

Macro-Historical Conditions for a Reconciliation in East Asia: Remaking History in an Age of Civilizational Crisis¹

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Abstract

This article talks about how the dominant Westphalian model, which is rooted in the capitalist development, has failed to institute peace among the countries in different regions in the world—a product of a civilization’s crisis. This crisis is a confluence of expansionism and cultural imperialism wielded by the circle of “civilized nations,” which Japan joined, resulted in the Great Japan Asianism, and fueled the development of Japan’s war state, the new Cold War between the haves and have-nots, and the growth of antihegemonic movements all over the world. Citing the 1955 Bandung Conference as a precedent, the article seeks to establish alternatives to the Westphalian peace narrative and suggests that Asian nations, in particular, look inwards and find amongst themselves local and indigenous means to achieve peace. This also calls for a reconciliation among the four countries of East Asia to look beyond the historical transgressions of the past and move forward towards building a pluralistic “common home of East Asian peoples.”

Keywords: Westphalian peace, totalitarian war state, Bandung Conference, exogenous modernization, Japan Asianism

Kairos vs. mythos: The neoliberal global economy of Westphalian capitalism

THE TIME (*KAIROS*) IS RIPE for reconciliation in East Asia but the Myth (*mythos*) of colonialist glory, based on a misinterpretation of the Westphalian Peace System² by Japan, makes it impossible to build a Common House of East Asia—together with China and the two Koreas, North and South. It is necessary to overcome this myth of national glory and counter it with another that supports local endogenous development and opposes cultural imperialism from its emulator, Japan.³ We are experiencing a Cold War between the cultural imperialism of the global financial capitalist forces and the anti-imperialist forces of the emerging endogenous ecocultural forces of local citizens and the multitude. The four states of East Asia will have to overcome their belief in the myth of state-based developmentalism, which adheres to Westphalian capitalist peace. Instead, they have to build a new endogenous regional community of communities as part of the emerging non-Western world united by a pluralistic vision against cultural imperialism.

The development of such a new vision has to found itself on an alternative reading of the history of modernization in East Asia. This model will be a triad. First, it must depict Japan's exogenous developmental project, which turned East Asia into a regional arena of Westphalian interstate conflict, the target of external and local forces of cultural imperialism. The external imperialism led by the British and then the American hegemons, along with the internal countercolonialist expansion of Japan, was based on an imitation of the exogenous Westphalian model of universalism and expansionism. Second, the model must paint a picture of the present civilizational crisis. Third, it must look to the Bandung Conference, which is posited as an alternative to the present myth of Westphalian peace; its reinterpretation will be a target of our efforts in East Asia.

The tragic experience of cultural imperialism in East Asia

I wish to give an interpretation of the Japanese anticolonialist state project, which was based on a grand strategy of maintaining Japan's independence. Japan, encircled by Western colonial powers, became a colonialist state. And, to counteract potential aggression by the Western hegemony, Japan eventually turned into a modern developmentalist total-war state—attacking and distinguishing herself from neighbor countries in the name of modernization—and into a non-Western Westphalian great power.⁴

This was Japan's State Civilizational Project, which the great Westphalian states wanted to admit into the inner circle of civilized powers. Japan underwent a nation-building effort of exogenous modernization, and stayed Westernized while keeping its patriarchal traditions reformulated according to the Westphalian peace project.

The state project of the Meiji "modern" state was coined by Yoshida Shoin of the Choshu Clan. Alerted by the Opium War in China, Shoin taught his disciples a plan to build a modern state that emulates the Western powers, to accept Western technology and institutions, and to develop Japan into a modern unified nation state. One very dangerous component of this project was to counteract Western colonialism by transforming modern Japan into a powerful colonial state. He wanted Japan to colonize the North Pacific beginning from Hokkaido, Korea, Manchuria, the Ryukyu Kingdom, Taiwan, and down to the Philippines.⁵

One of his disciples, Ito Hirobumi, who became a key leader of the Meiji State, applied this plan to build a modern state and reported at his master's grave that he implemented his will and colonized Korea. The colonial expansion of Japan, which started with the annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom, was followed by the annexation of the Korean Kingdom and by the invasion of China, which in turn precipitated the creation of the Manchukuo puppet state. At present, the colonial expansion of Japan is still legitimized by conservative political and economic leaders, who continue Japan's expansion post-1945 Defeat, through an economic project based on

a course-correction that combines the subaltern role of the United States as the new hegemon, and focuses on the building of an economic influence with a potential for regaining political and military supremacy in the future.

This trend of Asianism, combined with Japan's great power status, did not end with the 1945 defeat. It kept the principle of a developmentalist "total-war state," which demilitarized Japan and developed and applied nuclear energy to build a prosperous national economy. The "peaceful use" of nuclear power, nevertheless, maintained a potential capacity for military use through the enrichment of the accumulated used nuclear fuel, plutonium. The total-war state of Japan wanted to maintain a technological capacity that would eventually develop its nuclear power for military purposes. The creation of an economic sphere of influence represented ambivalence in the Great Japan tradition, while the alternative Small Japan Asianism was recently represented by the Peshawar Project of Dr. Nakamura Tetsu.⁶

Small Japan Asianism does not support the military "counterterrorist" activities of the United States in Afghanistan, nor does it try to develop a Japanese economic sphere of influence in any part of Asia. It is the basis of the Japanese ecological movement that supports the Convention of Biodiversity, which developed activities that criticize the Western ideology of assuming the supremacy of human interests over life and its diversity. It supports a decentralized nation-building that turn the regions of the country into units of participatory democracy,⁷ opposing the challenge of a Great Japan nationalist revisionism. This movement includes the Abe Shinzo government, which can be regarded as an ideological descendant of Yoshida Shoin.

The small Japan Asianist tradition also represents Shidehara Kijuro's attempt to keep the Japanese military from invading China through a policy of non-expansion. The same Shidehara played a key role during the occupation in introducing the concept of the "right to live in peace," whose logical consequence is the renunciation of military forces in Article 9, Paragraph 2. It is important to take note of this alternative state project, which fructified, with the support of American New Dealers, into the concept of the "right of all nations in the world to have their rights to live in peace,

free from fear and wants.” It is an anticolonialist concept that declares illegal all colonialist aggression, which violates the right to live in peace, and outlaws any exogenous intervention from the outside. The tradition of a small Japan Asianism was an influential alternative state project proposed by Sakamoto Ryouma and Katsu Kaishu during the Meiji Restoration.

The version of small Japan Asianism and anticolonialism was neither in support of Japan’s countercolonialist aggression against its neighboring countries, nor was it an attempt to build a strongly unified nation; rather, it is a developmentalist and a total war national mobilization. It was trying to keep pluralism from arising in the different regions in Japan by keeping them under a parliamentary rule by the feudal lords in the Upper Chamber of a new democratic parliament of the British type. This alternative state project, had it been adopted, would have made Japan an independent state similar to Thailand, maintaining a tradition of self-sufficiency rather than of unlimited national economic growth. It is only now, after the nuclear plant explosion during the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake, that this small Japan model regained support from Japanese civil society. This has been so in spite of the combined efforts of the government, the corporate circles, and the mass media to maintain the Great Japan total-war state economic project and the eventual return to a military expansionism, which was officially renounced in the Preamble of the Constitution.

The Cold War period in East Asia was an occasion to develop different types of developmentalist total-war state projects in opposition to or in cooperation with the external hegemonic influence of the United States. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a typical example of a total war anti-imperialist state opposed to the exogenous expansionism of Japan and the United States. *Juche* is an alternative to Meiji Japan’s edict on education. During the Cultural Revolution, China turned into an anti-imperialist total war state as well. Its adoption of open policy altered its state project in many respects. Nevertheless, it remained unchanged in terms of its aim to develop into a prosperous state that can compete with Western hegemonic alliance through the total mobilization

of national capital, including human resources. The Republic of Korea, before and after its democratization in the 1990s, is also a total-war developmentalist state; it tries to maximize its national economic share of the world market through the mobilization of its rich national capital.⁸

It is unthinkable how regional integration can be achieved in this situation where national identities oppose each other. Obviously, nothing will happen unless and until Japan renounces its Great Japan Asianism. It is also unthinkable how the DPRK and the US can develop a positive path for diplomatic negotiation towards regional denuclearization unless and until US hegemonic cultural imperialism acknowledges the tradition of multicultural democracy. The role of the nonhegemonic side of the American state project played a positive role in allying with the Small Japan Project; however, this positive aspect of the American occupation of Japan was replaced with a hegemonic cultural imperialism.

The end of the Cold War did not end the American hegemonic imposition of exogenous modernization. Samuel Huntington became the new prophet of cultural imperialism in advocating the clash of civilizations. The Obama government seems to go in this direction of multicultural democracy as proclaimed in the US Constitution, but fails to gain international confidence because of the hidden control of global political economy and cultural relations by the US government. The double standard in support of Israel is combined with another one vis-a-vis China, where economic cooperation occurs alongside politico-military tensions, especially in the Taiwan Strait. The US and Europe's agreement in claiming their right to and obligation for humanitarian intervention is a question we will treat in the next section of this paper.

The new Cold War between the haves and the have-nots

We are at an interesting period of transition when modern civilization is at a critical point, which is both at its apogee and at its terminal phase. It is a time of a new global Cold War—between the haves and the have-nots—a tacit conflict between global hegemony, which tries to keep its

dominance by engaging in a cultural imperialist campaign, and the citizens and multitudes of networks of endogenous development movements.

We are in a three-level global system where the Westphalian sphere is in a terminal phase and is covered by (1) a global sphere of mega-TNCs and emerging states experiencing an unsustainable boom, (2) a chaotic sphere with islands of despair supported by transnational terrorism, and (3) islands of hope supported by NGOs, ILCs, and antihegemonic coalitions.⁹ The global financial order is dominated by gigantic TNCs, supported by three major industrial states—US, EU, and Japan—the so-called “industrial democracies,” which eagerly deploy “humanitarian” intervention forces in countries where their financially-based cultural imperialism benefit. This global standard of new constitutionalism¹⁰ rules over two layers of the world system. Balancing this global rule of neoliberalism, human security plays two major roles in protecting vulnerable sectors in this new Dark Age and in empowering new agents towards the emergence of a counterhegemonic sociocultural renaissance.

The Cold War is taking place within an international system where Westphalian peace under the United Nations is no longer able to extend its control over the world; MNCs demand to be part of the global governance system, which is challenged by citizens, multitudes, and weaker states and ethnic/religious minorities challenge.

In this way, we must realize the fact that the present world we live in is no longer the Westphalian peace system proposed by Kant and that which materialized under the United Nations.

The original accumulation of Westphalian capitalism was based on the colonial expansion of successive hegemony extracting mineral and biological resources through their cultural imperialist system. This system played a dialectically positive role in the exogenous development of the non-Western world by transferring universal values of nationalism and liberalism, while establishing slavery and colonial domination.

This Westphalian peace is now in deep crisis because of the limits to economic growth characterized by Eurocentric modernity. The limits to

growth caused the apogee and the end of productive capitalism by creating a global financial capitalist system on top of the nation-state system, and a chaotic antihegemonic level where Westphalian peace could not function because of the evolution of nonstate security communities, ethnoreligious conflicts, and anti-Western and anticolonial movements between the global South and the global North.

This is how the Cold War of global cultural imperialism under the neoliberal rule of global financial standards is widening the polarization between the haves and the have-nots. The hegemony of cultural imperialism, whose global standards are symbolized by Wall Street and the World Economic Forum of Davos, triggered a diversity of antihegemonic movements in the non-Westphalian level of the world system. This included not only terrorism as a pretext for “humanitarian interventions” from the global hegemon but also a number of antihegemonic movements where citizens and multitudes gathered locally. Their nonviolent movements were symbolized by the World Social Forums, which began in Porto Alegre in the second half of the 1990s and developed in the different regions of the global South: Asia, Africa, and the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

The crisis of the Westphalian capitalism was, in a sense, a process which allowed the development of a variety of non-Western, antihegemonic movements. To mention only some, the African antiapartheid struggle prepared the UN Conference against Racism of Durban 2001; the Bolivarian Revolution began in Central America; and the Caribbean region developed into an indigenous movement combining human rights and the right of Mother Earth. The UN Human Rights Council turned from an instrument of exogenous human rights imposition by the industrial North into a tool of the South and the peripheral countries to develop the endogenous rights of minorities, and to activate a re-evaluation of traditional values. This movement from the global South also includes attempts to reactivate non-Western regional systems: the Arab/Islamic *Ummah*, the Pax-Indica represented by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Pax-Sinica *Tienxa* system.

The role of the Westphalian states was minimized by the emergence of neoliberalism in the 1980s. Yet since the Lehman Shock, the financially affluent states in North America and Europe are now called upon to extend their financial support to the affluent sectors of the weaker states to avoid their bankruptcy, which would lead to the collapse of the entire Westphalian capitalist system. The survival of the moribund financial capitalism relies on the financial support of total-war coalitions of Westphalian states of the industrial North. Dollars from the US and euros from EU are given by the rich financial institutions to the states in crisis, imposing stringent policies to the governments of subaltern states, which are forced to accept the widening gap between the haves and have-nots among their citizens. In a sense, the weaker states transfer debt bonds to vulnerable citizens and multitudes. This new kind of domestic colonialism has been causing massive demonstrations and regime changes in the Middle East.

This is why nation states, which, according to the democratic development of Westphalian states, have been traditionally expected to protect people from fear and want, are no longer able to take care of the domestic welfare of their citizens. The states, especially the weaker ones in the world market such as Libya, develop paternalistic governments and become the target of humanitarian intervention from the North.

In East Asia, the DPRK is a target of international interventionism, while Japan continues to play a countercolonialist role by allying with the United States and refusing to recognize the historical mistakes it committed when it broke the rights of neighboring nations to live in peace. Japanese cultural imperialism became the target of economic and military opposition by an equally powerful cultural developmentalist state, China. The myth of national interest created by the Westphalian political economy makes it impossible for the peoples of East Asia to develop a common security and a “common home.” In spite of the fact that the conflicts among Westphalian states became practically unrealistic, the role of the developmentalist states becomes more and more important in Northeast

Asian nations, which try to keep themselves from becoming the object of financial protection by the hegemonic North.

The tensions created by the territorial claims between the total-war states of Japan against China and Korea combines itself with another polarization between the DPRK on the one hand, and with the Republic of Korea on the other. China plays a key role in both cases because of her growing economic and military power.

In a sense, the East Asian situation is a historical remnant of the past—past colonialist expansion on one hand, and past cold-War polarization on the other. The citizens of the four developmentalist states of East Asia, whose human insecurity is growing because of their respective domestic Cold Wars, must unite and develop a common perception in the region about the futility of adhering to the myth of the balance of great power rule in the past Westphalian peace system.

East Asian civil societies must move towards a post-Westphalian approach in revising regional history distorted by the Japanese's exogenous path to modernity (i.e. aggression and colonization justified by the logic of Westphalian peace based on cultural imperialism). The time is ripe to develop an alternative path beyond Westphalian peace in an age when its powers are forced to maintain a global order dominated by multinational corporations, which force the states to serve their interests as the only way to survive under the present global financial crisis.

Revisiting the Bandung message in this age of civilizational crisis

We already saw that Japan had become—by her recognition of the right of peoples to live in peace—the first modern power to recognize the injustice of colonial expansion (that is bound to be accompanied by a violation of the rights of all peoples of the world to live in peace), free from fear of exogenous domination caused by the exploitation of natural resources and the labor force of respective local communities.

The present Great Japan nationalism attempts, under the leadership of Premier Abe Shinzo, to justify the aggression and violation of basic human rights and justice. Essentially, it is unacceptable to all peoples of the world, and also a serious act of betrayal against the Japanese people, who have officially recognized the mistake of the aggression and colonization committed by their leaders since the Meiji Restoration.

We already mentioned the alternative path towards a small Japan Asianism, which led some Japanese political leaders to seek the possibility for Japan to remake its history by joining the camp of the anticolonialist peoples. This was where the Bandung Conference became an important opening for Japan to join the anticolonialist countries.

Led by Takasaki Tatsunosuke, the Japanese delegation had been involved in the aggression towards China, but had also been part of the Small Japan political leaders trying to minimize the damages brought about by Japanese military expansion. Another participant, who also belonged to the Small Japan School of Thought, was the Buraku minority leader, Matsumoto Jiichiro, leader of a movement which had declared its commitment to build a world without discrimination and racism.

The Bandung Conference, which will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2015, was indeed an historical event, unforgettable yet forgotten, in view of its civilizational implication that opens new possibilities to go beyond the West-dominated Westphalian peace.¹¹ It is often defined as a meeting of emerging new nation states who had successfully fought their anticolonial wars of liberation or had obtained their independence peacefully.

As pointed out by a unifying common experience, the Bandung Conference was not a Westphalian state-building project; it came from a much deeper sense of the injustice of colonial rule that successfully allowed them to obtain political independence; however, there is still a long way to successfully overcoming the economic and cultural aspects of Western universalist hegemony. Their message must become the basis for overcoming the past memory of the Japanese countercolonialist aggression in the regions of North and Southeast Asia. We must correctly interpret

the Bandung message, especially its non-Westphalian message that is formulated in the language of the rights of nation states.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence signed by Pandit Nehru and Premier Zhou En-Lai was broadened to the Ten Principles in the Declaration in Bandung. Yet the core ideas remained the same. The author of these lines remember, having been told by the members of the Indian Commission for Afro-Asian Solidarity, that the principles agreed upon by the Indian and Chinese leaders were based on the fact that both nations were composed of many nationalities and cultures under a pyramidal structure.

In India, it was the *Mandala* order with the emperor at the centre; in China, it was the *Tienxa* also united by the emperor. The two great civilizations needed to develop a united front of all anti-imperialist forces within and between them. This is why “peaceful coexistence” and “equal mutual benefits” were extremely important in leveling the two pyramidal structures, making all components within the two emerging nations agree on the principles of cultural and economic cooperation.

The Japanese delegation in Bandung was allowed to participate through the agreement of the participants to welcome a repentant Japan from the moment it dissociated itself from its aggressive militarist leadership—that violated several countries’ rights to live in peace—through the creation of a new Constitution that denounces the injustice of colonialism. Matsumoto Jiichiro was well-known for the “Levelers Declaration” of the Buraku Liberation Movement, which demanded the building of an egalitarian state within an egalitarian world.

This is where Bandung can and should be reinterpreted, in spite of its Westphalian language, to issue a message beyond the Westphalian peace system, which accepts colonial expansion outside the West. The message in East Asia is a new interpretation of the *Tienxa* regional order which will now flatten its pyramidal structure and agree to the peaceful coexistence of different domestic and international identity communities.

Besides the recognition of equality between the emerging nations, aimed at achieving their respective endogenous development, the Ten

Principles of the Bandung Declaration begin with a solemn declaration of the South's support of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We must realize the fact that this conference was an official gesture from the South for reconciliation with the North. A historical occasion which started as a process of North-South reconciliation has not yet been achieved, and is indispensable for building a new world order that is just and sustainable.

We, the Japanese, must cease to presume that our people are composed of a homogeneous unified group of people. We must realize that Japan has traditionally been a nation composed of diverse local identity communities. We must also keep a cultural tolerance towards new diaspora communities who have non-Japanese cultures and identities. The recognition of local multicultural and multiethnic pluralism in all member nations of a common home of East Asian peoples must be built by us, the citizens of East Asian nations. Such a metamorphosis is indispensable, in spite of the fact that it contradicts high national mobilization that built a total war state and facilitated Japanese, Chinese and Korean competitiveness in the neoliberal global market.

We saw that this will be possible if we accept our common historical experience of being part of the *Tienxa* of Pax Sinica. The Bandung principles agreed upon by the representatives of both pyramidal civilizations, Pax Indica and Pax Sinica, aim to develop an egalitarian cooperation in both civilizational spheres, in opposition to cultural imperialism. We, Japanese citizens, must be proud of the declaration made in the Preamble of our Constitution about Japan's full recognition of the rights of people to live in peace—in repentance of the mistake of choosing the path of modernization that imitates Western colonialism and violates the rights of our East Asian neighbors to live in peace. We must join all of them in building a common home of East Asia as part of the worldwide common front against cultural imperialism. Bandung Plus Sixty will provide us with a good occasion to redo our modern history. The present trends of a global civilizational change make it possible to go back to square one and restart our modern history by correcting our mistakes.

We believe that such a remaking of history is now possible because the emergence of the post-Westphalian trends permits and invites states and non-state actors, not only in the global South, but also in the peripheries, to return to Bandung to seek the sources for building a new regional project. This project will be based on our local cultural traditions and our civilians' historical courage to recognize past mistakes and assume the task of building a new home within the common front, in search of a new pluralistic universalism beyond the Westphalian peace system.

Notes

- ¹ This article is an edited version of the paper delivered as the Keynote Address at the 5th International NGO Conference on History and Peace on 22–25 July 2013 at Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea.
- ² Japan believed that colonial power was an indispensable attribute of Great Powers in the Westphalian peace system.
- ³ We use here the term “myth” in its Gramscian sense, which is a concept with normative psychic force. Cf. Stephen Gill, *Power and Resistance in New World Order*, (New York and Basington, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2003), 19.
- ⁴ We discuss the ethnopolitical aspect of non-Western Great Power projects as a manifestation of “smart Occidentalism” in “Ethno-politics in Contemporary Japan: The Mutual Occlusion of Orientalism and Occidentalism,” a forthcoming article in *Proto-Sociology*.
- ⁵ The Project of Colonization was stated in the “Yu-Shu Roku” of Yoshida Shouin. On Yoshida, cf. Tokutomi Sohau, *Yoshida Shouin* (Minyu-Sha 1893), Iwanami Shoten.
- ⁶ Cf. Hatsuse Ryouhei, “Pan-Asianism in International Relations: Prewar, Postwar and Present,” in *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History*, ed. Sven Saaler, et. al. (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 233–245.
- ⁷ Cf. Chubu ESD Kyoten Suishin Kaigi ed. *Global ESD Taiwa Jigyuu Hokokusho: i-dialog* (Global ESD Dialogue Report) Chubu ESD Kyoten Suishinkaigi, 2011.
- ⁸ Cf. Kinhide Mushakoji, “*Higashi-Asia Kaihatsushugi Shokokkaniokeru Identity Seiji: Shimin-Shakai no Keiseiniokerru Ijusha Community no Yakuwari* (Identity Politics in the Developmentalist States of East Asia: the Role of the Migrant Communities in the Formation of Civil Societies),” in *Ritsumei-Kan Daigaku Jinbun-Kagaku Kenkyuujo Kiyuu*, no. 99 (2013): 133–147.
- ⁹ This three-layer World Order Model is a revised version of the model proposed by Akihiko Tanaka. Cf. Akihiko Tanaka, *Atarashii Chusei: 21 Seiki no Sekai Shisutemu*, (The New Middle-Age: The World System of the 21st Century). Nihon-Keizai Shinbun-Sha, 1996.
- ¹⁰ Cf. Stephen Gill, A. Clair Cutler eds., *New Constitutionalism and World Order*, Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- ¹¹ Cf. Kinhide Mushakoji, “Bandung plus 50: a call for a tri-continental dialogue on global hegemony,” *Inter Asia Cultural Studies* 6:4 (2005): 510–622.