverses. If it does not, it is likely to be no barrier at all."² Geographically therefore it is extremely difficult and arbitrary to draw lines of delineation. And as Hungerford Holdich

¹ Thomas Hungerford Holdich. *The Indian Borderland 1880-1900*, Methuen and Co., London, 1901, p. 5.

² Thomas H. Holdich. *Political Frontiers and Boundary Making*, MacMillan and Co., London, 1916, p. 184.

emphasises, in security terms a border makes no sense in South Asia.³ For this reason geography has a profound influence upon the history, politics, economics, sociology, culture and the security of South Asia.

Shifts in the historic and strategic definition and delineations of frontiers

Geography is one thing and the movement of history is another. As the regular flow of news items from the subcontinent shows, problems of historic definitions and delineations are one of the biggest and most serious problems plaguing South Asian territorial integrity and security. Concepts of security are very interesting and could be extremely useful, but can become useless and potentially dangerous if we do not take into account a whole range of realities on the ground. This is what happened with the subcontinent when the freedom fighters refused to accept the fact that South Asia could not be divided and appropriated on a conceptual basis. Dividing or delineating on a religious basis was anathema to the whole South Asian system. Moreover, the burdens of division and dislocation were imposed mainly on those who had nothing to do with the overall process. In this sense, the shifts in delineation, rather than solving anything tangible, generated a whole new set of security risks unheard of before. The departing British colonials are often blamed for this but in my opinion it would be inappropriate to put the whole blame upon them.

Historically speaking, the British Indian Empire came close to giving a meaning to the South Asian identity forged by Emperor Ashoka's reign (275-232 BCE). For the first time, British rule in India tried to reflect the complex strategic and defensive security structure put in place by Ashoka. Compared to the Moghuls, who tried to forge a trans-Pamir empire, the British annexed Sri-Lanka, Burma, Tibet, and parts of Persia and Afghanistan, treating these acquisitions as an integral part of the defensive perimeter of South Asia. However, there was a slight difference between the security system conceived by Ashoka and the British colonials.

When Ashoka took control of the perimeter he did not work to alienate the local people, he did not expand his own state-system, rather he integrated the periphery through monetary and religious systems, leading to long-term bonds of trust. The East India Company, to a certain degree, paid attention to this fact and left the sovereignty of

³ Rob Johnson. *South Asian Conflicts Since 1947*, Reaktion Books, London, 2005, p. 7.

these border nations intact as long as the paramountcy of the company was acquiesced. This attitude was a result of two factors: firstly, there was no impending economic need or rationality to invade these territories, since they produced little that the company needed or consumed almost nothing in terms of goods sold by the company. Secondly, due to the nascent condition of its administrative consolidation in the Subcontinent proper, it was not prepared to come into direct contact with the other imperial powers of the region, notably Qing China in the east and Persia in the west. The result of these ponderings was that the Ashoka security configuration was not disturbed and the traditional pact between the paramount power and the border nations was left intact.

Long after the Ashoka period, Arab sultans dominating the Indo-Gangetic plains were particularly keen to protect the western gate against the threats of the Mongols and other incursions from central Asia. What the Arab Sultans did was to populate the border regions with Turkic populations coming from the southern Caspian areas. The ethnically Turkic population was deemed to have better knowledge of the Central Asian hordes and was therefore better trained to confront with them.⁴ “Although Mongol raids into north India continued through the second half of the thirteenth century, there was considerable migration of Mongol and Turkic groups searching for Sultanate patronage and instances of disaffected Sultanate amirs looking for allies in Mongol camps. The old traditions of policing the frontier by slave commanders slowly shifted to include new bodies of immigrants who had intruded into the region.”⁵ In this way a new physical and conceptual security policy and frontier delineation was put in place, but this came at a cost, ethnic conflict was created in the frontier and a safe delineation was transformed into a troubled and porous trans-border region.

When analysing South Asian defence policies and problems one has to pay attention to this fundamental change. As John F. Richards explains: “Expansive early modern states imposed new types of territoriality on frontier regions. Settlers and colonial regimes refused to recognise any existing property rights among indigenous peoples (or if

⁴ Thomas H. Holdich. *Political Frontiers and Boundary Making*, MacMillan and Co., London, 1916, p. 184.

⁵ Thomas H. Holdich. *Political Frontiers and Boundary Making*, MacMillan and Co., London, 1916, p. 41.

they did so initially, these were soon abrogated). Instead, they viewed these lands as empty, to be claimed by the encroaching state. In turn, the colonising state conferred property rights on its frontier settlers.”⁶ The Turkic tribes were supposed to be socially better equipped than the Pathan (Pashtun) tribes that had resided in the frontier valleys for thousands of years. The reality on the ground was that it created an unbridgeable enmity between the new arrivals and the Bhumiputra (sons of the earth).

The British Crown, after the coup d’état against the East India Company, openly espoused the same policies as the Arab Sultans, strengthening the ethnically foreign elements to South Asian culture, ethics and attitude to life. Indeed, the British Crown adopted an open policy to promote certain segments of migrant populations sitting on the perimeter of the Subcontinent.⁷ It recruited a tiny minority, beside itself, that never considered itself to be ethnically part of South Asia. Tan Tai Tong calculated that between 1858 and 1910 the recruitment of Punjabis increased by 309% to 93 295.⁸ And by ploughing in the tax revenues from all over South Asia into the development of Punjab, the British Crown had forged an identity, and given it an economic salience, that was antagonistic to the rest of the Subcontinent. This fact had a major implication during and after the ‘struggle’ for independence, and of course had a profound impact on post-independence strategic thinking; this structural antagonism put Nehru under huge pressure after the British packed up and went home.

Characteristic security threats and region-specific geopolitical problems

From afore mentioned historic and structural developments, one is able to get a better insight into the dilemmas weighing upon the new Indian republic and its prime minister. On the one hand he had the armed forces that did not belong to him, since they en bloc belonged to

⁶ John F. Richards. *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*, University of California Press, Berkley, 2003, pp. 4-5.

⁷ Amar Farooqui. ‘Divide and Rule’? Race, Military Recruitment and Society in Late Nineteenth Century Colonial India, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 43, No. 3/4 (March–April 2015), pp. 49-59, pp. 50-52. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24372935>, (accessed 25.11.2017).

⁸ Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State - The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849–1947*, SAGE Publications, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 70-71.

one hostile community that had never given up its own colonial ambitions within South Asia. The division of the Punjab was intended to solve this problem but one has to realise that the Northwest gateway to India had become a hostile zone. And on the other hand Nehru was confronted with regional players like China who were willing to use salami tactics to dig deeper into the South Asian sphere of influence. The Chinese method of colonialism is silent sequencing doctrines. It designates a core territory as indivisible and consequently builds and bestows buffer state status to territories surrounding it and then with time lapse designates the newly acquired territory as an indivisible core element of the Chinese territorial integrity. Trying to stop China militarily in Tibet would have increased the power of the Punjabis over the core of South Asia. So rather than lose the core to his inner enemies he decided to allow the Chinese to occupy Tibet in the hope that it would satisfy their appetite, at least for a couple of decades; he obviously misjudged this eventuality. These inner structural problems of delineation at all levels led Nehru to re-evaluate and to temporarily abandon the well-tested defence and security arrangements in South Asia. The ensuing chaos is something common to all South Asian countries, a characteristic that is still persistent in the security configuration of South Asia.

Interstate conflicts

Following on from the previous section, the big question concerning conflicts and wars in South Asia is: Can the conflicts between some of the South Asian countries be considered civil wars? The following quote from Rob Johnson corroborates that logic: "A regional study enables us to make some general comments about the nature of conflict. The term 'conflict' has been selected deliberately, not because of a problem with the definition of war in any legalistic sense, but because the number of deaths caused by politicised violence in 'unconventional' settings often far exceed those that occur during interstate or 'conventional' fighting. Conflicts embrace armed confrontations, insurrections, communal rioting, insurgencies and episodes of terrorism, as well as wars."⁹ The division of South Asia was artificial and it consequently follows that the ensuing conflict to date is

⁹ Rob Johnson, *South Asian Conflicts Since 1947*, Reaktion Books, London, 2005, p. 7.

artificial, although in security terms these conflicts can be deemed ‘civil war’-like in their nature.

India –Pakistan conflict and rivalry

The conflict between India and Pakistan is composed of a sequel of logical calculations by different political and military communities in the months and years leading to the independence of both countries. As such, these acts could be seen both as a line of coincidences, but at the same time the result of some ‘higher-up’ planning. The first thing to know about the conflict between India and Pakistan is that it is artificial, but nonetheless, in a perverse sense, constitutes the national interest for both countries. India needs the conflict with Pakistan to keep a strong grip on some of its federal states who demand more autonomy and less concentration of power in New Delhi. In the same manner Pakistan needs the conflict with India to trample separatist ambitions nurtured by some of its provinces. This is especially true when both countries, in the immediate aftermath of the British withdrawal, lacked legitimacy and viability.

It is a fact that, in whatever perspective we analyse the situation, both countries were artificially created in the period 1945-1950. In a sense, the conflict was conceived and built to oppose each other for a special and specific reason, namely that of legitimising their existence over their constituent parts. For this reason, until the day India and Pakistan stop having legitimacy problems, the Indo-Pakistan conflict will continue. In this way, inner structural tensions are diametrically aligned to the conflict.¹⁰

Being continuously prepared for a possible transfer of power, Nehru did not wield the necessary legitimacy in India, at least not in the same manner as Gandhi had; and he did not have a political organisation that could integrate the local elites and bring about a political consensus and thus create a strong territorial unity. The saga of the ‘partition’ did have an immediate impact in the areas concerned but nationally petered out. Embarking on high profile military engagements with Pakistan to build national consensus at home was not to Nehru’s taste, apart from a few incidents like the invasion of the State of Hyderabad and the fait

¹⁰ K. P. Misra, *Intra-State Imperialism. The Case of Pakistan*, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1972), pp. 27-39. Sage Publications, Ltd., page 27. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422970>.

accomplish of the 1962 Indo-China War. Nehru never really wanted a military conflict with Pakistan however much it was a thorn on his side, instead it seems that he was expecting political rivalry at worst. Religious rhetoric was never his cup of tea, especially given the fact that his origins are blurred, he was not a champion of a Hindu India against an Islamic Pakistan. As explained earlier, the conflict's structural roots lie before the post-independence settlement. One could actually go back to the early days of the crown rule and find evidence for the outlines of two different and distinct entities, in their administrative and judicial forms. A defence community was built-up in the north-west as a barrier against a combined Persia-Russian invasion. In essence what happened during the final months of independence and afterwards is that this military community, which had power through conquest as its *raison d'être*, had to reassign itself. The Sikh community, which had large control of this martial entity, tried to create an independent state. Whatever historians might say, in strict security terms, it would have been suicidal for Nehru to accept an independence settlement where one of the biggest military strengths was concentrated at the gates of India. Nehru, to further his personal ambitions, accepted settlement by integrating half of the Punjabi population into India. This community mirrors exactly the same methods used by the Pakistani military establishment, with a predominant position of the military establishment in further economic consolidation as in India.

Structurally it is anyone's guess what will happen if this Punjabi community is forced to relinquish its preponderance over the Indian and Pakistani armed forces. The whole nature of the conflict will change to one of cooperation. This is not some sort wishful thinking, it is an impending structural reality, if the Punjabi community is sidelined. When this will happen none can foresee, but signs are that changes will first come from the Indian side because of the increasingly international outlook of the Punjabi (Sikh) diaspora. It would be structurally dysfunctional to maintain the predominance of a community that has 'integrative' relations with a diaspora that is increasingly building strength in the armed forces of other world powers.

India –Bangladesh conflict and rivalry

The partition of the Indian subcontinent was devised to destroy one of the strongest nationalisms in the whole of Asia in the early 20th century – namely that of the Bengali people. Religious divisions and

communal conflicts between Hindus and Muslims was only a side show while the real struggle was happening on two fronts. One, as earlier mentioned was taking place between the Fringe Mesopotamians¹¹ (the elite of northwest of India) and the Punjabis, who were the main military contingency of South Asia and the backbone of British military might in the region and beyond. The Punjabis as an ethnic group was composed of a powerful Sikh community, a sizeable Hindu community and a very large Muslim community. They had their differences but they were well cemented by their common adoration for their British masters. This the other Fringe Mesopotamians were unwilling to leave intact, as it became evident that the British had decided to leave. It was evident they were going to split the mighty Punjab, so the creation of Pakistan was the consequence of this and not the other way round. This decision had a parallel development on the eastern front; and the ingenuity of Nehru and Gandhi was to link both fronts and win the day for Fringe Mesopotamia as a whole.

In 1757, precisely one hundred years before the Indian Mutiny, when the East India Company conquered Bengal, willingly and most of the time unwillingly, it was unleashing a powerful phenomenon thence unheard of in the Subcontinent – modern nationalism. Indeed, Bengali resources and arrogance served the company well when they offered it the entire subcontinent on a silver plate. Bengal became the backbone of the East India Company and in return a powerful and extremely articulate Bengali elite emerged that even had the British aristocracy starting to feel unsure of its own high-handedness, hating them and the East India Company that stood behind them. The masquerade of the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny was to reduce both aspirants to rouble.

The company vanished overnight and so did the Bengalese as a military force; but Bengali nationalism had deep roots, made of strong fibre. The best minds might come from South India but Bengal had meticulously woven its administrative fabric deep into the heart of British India. The Sikhs and Punjabis with their military might, the Bengalis with their unparalleled control over the administration,

¹¹ *Fringe Mesopotamia* is the defence and alliance community that the British had nurtured in the north-west of British India. Since their origins, customs, culture and posture towards South Asian civilisation this community can be considered as pertaining to the Mesopotamian sphere, on the fringe of it. Today it is Pakistan and the north-western states of India, from Gujarat right up to Kashmir. The only problem was and still is that this community is not uniform and is prone to rivalry.

judiciary and the organs of the press and the remaining section of Fringe Mesopotamians had nothing except Gandhi, Nehru and British sympathy. Its interest was thus intertwined with that of the British aristocracy; Bengali nationalism had to be destroyed and Bengal divided. The British tried to do this in 1905 and failed as both Hindu and Muslim Bengalis united to defend the integrity of their nation but not for long. Gandhi and Nehru were masters in the art of deception and intrigue, and they got the job done; Bengal was divided. While both of them played a serenade to the principles of nonviolence, Bengali blood was flooding the streets of Calcutta like a monsoon in deluge.

As if this was not enough, a plan was drawn up to make eastern Bengal a colony to Pakistan, a master more brutal and unapologetic than the worst of the Bengali nightmares.¹² The initial partition plan did not include Bengal. The name 'Pakistan' holds a secret in the sense that it is a compound of the names of provinces of today's Pakistan, with no mention of Bengal. Logic says that it must have been added to the list of demands at the last moment, at the request of Nehru. What he feared most was not Pakistan or even China, it was the return of Subhas Chandra Bose¹³ to a united Bengal, making it his base to challenge Nehru. Every patriotic family in India had a picture of Bose hanging on their wall. This paper is too short to elaborate how Nehru used his power to further enslave and antagonise the divided parts further. It took the courage of the first and truly Indian leader, Indira Gandhi, to come to the rescue of an economically decimated Bangladesh (East Pakistan) in 1972. Dividing Bengal into two can only be seen as a temporary measure to hold Bengali nationalism in check. Today, since Bengali nationalism was never based on religious beliefs, there is a chance that cultural and linguistic nationalism could stretch across the artificial borders.¹⁴ Bangladesh has been one of the best managed economic growth stories in the whole of South Asia. And if this success continues

¹² K. P. Misra: Intra-State Imperialism. The Case of Pakistan, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1972), pp. 27-39, Sage Publications, Ltd., p. 28. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422970>, (accessed 27.11.2017).

¹³ Subhas Chandra Bose a Bengali nationalist leader who disappeared mysteriously on a Japanese plane at the end of WWII. The evidence concerning his death is still contested.

¹⁴ Zillur R. Khan. Islam and Bengali Nationalism, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 25, No. 8 (Aug., 1985), pp. 834-851, University of California Press, p. 838. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644113>, (accessed 27.11.2017).

there is a strong possibility that the two Bengals would like to resurrect some sort of cultural reunification.

Fringe Mesopotamia hope that the anti-Muslim trend in the world at large and Hindu nationalism in India may keep tensions high and make a rapprochement between the two Bengals (West Bengal and Bangladesh) difficult if not impossible. This could do the trick, but together the Bengalis constitute a linguistic community of more than 400 million people. In 1972, when Bangladesh was created, Indira Gandhi hoped to consolidate India's eastern flank by having a friendly and grateful country there. And the first Bangladeshi foreign policy initiative led to the later creation of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), to definitively end the Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru era of communal divisions and mutual mistrust. This path to peace was always marginalised by Fringe Mesopotamia as both Indira Gandhi and her son Rajeev Gandhi were assassinated. They and South Asian unity were victims to a fanaticism inaugurated by the great Mahatma himself, so rapprochement between the two Bengali communities might not be easy, but structurally it could happen. The Bangladeshi foreign policy attitude and posture is one of the most accommodating. Fringe Mesopotamia has conquered most of India and might use a conflictual path to consolidate South Asia further. This posture might push Bangladesh to do the same. A miscalculation on the part of Fringe Mesopotamia could be one of the biggest risks that haunts India – Bangladesh security concerns.

India-Nepal conflict

Nepal is a land-locked country and prone to buffs of panic and suffocation. It cannot sustain uncertainty; it needs long-term assurances from its two big neighbours. On the domestic side, Nepalese politics has been tumultuous and its relations with India have taken the same turn. And there is a reason for that. Although the population of Nepal in its majority is Hindu, ethnicity plays a bigger role, with stark differences between what is called Hill Hindus and Valley Hindus. The Valley Hindus feel more affinity to the neighbouring Indian provinces than with the customs and ways of life of the Gurkha Hill Hindus. In the 1950s Nehru tried to fiddle and pull strings in domestic issues and enhance the position of the Valley Hindus who preferred closer association with India. This was not to the liking of the Hill Hindus, the independent spirited Gurkhas. More recently Nepal has accused India of imposing

a whole scale embargo to twist its arm, not even taking into account the shock and devastation caused by a deadly earthquake. The Nepalese consider this to be a form of declaration of war. From its perspective, India is using the only peaceful method that it can to effective means.¹⁵

India –Sri Lanka conflict

India's conflict with Sri-Lanka is a turning point and a milestone in South Asian security policy. India started to see its defensive and security priorities in terms of the whole of South Asia again.¹⁶ To this extent, it was a long awaited structural adjustment from a historian's point of view. There was precedence, both in India's continued involvement in Nepal and India's liberation of Bangladesh from the clutches of Pakistani repression and brutality. The 1980s are seen as a more assertive foray into an attempt to define the security perimeters of South Asia as the indivisible part of the Indian sphere of concern and primacy. Of course the reality on the ground was different since the United States was heavily implicated in Pakistan and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. This said, with Nepal and Bangladesh tightly pulled into the Indian sphere, the eastern front was more or less consolidated.

The India and Sri-Lanka conflict is built at several levels, as is customary in South Asia. Tensions at any one level could easily spill into others, leading into a generalised conflagration. One of the priorities of security policy in the region is to keep these levels compartmentalised and isolated. As with the other instances, here too events and the pattern of actions and reactions is dictated by the structure of historic build-up. A love-hatred relationship between the two countries is a fact. The reasons for this contradictory picture is not all too evident to understand, but we have to isolate certain trends. As Sasanka Perera argues: "In the final analysis, both Sinhalas and Tamils of today are descendants of immigrants from mostly southern parts of India. At the level of popular perception, Sinhalas believe that they belong to a superior ethnic group called "Aryans", who trace their descent from northern parts of India."¹⁷

¹⁵ Anumeha Yadav. Is India really behind Nepal's economic blockade?, Scroll.in online periodical, Feb 04, 2016, <https://scroll.in/article/802653/is-india-really-behind-nepals-economic-blockade> (accessed: 2017-11-27)

¹⁶ Devin T. Hagerty: India's Regional Security Doctrine, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Apr., 1991), pp. 351-363, University of California Press, p. 352. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2645389>, (accessed 27.11.2017).

¹⁷ Perera, Sasanka: The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka : a historical and sociopolitical outline. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001, p. 6. URL

So structurally, the Indian involvement in the Sri-Lankan conflict was bound to fail because it was difficult to take sides or keep equidistance for long. That is exactly what happened with Rajiv Gandhi's policy, but there were other ingredients that led to the poisonous atmosphere that arose.

The Sri-Lankan situation has to be understood from another perspective, from that of nascent nationalisms. Up to the 1950s the whole of the Indian Ocean rim and the Indian Ocean islands came under direct or indirect influence of British India. But this changed as every single territorial unit openly celebrated nationalism and became temporarily insensitive to pan-regional alliances and irksome to the slightest insinuation of outside influence. As William L. Dowdy and Russell B. Trood point out: "Today the ocean littoral is composed not of dominated colonies but of proud, independent nation-states jealous of their prerogatives and suspicious of the intentions of all outside."¹⁸ It was for this reason that most of the South Asian nations entertained a deep suspicion of India's benevolent intentions and Sri-Lanka was the best example.

Conclusion

Geography is a defining element in the history of South Asia, and consequently the role played by geopolitics is quite substantial. It is for this reason that any outside analyst or policy maker inside South Asia should have an intimate understanding of the geopolitical aspects of the region and how they have been transformed over the centuries and to what consequences. The geographic delineations in South Asia have also reflected the mosaic of ethnic input into the defensive security arrangement for more than 2000 years from the times of Emperor Ashoka to as recently as 1904 when the Curzon Doctrine took centre ground. Unfortunately, the break-up of this security configuration has led to a dysfunctionality of purpose. Rather than recreate, in one way or the other, the protective system after 1947, the South Asian components

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/727811468302711738/The-ethnic-conflict-in-Sri-Lanka-a-historical-and-sociopolitical-outline>

¹⁸ William L. Dowdy and Russell B. Trood. *The Indian Ocean: An Emerging Geostrategic Region*, International Journal, Vol. 38, No. 3, Ocean Politics (Summer, 1983), pp. 432-458, Sage Publications, Ltd. on behalf of the Canadian International Council, p. 437. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40202160>, (accessed 01.12.2017).

have constantly eroded the outer walls of the indivisible South Asia. From a geopolitical and geostrategic point of view, the interstate conflicts between the so-called South Asian conflicts are 'structurally' nothing more than civil wars on the political level and ethnic wars on the socio-religious level. India as the biggest player in the game should have taken the lead for the creation of some sort of pan-South Asian security arrangement. But unable to perform the mission because of its time-consuming democratic set-up, and more importantly India fell into the ethnic trap as some ethnics nurtured for security purposes became sovereign states in which the martial elements dominated the political structures. The sovereignty of the new states in reality meant nothing more than the primacy of military establishments. Nationalism was gathered to support this position, making any form of military cooperation impossible. This structural dysfunctionality is supported and used by China to enhance its own designs in South Asia but these violations could lead India to seek more concrete and radical solutions to recreate the long due South Asian security configuration. And in this endeavour cooperation with the United States can be an option, although India would like to keep its independence in terms of security, and not make the mistakes committed by Europe after the Second World War.

Interests before Ideas.

Does Hindu Nationalism influence India's Foreign Policy?

Abstract

This article seeks to determine whether the ideology of Hindu nationalism has influenced the course of Republic of India's foreign policy since 2014 (when Hindu nationalists took over power). The conclusion is that while Hindu nationalism might have been and probably was important in certain regards, the broad direction of the policy generally remained the same as during the previous governments. Despite the anti-Muslim stance of Hindu nationalists, India has not changed its stance towards certain Arabic Muslim countries, while building warmer ties with Israel. New Delhi has also not employed any new tactics or solutions – whether bold or conciliatory – towards Islamabad. India's China policy has not become more aggressive while the 'Act East Policy' that focuses on ties in East and Southeast Asia did not employ more references to common heritage than previously. New Delhi also tried to retain its similar cooperation with Russia and the US, though the one with Washington is visible growing (as ideological overtones are not visible in Indian policy on Russia, US and China, sections on relations with these powers were not included in the final version of this article). These conclusions lead the author to believe that India's foreign policy will largely remain the same even if the Hindu nationalists retain power after the 2019 elections.

Keywords: Act East Policy, Hindu Nationalism, India, India-Pakistan relations.

Introduction

In 2014, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) stormed into power in India, ending the 10-year rule of its rivals. The NDA is a constellation of regional parties led by one major national

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party – the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, “The Party of the Indian People”). A party of Hindu nationalists, the BJP had long remained on the fringes of India’s mainstream politics and while it ruled in a coalition from 1998 to 2004, it was in 2014 that it won the majority of seats in India’s lower house of parliament¹ on its own for the first time.

As the BJP was formed by a radical organisation of Hindu nationalists (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, “The Union of National Volunteers”, hence: RSS) and there is a vast cadre overlap between the two, it could have been expected that since 2014 nationalist ideology would have had a chance to substantially remould the Indian state and society. Here I will limit these considerations to only aspect: has the ideology of Hindu nationalism influenced India’s foreign policy since 2014? The answer, in my opinion, is “No”. The majority of the aspects of India’s relations with other states remain largely uninfluenced by the ideology of Hindu nationalism.

While claiming this, I do not assume that ideology has no place in foreign relations, nor do I assume that the Realist school of thinking can explain everything in international relations. I also do not believe in a reverse view: that ideologies must always remain primary powers that shape the foreign policies of nations. The reality, as always, is much more complicated and ideologies remain one of the many factors. The same is true for Hindu nationalism in India’s foreign policy.

Hindu nationalism – a brief introduction

A longer description of the ideology of Hindu nationalism is beyond the scope and limits of this paper. Here the ideology will be introduced in an extremely brief manner. Hindu nationalism may be defined as a political ideology that claims the existence of a Hindu nation and which utilises Hindu religious and traditions to construct the identity of the nation. The ideology and the first organisations of Hindu nationalism was born in the period of 1910s-1930s. One of the most influential theorists of Hindu nationalism was Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966). Savarkar claimed the existence of a “Hindu nation” to which – in contrast to the Indian nation – only Hindus by birth could belong. For Savarkar, in order to be a Hindu, one should

¹ In the political system of the Republic of India the lower house of the Parliament holds much more power than the upper one. The lower house is called Lok Sabha in Hindi (“The People’s Council”).

share three elements: the element of “race” (jati) which meant sharing common biological ancestry, the element of “culture” (sanskriti) which meant sharing common traditions and the element of ‘nation’ (rashtra, which literally means “state”). Moreover, a member of such a nation should regard India as both one’s fatherland as well as sacred land. Savarkar claimed that Indian Christians and Indian Muslims are descendants of Hindu Indians but lost their “Hinduness” because they changed their religion – and hence do not recognise common Hindu traditions or consider India a sacred land – and because they are radical in their religious attitudes. The ideology of Hindu nationalism is in fact focused on uniting Hindus. For Indian religious minorities (Christians and Muslims) it pretended to offer terms of assimilation into the fold of the nation, but these terms were rather unacceptable.² The rules of this assimilation assumed that Hindu culture should be acceptable to all Indians but they showed no clear distinction between culture and religion. Savarkar also popularised the term *hindutva* (‘Hinduness’, hence: *Hindutva*) as an essence of being a Hindu, but gradually this term has also become synonymous with ‘Hindu nationalism.’

Savarkar was also for a long time the leader of the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha (“All-India Great Hindu Council”), the first party of Hindu nationalists, founded in 1915 out of earlier, regional “Hindu councils”. In terms of foreign policy, Savarkar and his party claimed that India should be on guard in relations with neighbouring Muslim states, should be more assertive towards China and should forge closer ties with the only Hindu monarchy of that time – Nepal. The party never succeeded in becoming a major power in Indian politics. Yet, the leaders of the party also founded its organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (“The Union of National Volunteers”, created in 1925), hence RSS. The RSS gradually disassociated itself from the party and outgrew it. In 1951, the RSS members formed their own party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (hence: BJS) and later re-established it under a new name, the Bharatiya Janata Party (hence: BJP). The RSS and BJP share most of their ideology and members. Hence the RSS, while being more radical than the party, exercises a profound influence on the BJP. Both the BJS and BJP shared most of earlier Hindu nationalists’ views on foreign policy so one may speak of continuity in this respect.

² Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva. Who is a Hindu?*, New Delhi: Hindi Sahitya Sadan, 1968, *passim*.

The parties of the Hindu nationalists had long remained on the margins of Indian politics but have joined the mainstream in the last few decades and, as mentioned above, the BJP is in power at the time of writing these words. The BJP's current high level of popularity is generated, among other things, by the charisma and PR methods of the prime minister, Narendra Modi, while its electoral successes were partially the work of the BJP's master strategist and current party president, Amit Shah. But to achieve its present and past electoral successes, the BJP has had to convince the electorate that it is more liberal and also independent from the RSS. Thus, there were and are certain differences between the BJP and the RSS. The BJP has to win elections and stay in power and thus has to have a wider support than the more rigid RSS and also has to be more pragmatic and flexible, including in the field of foreign policy. Some aspects mentioned in this text serve as examples of discrepancies between the BJP and the RSS.

Domestic issues versus foreign policy. Political economy

Before moving into aspects of foreign policy, I need to briefly address the issue of the relations between domestic issues versus the foreign affairs of the state. It should be regarded as obvious that the two should not be considered as completely separate. Thus, the conclusion that Hindu nationalism plays a marginal role in India's current foreign policy, while being a very important factor on the domestic stage, may run into trouble at the very start, because of the somewhat blurry divide between the areas of foreign and domestic affairs. For instance, one of the sections below mentions the government's plan to resettle the Kashmiri Pandits, a solution which is supported by Hindu nationalists. Such resettlement would happen within Indian territory and would affect Indian citizens but might also in some way be important for India-Pakistan relations. Similarly, an issue which I will not address here due to paucity of space is the case of international Christian organisations. Briefly speaking, since Hindu nationalists do not consider Indian Christians as members of the Hindu nation, they believe that the proselyting activities of the foreign Christian missionaries in India fuel "anti-national" tendencies. The current government of Narendra Modi has reportedly restricted the activities and cancelled the licenses of many foreign NGOs in India, including Christians ones (such as Compassion

International, which the New Delhi government accuses of attempting conversions³).

Yet, the cases such as those of the Kashmiri Pandits or Christian NGOs differ from the core foreign policy issues in at least three respects: (1) they are limited to issues concerning Indian citizens, (2) they are issues in which other countries are not a party, at least from the perspective of New Delhi and hence (3) such affairs affect relations with other states in an indirect manner. On a foreign-domestic affairs spectrum, such issues would be closer to the domestic end, though there is no denying they have international implications as well. There is also no denying that the ideology of Hindu nationalism may become more important the more a given issue is of domestic character.

This does not mean, however, that the overall ideological considerations are not part of the India's strategy, especially in the realm of soft power. The best example – if the only one of such scale – is the Modi government's particular focus on promoting yoga through the International Yoga Day.⁴ Even if exceptional, this is a good instance of how ideology can be balanced with foreign policy needs. Yoga is often understood mostly as a set of physical exercises and meditation techniques in the Western world and thus its image is "secularised", but more historically – and in a broader sense – yoga is one of India's classic philosophies and its thought forms a part of Indian spirituality. Thus, promoting yoga by the current government is probably both acceptable to a large part of the international community but also important for Hindu nationalists, who may understand its gravity in a more religious way. Yet, this article will focus on issues of a more international character, that is those that concern India's direct relations with other states and in which the interests stemming from these relations (such as trade, investment or security) are of primary importance.

This is not to say that the domestic issues have no role to play. For example, during the earlier tenure (1999-2004) of the BJP-led government, Christian missionaries were targeted by Hindu nationalist

³ Ellen Bary, Suhasini Raj, 'Major Christian Charity is Closing India Operations Amid a Crackdown', *Reuters*, 7 March 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/07/world/asia/compassion-international-christian-charity-closing-india.html> (accessed 10.06.2016).

⁴ For a good and brief overview of this strategy cf. Sebastian Domżański, *Indie w gospodarce światowej. Słoń, który pragnął latać*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Asian Century, 2017, p. 290.

activists particularly in tribal areas of the state of Orissa, and the confrontations often resulted in violence.⁵ Similarly, some of the RSS leaders, such as Ashok Singhal, criticised pope John Paul II during his visit to India in 1999 for his words on spreading Christianity.⁶ There is no denying that such ideologically-driven events do have some international repercussions (there were, for instance, protests in some Christian-majority countries) but there is no evidence to suggest that they influence the major aspects or directions of India's foreign policy in any meaningful ways.

Yet, one very important area where ideology is both visible on the domestic field and has implications for international relations is the political economy. A large part of the RSS stands for the idea of *swadeshi* (lit. 'of one's own country') which, briefly speaking, concentrates on promoting Indian companies and Indian products and protecting them from international competition. At the same time, a section of BJP members – Modi included – is more supportive of the idea of the free market. The RSS is particularly suspicious of international companies while the Modi government is striving to obtain foreign direct investment. This divide has often caused frictions within the Hindu nationalist milieu.

At times of Hindu nationalist rule – both during the 1999-2004 as well as since 2014 – this discrepancy has even caused parts of the RSS (such as the *Swadeshi Jagran Manch*, the goal of which is to popularise the idea of *swadeshi*) to protest against its own government.⁷ In 2002, the RSS opposition towards the BJP's pro-market policy – coupled with the weakening of government's position – probably blocked further free market-oriented reforms. Such domestic issues could be important for India-US relations, since Washington is trying to help American companies in entering the Indian market (for instance, the RSS is against using genetically modified crops – and American companies could sell these to India). The 'swadeshi faction' of the RSS

⁵ Krzysztof Iwanek, Adam Burakowski, *Indie. Od kolonii do mocarstwa. 1857-2013*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2013, p. 398.

⁶ Mahesh Bhagchandka, *Ashok Singhal. Staunch & Perserverant Exponent of Hindutva*, New Delhi: Ashok Singhal Foundation, 2017, p. 156.

⁷ Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-2004. Gradual Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 2010, p. 724.

has also criticised some of Modi's economic policies since 2014.⁸ For example, the current RSS leader, Mohan Bhagwat, spoke out against the government's alleged plan of privatising the national air company, Air India, and suggested that foreign companies should not be given majority shares in it⁹ and a foreigner should not be allowed to manage it.¹⁰

Yet, at the time of writing it seems that the position of Modi is so strong that the opponents of his pro-market will not be able to block his actions.

Relations with Pakistan

Since the ideology of Hindu nationalism crystallised around the call to organise Hindus against Muslims, Islam and its followers remain the primary enemies in the Hindutva narrative (even though the BJP is trying to deny and hide to remain attractive to its more liberal electorate and to build political alliances). Thus, the issue of India's relations with Muslim states should be the first one to come to our attention.

Pakistan remains the most hostile country to India and a one particularly hated by Hindu nationalists, as in 1947 it was separated from India as a country for Indian Muslims. Yet, it is for this very reason that Hindu nationalism's stance towards Pakistan has changed since the 1950s. On one hand, the Hindu nationalists point out that the territories of Pakistan had been a part of the Indian civilisation (which is true with regard to most of them) and regard the Partition of 1947 as a catastrophe for India. On the other hand, the Hindu nationalists do believe that Hindus and Muslims stand socially apart and that Muslims are a threat to Indian society, and thus they should also agree that the creation of Pakistan reduced the percentage of Muslims in the Indian

⁸ E.g. Krzysztof Iwanek, 'The Political Economy of Hindu Nationalism: From V.D. Savarkar to Narendra Modi', *International Journal of Knowledge and Innovation in Business*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2014, p. 29-33.

⁹ Abhiram Ghadyalpatil, *Mohan Bhagwat cautions Modi govt against Air India sale*, LiveMint, 17 April 2018, <https://www.livemint.com/Companies/hC6m5sTtJHJLdpJTA45N/Mohan-Bhagwat-cautions-Modi-govt-against-Air-India-sale.html>, (accessed 19.09.2018).

¹⁰ No author, *Divest Air India, but let it be with an Indian: Mohan Bhagwat*, *Economic Times*, 17 April 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/divest-air-india-but-let-it-be-with-an-indian-mohan-bhagwat/articleshow/63789014.cms> (accessed 19.09.2018).

population. Savarkar agreed with M.A. Jinnah, the “founding father” of Pakistan, that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations.¹¹

Thus, while criticising Partition and Pakistan is an obvious choice for Hindu nationalists, calling for a reintegration of Pakistan with India was a troubling idea, as it would mean welcoming millions of Muslims into the Republic of India. In the immediate years after Partition, however, the Hindu nationalists did call for the recreation of united India (akhand Bharat in Hindi).¹² The idea had apparently become marginal by the 1960s. In 1963 one of the most important leaders and policy makers of the party of the Hindu nationalists at that time, Deendayal Upadhyaya, had already started to talk about the possibility of an Indo-Pakistani federation, rather than a single state.¹³ Over years of conflicts between the two states, it became obvious that reintegration was neither possible nor desired. In 1962 the BJS claimed that having a dialogue in Pakistan on the Kashmir issue was impossible and in 1966 the party criticised the solutions of the 1966 Tashkent Declaration that ended the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965.¹⁴ When in power, however, the Hindu nationalists emerged to be much more open to parleys with Pakistan and the times of their rule did not introduce any important changes in this regard.

The first full National Democratic Alliance government (1999-2004) was dominated by the BJP led and by Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, a BJP leader and a Hindu nationalist. Regarding Pakistan policy, Vajpayee’s government is remembered, among other things, for India’s nuclear tests and the Kargil war in Kashmir in 1999 (which Pakistan started) and the 2001 tensions, when after terrorists’ attacks on the Indian soil New Delhi amassed an army on the border with Pakistan and the situation seemed to be on the verge of war. Thus, it may be argued that Vajpayee was very bold in his approach to Pakistan. What it is equally true, however, is that in between those two conflicts the Vajpayee’s government tried in earnest to start a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan by organising the Agra summit (in July 2001).

¹¹ Sumit Sarkar, *Beyond Nationalist Frames: Postmodernism, Hindu Fundamentalism, History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 247.

¹² Donald E. Smith, *India as a Secular State*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 461, and Craig Baxter, *Jana Sangh. A Biography of an Indian Political Party*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1971 p. 40.

¹³ Baxter, *Jana Sangh*... p. 250.

¹⁴ Baxter, *Jana Sangh*... p. 246, 252-253

While the nationalists again sat in the opposition benches in 2004-2014 they returned to sabre rattling towards Pakistan. For example, in one TV interview in 2014 Modi said that “Pakistan should be given a reply to in a language that Pakistan will understand”.¹⁵ At this point the idea of a united India suddenly reemerged, even if only on the rhetorical level. Ram Madhav, the BJP secretary, was reported to say just before Modi’s visit to Lahore that “The RSS still believes that one day these parts [India, Pakistan and Bangladesh]... will again, through popular goodwill, come together and Akhand Bharat [united India] will be created.”¹⁶ This was a single remark and thus one should not read too much into it. It should most probably be understood as a way of supporting Modi’s visit to Pakistan. Yet, it is noteworthy that Madhav, being both a BJP and an RSS member, chose to claim that it was the organisation (the RSS) and not the party (the BJP) that stood for a united India. Thus, the “united India” remark could have been aimed at the most radical factions within the Hindu nationalist camp (which may still dream of a united India). The RSS and other radical Hindu organisations do observe occasional “United India Festivals” and “United India Weeks”¹⁷ but such events seem to remain marginal to their main activities. Thus, there seems no proof that the nationalist idea of a “united India” has had any influence on India-Pakistan relations post 2014.

As it turned out, the confidence-building measures of 2014-2015 also had little or no impact on further Indo-Pakistani relations but also strongly contrasted Modi’s earlier (and later) sabre rattling towards Islamabad. In 2016, a chain of border skirmishes and terrorist attacks (the perpetrators of which came from the Pakistani side) again greatly

¹⁵ Gujarat CM Narendra Modi in Aap Ki Adalat (Full Episode), *India TV*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDzbReWkwI8> (accessed 10.06.2017).

¹⁶ No author, ‘India, Pakistan, Bangladesh will reunite to form Akhand Bharat: Ram Madhav’, *The Hindu*, 26 December 2015, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/akhand-bharat-india-pakistan-bangladesh-will-reunite-one-day-says-ram-madhav/article8031920.ece>, (accessed 10.06.2016).

¹⁷ E.g. Ravindra Saini, ‘Akhand Bharat Sankalp by Hindu Jagran Manch’, *Organiser*, 5 September 2014, <http://organiser.org/Encyc/2004/9/5/Sangh-Samachar-br--Akhand-Bharat-Sankalp-Saptah--by-Hindu-Jagaran-Manch.aspx?NB=&lang=3&m1=&m2=&p1=&p2=&p3=&p4=> (accessed 10.06.2016) or: no author, ‘RSS observes Akhand Bharat Divas in Kolkata’, *Organiser*, 31 August 2012, <http://organiser.org/Encyc/2012/8/31/-b-RSS-observes-Akhand-Bharat-Divas-in-Kolkata-b-.aspx?NB=&lang=3&m1=&m2=&p1=&p2=&p3=&p4=>, (accessed 10.06.2016). *Organiser* is a weekly brought out by the RSS.

increased the level of bilateral tensions. These culminated in September 2016 with an Indian response in the form of “surgical strikes” of Indian soldiers on terrorist camps within the territory controlled by Pakistan. While this may have looked like nationalist boldness, the surgical strikes at Pakistan were not a novelty: they also happened in 2008, 2010 and 2011, when Hindu nationalists were in opposition.

The one element in the India-Pakistan dialogue in which Hindu nationalist sentiments are prominently on display is the issue of the Kashmiri Pandits. Pandit is another term for Brahman, the traditional priest in the Hindu community. When the internal situation of Kashmir worsened at the end of 1980s and the beginnings of 1990s – partially due to the influx of foreign Muslim fighters from Afghanistan and Pakistan – the Kashmiri Pandits started to be targeted by radical Muslims. Thousands of Pandits were thus forced to flee the Valley of Kashmir and settle elsewhere in India.

The current BJP government is promising that it will facilitate the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley.¹⁸ Prime Minister Modi introduced a special package that would guarantee a section of government jobs in Jammu and Kashmir for that community.¹⁹ The attempts at resettlement were facilitated by the fact that after 2014 the BJP came to power in the state, having formed a coalition with the regional People's Democratic Party. The state government chose 100 acres of land that could have been given for the use of the Pandits.²⁰ The promise of resettlement, however, has not been fulfilled by the time of writing (September 2018). The process could have been slowed by the fact that in that the state assembly coalition government fell apart after the BJP withdrew from it June 2018, but in the longer perspective, the

¹⁸ E.g. No author, ‘BJP passes resolution on return of Kashmiri Pandits to Valley’, *Indian Express*, 16 September 2016, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/bjp-passes-resolution-on-return-of-kashmiri-pandits-to-valley-3029859/> (accessed 6.10.2017). Bharatiya Janata Party, ‘Ek Bharat, Shresthra Bharat. Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. Election Manifesto 2014’, New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party, 2014, p. 8.

¹⁹ No author, ‘J&K govt tells Kashmiri Pandit employees to join work within 15 days or face termination’, *FirstPost*, 1 August 2017, <https://www.firstpost.com/india/jk-govt-tells-kashmiri-pandit-employees-to-join-work-within-15-days-or-face-termination-3879499.html> (accessed 19.07.2018).

²⁰ No author, ‘Jammu and Kashmir government identifies 100 acres for resettlement’, *Times of India*, 23 January 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/jammu-and-kashmir-government-identifies-100-acres-for-resettling-kashmiri-pandits/articleshow/56740755.cms> (accessed 17.09.2018).

party was not able to finalise the resettlement also through its earlier periods of rule.

While being a domestic issue, the return of Kashmiri Pandits – or even a promise of its facilitation – will have international importance as well. The radical section of the Kashmiri Muslims will certainly be opposed to the resettlement of the Pandits. The government of Pakistan usually uses all aspects of unrest that takes place in the Indian part of Kashmir to use them against India and to try to weaken India's legitimacy to rule over Kashmir. In 2015, when a lot was heard about Indian government plans to resettle the Pandits, the spokesperson of the Pakistani government Tasneem Aslam claimed that any such attempt would be a "violation of the U.N. Security council resolutions".²¹ In that case it would be correct to judge that the ideology of Hindu nationalism played a role in striving for settlement, even if the resettlement issue is unlikely to substantially change the already tense situation.

Relations with Bangladesh and Myanmar

It should be added, however, that when it comes to the issue of the influx of foreign Muslims the ideology probably influences some elements of foreign policy. The BJP's 2014 election manifesto promised that 'India shall remain a natural home for persecuted Hindus and they shall be welcome to seek refuge here.'²² The document, therefore, clearly focused on Hindus, not representatives of all religions.²³

When in mid-2017 a military crackdown on the Rohingyas in Myanmar forced many of them to flee to Bangladesh and India, the New Delhi government took an unfriendly position towards the refugees. The Interior Ministry claimed that the Rohingyas would be expelled and Narendra Modi did not bring this issue up publicly while visiting

²¹ Robert Birsell, 'Pakistan says Hindu settlements in Kashmir violate U.N. resolutions', *Reuters*, <http://in.reuters.com/article/pakistan-india/pakistan-says-hindu-settlements-in-kashmir-violate-u-n-resolutions-idINKBN0NL1IK20150430> (accessed 6.10.2017).

²² Bharatiya Janata Party, 'Ek Bharat, Shresthtra Bharat. Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. Election Manifesto 2014', New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party, 2014, p. 40.

²³ On the margins of these musings it would be interesting to note was that the BJP was not strongly defending the Hindu monarchy in Nepal – the last Hindu monarchy on the globe – was being abolished in 2007-8. When the constitution of the nascent Republic of Nepal was being prepared, *Organiser*, the RSS mouthpiece, published a piece penned by the general secretary of the Nepal Buddhist Federation, which claimed that Nepal should not stick to "to the outdated philosophy of theocratic Brahmanism dominance in the name of Hinduism."

Myanmar in the same period. Modi's joint declaration with Suu Kyi spoke of concerns about "extremist violence" (which most possibly was a reference to radical Muslims amongst Rohingyas) while other Hindu nationalist sources were more outspoken, pointing to the fact that most of Rohingyas profess Islam (while ignoring that some of them are Hindus). In short, the New Delhi government has acted very sternly when it came to the Rohingya crisis, wanting to stop their influx, announcing its plan to deport them, but also sending relief material to Rohingyas in Bangladesh,²⁴ apparently in the hope that it would stop them from coming to India. Thus, it could be assumed – though this cannot be proved – that Hindu nationalist ideology played a role in inflaming fear of Muslim radicalism among Rohingyas.²⁵

This issue has also become a part of a larger debate on the new citizenship bill. In 2016, the current government tabled the the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which, if turned into an act, would alter the ways of obtaining Indian citizenship. The bill mentions illegal migrants of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian religions coming from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan as eligible for the citizenship.²⁶ In other words, it omits Muslim migrants and ignores migrants from Myanmar (regardless of their religion) altogether. If the bill becomes a law, it would be an indication of Hindu nationalism's more concrete influence, albeit even here the primary concern is the internal situation, while the law could have some international consequences. It must be noted, however, that the bill has not been passed yet and has already sparked a lot of controversies in India.²⁷

²⁴ No author, India Sends Relief Material To Bangladesh For Rohingya Refugees, *NDTV*, 18 September 2018, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-sends-relief-material-to-bangladesh-for-rohingya-refugees-for-third-time-1918283> (accessed 20.09.2018).

²⁵ The Organiser has published a number of articles that spoke against the presence of Rohingyas in India. The most radical texts referred to the issue of Rohingyas settling in Jammu. E.g. Nishant Kr. Azad, Rohingya Muslims: Agenda to disturb Peace of Jammu, *The Organiser*, 6.08.2018, <http://www.organiser.org/Encyc/2018/8/6/Rohingya-Muslims-Agenda-to-disturb-Peace-of-Jammu.html> (accessed 21.08.2018).

²⁶ Wamika Kapur, *The Trouble with India's New Citizenship Bill*, *The Diplomat*, 11 March 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/the-trouble-with-indias-new-citizenship-bill/>, (accessed 20.09.2018).

²⁷ Debasree Purkayastha, *What is the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016?*, *The Hindu*, 26 May 2018,

Otherwise, when it comes to Bangladesh, Modi's government has strived to make the ties with the eastern neighbour warmer. While the illegal immigration of Bangladeshis (chiefly Muslims) and the involvement of fringe elements amongst them in terrorist activities in India are a cause of concern, and have often been brought up by Hindu nationalists (and not only them), the ideology of Hindu nationalism does not seem to be an element influencing New Delhi-Dhaka parleys. One of the most important breakthroughs in the two states' relations under Modi's tenure was the decision to swap enclaves on the border of India and Bangladesh, finally approved by the Indian parliament in 2016. There is no indication that ideology played any role here, and it may be noted that the BJP performed a U-turn, as it had voted against the swap when it was in opposition.

It is worth adding, however, that the Hindu nationalists of the RSS are building influence among the Hindu minority in Bangladesh. Some Hindu nationalist leaders (such as the recently departed Ashok Singhal, the leader of RSS' religious platform, Vishwa Hindu Parishad) have been in touch with Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mohajote, an organisation that aims at representing the Hindu minority of that country and voicing its concerns. According to some sources, the RSS has been also involved politically in Bangladesh, standing behind some of the Hindu minority candidates in elections.²⁸ This is perhaps the only case of such direct political involvement of the RSS outside of India. This still seems to be a minor issue, however, and if it did leave an impact on Dhaka-New Delhi relations, such effects were not revealed to the general public.

Relations with Israel and Arab states

The Hindu nationalists' perspective on the Jewish nation has seemingly evolved. In the late colonial period, Savarkar warned against settling Jews in India, while Golwalkar, the RSS leader, justified Nazi Germany's behaviour towards the Jews. On the other hand, in the same text, published in 1923, Savarkar stated that "if Palestine becomes a

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/what-is-the-citizenship-amendment-bill-2016/article23999348.ece>, (accessed 20.09.2018).

²⁸ Chandan Nandy, *RSS gets 'involved' in pushing more Hindus as candidates for upcoming Bangladesh parliamentary polls*, South Asian Monitor, 30 August 2018, <https://southasianmonitor.com/2018/08/30/rss-gets-involved-in-pushing-more-hindus-as-candidates-for-upcoming-bangladesh-parliamentary-polls/>, (accessed 21.09.2018).

Jewish State [...] it will gladden us almost as much as our Jewish friends”.²⁹ Moreover when the state of Israel did come into existence, Golwalkar supported this development. As early as 1962 the RSS mouthpiece *Organiser* called for establishing ties with Israel³⁰. Savarkar supported the same solution already in late 1950s.³¹ According to Dhooria A.B. Vajpayee’s suggestion to support the Arab states had been silenced within the Hindu nationalist milieu.³² Thus, in the area of Middle East policy, Hindu nationalists differed from the socialist Indian National Congress that dominated Indian politics from the 1940s to the 1980s. Throughout this period New Delhi supported the Arab states. India and Israel established formal diplomatic ties as late as 1992.

Closer to contemporary times the BJP claimed that the rationale of the effort to deepen cooperation with Israel was that it was a modern state which could offer interesting technologies. The party has been sending delegations to Israel even when in opposition. Yet, I assume that the Hindu nationalists’ position on Israel was also ideologically driven. The Jewish nation was perceived by them as a role model of a community that retains its religious traditions and homogeneity. When the Jews were stateless, their diaspora in many countries was a religious minority and hence for the Hindu nationalists in the colonial era the Jewish minority in a country like Germany could have been comparable to the Muslim minority in India. At the same time, however, the Jewish state – once it was reborn - was a positive example of homogeneity from the perspective of Hindu nationalists. Savarkar claimed that “no people in the world can more justly claim to get recognised as a racial unit than the Hindus and perhaps the Jews”.³³ When Israel was created, Golwalkar wrote that “The reconstruction of the Hebrew Nation in Palestine is just an affirmation of the fact that Country, Race, Religion, Culture and Language must exist unavoidably together to form a full Nation idea”³⁴. It can be also assumed that for Hindu nationalists, with their siege

²⁹ Savarkar, *Hindutva*... p. 53.

³⁰ No author, ‘The RSS: Turning over a new leaf?’, *India Today*, 7 July 2014, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/rss-reportedly-considering-admitting-non-hindus-in-its-fold/1/435500.html>, (accessed 9.04. 2016).

³¹ Dhananjay Kheer, *Veer Savarkar*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966, p. 499.

³² Ram Lal Dhooria, *I was a Swayamsevak (An inside view of the RSS)*, New Delhi, Samprayikta Virodhi Committee, New Delhi, n.d., p. 28.

³³ Savarkar, *Hindutva*... p. 33.

³⁴ Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, *We, Our Nationhood Defined*, Nagpur: Bharat Publications, 1993, p. 79.

mentality, Israel was and is a role model as a country boldly dealing with hostile Muslim neighbours and a Muslim minority.

Still, as in other cases, the post-2014 government of Narendra Modi did not substantially change India's earlier Middle East policy though it did strengthen its ties with Israel. In 2014 it was rumoured that New Delhi will cease to support Palestine in the UN but that had not happened at the time of writing.³⁵ So far, the conclusion is that India is gradually marginalising the Palestine issue³⁶ and more often abstaining from voting against Israel at the UN. On the other hand, however, New Delhi supported the UN vote against Washington's proposal to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017³⁷. On a visit to Palestine in 2018 Modi reiterated Indian government's support for the two-state solution and for an 'independent' and 'sovereign' Palestine, though he did not use the words 'united' and 'viable'.³⁸ Modi was also India's first Prime Minister to visit Israel (in 2017). These are noteworthy developments but it should once again be pointed out that the policy of strengthening ties with Israel was started by earlier, centre-left governments in New Delhi. Moreover, Modi's government is not foregoing its ties with Arabic states of the Middle East. India's Prime Minister also visited Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

³⁵ This rumour caused some marginal protests of Muslims in India. At least one party rival to the BJP and attempting to win over the Muslim electorate – the Aam Aadmi Party – supported the Palestinian cause while criticising BJP's position. Adam Burakowski, Krzysztof Iwanek, 'India's Aam Aadmi (the Common Man's) Party. Are the Newcomers Rocking National Politics?', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 57, No. 3, p. 541. This reminds us that the BJP's position on Palestine is partially conditioned by the fact that the party is usually not vying for Muslim votes, contrary to many of its rival parties.

³⁶ Ankit Panda, 'India's Position on Israel and Palestine: Change or no Change?', *The Diplomat*, 6 July 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/07/indias-position-on-israel-and-palestine-change-or-no-change/> (accessed 7.10.2017) and Anjana Pasricha, 'With Modi's Visit to Israel, India Sheds Historical Baggage', *VOA News*, 7 July 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/amp/with-modi-visit-to-israel-india-sheds-historical-baggage/3932358.html> (accessed 7.10.2017).

³⁷ Yashwant Raj, 'India's Jerusalem vote consistent with its position on Palestine', *Hindustan Times*, 22 December 2017, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/india-s-jerusalem-vote-marked-an-end-and-a-beginning/story-nYxmnZ5T9JvIJCsz3JXP.html> (accessed 18.09.2018).

³⁸ No author, 'In Palestine for Three Hours, Modi Drops Indian Support for 'United', 'Viable' Palestinian State', *The Wire*, 12 February 2018, <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/palestine-three-hours-modi-drops-indian-support-united-viable-palestinian-state> (accessed 19.08.2018).

The RSS' official sources do not seem to be criticising these developments. For instance, in 2017 the Organiser, the RSS' English-language mouthpiece, ran an article which praised Modi's attempts to strengthen ties with the UAE.³⁹ This is despite the fact that the RSS often warns about of radical forms of Islam flourishing in parts of India, allegedly partially due to the funding from foreign extremist organisations from Arab states or Pakistan. One case which could have been read as ideologically-driven was the Modi government's refusal to accept foreign aid from the UAE for the state of Kerala which had been devastated by floods in 2018 (many inhabitants of Kerala work in the UAE, and many Keralites are Muslims as well, hence some of the Hindu nationalists link this connection with radical Islam in Kerala). In reality, however, the decision was in line with New Delhi's earlier policy and, once again, was a continuation of the direction set by the earlier, non-BJP government.⁴⁰ It is clear that Hindu nationalist sentiments are not being allowed to come in the way of India's interests in the Arabic part of the Middle East, which include primarily energy imports and millions of Indians working in some of the Arab countries in the region.

Conclusions

To sum up, this article offers these conclusions: (1) There is consensus between the leading national Indian parties regarding the course of foreign policy (while the smaller regional parties do not focus on this policy at all); (2) There is consensus amongst India's political elites that New Delhi should balance its position between Moscow and Washington; (3) a common feature is that the opposition parties, nationalists or otherwise, call for a bolder position towards Beijing and Islamabad but are always more conciliatory once in power; (4) while the present government enhances its cooperation with Israel, it also understands that India's interests in the Middle East must be safeguarded even though it implies cooperation with the Arab countries;

³⁹ Kanwal Sibal, *Foreign Policy: Upswing in Indo-UAE Ties*, The Organiser, 24 January 2017,

<http://organiser.org/Encyc/2017/1/24/Foreign-Policy-Indo-UAE-Ties-Upswing-in-Indo-UAE-Ties.aspx?NB=&lang=3&m1=&m2=&p1=&p2=&p3=&p4=> (accessed 19.08.2018).

⁴⁰ Indrani Bagchi, *Why it's perfectly justified for India to refuse foreign aid for Kerala*, Economic Times, 23 August 2018,

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/why-its-perfectly-justified-for-india-to-refuse-foreign-aid-for-natural-disasters/articleshow/65506672.cms> (accessed 20.09.2018).

and hence (5) there is no visible influence of the ideology of Hindu nationalism on the main direction of Indian foreign policy.

In my view, some of the reasons for this situation for the Hindu nationalists stem from the following factors: (1) As a ruling party, the BJP must be more flexible, realistic and moderate, and cannot allow the RSS with its rigid approach, to influence India's foreign policy; (2) with regards to international relations, the leading politicians of the BJP have so far put trust in their diplomats and professional bureaucrats (such as employees of the Ministry of External Affairs) and have not embarked on a large-scale change of these cadres; (3) ideology becomes more prominent in Indian foreign policy when domestic needs seem to dictate it – in other words, certain declarations that seem to be bold and nationalistic are more aimed at a particular electorate in India than in fulfilling goals on the international stage; and, lastly (4) there is a swadeshi faction within the ruling party and Hindu nationalist circles that calls for a protection of Indian industries and opposes various activities of multinational companies in India. This factor could have been more important for Indian foreign policy but at present the position of the current Prime Minister is so strong that the swadeshi faction cannot stop him from trying to attract foreign companies to India.

Sino-Indian Standoff on the Doklam plateau

Abstract

In the summer of 2017, the armies of the two most populous nations of the world stood eye-to-eye, seemingly without any preceding cause, on the Doklam plateau, the ownership of which is disputed by both Bhutan and China. The aim of this paper is to place this episode in the context of Sino-Indian relations, assessing its repercussions for their shared future as two neighbouring nuclear powers, as well as for their past, keeping in mind the lasting scars and consequences of the Sino-Indian War of 1962, which was caused by similar reasons. We will search for the answers to the following questions: how was this border dispute similar or different than the one 55 years before? What effect did the then-approaching 19th Party Congress have on the decisions of Beijing and Xi Jinping? What was the reason of the sudden assertiveness of the Indian side? What did Bhutan, the third party, think about the dispute, stuck between the two Asian giants? And meanwhile, where was the United States of America?

Keywords: Border conflict, Bhutan, China, Doklam plateau, India.

Introduction

The aim of this study is introduction and analysis of the events of the summer of 2017 which transpired between China and India on the Doklam plateau.¹ This episode, which lasted from June 16² to August 28,³ when Chinese and Indian troops engaged in a staring match on the disputed Doklam plateau, is different in many ways from previous border clashes and incidents, as this disputed area has been mostly calm so far, and opposed to other border disputes between the two countries,

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¹ Also called Dolam plateau.

² Ankit Panda, 'Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End?', 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01.03.2018).

³ Simon Denyer, Annie Gowen, 'Who blinked in the China-India military standoff?', 30 August 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/08/30/who-blinked-in-china-india-military-standoff/>, (accessed 01. 03. 2018.)

it happened on the land of a third country. After a short historical summary and a brief introduction of Bhutan, the third player of the incident, I continue with the history of the area in question and previous attempts at negotiations, ending with the antecedent events of the standoff. The second part will deal with the motivations and arguments of the Chinese and Indian sides, finishing with the resolution and possible continuation of the crisis.

The first and bloodiest conflict between the two countries reborn after the Second World War was the war of 1962. As a result of colonial power politics, the two countries share a nearly 3,500 km-long and often disputed border. The two biggest disputed areas are Aksai Chin in the west, just north of Ladakh, and the border area at Arunachal Pradesh on the eastern side of the border. The former is controlled by the Chinese, while the latter area is controlled by the Indians. In the middle of the shared border, there are numerous smaller passes under dispute. The first border incidents starting in the 1950s culminated in a war, when on the eastern side of the border, Chinese troops attacked Indian patrols crossing to the other side of the infamous McMahon-Line, and after a successful offensive, pushed back the Indian troops deep behind the line with another attack. The war ended with a unilateral ceasefire by the Chinese, after pulling back behind the line.⁴

⁴ Ádám Róma, *Sino-Indian Relations Since the Second World War - From Panchsheel to the Sino-Indian War of 1962 - Deterioration of Relations*, BA Dissertation, Eötvös Lóránd University, 2016, p.52.



Picture 1: Disputed areas in 1962⁵

In the decades following the war, there were no shortages of border incidents, with the last ones in 2013 at Depsang⁶ and in 2014 at Chumar.⁷ The border-section now in question has been relatively silent until now, except for some local skirmishes in 1967.⁸ Although the trijunction between the Bhutanese, Chinese and Indian border has never been a centre of this kind of attention before, there were signs pointing to it, even as far back as 1959. In that year Jawaharal Nehru pointed out

⁵ Gen. Deepak Kapoor, 'Chinese Provocation: Is India Prepared?', 3 May 2013, <http://www.facenfacts.com/NewsDetails/38459/chinese-provocation:-is-india-prepared?.htm>, (accessed 01.03.2018.)

⁶ Chinese built a base in a disputed area, then the Indians did the same, the incident lasted three weeks.

⁷ A standoff for two weeks, because of a Chinese road-building plan, the conflict ended with concessions from both sides.

⁸ At the Nathu La and Cho La passes.

in a letter written to Zhou Enlai that certain Chinese maps showed substantial Bhutanese territories belonging to Tibet.⁹

Bhutan between giants

As we can see from above, the events of the summer of 2017 are of vital concern not just for China and India, but for Bhutan too, as the conflict was on soil claimed by Bhutan. For this reason, a short, but crucial, introduction of the small Himalayan kingdom is necessary. Although its size is smaller than Switzerland and its population is less than Cyprus', its geographical position elevated it into its current position. Not long ago it was in relative seclusion from the world between the ranges of the Himalayas, but it has started to open up to the rest of the world. This relative seclusion can be put into perspective by the fact that television and internet was legalised in 1999.¹⁰ The kingdom also transformed into a constitutional monarchy, with the first elections held in 2008,¹¹ and the third to be held in 2018.¹² This change was initiated by the current king of Bhutan, Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck.

A closer look at Bhutan's relations with its two neighbours reveals disproportional differences. While diplomatic relations with China are almost nonexistent, India, stepping into the shoes the British left behind, is exerting significant influence on Bhutan's security and foreign policy. Although the two countries 'friendship treaty' made in 1947 was updated in 2007 with the recent changes in Bhutan, thus gaining more autonomy in the two aforementioned areas, the following sentence should be noted:

⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Prime Minister Nehru's Letter to Chou En-lai', 26 September 1959.

¹⁰ Brian Benedictus, 'Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle', 2 August 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20151222212344/http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/bhutan-and-the-great-power-tussle/>, (accessed 01.03.2018.)

¹¹ Pillalamarri Akhilesh, Subanthore Aswin, 'What Do the Bhutanese People Think About Doklam?', 14 August 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170929185502/https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/what-do-the-bhutanese-people-think-about-doklam/>, (accessed 01.03.2018.)

¹² Chaudhuri Rudra, 'Looking for Godot', 3 September 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/looking-for-godot-doklam-standoff-india-china-bhutan-neighbours/lite/>, (accessed 01.03.2018.)

„Neither government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other.”¹³

Besides the Treaty, India's role in Bhutan can be further explained with the fact that India is Bhutan's biggest economic and trade partner: Bhutan exports 60% of its goods and services to India and 75% of its imports come from there. India also plays the strongest, if not the only, role in Bhutan's energy sector, and regularly provides credits and aid to Bhutan.



Picture 2: An Indian bridge-construction project in Bhutan¹⁴

But the exclusion of China is not without its reasons. On a map issued after the birth of the People's Republic the greater part of Bhutan is shown as an ancient Chinese territory, while the following statement from 1960 also made Bhutan more worry:

¹³ Ankit Panda, 'The Political Geography of the India-China Crisis at Doklam', 13 July 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170714232229/http://thediplomat.com/2017/07/the-political-geography-of-the-india-china-crisis-at-doklam/>, (accessed 01.03.2018).

¹⁴ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, 'Doklam discussed, Pakistan skipped: Here's what happened at the 1 hour meet between Xi and Modi', 5 September 2017, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/doklam-discussed-pakistan-skipped-heres-what-happened-at-the-1-hour-meet-between-xi-and-modi/articleshow/60372716.cms>, (accessed 01.03.2018).

“Bhutanese, Sikkimese and Ladakhis form a united family in Tibet. They have always been subject to Tibet and the great motherland of China. They must once again be united and taught the communist doctrine.”

After these events, Bhutan closed off the 470 km long border section and ended all relations with China. The Bhutanese Royal Army was also established in 1963, still vividly remembering the annexation of Tibet.¹⁵



Sources: maps4news.com/HERE, Reuters, openstreetmap, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indian Express

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Picture 3: The disputed area and the standoff location¹⁶

¹⁵ Brian Benedictus, 'Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle', 2 August 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/2015122212344/http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/bhutan-and-the-great-power-tussle/>, (accessed 01.03.2018).

¹⁶ Denyer and Gowen, 2017.

The Origin of the Border Dispute and Previous Attempts to Solve it

The origin of the border dispute goes back to a survey in the 19th century, which was followed by the *Convention Between Great Britain and China Relating to Sikkim and Tibet* signed in Calcutta in 1890. The aim of the convention was the ascertainment of the borders between the then-British protectorate, the Kingdom of Sikkim, and Tibet. But India's interpretation of the Convention is different, seemingly confirmed by the geographical reality, as in this Convention, just like in any other Himalayan border-treaty from the era, the main principle behind the determination of the borders was the watershed principle, meaning the border falls on the highest continuous mountain ridge in the area in question. Unsurprisingly, there is a ridge in the Doklam area too, but this ridge stops at Batang La. This is the point which the Bhutanese and Indian side see as the trijunction point, even though the text of the Convention puts this point at Mount Gimpochi, south of Batang La. Because of this, the first sentence of the Convention, which states the use of the watershed principle, comes into conflict with the second sentence, which names Mount Gimpochi as the end of the mountain ridge. This contradiction is further complicated by the fact that no map was made with the Convention, and some Sikkimese sources claim that Mount Gimpochi is in fact Batang-La.¹⁷

¹⁷ Brian Benedictus, 'Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle', 2 August 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20151222212344/http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/bhutan-and-the-great-power-tussle/>, (accessed 01.03.2018).



Picture 4: The contradiction on a map¹⁸

This was not the first time that this Convention had an important impact in the area, as the Kingdom of Sikkim and Tibet was not a part of it, thus Tibet rejected the Convention, a decision that was followed by the punitive Younghusband expedition in 1903-1904. After the expedition, the British recognised Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, in exchange for a number of rights in China. The Convention is also tied into the birth of the Kingdom of Bhutan as a hereditary monarchy in 1907 under the British Empire to serve as a buffer between India and Chinese-ruled Tibet.¹⁹

Negotiations

The negotiations to solve the problem in this inaccurately surveyed and contradictory border section with the other six disputed areas started in 1972. While the negotiations started between China and India, by 1984 Beijing had succeeded in bringing Bhutan to the table

¹⁸Ankit Panda, 'Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End?', 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01.03.2018.).

¹⁹Joshi Manoj, Doklam: To start at the very beginning, *ORF Special Report*, Observer Research Foundation, 2017, <http://www.orfonline.org/research/doklam-start-very-beginning/> (accessed 01.03.2018).

instead of India.²⁰ Since then, there have been a total of 24 rounds of talk about the disputed areas²¹ without success. Although in 1996 China offered a swap-deal to Bhutan, which was seriously considering accepting it in 1997, but in the end, possibly thanks to Indian pressure, it was rejected. The first real progress was in 1998 after the twelfth round, which was the *Agreement to Maintain Peace and Tranquility on the Bhutan-China Border*, the first bilateral agreement between the two countries. In this Agreement China recognised the Bhutanese sovereignty and agreed to maintain the peaceful conditions, on the basis of the status quo before March 1959, and at the same time refraining from unilaterally changing the aforementioned status quo. Later, in 2007, Bhutan also issued a map, conceding a mountain to China, but this gesture did not solve the question, and moreover the Chinese claims shows continuous growth. If Bhutan would have accepted every claim, it would face losing around 4,500 km², 10% of its territory.²²



²⁰ Brian Benedictus, 'Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle', 2 August 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20151222212344/http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/bhutan-and-the-great-power-tussle/>, (accessed 01.03.2018).

²¹ 'The Facts and China's Position Concerning the Indian Border Troops' Crossing of the China-India Boundary in the Sikkim Sector into the Chinese Territory.', *Government of China*, 2017.

²² "Bhutan-China Border Mismatch", 1 January 2013. <https://web.archive.org/web/20170810053429/http://www.bhutannewsservice.org/bhutan-china-border-mismatch/>. (access: 01.03.2018).

Picture 5: The location of the planned road construction²³

The Incident in 2017 and Its Immediate Antecedents

The catalyst for the military standoff was a Chinese plan to extend a road in the disputed area.²⁴ According to Bhutanese and Indian statements, Chinese engineers started the work on June 16, and in response Indian troops arrived on June 18, crossing the border and halting the construction, resulting in the standoff.²⁵ According to the statement of the Bhutanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese planned to build a motorable road to the south, from Dokola in the



direction of a Bhutanese military base at Zomperli. On the basis of the agreements before, Bhutan saw this as a violation of the status quo, and called China to reinstate the status quo preceding June 16. The planned road was supposed to be the prolongation of a dirt road built in 2005, which had been used up to then as a way to reach the border area, and from where the Chinese troops could patrol and survey the area on foot until the military base at Zomperli.

²³ Ankit Panda, 'What's Driving the India-China Standoff at Doklam?', 18 July 2017 <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/whats-driving-the-india-china-standoff-at-doklam/> (accessed 01. 03. 2018).

²⁴ Dashed arrow on the map.

²⁵ Ankit Panda, 'Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End?', 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01. 03. 2018).

*Picture 6: A map issued by the Chinese Government depicting the disputed area*²⁶

The public only got wind of the events on June 23, when the Chinese closed down the Nathu La pass, preventing pilgrims to pass. At first the Chinese side cited the danger of landslides as their reason, but on the 26th, the Chinese spokesperson, Geng Shuang admitted that the closing down of Nathu La happened out of security concerns, and then stated the Chinese standpoint. This was that Indian troops had crossed the border and obstructed the Chinese border patrol in their routine tasks, despite the fact that the border has been settled according to the Convention of 1890. On June 28, the Bhutanese ambassador in New Delhi gave an interview, where he explained the Bhutanese standpoint about the disputed border and the status quo, reaffirmed the next day with the official statement of the Bhutanese Government.²⁷

This signaled the start of the battle of statements, which lasted until the end of August. There were more notable events during this time, for example the G20 summit, where both Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi were in attendance, but there were no separate meetings between them, which could have helped to ease the tension.²⁸

Up until the end of the conflict in late August, while the armies were staring each other down on the plateau, the two nations started to issue statements and publish articles as part of their dispute, both hoping to force the other to back down, while stressing their interpretation of the events. Despite the strong language of these publications, often loaded with nationalistic sentiments, both sides refrained from armed confrontations, supported by their shared and time-proven rule of not letting the border patrols use loaded guns while carrying out their duties, but this did not prevent them from using other creative methods, whether it was simple pushing and shoving, fighting with their gun-

²⁶ Ankit Panda, 'Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End?', 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01. 03. 2018).

²⁷ Joshi Manoj, 'Doklam: To start at the very beginning', *ORF Special Report*. Observer Research Foundation, 2017.

²⁸ Steven Lee Myers, Ellen Barry, Max Fisher, 'How India and China Have Come to the Brink Over a Remote Mountain Pass', 26 July 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/doklam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html> (accessed 01.03.2018).

stock or pelting rocks.²⁹ There were around 300-400 soldiers from both sides in the immediate vicinity, while approximately 3,000-4,000 battle-ready troops were stationed nearby.³⁰ An interesting episode of the quarrel was a video made by the Chinese Xinhua News Agency, which listed the sins of India, presenting the Indians in a mocking and caricature-like way.³¹ Despite all of these, diplomacy succeeded at the end of August, with both sides withdrawing from the area. In the next parts, I will attempt to analyse the motivations of the three countries and the possible consequences.

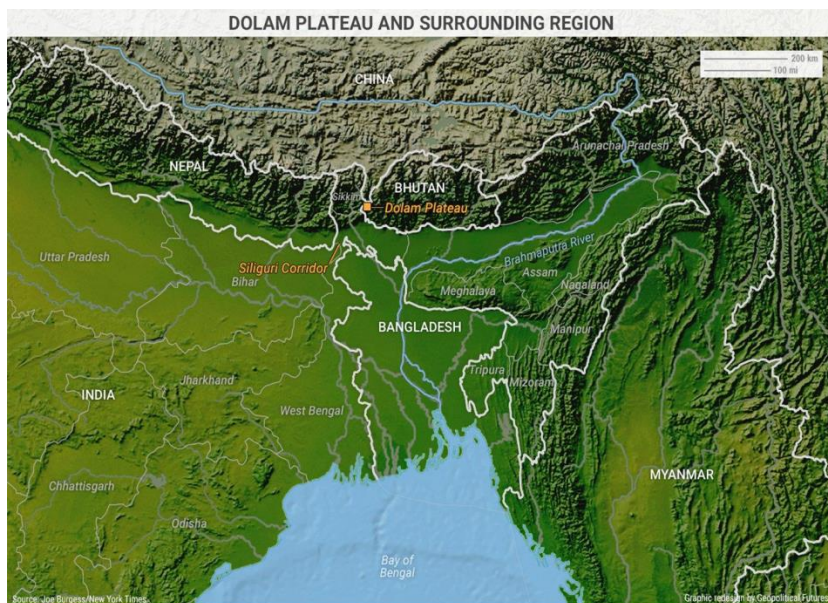
If we read the document issued by the Chinese Government on August 2, we could ask, why would New Delhi interfered with a road construction using 270 soldiers in an area belonging to China based on the Convention of 1890, especially if we take into account that the area is disputed by Bhutan, not by India, and the number of negotiations clearly implies the will to resolve it on both sides.³² Unfortunately, as we saw before, the Convention offers little help, and is not as reliable in pinpointing the trijunction point as Beijing would like it to be.

²⁹ Ankit Panda, 'Stone-Pelting at Lake Pangong: India, China Border Tensions Under the Spotlight', 21 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/stone-pelting-at-lake-pangong-india-china-border-tensions-under-the-spotlight/> (accessed 01.03.2018).

³⁰ Fedrika Allison, 'China and India may be on a path to war', 5 August 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170810052011/http://uk.businessinsider.com/china-and-india-and-doklam-2017-8?r=US&IR=T> (accessed 01.03.2018).

³¹ Chandran Nyshka, 'Racist video from China's official press agency mocks Indians', 17 August 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/17/chinese-media-xinhua-mocks-indians-and-pm-narendra-modis-policies-in-racist-video.html> (accessed 01.03.2018).

³² "The Facts and China's Position..."



Picture 7: The Siliguri corridor and the Doklam plateau³³

Keeping in mind, that if China successfully enforces her claims against Bhutan, India would face a grave security problem, as the Chinese military on the disputed Doklam plateau would be able to threaten the territorial integrity of India from a highly advantageous position, because just south of the plateau lies the 23 km-wide Siliguri corridor, also known as the “chicken-neck” between Nepal and Bangladesh, which provides the connection between the main territories and the north-western states of India. Accounting for this geostrategic weakness, the never-before shown assertiveness of the Indian interference is everything but surprising,³⁴ even if it happened on the soil of a third country, or she has to face accusations of infringing international law and the national sovereignty of China.³⁵ According to India, there is also an obscure agreement made in 2012, where the two sides agreed to

³³ Fedrika, 2017.

³⁴ Ankit Panda, ‘Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End ?’, 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01. 03. 2018).

³⁵ “The Facts and China’s Position...”

consider the Convention of 1890 only in a broad sense, and further talks would be needed to precisely determine the border alignment. However China never commented on this and kept referencing to the Convention as the conclusive evidence.³⁶

Another accusation that India had to face was that Bhutan had never asked for India's help. True enough, there were no official or public request of this nature, but the close nature of the two countries' connection can't be ignored, especially seeing that there were already interferences from India's part during Bhutan-China negotiations, and the use of unofficial channels is always an option, which could seem entirely plausible even if we just think of their 'friendship treaty', or just taking into account the Indian statements where they mention their cooperation with Bhutan. The silence of the latter country during the crisis drew heavy criticism from both the Chinese and Indian public, but local sources attributes this to a well-thought out strategy to not interfere with the Sino-Indian negotiations, leaving them more room to maneuver and save face, thus evading the possibility of a larger military conflict, which would have happened on their land.³⁷

Motivations of China

To understand what happened on the Doklam plateau and why, a much needed summary of the Chinese – suspected – motivations is needed, as their actions served as the catalyst for the crisis. According to the official statements given by the Chinese, this road-building plan does not seem as important or menacing as the Indian reaction would suggest. From their perspective, they wanted to improve the infrastructure in an undeveloped area, inside Chinese borders. While India over recent decades has already made huge progress in infrastructural developments in the nearby areas, China has not done anything similar, and most of the already existing roads are dirt tracks, making them vulnerable to the harsh weather conditions in the Himalayas. It is entirely plausible, that Beijing decided that this year would be the time for undertaking infrastructural improvements in the region. The only difference between them is that while India made these improvements on undisputed Indian soil, the Chinese undertaking was supposed to happen on disputed soil,

³⁶ Joshi Manoj, 'Doklam: To start at the very beginning', *ORF Special Report*. Observer Research Foundation, 2017.

³⁷ Tenzing Lamsang, 'The Third Leg of Doklam', 8 May 2017, <http://thebhutanese.bt/the-third-leg-of-doklam-2/> (accessed 03.01.2018).

which they undoubtedly knew. Still, there are signs, that China did not consider this building plan as a violation of the status quo. Such a sign was an unnamed diplomatic source from New Delhi, who claimed that the Chinese had already informed the Indians about their plans on June 1, two weeks before the start of the road building. If this piece of information is true, it would explain the overly negative reactions to the Indian actions from Beijing.³⁸

Besides the improvement of infrastructure in the area, there are other interpretations for the Chinese “provocation”. The Chinese actions could be seen as a tool to pressure Bhutan, mainly to reach a swift agreement in the border disputes, as well as to finally establish embassy-level relations between the two states. China’s main objective in the region is to counterbalance Indian influence, even if attaining Chinese hegemony in Bhutan and the neighbouring small states is an unrealistic goal, a less India-dependent region would be a both an attainable and favourable outcome from Beijing’s perspective. A Bhutan more open to China could also help develop the Tibetan region in line with Beijing’s aims, given that before colonial times, Bhutan served as a regional trading hotspot, which might have the potential to re-emerge as such, thus facilitating much needed regional development.³⁹

Another interpretation of the events from a long-term geopolitical viewpoint takes into account that control over the Siliguri corridor means control over the upper part of the Brahmaputra River, which flows through Bangladesh into the Indian ocean. Controlling the river means controlling the water sources of the region, as well as an open route to the ocean, thus avoiding the strong resistance facing the Chinese in the South China Sea, although at this point, this interpretation has to be taken with a grain a salt.⁴⁰

Resolution and Aftermath

The worst border dispute of the last 30 years ended in a peaceful, diplomatic way, despite concerns of an armed conflict. At the end of August, both countries issued a statement reporting of

³⁸ Ankit Panda, ‘Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End ?’, 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01. 03. 2018).

³⁹ Jha Tilak, ‘China and its Peripheries: Limited Objectives in Bhutan’, *Issue Brief*, No. 233, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2013.

⁴⁰ Fedrika, 2017.

a mutual agreement about the withdrawal of troops from both sides and China has refrained from further pressing the issue of road building in question, at least for now.⁴¹ Seeing that the aim of both Bhutan and India was the restoration of the status quo preceeding June 16, they appear to be the “winner” of this conflict, while letting China save face, as according to the agreement, the first side to retreat was India. In this way Beijing is able to communicate some kind of success at home.⁴² However the origin of the dispute is yet to be resolved and China still sustains her claim to the plateau, continuing the patrols and surveys, without any guarantee of preventing a repeat of an incident of the same nature. China also had a number of other factors which might have helped to arrive at a peaceful solution. To an aging China with a slowing economy, a “cold war” with India spanning through generations would definitely be a drawback,⁴³ especially with the heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula, the question of which is more vital than a border dispute on a remote Himalayan plateau. Another angle is that a risky, drawn-out military conflict might have proven disadvantageous to Xi Jinping just months before the 19th Party Congress, where he cemented his paramount leadership over the Party. The BRICS summit, held in Xiamen, China in September, 2017, was also drawing closer, where the aim of the Chinese leadership was to emphasise China’s positive global role, and a serious conflict with another member state would have been counterproductive.^{44, 45} The circumstances mentioned above coupled with the fact that China has other options to bolster its capabilities in the region, where Indian interference can be avoided, and does not happen to be a disputed area, can help understanding the Chinese motivation to arrive to the conclusion at the end of August.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Jeffrey Gettleman, Javier Hernández, ‘China and India Agree to Ease Tensions in Border Dispute’, 28 August 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/28/world/asia/china-india-standoff-withdrawal.html> (accessed 01.03.2018.).

⁴² Ankit Panda, ‘Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End ?’, 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01. 03. 2018).

⁴³ Gettleman, Hernández, 2017.

⁴⁴ Denyer, Gowen, 2017.

⁴⁵ Fravel M. Taylor, ‘Why India Did Not ‘Win’ the Standoff with China’, 1 September 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/09/why-india-did-not-win-the-standoff-with-china/> (accessed 01.03.2018).

⁴⁶ Ankit Panda, ‘Disengagement at Doklam: Why and How Did the India-China Standoff End ?’, 29 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/disengagement-at-doklam-why-and-how-did-the-india-china-standoff-end/> (accessed 01. 03. 2018).

Although the risky move by India at the middle of June proved to be successful on the short-term, but even with a more formidable military presence on the border, a military engagement with China would easily put an end to any domestic goal that Narendra Modi is working towards, from the centralisation of the political power to the much needed economic reforms, not to mention the war costs in such an inhospitable and desolate area like the ridges of the Himalayas.⁴⁷ Although there are signs signaling the normalisation of relations after the summer, like the visit of the Indian Defense Minister's visit to the border, where she paid a visit to the Chinese border patrol too,⁴⁸ or the one hour long talk of Xi and Modi at the BRICS summit,⁴⁹ the troop movements in the area paint a different picture. Already in September reports from the area confirmed the withdrawal of the troops, but only to an extent of 150 meters on both sides.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Fedrika, 2017.

⁴⁸ 'Ready to maintain peace with India: China on Sitharaman's visit to Nathu La', *Press Trust of India*, 9 October 2017, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/ready-to-maintain-peace-at-frontiers-with-india-china-on-sitharaman-s-visit-to-nathu-la/story-EVdlopKMXl0rkre9mRlZqM.html> (accessed 01.03.2018).

⁴⁹ Chaudhury, 2017.

⁵⁰ 'Doklam standoff: Indian, Chinese troops still on face-off site, they have merely stepped back 150 meters each', *FE Online*, 7 September 2017, <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/doklam-standoff-indian-chinese-troops-still-on-face-off-site-they-have-merely-stepped-back-150-meters-each/844812/> (accessed 01.03.2018).



Picture 8: Indian Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman meets Chinese border troops⁵¹

It seems that relations between the two countries have returned to their normal course for now, but the reemergence of the border dispute, either on the Doklam plateau or at any other Sino-Indian border section, is still a reality. Although the United States offered little comment on the events transpiring at Doklam, in part thanks to the murky nature of the claims, in part thanks to the nuclear weapon tests conducted by North Korea, where Chinese assistance would help them greatly, Washington's attitude could change at any time. The first Asian trip of Donald Trump also left out India from the itinerary, but the fact remains that most of their military drills are conducted with each other, which could serve as a basis of cooperation to counter China in the region.⁵²

⁵¹ Press Trust of India, 2017.

⁵² Brahma Chellaney, 'Asia's New Entente', 3 November 2017, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/asia-power-balance-china-tillerson-speech-by-brahma-chellaney-2017-11> (accessed 01.03.2018).

The image of China on the pages of the periodical *Naokoło Świata*

Abstract

The main aim of this article is to present the image of China on the pages of one of the biggest Polish popular science magazines, *Naokoło Świata* (Around the World), which was issued between 1924 and 1939. The published articles were devoted to customs, festivals and beliefs, and often surprised the reader, displaying a poor knowledge of China. Most of the authors had travelled to Asia, hence the articles were of a good quality, but tended to contain many oversimplifications. The reason is not only the character of the magazine, but also the stereotyped assumptions of the authors of that time.

Keywords: China, image, press, Second Polish Republic.

Introduction

The aim of this article is to present the image of China in the eyes of the average citizen of the Second Republic of Poland, between 1918 and 1939. Not only does it have intrinsic value, but it is also away to understand Poland-China relations in the interwar period.¹ As emphasised by Józef Włodarski, China was at the centre of foreign affairs, mainly because of the Polish community living in China, which numbered several thousand, but also because of the Polish government's need to adopt a position on the China-Japan conflict.²

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¹ After Poland regained its independence, Poles continued to form relations with the Chinese people. Official Poland-China relations invigorated at the end of 1920s, when two of the most influential treaties were signed: the Treaty of Friendship and Trade (1928) and the Treaty of Friendship, Trade and Navigation (1929). Piotr Łossowski (ed.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej TOM IV 1918-1939* [The History of Polish Diplomacy Volume IV 1918-1939], Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1995, p. 432.

² Józef Włodarski, 'Kilka uwag na temat współpracy wywiadu polskiego z wywiadem japońskim w Mandżurii w latach 30 XX wieku' [A few remarks about the cooperation between Polish and Japanese Service Intelligence in the Manchuria in the 1930s] in *Azja Wschodnia w oczach Polaków - wybór tekstów Józefa Włodarskiego z lat 2001-2015* [The

During the period, any piece of information about the Far East was well received among newspaper readers. Poles created an image of China based to a large extent on information implicit mainly in the popular science magazines. Józef Bachórz emphasises that the subject of China had been appearing in the Polish press from as early as 1899, the year of the Boxer Uprising. Moreover, the Polish press not only used foreign periodicals as a source of knowledge, but also its own journalists' accounts.³

One of the most popular travel magazines of this time was a monthly periodical *Naokoło Świata* (literally: Around the World). It was established in 1924 in Warsaw, the capital of Poland. The last issue, the 184th, was published in August 1939, right before the breakout of the Second World War. The editor-in-chief was Stanisław Lam. The main aim of the magazine was to reach a wide audience; therefore, it was more entertaining than scientific. Evidence of this can be found both in the informal language of the articles, as well as in the subjects of the articles, which were supposed to be more sensational rather than scientific. The magazine hence explained various topics in a simple, straightforward way. But perhaps the greatest value of this as a source is that all issues have been preserved.

Readers of the *Naokoło Świata* were mainly people of moderate means, a middle class of secondary and higher education. The editorial office also endeavoured to include articles entertaining both men and women.

The main themes in the magazine are fauna and flora, and the traditions and customs of foreign countries. The authors were usually travellers, who described their own experience. The articles touch upon subjects such as architecture, medicine, geography, astronomy, history, history of art, cinema, sport, motorisation, psychology, *savoir-vivre*, and even esotericism. Every issue comprises of four permanent sections; 'Świat kobiety' (the world of women), 'Z dziedziny kosmetyki' (On cosmetology), 'Rozrywki umysłowe' (riddles) and 'Dział grafologa' (geography). Occasionally, the articles would focus on contemporary

East Asia in the Eyes of Polish – The Anthology of Józef Włodarski's Works, K. Zeidler, J. Kamiń (eds.), Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2015, p.193-194.

³ Józef Bachórz, 'Prawda' Aleksandra Świętochowskiego o chińskim Powstaniu Bokserów' in *Chiny w oczach Polaków*, J. Włodarski, K. Zeidler, M. Burdelski (eds.), Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2010, p. 349-351.

state of the world. Moreover, the magazine includes squibs, translated parts of novels and short stories.

The authors publishing in the magazine used the Wade-Giles transcription, which was an early Romanisation of Mandarin Chinese, used in books published before 1979. However, the modern standard transcription, pinyin, is used for the purpose of this article.

The overall image of China

Two of the most popular subjects, which the authors of *Naokoło Świata* touched upon, were China and Japan. The main aim of their articles was to explain the customs, traditions or historical events of these two countries, and the information included often surprised the Polish reader. This article focuses mostly on the image of China.

China is described as an exotic, intriguing land with a rich and long culture, but also as a place of struggle with numerous setbacks. It is a country of contrasts, where a great number of citizens live in poverty, especially peasants and rickshaws pullers, who live in utter distress, compared to a group of millionaires. Apart from social and economic disparities, the Chinese struggle with kidnappings for ransom. The safest places, according to some of the articles, are the European and American districts.⁴ In 1930s, the criminal groups called *hunhuzi*, operating mostly in Manchuria, were infamous for such crimes. The members were ex-soldiers, local warlords and shepherds. The victims were both the Chinese and members of minorities. According to Ella Maillart, the number of *hunhuzi* was estimated at around 80 thousand.⁵ The authors of other articles occasionally mention modern historical events such as the civil war in China, the Boxer Uprising and the struggle of the Chinese government with opium.⁶ On the other side, in the Polish language, the adjective *Chinese* has more than one meaning; it is a symbol of distance and of something extraordinary.⁷

The Sino-Japan conflict

⁴ A. Wielawski, W. Winiarz, 'Riksha Kulis', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 130, February 1935, p. 69-72.

⁵ Ella Maillart, *Wysłanniczka specjalna do Mandżurii - w zderzeniu z Imperium*, Warszawa: Noir Sur Blanc, 2012, p.102.

⁶ Jerzy Bohdan Rychliński, 'Mah-Jongg', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 13, 1925, p. 96-118.

⁷ W.P. 'Aforyzmy chińskie (ilustracja J. Brzezińskiego)', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 90, October 1931, p. 77.

Authors of articles in the periodical regularly mentioned the China-Japan conflict, which started in 1931 with the occupation of Manchuria by the Kwantung Army. The editors of the magazine attempted to explain the genesis of the problem and the possibility of military action in the region. The article 'Anglicy Wschodu'⁸ (the English of the East) was devoted specifically to this subject. According to the author, the genesis of the conflict lay in the economic hegemony and overpopulation of Japan, the poor ordnance of China and the tumultuous history of Manchuria. The immediate cause of the military action in the region was Japanese aggression, which was carried out in response to an anti-Japanese economic boycott by the Chinese.⁹ The occupation of Manchuria was the subject of another article, which appeared in the 96th issue. It includes pictures of combat in Shanghai and civilians escaping from the occupied city.¹⁰

The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War resulted in attempts to increase readers' interest in the situation both in the region and across China. The 191st issue was devoted mainly to China, including three articles on the subject: "Liryka chińska"¹¹ [the Chinese Lyric] by Idalia Badowska, 'Chiński Herostrates'¹² [the Chinese Herostratus] by A. Czermiński and "Prolog chińskiego dramatu"¹³ [The prologue to the Chinese drama] by Jan Waśniewski. Before the last of the three articles, there is a poem from the Book of Tao, translated by Jan Lemański. The tone of that poem is pacifistic.¹⁴

The main aim of the article "Prolog chińskiego dramatu" [The prologue to the Chinese drama], as with "Anglicy Wschodu" [the English of the East], is to explain the causes of the conflict in the Far East. The authors focus on the genesis of the problem, rather than assumptions as to further military actions. According to the author, the weakness of China was rooted in the 19th and 20th centuries: the destructive Taiping Rebellion and the Boxer Uprising, as well as

⁸ Louis Charap 'Anglicy Wschodu', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 95, March 1932, p.14-16.

⁹ Louis Charap 'Anglicy Wschodu' ...

¹⁰ 'Dni grozy w Szanghaju', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 96, April 1932, p. 12-15.

¹¹ Idalia Badowska, 'Liryka chińska', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 161, November 1937, p.12-17.

¹² A. Czermiński, 'Chiński Herostrates', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 161, November 1937, p.55-57.

¹³ Jan Waśniewski, 'Prolog chińskiego dramatu', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 161, November 1937, p. 4-11.

¹⁴ Jan Lemański 'Tao (z ksiąg Lao-Tse)', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 161, November 1937, p. 3.

bureaucratisation and the absence of reforms, despite the attempts of emperor Guanxu and Chinese thinkers/reformers.¹⁵

The Chinese people

Another subject of the articles is the description of typical Chinese people; extraordinarily polite and hospitable. One humorous short story, entitled 'W gościnie u Chińczyka' (a visit to a Chinese person), describes a tea-party at a Chinese home. The main character is a wealthy Chinese man, called Bo Daili. He is presented as an extremely polite and well-behaved host. The whole process of preparing the tea-party is complicated; it is important who will be invited and the invitation itself has a specific procedure. What is more, the etiquette during the party contains many rules, is elaborated, and even exorbitant. The conversation between the guests is official and polite. The hierarchy between the participants is also a matter of great importance.¹⁶

The mentioned article is of a satirical character and contains many hyperbolas; the host, who prepared over forty dishes, apologises to his guests for such a small dinner. The illustrations attached to the article present in a humorous way the interaction between the host and the guests. It is clear that the author's knowledge about customs in the Middle Kingdom is poor and based predominantly on stereotypes, as the types of meals are not mentioned, and the only two specific types of beverage are tea and wine. The hierarchy and ritualised behaviour of guests are merely explained by their politeness. In China, that kind of behaviour is strongly connected with one of the five virtues promoted by Confucius, a Chinese philosopher. The teachings of Confucius are still important in Chinese society and they play a key role in the life and behaviour of every Chinese. One of the virtues, called *li*, means to fulfil the rituals,¹⁷ therefore the behaviour of the host and the guests may seem exorbitant for the Western reader not familiar with this element of Chinese culture.

The Chinese were also regarded as people with a talent for doing business. Stanisław Miłkowski in his article presents a story about

¹⁵ Jan Waśniewski, 'Prolog chińskiego...

¹⁶ Mi-Hao-De, 'W gościnie u Chińczyka', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 83, March 1931, p. 137-142.

¹⁷ Zbigniew Wesołowski, 'Konfucjańskie podstawy porządku społecznego i zjawisko „twarzy”' in *Zrozumieć Chińczyków. Kulturowe kody społeczności chińskich*, Ewa Zajdler (ed.), Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, 2011, p. 223-224.

two Chinese acquaintances, who over only a few years amassed a great fortune. One of them was a cook; the other was a water delivery worker. The author explains the background of their success, which is not only their resourcefulness and hard work, but also the fact that the Chinese had far lower material requirements and spent less money than the Europeans.¹⁸

Many Chinese gained knowledge on various subjects and became diligent students. One story mentions academic competitions, consisting of extremely difficult examinations, which took place in Tonkin. This event was held only once every three years. The rewards, given to only 300 people out of 10-12 thousand participants, were the title of bachelor. It consisted of several steps and the main topics were connected with religion or philosophy. Some of the participants needed to take part in this event ten times until they obtained the much-anticipated title, which is impressive given the fact that the average age of participants was around 50.¹⁹ One article, 'Studenci i Sędzia Piekieł' (The students and the Judge from Hell) is devoted to a story about a student called Chu who made acquaintances with the Judge from Hell, Lu. The powerful and grim inhabitant of the netherworld showed his affection for the dexterous student and helped him gain knowledge. Lu and Chu would hold long conversations on literary topics. The friendship between the mortal and the divine lasted a long time, until the death of Chu.²⁰

One of the articles describes Chinese medicine and the attitude of Chinese people towards the Western doctors. The traditional treatment was not as effective as the Western; however, this was strictly connected with the fact that Chinese medicine was often based on superstitions. The author highlights that there were specialists among Chinese doctors, who gained an expert knowledge in some areas of medicine, such as organ treatment and anaesthetics, but surgeons and dentists were of bad reputation.²¹

Women in Chinese society

¹⁸ Stanisław Miłkowski, 'Jak bogacą się Chińczycy', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 72, April 1930, p. 55-60.

¹⁹ Jerzy Radlicz, 'Turniej Uczonych w Tonkinie', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 30, 1926, p. 71-78.

²⁰ J.W. (tłum.), 'Studenci i Sędzia Piekieł (legenda chińska)', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 29, 1926, p.159-168.

²¹ J. B-r, 'Jak leczą w Chinach', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 35, 1927, p. 13-20.

Another popular subject among the articles is the role of a woman in Chinese society, which is often showed in a simplified way. According to one of the authors, Emil Theobald, the position of a wife in Chinese society at that time could be compared to a female servant or a slave. The author explains that the wife was completely dependent on her husband, and what is more, the tradition of polygamy was still preserved, especially in villages.²² In this case, the author did not understand every aspect of the Confucian system. According to the teachings of Confucius, women depended on their father first, then on their spouse, and last on their eldest son. The main aim of this system was to ensure the woman's safety, not only her life, but also financially. The man took full responsibility for her, and such a system allowed abuse. The husband had the right to divorce his wife if she did not give him a son, did not pay respect to her parents-in-law, or in the case of her falling seriously ill.²³

The typical Chinese woman was presented in a particularly negative light. According to the authors, women were honest but stupid and ill-mannered. Furthermore, they often did not have any deep feelings towards their husbands, and objectified them. Together with other wives, they would try to force the husband to purchase expensive robes and precious gems.²⁴ In a similar way, a woman is portrayed in a Chinese legend about the source of gods. It is a folk tale about a couple of elderly people: a woodsman called Chen Men and his whining wife Wu Li. One day, they drank water from a divine source. As a result, Chen Men became a young man and Wu Li, who was greedy and drunk too much water, became a newborn baby. The woodsman brought up his wife as if she was his daughter. Wu Li became a peaceful, smart and hard-working woman. This story, according to the author's opinion, explains why Chinese people would give away their young daughters to be brought up by the family of their future husband.²⁵ This legend presents how authors publishing in *Naokoło Świata* imagined an ideal Chinese wife. It is also an example of how they were trying to explain, incomprehensible from a European

²² Emil Theobald, 'Chińczyk i Chinka', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 139, November 1935, p. 27-32.

²³ Wolfram Eberhard, *Symbola chińskie – słownik*, Kraków: Universitas, 2007, p. 249-252.

²⁴ Emil Theobald, 'Chińczyk i Chinka'..., p. 27-32.

²⁵ Aleksander Monoz, 'Źródło Bogów-legenda chińska', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 184, August 1939, p.73-76.

point of view, Chinese customs. A typical practise of this time was arranging marriages, even among children. The woman, after marriage, had to leave her family home, and move to her husband's. She became a part of her spouse's family, even after his death. From the moment she left her own family, she could not worship her own ancestors. The ceremony of worshipping ancestors was important due to the fact that prayers were of help to all living family members who would obtain support from deceased ancestors. This ritual was supposed to help the deceased obtain eternal peace.²⁶

Emil Theobald, in his article about the role of a woman in Chinese society emphasises the distinct position of courtesans. He states that this job had a different connotation than in Europe; such women were free, respected, usually well-educated, and did not have any reason to feel guilty for their deeds. Furthermore, they had a better chance for a good marriage, than an ordinary Chinese woman.²⁷

Chinese culture

The Chinese people, according to the magazine *Naokolo Świata*, were supposed to be strongly attached to their culture and tradition. The evidence presented in articles on the subject, was that every Chinese person knew his ancient, national poetry and sang such poems at almost each occasion.²⁸ Another important element of Chinese culture was a ceremonial bow, which was a common way to show respect to the interlocutor. It was supposed to be "S" shaped and exquisite.²⁹ The Chinese were also open to different religions, as long as these beliefs had a positive influence on their society. For instance, many people from the Middle Kingdom supported the Y.M.C.A., despite the fact that the majority of people were Confucians, not Christians. They regarded Christian culture as helpful in promoting moral values among teenagers. Poul Super, in his article, quoted a Chinese man, who stated that lack of integrity was one of the biggest problems in his country.³⁰ The Chinese, he wrote, would follow European patterns as long as they could be beneficial for them: Chinese workers, who had contacts with Russians, took Russian first names; wealthy, powerful, substantial businessmen

²⁶ Edward Kajdański, *Chiny. Leksykon*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 2005, p. 123-124.

²⁷ Emil Theobald, 'Chińczyk i Chinka'..., p. 27-32.

²⁸ Idalia Badowska, 'Liryka chińska', *Naokolo Świata*, No. 161, November 1937, p. 12-17.

²⁹ Jerzy Bohdan Rychliński, 'Mah-Jongg'..., p. 96-118.

³⁰ Poul Super, 'Y.M.C.A. Na trzech kontynentach', *Naokolo Świata*, No. 15, 1925, p. 117-128.

wore European clothes.³¹ To show their modernity, rich Chinese people visited Western doctors, although they trusted traditional medicine in a greater degree. They often called for a folk healer after a visit at a western clinic, as well as in emergency.³²

The religion of the Chinese people plays a key role in some of the articles in *Naokoło Świata*, despite the fact that the authors did not always fully comprehend each aspect of the Chinese belief system. As an example, the article about a collector called Deo Jing, who was praying to both Buddha and his servants, Confucius and Laozi, even though while the three of them are equal, they represent different doctrines.³³ Confucius represents Confucianism, and Laozi – Taoism. The Chinese can simultaneously believe in all three, because each of them is responsible for a different aspect of life: Buddhism explains the afterlife, Confucianism presents moral and social rules, and Taoism teaches aspects of life such as health and longevity.³⁴ The articles also touch upon the matter of the soul in Chinese culture, as it is believed that people have three souls: the first one stays at the battlefield, the second stays in Heaven and the third stays at home with family. Taoism, on the other hand, presents another idea, according to which people have two souls: earthly *po*, which slowly disappears after death, and heavenly *hun*, which lives as long as it receives sacrifices. The magazine describes in detail Chinese beliefs, as in the article "Chiński Nowy Rok" (Chinese New Year), whose author, Tadeusz Szukiewicz, not only describes customs, but also the deities connected with the celebration of New Year in China, as well as the traditional stories of this festival.³⁵

The Chinese, presented as a pious nation, were still not as religious as the Mongolians. According to the article "Taniec Demonów" (The dance of the demons), 25% of Mongolian men were lamas. The author explained that every family chose one child to become a lama, in order to be able to receive his services free of charge. She also includes a piece of information that Mongolians practise

³¹ Stanisław Miłkowski, 'Jak bogacą się Chińczycy'... 1930, p. 55-60.

³² J. B-r, 'Jak leczą w Chinach'... p. 13-20.

³³ Mieczysław Sterling, 'Poborca likinu-Teo-dzing', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 38, 1927, p. 21-42.

³⁴ Leonid Wasiliew, *Kulty, religie i tradycje Chin*, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1974, p. 377, 379.

³⁵ Tadeusz Szukiewicz, 'Chiński Nowy Rok', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 138, 1927, p. 145-158.

shamanism.³⁶ In the next part of the article, the author describes in detail the festival called *Dżerno* and the ceremonial dance Cz'an.³⁷

Some of the articles include more scholarly facts about the culture of China. Their language is not scientific; nonetheless it is still entertaining for the reader. One such article is devoted to Chinese writing, in which the author explains the basic grammar rules of this oriental language. It is worth mentioning that the author clearly had a good knowledge about the structure of Chinese characters. In his article, he uses terms such as *klucze* (keys) or *elementy* (elements) while referring to the compound ideograms. Furthermore, the article contains a few well described characters.³⁸ In another article, entitled "Jak powstają cyfry" (How numbers come about), one of the paragraphs explains the origins of Chinese numbers.³⁹

Some of the articles are devoted to the Chinese culture of tea. In one of them, the author presents a Chinese legend about the beginnings of tea in China, describing its role in Chinese medicine, and also includes the description of preparing the beverage. The author highlights that the Middle Kingdom is the country with the oldest tea culture history. The role of tea in Chinese is described as a ritual of purity, and even as a religious cult. According to the article, a special bond is created when a host and guest share a cup of tea.⁴⁰ One of the authors of an article in *Naokoło Świata*, includes the piece of information that China was the biggest exporter of tea at that time, and cites that they exported more 100,000 tons per year.⁴¹ Nowadays, tea is not as important as it used to be, and one of the reasons is the change in its preparation; the leaves are not ground, but are brewed. The Chinese say that with brewed tea, although the taste is unchanged, the poetry of the ceremony is lost.⁴²

The Chinese also had a major impact on the process of paper making, as it was invented as early as the 1st century BC. Chinese paper was widely known and popular at that time, because it was extremely

³⁶ Aleksandra Chelwicka, 'Taniec Demonów', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 175, 1938, p.18-19.

³⁷ Aleksandra Chelwicka, 'Taniec Demonów'..., p. 20-23.

³⁸ 'Pismo chińskie', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 107, March 1933, p. 81-82.

³⁹ B. Szarlitt, 'Jak powstały nasze cyfry', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 10, March 1926, p. 58-63.

⁴⁰ Michał Derenicz, 'Herbata', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 114, October 1933, p. 38-41.

⁴¹ Z. Kacprowski, 'Herbata', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 66, October 1929, p. 63-64.

⁴² Okakura Kakuzo, tłum. M. Derenicz, 'Pokój do herbaty', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 76, August 1930, p.121.

thin and strong.⁴³ Apart from paper, the Chinese were known for their silk, whose production was often a part-time job for farmers.⁴⁴ One of the articles presents the list of countries and their famous objects. According to this source, China was most famous for the Great Wall.⁴⁵ Some of the articles are devoted to cruel Chinese customs such as foot binding.⁴⁶

The Chinese were also interested in astronomy, as the earliest record about astronomical phenomena dates back to 2500 BC, during the reign of the mythical emperor Huangdi. Although the Chinese did not use sophisticated astronomical devices, they conducted deep research, discovered five planets and the immobility of the Polar Star. The lack of major discoveries was connected with little knowledge of mathematics, the proof of this being the invention of the reflecting telescope and the spotting scope as late as the 16th century.⁴⁷

At this point it is worth mentioning that during the Second Polish Republic, the Chinese people were associated with their characteristic haircut with a single braid. The name *warkoczowiec* ("the one who wears a braid") occasionally occurred in this magazine, as a synonym for the Chinese of that time.⁴⁸

The Mandarins

In another article, entitled "Ho-uen", the author described a typical Chinese mandarin. He would wear a small cap with a knob, a long doublet and oval-rounded slippers, with felt soles, as well as a long single braid and lacquered umbrella. The main character of the article was a judge, who wore glasses, which were a symbol of his wisdom.⁴⁹ The description of the mandarin's outfit is correct, although the knob on a cap symbolised not only that he is an official, but also his position in the Qing administration. What is more, in the picture of the judge, a characteristic *mandarin square*, quadrangle embroidery, is missing, which was one of the most important elements of the official

⁴³ Kazimierz Szymański, 'Dzieje papieru', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 15, 1925, p. 130-142.

⁴⁴ Jerzy Mariusz Taylor, 'O jedwabnictwie', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 18, 1925, p. 177-188.

⁴⁵ A. Świdwiński, 'Z czego słyną narody', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 19, 1925, p. 187-188.

⁴⁶ W. Bernstein, 'Męczennice tradycji', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 10, March 1926, p. 135-138.

⁴⁷ Z.K., 'Astronomia w Państwie Niebieskim', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 32, 1926, p. 83-82.

⁴⁸ L.B., 'Pałac letni cesarzów chińskich', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 3, 1924, p. 129-131; B. Szarlitt; 'Jak powstały nasze cyfry' ... , p.58-63.

⁴⁹ Mariusz Zaruski 'Ho-uen – nowela z cyklu „Na morzach dalekich” napisał i ilustrował Marjusz Zaruski', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 7, 1924, p. 169-170.

robes at that time, indicating the specific position of the official.⁵⁰ In another article, it is mentioned that umbrellas were the attributes of the judges at academic competitions in Tonkin. The number of umbrellas, which were held over the mandarin's heads by servants, indicated their rank. For instance, four umbrellas was a sign that their owner was an exalted dignitary.⁵¹

Chinese history

The articles in the magazine also touch upon history. Idalia Badowska in her article describes Chinese lyric poetry, which together with Hindu and Hebrew, is world's oldest heritage of poetry.⁵² The ancient Chinese poetry is still comprehensible for contemporary Chinese people, as the writing was not changed, only the pronunciation of the characters. According to the author, the *Classis of Poetry*, or *Shijing*, which is believed to be compiled by Confucius himself, had a major impact on the Chinese people. In her article, she discusses different Chinese ancient and modern lyricists, concluding that Chinese culture is old and original, and that that is the reason for its survival, despite Western influence.

Another article which touches upon the history of China includes a story about the duke Qin, who became the first emperor of China, called Shi Huangdi. It describes his road to power, his cruel reign and struggle with the Confucians.⁵³ Another article is devoted to the emperor's palace, in which the author briefly describes the building, with admiration. Apart from the architecture, the article includes facts about the history of China, events such as the Boxer Uprising, the Western punitive expedition, as well as the struggle of empress Cixi with her son, and their deaths.⁵⁴ The language of this article, in contrast with previous ones, is colloquial. The author describes the Chinese as *warkoczowiec* (the one who wears a bride) and their outfits are called bizarre, which shows his poor knowledge on customs. He is surprised by peacock

⁵⁰ W. J. Sidichmienow, *Chiny Karty Przeszłości*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Iskry, 1978, p. 180.

⁵¹ Jerzy Radlicz, 'Turniej Uczonych w Tonkinie'..., p.77.

⁵² Idalia Badowska, 'Liryka chińska'..., p. 12-17.

⁵³ A. Czermiński, 'Chiński Herostrates'...

⁵⁴ L.B. 'Pałac letni cesarzów chińskich'..., p. 129-131.

feathers at the top of mandarins' hats.⁵⁵ The ornamental elements on mandarins' hats were not only decorative, but also indicative of the rank of the civil official.⁵⁶ The article mentions the emperor's concubines with fox tails, who organised secret, diabolical meetings in the mountains. Although Chinese folklore describes a story about female demons who seduce men and take away their vital force, but unlike in the article, they were supposed to live in woods and mountains, not in the emperor's palace. They were not witches and they did not organise Sabbath, as the author claimed.⁵⁷

Travelling

Some of the articles were devoted to travelling. Tadeusz Ross based his article on a report of one of the Christian missionaries, a member of the Society of the Divine World in China. The clergyman described his experience gained while visiting lamas in Kumrum.⁵⁸ He presented in detail not only the architecture and history of the temple, but also the monks' customs. Two the most interesting and memorable of his notes were about butter and prayer; the traveller mentioned that the aromatic candles and oil ointment were made of butter. Every year, during the celebration called the *Butter Festival*, the people of Kumrum would conduct a procession with statues of Buddha, animals and other figurines, which were made of butter. The author was fascinated by the atmosphere of the prayer everywhere, and its key role in the life of the land.⁵⁹ Another article which touches upon this subject is "W krainie Lamów" (In the land of the Lamas). It mentions Choni, a dukedom which in 1928 became a part of the Republic of China.⁶⁰ The article „Śladami ekspedycji himalajskiej” (In the tracks of a Himalayan expedition) brings up a similar topic. However in this case, the author pays more attention to the description of the mountain's fauna and flora, and not the difference between the Chinese and European historical architecture and customs.⁶¹

⁵⁵ W. J. Sidichmienow, *Chiny Karty Przeszłości*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Iskry, 1978, p. 180.

⁵⁶ Edward Kajdański, *Chiny. Leksykon...*, p. 145

⁵⁷ Wolfram Eberhard, *Symboly chińskie - słownik...*, p. 132-134.

⁵⁸ Tadeusz Ross, 'U Lamów w Kumrum', *Naokoło Świata*, No.135, July 1935, p. 53-57.

⁵⁹ Tadeusz Ross, 'U Lamów w Kumrum'..., p. 53-57.

⁶⁰ W. Peszkowa, 'W krainie Lamów', *Naokoło Świata*, No.66, October 1929, p. 13-24.

⁶¹ Adam Czeżowski, 'Śladami ekspedycji himalajskiej', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 16, 1925, p. 157-190.

Another interesting reportage was written by Poul Super, the head of a Y.M.C.A in Poland. He describes his experience in China and Japan.⁶² Readers could find out about a five-member Polish expedition to the Altai Mountains which took place in 1917. Eugeniusz Krosnowski, the author of another article on this subject, describes not only adventures, but also the customs of the natives, and fauna and flora.⁶³ The article entitled "Szanghaj" (Shanghai) is devoted to a description of the people, architecture and industry. The author mentions that the metropolis is the second world's most important international port; the first at that time was New York, the third - London. Despite this the city was safe and peaceful. The journalist sadly comments that the streets of Shanghai are cleaner and in better condition than in Warsaw.⁶⁴

Chinese legends and popular stories

Besides popular science articles and reportage, some of the authors focused on legends and short stories about China. One of them is a story written by Amelia Hertz, who describes the 18th century emperor Qianlong, as well as a sculptor called Shu Yan and his beloved Chan Xian.⁶⁵ The author of the story about the emperor Qianlong included illustrations, which are worthy of mention, as they are an interesting way of popularising knowledge of this period. The illustrations present a statue of a dragon on a silver stand, which is holding a crystal ball; a tiny room screen, made of ebony and jade, with a bird and a phoenix sitting on a peony tree, and the emperor's poem; a sculpture of a goddess standing on a dragon, made of coral; a statue of a lady with a parrot and a peach tree. These treasures also play a key role in the story. The author presents, in an innovative way, antiques from the period of the Chinese monarchy.⁶⁶

Another examples are "Źródło Bogów" (The source of the gods), a folk tale, mentioned earlier in this article,⁶⁷ and "Studenci i Sędzia Piekieł" (Students and the Judge from Hell), a story which describes a friendship between a student Chu and the Judge from Hell,

⁶² Poul Super, 'Y.M.C.A. Na trzech kontynentach'..., p. 117-128.

⁶³ Eugeniusz Krosnowski, 'Polscy podróżnicy na Altaju', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 53, September 1928, p. 77-94.

⁶⁴ A. Rolicz, 'Szanghaj', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 25, May 1926, p. 41-56.

⁶⁵ Z.K. 'Wielki cesarz Czien-Lung'..., p. 65-78.

⁶⁶ Z.K. 'Wielki cesarz Czien-Lung'..., p. 65-78.

⁶⁷ Aleksander Monoz, 'Źródło Bogów'..., p. 73-76.

Lu.⁶⁸ One of the stories, "Ho-uen" presents a history of a mandarin and a judge, called Daochun Bai, who solved a mystery of the death of a fisherman, called Zao Li.⁶⁹ Criminal stories were also a popular subject for the magazine, for instance a story about a doctor of demonology, Anders, who conducted an investigation on the death of his friend, Vosgan. As the result of the investigation, the protagonist discovered a secret opium den, whose owner is a Chinese mandarin. The story includes Japanese motives, such as Andrew imagining a dancing geisha after taking the drug.⁷⁰

Romance stories were also a popular theme in *Naokoło Świata*. One such article describes the story from the Tang dynasty about Chang and Yin-Ying.⁷¹ The article "Poborca likingu" (The lijn collector) describes the dramatic fate of the family of an official called Deojing. As a result of the chaos of the civil war, Deojing and his three children die in dramatic circumstances.⁷² The magazine includes a fragment of a book by Antoni Ferdynand Ossendowski "Widma Szanghaju" (The phantoms of Shanghai).⁷³ The 161st issue contains a poem from the Tao book, translated by Jan Lemański.⁷⁴

Conclusion

Subjects connected with China were popular in the magazine *Naokoło Świata*. The articles touched upon different aspects of Chinese culture, occasionally presenting the current situation in the country. Only two of the articles, entitled "Prolog chińskiego dramatu" (The prologue to the Chinese drama) and "Anglicy Wschodu" (The English of the East) are connected to the Second Sino-Japanese War.⁷⁵ Such a small amount of information on this subject is linked with the character of the magazine; the main aim of *Naokoło Świata* was to popularise any kind of information, not only the current political

⁶⁸ 'Studenci i Sędzia Piekiele'..., p. 159-168.

⁶⁹ Mariusz Zaruski, 'Ho-uen'..., p. 169-170.

⁷⁰ Jerzy Bohdan Rychliński, 'Mah-Jongg'..., p. 96-118.

⁷¹ Ignacy Schreiber, 'Romans panny Yin-Ying', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 19, 1925, p. 169-186.

⁷² Mieczysław Sterling, 'Poborca likinu'..., p. 21-42.

⁷³ The book describes the living conditions and political situation both in Shanghai, and in broader perspective - in the whole country; the civil war in China, anti-Japanese public mood and the boycott of Japanese goods. Antoni Ferdynand Ossendowski, 'Widma Szanghaju', *Naokoło Świata*, No. 142, February 1936, p. 19-20.

⁷⁴ Tao' tłum. Jan Lemański, *Naokoło Świata*, No.161, November 1937, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Jan Waśniewski, 'Prolog chińskiego ... L. Charap, 'Anglicy Wschodu...

situation. That is why a great number of articles describe the traditions, customs, festivals and beliefs of the people of China. An article had to meet two criteria: it should surprise the reader, and should appeal to the readers' poor knowledge about China.⁷⁶ In order to enrich their knowledge, the articles were devoted to tea, Chinese writing and silk production etc, presented in a straightforward way.

The task the authors faced was not difficult, according to one of the journalists. Emil Theobald, in his article "Chińczyk i Chinka" (The Chinese man and the Chinese woman) mentions that the sources of knowledge on China, even for well-educated Europeans, were limited. At that time, they were thought to know merely that the Chinese wear long, single braids, women cultivate a foot binding custom, that there is tea and porcelain in China, that the Great Wall is important, and that this is the land of the mandarins. Many Chinese customs were incomprehensible for the Europeans, such as eating hundred-years-old eggs.⁷⁷

The quality of the article depended on the author; better-informed authors were Michał Derenicz, Tadeusz Ross, Aleksandra Chełmicka, Tadeusz Szukiewicz and Emil Theobald. The articles of those authors who had personal experience of travelling in China are filled with a vast knowledge of the customs. Their erudition was influenced by their experience rather than knowledge on the subject itself. Those authors are Emil Theobald, Jan Kowalewski, Edward Kuryło and Tadeusz Ross. The latter described the visit of a missionary to the Kumrum monastery,⁷⁸ and although his article contains a great number of oversimplifications, it is connected with the popular science character of the magazine, as well as his stereotyped assumptions. The authors presented their experience from a European point of view, frequently comparing it to European standards, and lacking a deep understanding of the differences between Western and Asian cultures. One of the examples is an article on the role of the women in Chinese society.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ One of the articles begins with the words 'Japan - wonderful oasis of the Far East, the country of flowers, sun, geishas, is the primeval land of new religions, philosophy, and spiritual concepts, all the time bringing to life new prophets of different religions I. Koss, 'Oomoto (nowy ruch religijny w Japonii)', No. 24, April 1926, p. 71-80.

⁷⁷ Emil Theobald, 'Chińczyk i Chinka'..., p. 27-32.

⁷⁸ Tadeusz Ross, 'U Lamów w Kumrum'..., p. 53-57.

⁷⁹ Emil Theobald, 'Chińczyk i Chinka'..., p. 27-32.

The authors differentiate between Chinese and the Japanese civilisations, and do not mix them. Emil Theobald, in one of his articles, highlights the individuality of the Middle Kingdom's culture, as opposite to Japanese culture.⁸⁰ However, some of the authors find common aspects of the two cultures, such as the tea ceremony, the role of courtesans in society and the function of characters in the Chinese and the Japanese language.

Besides popular science articles, the magazine *Naokoło Świata* includes short stories connected with China, some of which are original legends translated by the authors. Other popular genres were crime and romance, which often included descriptions of Chinese beliefs.

To sum up, concerning this topic, there are 25 works on China in total; 16 popular science articles, 8 stories and one translation of a poem. The number of works touching upon both China and Japan is four. However, the proportion changes when considered seven articles on the lands under the direct influence of Chinese culture. It should be taken into account that the number of works on China in the 161st issue was influenced by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War; this issue contains three articles and a translation of the Tao poem. It is worth mentioning that articles devoted to China constitute one third of the total number of the works in *Naokoło Świata*.

⁸⁰ Emil Theobald, 'Chińczyk i Chinka'..., p. 27-32.

“Century of humiliation” and its influence on modern Chinese politics with special emphasis on China — Japan relations

Abstract

The author strives to examine the influence of historical events of the 19th and 20th centuries on the current political situation in the People's Republic of China. Both the current foreign and domestic policy pursued by the PRC is determined by history, especially by the so-called “century of humiliation”, on which the author has focused. All signs point to China becoming a global superpower within the next several years; due to this fact, concern with the policy pursued by China seems to be a crucial issue. Historical policy and history are of great significance – not only have they transformed Chinese international relations, shaped by the Communist Party of China, but also impacted the attitudes of citizens. The conclusions of this paper have been drawn from the analysis of modern history of China and current political events. The author claims that there is a strong connection between the tensions in relations between China and Japan, the aforementioned historical events and the aversion of China towards Japan, which is still prevalent in the foreign policy of the Communist Party of China. These considerations are based on papers concerning the “century of humiliation”, such as *The “Century of Humiliation”*, *Then and Now: Chinese Perceptions of the International Order* by Alison Adcock Kaufman and *Never Forget the National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* by Zheng Wang and current political events.

Keywords: Century of humiliation, China, international relations, Japan.

Introduction

The picture of current international relations and policies globally are not a result of the last couple of years alone. They are strongly determined by historical events, cultural differences, and overall distinctions in civilisational development of countries. The PRC is, by all accounts, on the verge of becoming a global superpower in a matter of a couple of years. Due to this fact, being concerned by the

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policy pursued by China and factors motivating it seems to be a vital issue.

China's current leadership has said it wants to reboot the relationships between the major powers on a new model i.e. to base them on three pillars: non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation. However, over the past years, the first commitment (non-confrontation) seems to have been somewhat doubtful¹. The reason for this is the increasingly nationalistic tone in the rhetoric of Chinese Communist Party, which influences the country's international relations and its state policy. This manifests itself in many fields and in many cases, but this kind of rhetoric usually alludes to the so-called “century of humiliation”. I claim that this event strongly correlates with hostility in relations between China and Japan, which we are facing, because of the still ongoing aversion towards the Japanese held by the Chinese and fuelled by the Communist Party of China's foreign policy.

These considerations and conclusions are based on papers concerning the “century of humiliation”, such as *The "Century of Humiliation", Then and Now: Chinese Perceptions of the International Order* by Alison Adcock Kaufman and *Never Forget the National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* by Zheng Wang and current political events.

What is the “century of humiliation”?

Wang Zheng in his book states that “History is a religion to the Chinese.” The explanation of this statement is as follows - the majority of Chinese do not practice any religion, so the influence of religion over Chinese is not as great as for some other countries, so history (including historical narrative and education) has performed some of the roles of religion in China². If we accept this point of view and consider history as a sort of religion for the Chinese, then it become easier to recognise the “century of humiliation”, sometimes also called the “century of shame and humiliation” as an equivalent of the resurrection of Jesus for Christians. It is without any doubt the most important, and still alive in many minds, part of a “religion”.

¹D.W. Kearn, ‘China's Rise: Rhetoric and Reality’, *HuffPost*, 2015, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-w-kearn/chinas-rise-rhetoric-and-_b_8338416.html (accessed 30.12.2017).

² Wang Zheng, ‘In China, “History Is a Religion”, *The Diplomat*, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/06/in-china-history-is-a-religion/> (accessed 30.12.2017).

The period in question represents the most dire and tragic time in the Chinese nation's history, when from 1839 to 1949 the Middle Kingdom was under almost continual assault from external and internal forces.³

Throughout the ages, China was quite a well-developed and powerful country. The rulers were not really concerned with civilisations outside China. This situation changed dramatically in the 19th century, when China, as a result of actions undertaken by western powers, was effectively relegated to a semi-colonial country. The Chinese were not prepared and therefore did not know how to respond adequately to the forces they encountered, which resulted in such painful losses.⁴

Prior to 1839 the only foreign trade allowed was restricted to the Canton, where all foreign merchants had to transact business through official intermediaries. The inconveniences of this, mainly the prohibition of barter sale of tea and the seizure of about 20,000 boxes of opium by Chinese authorities, were the main causes that led to what is known as a First Opium War (1839-1842). The event is considered the beginning, lasting 110 years, of the "century of humiliation".⁵ Great Britain sent gunboats up the Yangtze River to compel, by force of arms, China's rulers to open their ports and markets to the opium trade. This experience and subsequent interactions with other western nations spurred similar demands for wider trade access in China. It revealed China's vulnerability to the west and highlighted imperial China's military and diplomatic weakness in the face of western powers.⁶ The war had such a huge impact on Chinese society that history textbooks on the mainland and on Taiwan still divide Chinese history into two categories – "pre-Opium war era" and "post-Opium war era".⁷

³ Davis Florick, 'China's National Century of Humiliation: Context for Today's Tensions', *Hum. Secur. Cent.*, 2016, <http://www.hscentre.org/asia-and-pacific/chinas-national-century-humiliation-context-todays-tensions/> (accessed 30.12.2017).

⁴ M.Anderson, Documentary: *China's Century of Humiliation*, 2011.

⁵ M.Anderson, Documentary...

⁶ A.A. Kaufman, Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on "China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy" - *The "Century of Humiliation" and China's National Narratives*, 2011, <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf> (accessed 10.03.18).

⁷ See, e.g. X. Jianjun, H. Shaohua, *Daxue Junshi Jiaocheng*, Changsha: Zhongnan University Press, 2004.

Yet, the term the "century of humiliation" perhaps would not have been around had it not been for the Second Opium War (1856-1858 and 1859-1860), even though the pretext for it, from our perspective, may be absurd.⁸ Chinese authorities seized a Chinese ship with Chinese crew onboard on charges of opium smuggling and piracy- albeit one has to keep in mind that the ship had been registered in Hong Kong, which was a British colony. When the crew were arrested, the British demanded the China release the Chinese crew. Even though China complied, this incident was used for propaganda purposes as *casus belli*. The British began a bombardment of the Chinese forts around Canton and eventually blasted open the city walls.⁹

China lost the war against the combined forces of the UK and France and as a result in 1860 in Beijing signed the Treaty of Tianjin. Among many other things, one of its provisions was to open Chinese ports to trade with the UK and France, also for the trade of opium. Merchants from the UK, France, Russia, and the USA received privileges in trading with the Chinese.¹⁰

The reason I consider the Second Opium War more important to the coinage of the term the “century of humiliation” is because this “humiliation” narrative is not entirely a Chinese creation. In 1860 the British army attacked Beijing’s Summer Palace,¹¹ even though it had no military significance. The Summer Palace was an exquisite array of buildings, lakes, and parks, and served as the primary residence of the imperial court.¹² It was one of the most beautiful places in China and a big part of the national legacy. The destruction of the Summer Palace was an act aimed to crush emperor Qing’s pride and humiliate him. Moreover, as the historian James Hevia in *Wealth and Power* explains, “it was an object lesson for others who might contemplate defying

⁸ Sometimes Second Opium War is treated as two, separate conflicts - the Second Opium War (1856-1858) and Third Opium War (1859-1860).

⁹ Kallie Szczepanski, ‘The First and Second Opium Wars’, *ThoughtCo.*, 2017, <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-first-and-second-opium-wars-195276> (accessed 31.12.2017).

¹⁰ Sebastien Roblin, ‘The Opium Wars: The Bloody Conflicts That Destroyed Imperial China’, *Natl. Interest*, 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-opium-wars-the-bloody-conflicts-destroyed-imperial-china-17212?page=2> (accessed 31.12.2017).

¹¹ In Chinese - Yuánmíngyuán - 圓明園.

¹² Matt Schiavenza, ‘How Humiliation Drove Modern Chinese History’, *The Atlantic*, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/10/how-humiliation-drove-modern-chinese-history/280878/> (accessed 31.12.2017).

British power”.¹³ The main reason for the attack was to crush Chinese morale. The ruins of the Summer Palace, known today as the Old Summer Palace, are on display in Beijing, the capital of China, and constantly remind citizens of the humiliation that had been experienced.

Alongside these external affairs, Chinese authorities had to deal with internal problems as well e.g. the Nian Rebellion, Dungan Revolt or Panthay Rebellion. But the most important was the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), brought about by the unfavourable provisions of the Nanjing treaty, which ended the First Opium War and the introduction, by force, of Christianity into China. It lasted for 14 years, ravaged 17 provinces and took an estimated 20 million lives. The Qing dynasty was so weakened by the rebellions that it was never again able to establish an effective hold over the country¹⁴ (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.).

There was also a relatively minor historical event in the 19th century, the Sino-French war (1884-1885), which halted China's self-strengthening movement in its tracks¹⁵. The reason for the conflict was the desire of both countries to maintain control over what is today Vietnam. As a result, China had to recognise a French protectorate.¹⁶

The last major event in 19th century was *jiawu* – the Sino-Japanese war, over control of Korea, which was a Chinese tribute state. Even though many foreign observers expected China to win, Japan easily defeated China. Based on the provisions of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, China was forced to cede Taiwan, Liaodong Peninsula and the Penghu Islands to Japan. Senkaku Islands were not part of the treaty, but Japan annexed these islands to Okinawa Prefecture in 1895. Moreover, China was obliged to pay a huge indemnity (an amount that in 1895 was the equivalent of \$150 billion in today's money), permit the establishment of Japanese industries in four treaty ports, and recognise

¹³ Orville Shell, John Delury, *Wealth and Power: China's Long March to the Twenty-first Century*, New York: Random House, 2013.

¹⁴ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. *Taiping Rebellion*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Taiping-Rebellion> (accessed 31.12.2017).

¹⁵ Stuart Heaver, 'When China and France went to war: 130 years since forgotten conflict', *Post Mag*, 2014, <http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/article/1578428/no-charm-intended> (accessed 31.12.2017).

¹⁶ Patryk Franiel, 'Wojna Chińsko-Francuska 1884-1885. Operacje na morzu', *Nowa Strategia*, 2015, <http://www.nowastrategia.org.pl/wojna-chinsko-francuska-1884-1885-operacje-na-morzu/> (accessed 31.12.2017).

Japanese hegemony over Korea¹⁷. This war was especially meaningful since Chinese had always considered Japan its “student”, a civilisation inferior to their own - hence losing against them is considered by many Chinese the most humiliating incident throughout the “century of humiliation”.

The shame was further compounded in the first two decades of the 20th century by independence movements in Tibet and Mongolia, the definitive fall of the Qing dynasty and by further Japanese incursions into Manchuria, demanding expansion of their control of Manchuria and of the Chinese economy by creating Manchukuo – a puppet state of Japan. China lost effective control over nearly a third of its territory and had to struggle with massive rebellions and uprisings, chief among others, the notorious Boxer Rebellion,¹⁸ but the most important for this considerations is the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). The resistance of China to continuous Japanese expansion caused the breakout of the conflict. In this case the *casus belli* had taken place on Marco Polo bridge when in July of 1937 Japanese troops provoked the Chinese to open fire on its soldiers. The war led to up to 20 million Chinese casualties¹⁹. One event in particular sows massive discord in China-Japan relations, even to this day, i.e. the Nanking Massacre. The Japanese massacred approximately 300,000 people. Thousands of civilians were savagely killed, females enslaved as so-called “comfort women” (sex slaves). What is more, the Japanese also conducted human experimentation in China.²⁰

The victory of the Communist Party of China and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 by Mao Tsetung ended the “century of humiliation”.

The “Century of humiliation” in modern Chinese narrative

The use of the past in China has a big impact on society as a whole, mainly due to its role in the educational system. Even though,

¹⁷Hays Jeffrey, ‘Sino-Japanese War, Facts Details’, 2016, <http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat2/sub4/entry-4291>.

¹⁸ Alison Adcock Kaufman, ‘The “Century of Humiliation,” Then and Now: Chinese Perceptions of the International Order’, *Pacific Focus* Vol. 25, 2010, p. 1–33.

¹⁹*The Second Sino-Japanese War*. Alpha Hist.

<http://alphahistory.com/chineserevolution/sino-japanese-war/> (accessed 1.12.18).

²⁰*The Second Sino-Japanese War*. Alpha Hist.

<http://alphahistory.com/chineserevolution/sino-japanese-war/> (accessed 1.12.18).

as was pointed out before, China has a scabrous history full of undeserved suffering, the history textbooks still manage to twist and omit it to fit the narrative. History is being used as a political tool, and at the high school level, the Chinese must follow the doctrine imposed by Communist Party of China.²¹ In 1991 the CPC began the 'Patriotic Education Campaign'. The campaign was targeted mainly at Chinese youth, but Beijing called upon the entire nation to study China's humiliating modern history and how much the country has been changed by the Communist revolution.²² The party has revised the history textbooks since 1991 in order to replace the old class-struggle narrative with an official "victory narrative" (read: China winning independence), which blames western countries for China's suffering.²³ This strongly influences the collective memory of Chinese society, which, in turn gives it a kind of national identity framework and channels its values and objectives, which in turn shape the future in the name of the past.²⁴ This kind of indoctrination of nationalistic attitudes with a simultaneous incitement of aversion towards the external world is typical for non-democratic regimes. The CPC realised that there is a link between the "Century of humiliation" and legitimisation of its power. It realised this the hard way as before it started to emphasise the nationalistic aspect, China had struggled with a crisis of public confidence that culminated in the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations that were brutally thwarted by the regime. To ensure its effective rule the CCP had to be considered a defender of the national interest against the influence of western imperialism. History education on national humiliation is an effective device for the regime to legitimise the one-party state.²⁵

²¹ See: Howard W. French, 'China's Textbooks Twist and Omit History', *N. Y. Times*, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/06/world/asia/chinas-textbooks-twist-and-omit-history.html> (accessed 01.03.2018).

²² W. Zheng, 'National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 2008, p. 783–806.

²³ Gerrit W. Gong, *Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia: Issues of Identity in International Relations*, Significant Issues Series, Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2001.

²⁴ Gong, G.W., *Memory and History...*

²⁵ W. Zheng, 'National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 2008, p. 783–806.

At the XIX Communist Party Congress Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, was re-elected to the post of Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China – the highest possible post in the party. He was also elected head of the Military Council. Moreover, he will probably hold the position of President of China indefinitely, after the abolition of the term limit, while many of his supporters have filled key posts in bodies such as the Central Politburo of the Communist Party of China and the Central Military Commission.²⁶ It is said that this makes Xi the most powerful Chinese leader in decades.

Xi's Political Report, that opened the above-mentioned Congress, included the phrase the “Great Rejuvenation” – by which he means restoration to the rightful, great power status of China, a predominance it enjoyed and lost due to the “Century of humiliation” – 27 times.²⁷ The same man, during his speech, in the former Concerning the ex-British colony of Hong Kong, on the 20th anniversary of its return to China, Xi recalled how the British victory in the First Opium War of 1839-42 – in which Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain – set in motion decades of humiliation for China. He said also that Hong Kong should do more to boost “patriotic education” which has been opposed by local residents who fear losing their identity.²⁸ It seems that as long as Hong Kong maintains its autonomy – according to a treaty signed by UK prime minister Margaret Thatcher in 1984 it should keep its unique rights until 2047 – the Chinese authorities will not stop recalling the phrase a ‘Century of humiliation’ and using it as a propaganda tool thereby keeping open the wound in relations between China and UK. However, Xi is not the only Chinese leader that has used the concept of national rejuvenation, because almost every generation of Chinese leaders has used the national humiliation narrative and the goal

²⁶ Information derived from Polish Press Agency, “*Najpotężniejszy od czasów Mao.*” *Xi Jinping umocnił swoją władzę*, TVN 24, 2017, <https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiatek/chiny-xi-jinping-umocnil-wladze-po-zjezdzie-partii-komunistycznej,784672.html> (accessed 01.03.2017).

²⁷ Doshi, R., *Xi Jinping just made it clear where China's foreign policy is headed*. Wash. Post, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/10/25/xi-jinping-just-made-it-clear-where-chinas-foreign-policy-is-headed/?utm_term=.d0780c7a6c36 (accessed 1.3.18).

²⁸ Neil Connor, ‘China's Xi Jinping recalls national “humiliation” to Britain as he seeks to stir patriotism in Hong’, *The Telegraph*, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/01/chinas-xi-jinping-recalls-national-humiliation-britain-seeks/> (accessed 01.03.2018).

of rejuvenation to mobilise the Chinese populace to support their revolution or reform.²⁹

Within the scope of state policy, the current president recalls the “century of humiliation” in army-related matters. Xi has embarked on an overhaul of the military and a clampdown on corruption throughout the military and the party. In doing so, he points to the First Sino-Japanese War that was lost due to the weakness of the Chinese army whose grave sin was corruption.³⁰

The impact of the “century of humiliation” is visible also in China’s approach to the issue of human rights. In the western culture sphere, human rights are understood in rather a uniform way. Those are inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated rights that are possessed by everyone and stem from human dignity. Democratic countries consider this approach as the only right approach and therefore exert strong pressure on China when it violates human rights. That pressure has provoked a strong nationalistic response. As Robert Weatherly says, “This is evident in at least three ways, which taken together constitute a rejection of Western pressure as an unwelcome form of cultural imperialism, a means of imposing an alien mode of thinking on China”. The three reactions are:

1. portraying western criticism as a violating of national sovereignty of China;
2. accusing the west of gross hypocrisy on the subject and claiming that CCP has developed its own, specific to China, model of human rights.³¹

In fact the sense of humiliation is so deeply rooted in the Chinese psyche, that even today, when China is considered one of the great superpowers, many Chinese still behave as if they are being bullied and abused – therefore building a strong nation that no one can mistreat is the most important agenda, far more relevant than protecting

²⁹ Wang Zheng, ‘In China, “History Is a Religion”, *The Diplomat*, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/06/in-china-history-is-a-religion/> (accessed 30.12.2017).

³⁰ *China’s Leaders Draw Lessons From War of ‘Humiliation’*. 纽约时报中文网. 2014, <https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20140729/c29leaders/en-us/> (accessed 01.12.2018).

³¹ R. Weatherly, ‘Defending the Nation: The Role of Nationalism in Chinese Thinking on Human Rights’, *Democratization*, Vol. 15, 2008, p. 352-355.

human rights.³² As Allison Graham says, “During the 1990s when many Western thought leaders were celebrating the «end of history» with the apparent triumph of market-based democracies, a number of observers believed that China, too, was on the path to democratic government. Today, few in China would say that political freedoms are more important than reclaiming China’s international standing and national pride”.³³ There are voices that the Chinese view of today’s world is that nations must “humiliate or be humiliated”.³⁴

The “century of humiliation” is evoked even when it comes to fields that, at first glance, seem unconnected directly with the colonial invasion of the west, such as sport. It manifests itself, for example, during the Olympics. In theory, this is an event that is all about universal values and noble sporting competition. But that is not the case for China. As Professor Wang Zheng says, explaining the medal haul at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, “this is because of the lingering memory of national humiliation that the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) elite can legitimise their rule through sports. Gold medals in international sports have been effectively used as the currency of CCP legitimacy. Comparing today’s achievements with that of old China, as in the article «From ‘Sick Man of East Asia’ to ‘Sports Big Power’» has been a common method of the CCP propaganda machine. It is a great achievement for China to go from just one participant and no medals in 1932 to 100 medals and 51 golds in 2008. The success of the CCP government and China’s rejuvenation in power and wealth can be illustrated by the world-leading count of 51 gold medals”.³⁵ Concluding – for China, the Olympics is not just about sport. They see here a link to redemption for the suffering experienced during the “century of humiliation” and legitimisation of the CCP. Winning international competitions is the way to show to the world the progress that the Chinese nation has made throughout the years.

³² Helen Wang, ‘Century of Humiliation’ Complicates US-China Relationship’, 2015, <http://thehelenwang.com/2015/09/century-of-humiliation-complicates-us-china-relationship/> (accessed 01.03.2018).

³³ Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap*?, Boston-New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, p. 122.

³⁴ W.A. Callahan, ‘National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism’, *Alternatives*, Vol. 29, 2004, p. 199–218.

³⁵ Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

The influence of the “century of humiliation” on Sino-Japanese relations

The Asia-Pacific region struggles with many security dilemmas and challenges, such as the nuclearisation programme of North Korea and the ongoing tensions between Pakistan and India, but one of the most significant is China-Japan relations. This is the longest standing tension in the Asia-Pacific region and, for the first time in history, both countries are superpowers at the same time, and the most influential actors of Western Asia. For the aforementioned historical reasons and fuelled by the Chinese authorities’ nationalistic rhetoric, relations between the two countries are rather frosty, not only at the governmental level, but also on the societal plane. The three most captivating and interconnected issues concerning China-Japan relations are: Japan’s prime minister’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, historically significant affairs concerning the attitude of Japan towards its past and the disputed territories of Senkaku Islands (in Chinese - Diaoyu Islands).

The first issue – the Yasukuni Shrine is a Shinto shrine that commemorates the two and a half million Japanese who died in service of Japan, the majority of them – during World War II. The reason it arouses controversy is that among the commemorated are war criminals sentenced by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo.³⁶ In 2001 Junichiro Koizumi, the prime minister of Japan, after a few years of not doing so, resumed paying an official, annual visit to the controversial shrine, and since then China-Japan relations have cooled. This was further aggravated by tensions concerning the Senakaku Islands, the disapproval of Japanese history textbooks and the proposal that Japan be granted a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, with cities across most of East Asia breaking out in anti-Japanese protests in 2005.³⁷ The above-mentioned factors are connected with the the fact that, as China claims, Japan has not come to terms with its own past. Japanese officials and textbooks have even questioned whether Japanese military actions in China and Korea could

³⁶ ‘Yasukuni war shrine: what is its importance ?’, *The Telegraph*, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/10538086/Yasukuni-war-shrine-what-is-its-importance.html> (accessed 01.05.2018).

³⁷ Johnatan Watts, ‘Violence flares as the Chinese rage at Japan’, *The Guardian*, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/apr/17/china.japan> (accessed 01.05.2018).

be called “invasions” and whether there was a “massacre” in Nanjing.³⁸ The bid for a permanent seat on such an influential body as the UN Security Council triggered alarm bells in China and Korea, because Japan, as they claim, still hadn’t repented sufficiently over its wartime atrocities and was trying to whitewash them³⁹.

In 2006, when Shinzo Abe took over the prime minister office, he promised to cease paying visits to Yasukuni Shrine, with resulted with a slight improvement in China-Japan relations, but in 2012 Abe decided to visit the shrine again. China was outraged and Beijing stated that: “only by Japan earnestly and squarely facing, deeply reflecting upon its history of invasion and clearly distancing itself from militarism, can China-Japan relations realise healthy and stable development”.⁴⁰

The second of the issues – a dispute over Senkaku Island stems from the fact that both countries lay claim to the disputed territory. It reaches back to the beginning of Japanese colonialism when in 1885 Japan, claiming that the islands do not belong to anyone, incorporated them into its territory. One would think that the islands, which are basically seven uninhabited rocks in the East China Sea, would not stir up international relations, but in the 1960s information about oil deposits and fishing grounds near the archipelago came into the spotlight.⁴¹ Recently, in 2012, the conflict escalated due to the decision of Japan’s government to buy and nationalise three of the biggest islands that belonged to private owners. This resulted in a violent anti-Japanese protest in China, where thousands of protesters took to the streets across the country, burning images of Japanese flags, attacking Japanese-made cars and smashing windows of Japanese-owned businesses. China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that “the illegal behaviour of Japanese

³⁸ Wang Zheng, “‘Missing Histories’: History Education and China-Japan Relations”, *The Diplomat*, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/03/missing-histories-history-education-and-china-japan-relations/> (accessed 01.05.2018).

³⁹ Johnatan Watts, ‘Violence flares as the Chinese rage at Japan’, *The Guardian*, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/apr/17/china.japan> (accessed 01.05.2018).

⁴⁰ Barney Henderson, ‘Why do Japan and China have such a frosty relationship ?’, *The Telegraph*, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/11221248/Why-do-Japan-and-China-have-such-a-frosty-relationship.html> (accessed 01.05.2018).

⁴¹ David Pilling, ‘Azja, Japonia, Chiny i dziedzictwo problemu historycznego’, 2012, <http://forsal.pl/artykuly/642171,azja-japonia-chiny-i-dziedzictwo-problemu-historycznego.html> (accessed 01.05.2018).

rightwingers has violated China's territorial sovereignty".⁴² It seems that for China it is not just about financial interest, but also to show that they will not be subjugated to foreign powers. China for centuries treated Japan as its "younger brother" or "student", therefore conceding to Japan would be seen for the Chinese as dishonour and making the CCP appear to be letting down nationalistically minded Chinese. The conflict is a serious threat that has repercussions for the overall situation in Western Asia.

Moreover in 2014 The People's Liberation Army navy held a memorial ceremony at the coast of Weihai, where China was defeated in 1894, to mark the 120th year since the start of the First Sino-Japanese War.⁴³ In recent years China has increased its investments in strengthening the maritime power of the Chinese army. According to the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission's Annual Report to Congress by 2020, China could have as many as 351 submarines and missile-equipped surface ships in the Asia Pacific, *ipso facto* outnumbering the US navy. As an explanation for such intense naval buildup, the Chinese point to the failures of the Qing Navy and its loss against a modernised Japanese navy – using the "century of humiliation" as a justification for such a military development. It's worth mentioning that alongside building ships China also invests in long-term strategic infrastructure in a variety of Asian and African countries to increase force projection.⁴⁴

Conclusions

The "Century of humiliation" has had a massive impact not only on the foreign and national policies of China, but also on national self-confidence and attitudes towards other nations. It seems that the whole political system of the People's Republic of China is based on the legitimacy to rule that the Communist Party of China derives from the

⁴² Tania Breningan, 'China protests over Japanese activists' visit to disputed island', *The Guardian*, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/19/china-protest-japan-senkaku-diaoyo-island#comments> (accessed 01.05.2018).

⁴³ Peng Yining, 'Navy holds memorial ceremony for Jiawu War', *ChinaDaily*, 2014, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-08/27/content_18498324.htm (accessed 25.09.2018).

⁴⁴ Hans Lei, 'The Ghost of China's Past: How the "Century of Humiliation" Influences China's Naval Buildup', *Brown Political Review*, 2017, <http://www.brownpoliticalreview.org/2017/11/ghost-chinas-past-century-humiliation-influences-chinas-naval-buildup/> (accessed 25.09.18).

suffering experienced at the hands of western and Japanese incursions. Hence, it is highly unlikely that China will simply “move forward” from historical grievance, because, as Zheng Wang says “[...] historical memory of past humiliation is not just a psychological issue or something only related to perception and attitude. It is a key element of constructing the Chinese national identity”.⁴⁵ Therefore, the “century of humiliation” manifests itself in China in almost every aspect of life and cannot be simply abandoned from the national narrative.

China-Japan relations have been particularly unstable. Despite all the aforementioned issues, both countries are currently strongly connected economically, which prevents possible serious conflicts for the time being. However, this is the first time in history that simultaneously both China and Japan are superpowers. With Japan being demilitarised due to article 9 of the Japanese Constitution and a new Chinese generation coming into power, the situation might get more tense. This new generation taking over the reins was strongly indoctrinated with nationalism and aversion to Japan. This is a generation for whom the Japanese were portrayed as those who robbed, murdered and raped their way across China. Hence, it is unclear whether China will resist calls for settling scores of long-held grievances or not, even though since the establishment of diplomatic relations, Japan has made some friendly gestures to develop better relations with China⁴⁶. Without any doubt the “century of humiliation” will not simply fade into obscurity from public life and international relations for both Chinese citizens and officials. As Chu Yimin, a People's Liberation Army general and political commissar said, “The wounds are increasingly healed over, but the scars remain, and what we need most of all nowadays is to awaken an intense sense of humiliation, so that we never forget the humiliation of our country and military, and turn knowledge of this into courage”.

⁴⁵ Wang Zheng, ‘In China, “History Is a Religion”, *The Diplomat*, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/06/in-china-history-is-a-religion/> (accessed 30.12.2017).

⁴⁶ See E. Dryjańska, Główne problemy w stosunkach Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej z Japonią, *Forum Politologiczne*, Vol. 8, 2008.

BOOK REVIEW

Kim Myung-ja. *The Korean Diaspora in Postwar Japan-Geopolitics, Identity and Nation-Building*, London: I.B Tauris, 2017, 304 pages. ISBN: 978-1784537678

Around one million Koreans are permanent residents or citizens of Japan. Mainly distributed in the major industrial and economic centres of the country, the largest number of Koreans live in Osaka, followed by Tokyo and Hyogo prefectures. Like their counterparts in North and South Korea, most Koreans in Japan speak Korean, although younger Koreans who are second or third generation increasingly speak only Japanese.

The term ‘Zainichi’ Koreans (from the Japanese word meaning ‘staying in Japan’) is sometimes used to describe those who are permanent residents of Japan but who have not acquired Japanese citizenship.’

The author is Kim Myung-ja, a Teaching Fellow in Northeast Asian Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. She completed her PhD at the Politics Department at SOAS where she received the Meiji Jingu Scholarship Award. Her MA in International Affairs was completed at the School of International Service, American University in Washington DC. She has been a guest lecturer in Korean Studies at Tübingen University and has published in the *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*. She founded and was President of the NGO, World Tonpo Network, Tokyo, an organization that seeks the peaceful unification of North and South Korea.

The book *Korean Diaspora in Postwar Japan - Geopolitics, Identity and Nation-Building*, written by Kim Myung-ja was published by I.B. Tauris in 2017. Excluding the preface, the conclusion and

additional elements, the book consists of a classic structure: five chapters, where the first chapter is theoretical, and the other are presented in a chronological order.

Chapter one is on alliance cohesion, the diaspora and nation-building policies. The author looks at how the diaspora's identity affects its host state's behaviour when both host and home states are classified as minor or middle powers as opposed to major powers. Chapter two describes the Korean Zainichi, defining them as being Korean nationals who moved to Japanese territories before the colonial period, secondly as people who moved to the Japanese territories during the colonial period and thirdly as Korean nationals who remained in Japan after the end of World War II (p. 51). Chapter three discusses the exclusionary policies towards the Zainichi in the post-world war II era (1945-1964). The author studies the impact of the Korean War on the US-ROK alliance (p. 79) and the US-Japan Alliance (p. 89).

The permanent character of Korean migration to Japan became a major problem, which is analyzed in chapter four. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses whether alliance cohesion still matter in the period starting in 1990. The author posits the hypothesis that weak alliance cohesion allows a host country to accommodate a diaspora supported by an enemy homeland in order to expand its own autonomy under an asymmetric alliance. The author also supports the hypothesis presented by Mylonas, where a host state is likely to exclude a non-core group when the state has revisionist aims and an enemy supports the non-core group.

Still, for such a concentrated work – a little under three hundred pages – this book provides a good deal of ground related to the adaptation of the Korean diaspora in Japan. As a kind of precursor (only a handful of books related to the Korean Zainichi have been published in western languages), its content provides an original approach into the impact of international alliances on the internal policy of the country under consideration. In spite of the clarity of the book and its valuable knowledge. I do have some minor remarks that I want to point out below.

Firstly, there is a lack of statistical data, we do not have any information about the leadership of Chonggryon (such as the conservative Han Dok-su) and Midan organisations. In spite of data provided on page 197, there is no information concerning for instance a listing of Korean schools in Japan, which may perturb the junior reader. I regret that the author also omitted to mention that Ko Yong-hui, the

mother of Kim Jong-un, the leader of North Korea, was born in Osaka. I also regret a lack of pictures, which is maybe due to the publisher's requirements. We do have a map of the Korean Peninsula (p. 75), but no social map of Japan, which could indicate where Korean Zainichi live in Japan. I also regret the lack of information concerning the location of (North) Korean companies in Japan and the economic cooperation between Japanese (such as Mitsubishi) and North Korean trade companies.

I also noted that the large bibliography doesn't include any books or publications in Korean, or any Zainichi Korean journals, such as the *Chosun Sinbo Ilbo*, no updated data related to the Naturalisation of Korean in Japan (p. 157), no information about the role of Junya Koizumi (the father of the former PM Junichiro Koizumi), the repatriation project of Koreans to North Korea or the book of Kang Chol-hwan, a member of a Zainichi Korean family. It's also not obvious to me, that both Chongryon and Mindan include people from both Koreas.

There are also some interesting facts which are not usually mentioned. For instance, Japanese financial assistance to South Korea after the 1997 financial crisis. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation signed a memorandum with Korean authorities and provided USD 3 bln of loans. On page 183 there is probably a typo mistake concerning the Pyongyang's trade with China (82%, and not 28% as stipulated).

In spite of the previously mentioned remarks, I definitely consider that this book is a wonderful addition to the field of Japanese Minorities studies. I would suggest the author make a second edition by updating data and discussing more about the situation of Chongryon members in the framework of the potential halting of the nuclear programme of North Korea. I would also suggest the researcher incorporate a chapter related to the notion of Zainichi Koreans in the North and South Korean press.

I also think that the author has prepared a brilliant book, and I would like to highly recommend it as one of the best ways to understand the situation of Zainichi Koreans in Japan.

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BOOK REVIEW

Kim Byung-Yeon. Unveiling the North Korean economy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 329 pages. ISBN: 978-1-316-63516-2.

The author is Kim Byung-yeon, a professor of economics at the Department of Economics at Seoul National University. He is a recognised distinguished researcher in the humanities and social sciences by the National Research Foundation of the Republic of Korea. He is also a regular columnist on Korean issues in leading South Korean newspapers.

The book *Unveiling the North Korean economy*, by Kim Byung-yeon, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2016 and by Tauris in 2017. Excluding acknowledgements and introduction, conclusion and additional elements, the book consists of a classic structure: three chapters, where the first chapter is an evaluation of the socialist economy, then a presentation of the North Korean economy, and finally the transition process of the North Korean economy, demonstrating how the North Korean leadership survived the collapse of the Soviet Union. The book is also a synthesis and overview of studies of the North Korean economy since 1953 (starting from page 41). It is an example, but not the only one, of a scholarly book focused on North Korean economic studies made available in a foreign language. Interestingly, similar books related to the North Korean economy have been published in communist countries such as the book entitled *Współpraca KRLD z krajami socjalistycznymi* [The cooperation of the DPRK with Socialist countries] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1975) authored by Stefan Kojło Stefan, and the

monograph prepared by Stefan Kojło and Anatol Dikij Polska – KRLD: Gospodarka, współpraca [Poland-DPRK: Economy, cooperation], (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 1975).

The book is equally divided between the three following chapters. The first chapter is an evaluation of the socialist economy (pp. 6-40). Divided into five parts, it discusses the framework of the socialist economy from the point of view of companies and households, explained using theoretical economic models. The second chapter (pp. 41-216) is a kind of economic history of North Korea, underlining its foundations, such as the central planning system, Juseok Funds&Spot Guidance matters. I regret there is no extended information concerning the public distribution system. The third chapter is more contemporary as it deals with the transition of the North Korean economy (pp. 217-300) focusing on the stabilisation of its economy through liberalisation and potential integration with South Korea. As a piece of evidence (p. 92), the author stipulates that 90 per cent of total household expenditures are made in these (informal) markets.

The book deals with several different eras in history, emphasising in English those elements of the North Korean economy which have rarely been discussed by North Korean scholars. For instance, combined North Korean firms, known as Yeonhap Giupso, (p. 123), the new system of foreign trade established in 1991 (p. 124), and the Juseok Fund (pp. 130-31). Some of these elements were discussed in the other best-seller related to the North Korean economy written by Hazel Smith, *Markets and Military Rule*.

There are some points which seems to indicate that the research is somewhat outdated. For example, many research surveys cited by the author (pp. 185) were done six years before the publication of the book. Also data seems to be slightly old taking in account the publication date (2017). Due to this, the conclusion related to the relationship between markets, bribery and regime stability in North Korea may weaken over time (p. 187) as the survey was done in 2009 (Main Bribe-Takers).

On page 164, data related to North Korea's trade are updated to 2014, p. 169, while imports are dated up to 2012. may provide more outdated examples. The author also considers the province Hamgyung (known as Hamgyungdo) as a whole in spite of its division into Hamgyongdo North (Hamgyungpukdo) and Hamgyungdo South (Hamgyungnamdo), for example on page 96. I would like to clearly indicate that in any case, the contribution of the author to the gathering

of data concerning the North Korean economy is fantastic. The author also minimises the results of the North Korean economy in the 1970s, indicating that GDP per capita was higher than that of South Korea. The author argues that growth rates were overestimated in the statistics supplied by North Korean authorities (pp. 80-81).

Concerning bribes and corruption, the author argues that bribery may have a negative, but also a positive, impact. According to Frossman, quoted on page 181, as “good corruption may contribute to the stability of the regime because it adds to the aggregate supply of goods and services, while bad corruption does not”. Finally, the author defends, something I agree with, that “the current situation regarding the informal economy and bribery may be characterised as an equilibrium...Given resource constraints that make it difficult for the dictator to pay his officials appropriate salaries, he implicitly allows officials to receive money from market participants.

Furthermore, the book has also other limitations. I believe the author did not provide enough data concerning the emergence of a new social class in North Korea: the *donjus*. These “money owners” are barely mentioned, only on page 64, as being “private financiers...to be financing the construction of flats”. Probably the focus of the author did not cover this social class, hence its brief reference, despite its key role in the development of the North Korean economy. The author also uses only a few western publications (only one publication, by Marcus Noland, was quoted – p. 319) and there are no Russian sources, in spite of the connections of this country to North Korea. Probably for linguistic reasons, sources in Chinese were also omitted. It may have been valuable to indicate this in the introduction to the monograph.

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EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

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1. Ivor Wilks, *Wa and Wala. Islam and Polity in North-Western Ghana*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 70.
2. Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 124.
3. Kareen Pfeifer, 'Is There an Islamic Economics?' in *Political Islam. Essays from Middle East Report*, Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.), Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977, p. 155.
4. Zygmunt Komorowski, *Kultury Afryki Czarnej* [Cultures of Black Africa], Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1994, p. 89.
5. L. Dimond, 'Rethinking of Civil Society', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1994, p. 4.
6. Tafsir of Ibn Kathir: <http://www.qtafsir.com> (accessed 20.11.2011).

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7. Pfeifer, *Is There an Islamic...*, p. 154.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
9. *Ibidem*.

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