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Progressivism & Nationalism:  
The Liberal Influence of Japanese Pan-Asianism During the Late Meiji Era

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## Introduction

Because of Japan's extreme nationalism and brutality during the Second World War, people often forget that not even seventy years prior, Japan was a country with a great diversity of political and ideological thought.<sup>1</sup> In its inception, the Meiji Restoration of Japan is the most notable example of East Asian political reconstruction by fully transforming the previous *bakufu* samurai military government into a constitutional monarchy amid extensive measures to learn Western practices of state-building and bureaucracy. But while Japan succeeded in westernizing itself, its neighbor China faced stagnation in the face of western imperialism. And while Japan would become an expansionist empire by the 1880s, Japan's rule was not motivated only by growing and protecting national interests, but also by a desire to make Asian countries autonomous from the West. This sentiment manifested as pan-Asianism, and was a key feature during the Meiji Era, entailing Japan's support of Asian countries in their own development in order to oppose Western encroachment. While pan-Asian idealism served as expansionist propaganda during wartime Japan (1930-1945), which entailed the Pacific War and World War II, early pan-Asianism was a diverse school of thought, with leftist and rightist thought influencing it.

While this is an important subject all on its own, I do not seek to examine pan-Asianism's role during wartime Japan, as it has been a major study in itself. Rather, I wish to focus on research conducted on pan-Asianism during the Meiji Era, twenty years before wartime Japan began. While nationalists were invested in pan-Asian thinking as a means for imperial expansion during wartime Japan, the liberal influence on pan-Asian thought during the mid to late Meiji period suggests that there were real attempts towards reform across East Asia. In this essay, I hope to answer how leftist Japanese activists, particularly liberals invested in Japan's Freedom

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<sup>1</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 99.

and People's Rights Movement, impacted early pan-Asian thought, as its effects on cross cultural cooperation with Japan acting as a benefactor towards other Asian countries via cooperative reforms..

During the mid to late Meiji period, Japan found itself in the thick of new enlightened thinking and modern nationalism. After Commodore Matthew Perry came to Japan to open its borders in 1853, Japanese statesmen determined that in order to avoid Western encroachment, the country, and more specifically the state, needed to modernize to avoid being colonized like its neighboring country China. Japanese envoys sent abroad to study new modes of government and administration came back not only with Western studies, but new ideas that focused on promoting individual rights and freedoms as promoted by Western enlightenment thinkers. What came to be known as the 'Freedom and Peoples' Rights Movement' dominated liberal intellectual circles in the 1880s, and leftist politicians throughout the 1890s and 1900s. As a result, left leaning pan-Asianists created a liberal strain within the pan-Asian movement, focusing on promoting peaceful, mutual relations, as opposed to direct imperialism. Though the rise of nationalism after the First Sino-Japanese war would shift leftist pan-Asian ideals, notably supporting Japanese predominance in Asia as the central military power, its mission towards promoting mutual cooperation remained intact within the relatively minority liberal strain.

Scholarship on Pan-Asianism has traditionally emphasized its fascist and right-wing ideas and outcomes. Many contemporary scholars approach pan-Asianism more cynically due to its association with wartime imperialism. This is a legitimate viewpoint which I do not dismiss, as Japanese pan-Asian scholars and journalists would justify Japanese imperialism during the Second World War. This included Okakura Tenshin, author of *The Book of Tea*, which promoted Japanese culture as being superior to other Asian countries, and Tokutomi Sohō, founder of the

statist *Keijō Nippō*, a Japanese newspaper in Korea occupied Japan in 1910, and Class A War criminal.<sup>2</sup> Yet this predisposition of pan-Asianism being a tool for Japan's imperialism harms the study of pan-Asianism, as it prompts scholars to view pan-Asian activities through a strong imperialist lens. Approximately 70 years prior to Japan's defeat in the war, pan-Asianism was a hopeful candidate for a peaceful foreign policy by promoting economic development through industrialism and free trade. Many Japanese liberals were largely inspired by the Manchester School of liberalism, which promoted free trade, popular rights, and freedom of the press, all of which were descriptive of Japan's liberal movement.<sup>3</sup> This liberal strain has been somewhat forgotten, or perhaps ignored, by historians amid pan-Asianism's general rightward turn as Japan progressed its militarism leading up to the Second World War.

This thesis spotlights pan-Asianism's origins as a liberal worldview tied to domestic liberal movements such as Freedom and Peoples' Rights Movement (*Jiyū Minken Undō*), its effect on Meiji politics, and a liberal China policy through the Xinhai Revolution in 1911. According to Mikiso Hane, direct contact with Western nations, as well as literature written by Western liberals had a direct effect on the liberal movement within Japan.<sup>4</sup> Many Japanese liberals who were inspired by Western liberalism included notably pan-Asianists including Miyazaki Tōten, an advocate for liberal political movements across Asia, Arao Sei, who promoted studying commerce as a means to incite cooperation between Asian nations.

My hypothesis is that Japanese liberalism had an early impact on Japan's pan-Asian movement by promoting early Manchester liberalism through what would be known as its "Raising Asia" policy, or *Kōa* pan-Asianism, during the mid to late Meiji period. In promoting

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<sup>2</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 93.

<sup>3</sup> Bresiger, Gregory. "Laissez-Faire and Little Englanderism: The Rise, Fall, Rise, and Fall of the Manchester School." *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Hane, Mikiso. "The Sources of English Liberal Concepts in Early Meiji Japan." *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1969, pp. 259–72. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2383634>. Accessed 26 Mar. 2023.

Manchester liberalism, Japanese liberal politicians came to support pan-Asianism as a means to establish peaceful relations with other Asian countries like China, while promoting anti-Westernism and Western countries' colonialism within Asia.

By promoting this early *Kōa* policy, Japanese liberal pan-Asianists in government had direct effects on cooperative efforts by Japanese pan-Asian organizations and the Japanese government itself until 1911, when the Qing Dynasty fell to Chinese Republican revolutionaries. I hope to prove that pan-Asianism was not an early tool for Japanese imperial propaganda, but rather a diverse ideological movement, encapsulating not only the hawkish realpolitik by Japanese militants, but liberal idealists who hoped to promote independence among Asian countries and peaceful relations between Japan and its neighboring countries.

### **Historiography**

In the study of Japanese political history, scholars have largely focused on the stratagems and motivations in its wartime period from 1930 to 1945. One of the initial causes of Japan's militarism came from its rapid industrialization and westernization process throughout the Early Meiji period (1868-1877). Yet in developing its modern military, scholars argue to what extent Japan already began its imperial ambitions during the early Meiji period. Some scholars, including the late Ezra Vogel, a Professor of the Social Sciences at Harvard University, suggest that Meiji politicians were primarily concerned with domestic affairs rather than conquest by the 1880s, and even promoted peaceful relations with neighboring countries.<sup>5</sup> Vogel explains the shift towards imperialism was in part caused by moderate politicians falling from primacy in Japanese politics, as well as radical political groups such as the *Kokuryūkai* promoting aggressive foreign policies within the government and the populace. However, other scholars,

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<sup>5</sup> Vogel, Ezra. *China and Japan: Facing History*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019. 98.

including Douglas Reynolds, reveal how Japanese militarism was also utilized as a tool to promote cooperative measures abroad, with Japanese teachers instructing at Chinese military academies to launch what he calls “The golden decade of cooperation”.<sup>6</sup> Reynolds is perhaps the largest proponent of Japan’s potential altruism during the late Meiji period, suggesting that despite Japan and China’s animosity towards each other during the First Sino-Japanese War, China was eager to work with Japan to support its own domestic self-strengthening movement due to Japan’s close geographic proximity and cultural affinity.<sup>7</sup> Both scholars attribute Japan’s rising militarism to rightist organizations and growing statism after the Russo-Japanese War, but differ in their views on liberal pan-Asianism’s effect on Japan. While Vogel suggests that Japan always held some form of imperial ambition in its foreign policy plan, Reynolds suggests that there were genuine efforts by Japanese officials and pan-Asianists to improve conditions in Asia through non-militant means.

Understanding the role liberalism played in early Japanese politics is important for scholars of Japanese history. To clarify, Japanese liberalism itself was broad, with some advocating for moderate reform, while others advocated for full scale democratic change. Japanese liberalism’s role in political activism is difficult to research due to liberal activists often associating themselves with contradictory views and organizations. For example, liberal political activists such as the champion of the Popular Rights Movement, Ōi Kentarō (1843–1922), as well as Liberal Party leader Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855–1932), helped form the rightist *Kokuryūkai* pan-Asian organization in 1901.<sup>8</sup> According to historians Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman, Japanese liberalism originated in the 1870s, and continued to play an important role in

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<sup>6</sup> Reynolds, Douglas Robertson. *China, 1898-1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. 151.

<sup>7</sup> Reynolds, Douglas Robertson. *China, 1898-1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Saaler, Sven. “The Kokuryūkai, 1901-1920.” In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 102–11. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.



Japanese politics and activism throughout the Taishō era (1912-1926), until party politics gave way to militarism and fascism.<sup>9</sup> Sven and Szpilman suggest that Japanese liberalism had an important role in the development of Japanese politics by promoting constitutionalism in Japan. Though Japanese liberals had many enemies within the Japanese government throughout the Meiji era, including Saigō Takamori, an early advocate for Japanese expansionism, there is no denying liberal politicians' influence on Japanese politics. This is an important viewpoint, as not only does it suggest liberalism in Meiji Japan was relevant to political reforms, but supports my argument, as Japanese liberals and leftist politicians were often in association with like minded pan-Asianists. I hope to shed light on how the liberal strain of Japanese pan-Asianism influenced and even supported Japanese liberal politics, and how these same liberal politicians enabled pan-Asianism to take a more assertive role in Japan's foreign policy plan.

Another important observation made by Japanese scholars is the association of liberalism and nationalism. In many cases, Japanese liberals concerned themselves with national affairs, and often justified Japan's predominance through liberal idealism. Scholarly research is often split on the origins of Japanese nationalism and its relation to liberal idealism. Scholars such as William De Bary are often more suspicious of Japan's early nationalism. The Japanese liberals that did exist, De Bary argues, are often associated with what he refers to as 'cultural nationalism', which "held internationalist and imperialist forms" that were linked to the pan-Asian movement.<sup>10</sup> However, to De Bary and his associate Fred G. Notehelfer, Japanese liberals were nationalist insofar that they placed national sovereignty as the country's ultimate goal, and while promoting pacifism, maintained anti-Western attitudes.

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<sup>9</sup> Saaler, Sven. "Japan and Asia." In *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese History*, 26–30. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. xxv.

<sup>10</sup> Tsunoda, Ryusaku, and Wm. Theodore de Bary. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1964. 790.

Promoting national sovereignty was a common occurrence among liberal pan-Asianists, as they initially rejected military expansion, but were doubtful on if the “forces of peace had the upper hand against military might” from the West.<sup>11</sup> The major difference between liberal pan-Asianists and more conservative pan-Asianists was their views on militarism, in which liberals were typically against military interventionism, and conservatives for. While anti-Westernism is a staple among most, if not all Japanese pan-Asianists, liberals were often conflicted between peaceful international relations and military development as a national security measure. While liberalism and nationalism among Japanese pan-Asianists may have seemed contradictory, other scholars suggest that the two went hand in hand, and even aided the pan-Asian movement.

This includes Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957), who in the 1880s was one of the leading promoters of liberal idealism in Japan. By advocating for people’s rights, including freedom of expression, as well as industrial and economic growth in lieu of militarism, Sohō sought to enable self-strengthening movements in Japan while promoting individual rights.

Other scholars, including Hiroshi Tanaka, argue that nationalism and liberalism were complementary to one another rather than contradictory. While De Bary sees the two as being contradictory, Tanaka sees that Japanese liberals thought that “international relations should be democratic and peaceful”.<sup>12</sup> Pan-Asianists could be determined as nationalist inasmuch that they advocated for improving the national well-being of their countries’ respective peoples, and liberal in the fact that many such pan-Asianists and liberal politicians advocated for greater constitutionalism and peoples’ rights. I believe that Tanaka’s unique insight into the concept of

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<sup>11</sup> Tsunoda, Ryusaku, and Wm. Theodore de Bary. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1964. 803-804.

<sup>12</sup> Tanaka, Hiroshi. “THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM IN MODERN JAPAN: CONTINUITY OF AN IDEA—FROM TAGUCHI AND KUGA TO HASEGAWA.” *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 21, no. 1 (August 1989): 259–68.

liberalism as nationalism provides a more concise description of the liberal strain of pan-Asianism than those who saw nationalism as being a strict precursor to Japanese Nationalism, such as De Bary. This is because Japanese liberals were concerned for both Japan and other countries' domestic well-being, believing that Western encroachment was a threat to that same well-being. For this paper, I will be utilizing Tanaka's insight into liberal nationalism as an explanation for the development of pan-Asianism, as I believe that it better explains the complex nature between liberal pan-Asianists' national security concerns and desire to spread liberal ideals. The dichotomy between liberalism and nationalism would explain the seemingly inconsistent behavior of liberal pan-Asianists who at times appeared invested in national security and military affairs.

Pan-Asianism is a conflicting study among scholars of Japanese history and international affairs. It is important to categorize the specific eras pan-Asianism is being studied in, however. During wartime Japan - 1931 to 1945 - pan-Asianism was utilized as a tool to legitimize and propagate Japanese imperialism within Mainland China and across the Pacific. Certain scholars, such as Jeremy Yellen, focus primarily on this era, and how pan-Asianism was a tool to promote the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" where, while some genuine intentions to develop Asian countries existed, it was often overshadowed by Japan's own imperial ambitions and colonization. The Japanese empire heavily exploited its occupied territories at the expense of their natural resources and occupied peoples, not unlike previous Western occupiers.<sup>13</sup>

In this essay, I propose that it is important to understand pan-Asianism as a "movement", as its supporters often worked outside of the government's jurisdiction, and at times, interests. It is important to classify pan-Asianism as a broad, intellectual movement, as there were several

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<sup>13</sup> Saaler, Sven. "Japan and Asia." Essay. In *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese History*, 26–30. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. 98.

different, sometimes conflicting viewpoints over how to achieve pan-Asian goals, such as promoting Asian independence and opposing Western colonialism. From the mid to late Meiji period (1880 - 1911), pan-Asianism was a diverse school of thought with both liberal and conservative elements. Scholars that look into pan-Asianism at this time include Sven Saaler and Szpilman, as well as William De Bary and his associates. De Bary views the role of pan-Asianism more cynically, as while admitting to the early liberal elements early on in the movement believes that pan-Asianists become far more disingenuous early on, approximately by the end of the First Sino-Japanese war, where he attributes the public jingoist sentiment to the change from liberal to statist views. Additionally, De Bary places larger emphasis that the role of race played within pan-Asianism, which while racial studies and cultural studies were an important part of the idea of “Asian solidarity”, it ignores several other aspects that pan-Asianists cared about, including anti-Colonialism, ensuring national sovereignty, and popular rights.

Saaler and Szpilman look at pan-Asianism more scrutinously, and even differentiate the various implications of pan-Asianism across different time frames. For example, they explore how pan-Asianism can be seen as a transnationalist movement by the mid-Meiji period, as various Asian states, not just Japan, sought a “quest for solidarity as a strengthening of the existing networks of economic and cultural exchange.”<sup>14</sup> They argue somewhat against De Bary in saying that pan-Asianism was not a nationalist agenda for any single country, but rather an international cooperative trend between associations that sought to improve domestic economies and politics across various Asian states. In short, the difference between the two groups of scholars is that De Bary placed that race of higher importance in pan-Asian solidarity, while Saaler and Szpilman argued that many pan-Asianists saw economic cooperation and cultural studies as a greater force of solidarity between Asian countries.

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<sup>14</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011. 13.

The explanations provided by Saaler and Szpilman will support my exploration of Japan's liberal strain of pan-Asianism, as they often promoted transnational sentiments rather than hawkish, conservative views. By transnational sentiments, Saaler and Szpilman are referring to Japan's shared sentiments and desires with other Asian countries, rather than focusing solely on Japanese interests. This is especially the case in my first section, where I explore how Japan's early liberal pan-Asian movement, which supported what I refer to as the *Kōa* (raising Asia) policy, sought to develop Asian states through economic development in lieu of military interventionism. They also go more in depth as to how major political events than their scholarly contemporaries, including the Japanese victories in both the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese war, gave Japan precedence within the international pan-Asian movement, as they were perceived as contenders against the various Western powers encroaching on Asian countries. Saaler and Szpilman demonstrate how Japanese pan-Asianism worked with leftist organizations and liberal politicians, though emphasize its importance more so in the 1920s. Their work supports my paper's central claim that the Japanese pan-Asian movement held an influential liberal strain that often worked in conjunction with its various liberal movements, including the Freedom and Peoples' Rights movement.

De Bary and Saaler both look at the study of cultural nationalism within Japan's pan-Asian movement. For example, both examine Japanese cultural nationalist Okakura Kakuzō, author of *The Book of Tea*, in which he attempts to demonstrate Japan's cultural superiority over its Asian counterparts. Kakuzō saw other Asian countries as Japan's cultural predecessors, and believed Japan was the perfect catalyst for preserving (and representing) the entirety of Asian culture. In doing so, he inadvertently gave Japanese nationalists justification that Japan should be at the top of the Asian country hierarchy. While De Bary places Kakuzō as a prime example of

what Japanese pan-Asianism represented, I believe that Saaler's interpretation of both Kakuzō and the Japanese pan-Asian movement provides deeper insight into their motivations. Saaler presents Okakura as the cultural nationalist that he was, but explores how he shared many ideals with other liberal nationalists by supporting transnationalism as a means to promote Asian independence. The differences between scholars represents how the scholarship surrounding pan-Asianism largely focuses on the strictly nationalist elements of pan-Asianism (as a precursor to its wartime interpretation), or the diversity within the pan-Asian movement that remains confusing and inconsistent at times.

Despite Saaler and Szpilman's extensive work on the study of pan-Asianism, their consensus remains that it is a difficult subject to explore given pan-Asianism's complex development throughout the Meiji era, and the various factions within the movement itself. For this paper, I hope to explore how the liberal strain within the Meiji period's pan-Asian movement was influential within Japanese politics in hopes of breaking the traditional interpretation that pan-Asianism was simply a tool for Japanese pan-Asianists to expand Japanese imperialism. While it became that way during wartime Japan, the pan-Asian movement held a diversity of schools of thought, with the liberal strain promoting traditional liberal ideals, including free trade, individual freedoms, and more democratic governments, not too dissimilar to Manchester liberalism, which many liberal pan-Asianists were inspired by. The association of Manchester liberalism and pan-Asianism is not often discussed among these scholars, and therefore is a contribution which I hope academics may take into consideration. I also hope to share how this said liberal strain of pan-Asianism came to influence Japanese politics during the 1890s, and how pan-Asianism continued to utilize liberal idealism in its efforts to support Asian development abroad. In order to understand how pan-Asianism and Japanese liberalism came to

be, first we must explore how Japan came to the position that pan-Asianism was a legitimate response for its national security concerns.

## **Background**

### **Japan and the Meiji Era**

Since 1868, fearing possible invasion by western nations and lack of development in comparison to industrialized societies, the Japanese government instituted reforms in hopes of modernizing its society to compete with western powers. Japan sought not only to grow their military strength but create a sustainable mode of modernization, relying on study abroad to gain a comprehensive understanding of fields including political and social organization, the economy and education.<sup>15</sup> Early practices of modernization included the Iwakura Mission in 1871, where Japanese dignitaries were sent abroad to learn various forms of governance and eventually lead Japan's modern development. The mission eventually modeled its own Meiji constitution upon that of Germany, which emphasized the role of the emperor in a constitutional monarchy. The Meiji restoration was one of culture change as it was political, hoping to reform Japan by learning from its western counterparts.

To the ruling oligarchy and military, modernity became synonymous with imperialism. The industrial revolution in Japan showed just how fragile the country was, requiring natural resources from abroad in order to sustain themselves, and the ruling elites believed that Japan was technologically backward due to their lack of industry in comparison with Western states.<sup>16</sup> Information brought back to Japan through its education abroad missions was more institutionalized and accepted in the Meiji Government than other governments in Asia, which

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<sup>15</sup> Vogel, Ezra. *China and Japan: Facing History*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Paine, S C M. *The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

helped reach its modernization goals much faster. Japan saw first hand at what imperial nations were capable of in East Asia by seeing the exploitation of China. Modern militarism became a precedent issue in Japan out of fear of being just as easily conquered by their neighbors. The rapid development of Japanese society and demand for preserving Japanese political autonomy constituted a need for imperial expansion.<sup>17</sup> As a result, Japan would directly involve themselves into East Asian affairs.

But with an updated military and government, Japan was going through a new age of thinking, with pan-Asianism taking the forefront of both political and international subjects. Pan-Asianism, as an ideology, is a synthesis of Asian solidarity and anti-western sentiments, often perpetuated through countries' respective political leaders and intellectuals.<sup>18</sup> While pan-Asianism is an inherently political rhetoric, its subject matter has ranged in a wide variety of ways, including cultural anthropology, language, and human geography. While several different countries wrote on pan-Asianism, Japan is the largest contributor, writing extensively on the subject. Japan's view on pan-Asianism is referred to as *Meishuron* Asianism, which placed emphasis on Japan's leadership throughout Asia.<sup>19</sup> Japan's belief in its role as a central leader of pan-Asianism was only strengthened by its victory over China in 1896 and Russia in 1905. While pan-Asianism would later be used as a moral justification for Japan's bloody imperial expansion until its defeat in 1945, Japan's early intentions were to assist Asia against Western states. Pan-Asianism prompted early bilateral cooperation between Japan and the Qing Dynasty as a result of incorporating liberalism into the movement.

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<sup>17</sup> Drea, Edward J. *Japan's Imperial Army, Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Saaler, 2011.



## Japanese Liberalism

Japanese liberalism became relevant in Japanese political circles during the 1870s as a result of Japan's various diplomatic and education missions abroad, learning from a variety of Western thinkers. The Meiji government conducted these diplomatic missions in order to establish formal relations with Western powers, revise unequal treaties between Japan and the West, and research modern industry, military, education, and political systems.<sup>20</sup> This included the Iwakura Mission (1870-73), where prominent Meiji political leaders and scholars traveled to countries including the United States and Germany.<sup>21</sup> Missions such as these taught the Japanese Western style statecraft (including Lorenz von Stein, who was instrumental in the drafting of the 1890 Meiji Constitution) and Western customs to Japan's political and social elite. Yet an indirect result of these missions was the introduction of Western style liberalism.

Through their diplomatic missions, several Japanese Meiji statesmen were introduced to Western style liberalism that eventually characterized Japan's own liberal movement. Though many of the members of the Iwakura Mission were prominent traditional *genrōin* (Japanese elder statesmen in the Meiji senate, many of which from former high ranking Samurai families), their ranks were influenced by Western enlightenment. This includes Nakae Chōmin, who eventually became a champion for Japan's Freedom and Peoples' Rights Movement. Western enlightenment was not only seen as a source of inspiration among Japanese progressives who sought to develop stronger democratic institutions in Japan, but Meiji revisionists who viewed Western enlightenment as a necessity for Japan's own "Westernization".<sup>22</sup> Relatively liberal statesmen such as Itō Hirobumi and Ōkubo Toshimichi, Japan's Lord of Home Affairs in 1873, promoted

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<sup>20</sup> Vogel, Ezra. *China and Japan: Facing History*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019. 148.

<sup>21</sup> Irokawa, Daikichi, and Marius B. Jansen. *The Culture of the Meiji Period*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985. 52.

<sup>22</sup> *Ebid.* 52.

Japanese constitutionalism as a means of establishing Japan as an equal to Western powers, and suppressed conservative efforts to invade Korea by the former Samurai noble Saigō Takamori.<sup>23</sup> Though they cannot be defined as progressives, inasmuch that they did not promote republicanism like their more radical contemporaries, their support and future establishment of a Japanese legislature was a direct result of Western enlightenment and political liberalism.

Japanese liberal progressives inspired by Western enlightenment thinking also came to dominate Japanese activism. Progressivism is largely defined as political movements that promote political and social reform through political action, seeking to promote economic development and improve peoples' overall well-being.<sup>24</sup> To clarify, progressivism is associated with liberalism inasmuch that they often promote individual rights and freedoms, but while liberalism is a political ideology based on what *should* be (i.e. freedom of the press, free trade, etc), progressivism stresses the significance of political change and activism. In other words, progressives tend to be liberal, but will oftentimes work outside of formal governmental institutions to achieve social and political change. The most notable of progressive movements inspired by Japanese liberalism was the Freedom and Peoples' Rights Movement (*Jiyū Minken Undō*), a prominent social and political movement that advocated for democracy in Japan, and the forerunner of numerous liberal parties after the 1890 Meiji Constitution was promulgated, while also promoting new social concepts from the West.<sup>25</sup> This included both Nakae Chōmin, an alleged champion of Japan's liberal movement and author of the book *A Discourse By Three Drunkards On Government*, which promoted Japanese republicanism, and Itagaki Taisuke, the leader of the Freedom and Peoples' Rights Movement in Japan.

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<sup>23</sup> Ebid. 52.

<sup>24</sup> Nugent, Walter. *Progressivism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Irokawa, Daikichi, and Marius B. Jansen. *The Culture of the Meiji Period*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Heavily inspired by French idealism, both Nakae and Itagaki helped promote liberalism by establishing various progressive institutions, including the *Oriental Free Press* and the *Public Party of Patriots*.<sup>26</sup> While both held government positions, their greatest contributions stem from their progressive activism, forming political organizations that promoted human rights and republicanism. Itagaki Taisuke and the Public Party of Patriots reflect their liberal beliefs in their pledge, in which they decree, "We, the thirty millions of people in Japan are all equally endowed with certain definite rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring and possessing property, and obtaining a livelihood and pursuing happiness. These rights are by Nature bestowed upon all men, and, therefore, cannot be taken away by the power of any man."<sup>27</sup> This is indicative of early Japanese liberalism as a progressive movement, in which Japanese political activists demanded greater political rights in addition to Japan's development.

Japanese liberalism is also characterized by its close affiliation with Manchester liberalism. Aside from political reforms, an important part of modernization for Japanese liberals was economic development. Also known as progressive liberalism, Manchester liberalism became the predominant school of thought for Japanese liberals due to its inclination towards civil rights, free trade, and pacifism, drawing inspiration from the classical economic model described by Adam Smith.<sup>28</sup> Aside from their liberal political inclinations, many Japanese liberal activists including Itagaki Taisuke supported Manchester liberalism for its emphasis on and promotion to popular rights. Because of its priority towards advancing human well-being and economic development, it became closely associated with Japanese progressivism during the

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<sup>26</sup> Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Hakushaku Itagaki Taisuke." Encyclopedia Britannica, July 7, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hakushaku-Itagaki-Taisuke>.

<sup>27</sup> Etō, Shinpei, Associated Name, Shigeru Furusawa, Shōjirō Gotō, Taisuke Itagaki, and Soejima Associated Name Taneoi. Draft of the "Public Party of Patriots Pledge". [1874] Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021667467/>.

<sup>28</sup> Hutchison, Anthony. "'All the Men of Great Affairs': The Barnard Statue, Manchester Liberalism, and Lincoln Intellectual History." *American Literary History* 21, no. 4 (2009): 793-809.

1870s. Japanese progressive political activists prioritized middle-class development (often those living in agricultural areas) in addition to individual freedoms, as well as political rights and representation. Manchester liberalism continued to play an important role during Japan's liberal movements, and would influence Japanese political activists and politicians in their foreign policy views by promoting greater economic cooperation in lieu of colonialism, unlike their Western counterparts.

### **Japanese Pan-Asianism**

Pan-Asianism, specifically from Japan, started developing during the 1850s. Though it became a tool for Japanese imperialism and colonial practices during wartime Japan (1930-1945), Pan-Asianism grew as a response to Western expansionism into East Asia. With its neighbor China under Western imperial influence, Japan feared that their national sovereignty was under threat, and called for "Asian" solidarity in relation to "the West".<sup>29</sup> Initially, Asian scholars were opposed to the term "Asia", believing it to be a somewhat derogatory term created out of "Westerners' arrogance."<sup>30</sup> Ironically, Asian peoples during the mid to late nineteenth century eventually rallied around this term, perhaps out of necessity, as it distinguished them against Western countries. Though it started as a rallying cry amongst Asian intellectuals and activists, pan-Asianism was a result of the emerging demand for Western style nation-state building in Asia.

Due to the diversity of ideas, cultures, and political ideologies influencing pan-Asian rhetoric across several countries, pan-Asianism is notoriously difficult to define as a result of the various and broad backgrounds. Terminology surrounding pan-Asian studies also does it a

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<sup>29</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011. 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ebid.* 47

disservice, as even referring to it as “pan-Asianism” suggests that it is a strict ideology. For the sake of this essay, I refer to pan-Asianism as a “movement” due to various political organizations supporting pan-Asian ideas on Asian development and cooperation, even if different pan-Asian thinkers and views contradicted one another. However, pan-Asianists, especially in Japan, sought different methods in achieving their goals to fit these themes. For example, while Japanese liberal pan-Asianists may have promoted Manchester liberalism as a means to incorporate peaceful cooperation to achieve Asian solidarity, Japanese conservative pan-Asianists such as Uchida Ryōhei promoted annexation of Asian territories to ensure Japanese colonial rule. For the sake of this essay, I will be examining Japanese liberal pan-Asianism, and its effect on Japanese political development.

Early Japanese pan-Asianism primarily developed as a response largely to Western encroachment. Though Japanese pan-Asianists came to promote other pan-Asian themes (notably geographic proximity and, eventually, racial unity), Japanese observers feared for Japan’s national security interests due to the increased presence of Western colonialism in East Asia. Western powers proved to be an existential threat to Japan, as with the defeat of the Qing Dynasty in China under the British Empire, as well as the colonization of Vietnam. By the 1870s, we began to see Japan’s interest in promoting self-strengthening and development in other Asian countries as a means to stop the spread of Western colonialism from reaching Japan’s shores. Russia was of particular concern to Japan, as Russia sought to expand into Korea and keep a close proximity with Japan.

Fears began to mount in the 1870s that Japan could be a possible target for Russian imperialism. In 1875, Iwakura Tomomi, a central Meiji governmental figure, proposed Sino-Japanese cooperation by stating “Our imperial country and China are neighbors which are

as intimately connected as the lips and teeth. If China were to be absorbed by Russia, it would be like the teeth losing the lips that protect them. Therefore, Japan and China must strengthen their relations and friendship like the two wheels of a carriage or the two wings of a bird, and thus strive to help each other achieve self-reliance and [preserve] their independence.”<sup>31</sup> Interest in Sino-Japanese cooperation was an early development within the pan-Asian movement, as it was seen as a necessary development to ensure Japan's national security interests. Though early pan-Asian sentiment was relatively hawkish, the introduction of Western enlightened thinking introduced alternative means to support protecting Japanese interests while promoting progressive reforms throughout Asia to promote Asian independence, just as Japan had accomplished during the Meiji Restoration.

It is also important to define who exactly qualifies as a pan-Asianist. A pan-Asianist is anyone who promotes both economic or political cooperation and development between Asian governments and their respective societies for the sake of achieving regional autonomy against Western imperialism and colonialism. Achieving said regional autonomy, however, can come from either cooperative independence movements supported by Japanese liberals, or annexation, as supported by Japanese conservatives. This is why it is important to differentiate the types of pan-Asianists, as simply calling one a pan-Asianist has extremely broad implications. I seek to explore Japanese pan-Asianists who vied for the more liberal versions of pan-Asianism, and those who assisted Japanese liberal pan-Asianism during the mid to late Meiji period.

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<sup>31</sup> Saaler, Sven, and Matsuda Kōichirō. “The Concept of ‘Asia’ before Pan-Asianism.” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 44–48. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

Quote sourced by Matsuda, from:

Iwakura Tomomi (1875), “Tomomi Saido Kokusei o Hitsurokushi Goran ni Kyōzurukoto” (Tomomi Writes and Submits Another Proposal on the State Policy). Tada Kōmon (ed.), Iwakura Kō Jikki (Diary of Prince Iwakura), Vol. 2, (Kunaishō/Ministry of Imperial Household), 1906, 1270.



## Section 1) THE LIBERAL ORIGINS OF PAN-ASIAN THOUGHT

In this section, I intend to establish how Japanese liberalism, particularly liberals who were at the forefront of Japan's Popular Rights Movement, affected the development of pan-Asian *Kōa* ("Raising Asia") political thought during the mid-Meiji period (1880-1890). This *Kōa* pan-Asianism sought to advance neighboring Asian countries through economic development rather than an aggressive, militant strategy while opposing Western colonialism through anti-imperialism. As liberalism and progressive reforms spread during the mid-Meiji period, characterized by the demand for more popular rights and greater constitutionalism in the Japanese government, the demand for a revised foreign strategy also grew.

With growing fears of Western aggression in East Asia and demand for more modern political institutions, the call for a foreign strategy led to diverse opinions from both right-wing and liberal organizations.<sup>32</sup> These organizations were largely informal, with literati from different countries coming together to speak largely in private as a means to network and establish private relations between both countries. Most, if not all, pan-Asian organizations had the goal in mind to influence Sino-Japanese relations through self-strengthening programs, whether it be through military support towards revolutionary groups in China, or progressive reforms in China's dynastic bureaucracy and institutions. In regards to Qing policy, this included major institutional change, notably educational reforms to promote Western style learning alongside Confucian ethics, as well as some constitutional efforts by Chinese liberals to establish more effective political institutions. In some ways, their concerns were similar to the ones Meiji Japan faced, seeing that rapid development through institutions would help bring itself up to Western standards as a legitimate political power in order to preserve its sovereignty. The diversity of

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<sup>32</sup> Theodore, De Bary Wm, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. 2. 2nd ed. Vol. 2. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006, 721.



ideas came with equally diverse motivations for intervention in China, from ethical and cultural justifications, anti-Western imperialism, and national security concerns. Though pan-Asianism gained a fascist and expansionist connotation in the post-war period, evidence suggests that early pan-Asian thought also had roots in Japan's mid-Meiji liberal movement due to its anti-militarist sentiments, emphasis on cultural learning, and advocacy for regional economic development.

While many early pan-Asianist writers were liberal through their constitutionalist and anti-colonial sentiments, most probably were still nationalists. In the context of the Meiji Period, the term "nationalist" in Asia was still broad, as countries were still developing an identity of their modern nation states. This makes the study of pan-Asianism difficult, as Japanese nationalists during the Meiji period, some of whom worked with right-wing organizations, oftentimes supported leftist movements, such as Japanese conservative nationalist group the *Genyosha* supporting Korean reformist Kim Ok-Yun's modernization and revolutionary efforts.<sup>33</sup> Cultural nationalists, who are associated with Japanese conservatism, were also supportive of such progressive policies in its early stages, but had reservations on a non-militant foreign policy plan. Because of the movement's broad definition, early pan-Asianists consisted of politicians and intellectuals from both sides of the political spectrum. For the purpose of my argument, I will be looking into politicians and intellectuals who were more closely associated with progressive movements, such as the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement (*Jiyūtō*) in the 1880s, also known as the Freedom and People's Rights Movement.

Because of the diversity of positions notable pan-Asianists held, it is also important to differentiate the specific groups. This includes notable politicians, academics, and diplomats who were emblematic of the pan-Asian movement. What makes liberal pan-Asianists distinct from right-wing pan-Asianists was their emphasis on constitutionalism in addition to their desire to

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<sup>33</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011. 66.

develop other Asian states via institutional reform and cooperative programs. In this section, I intend to examine three different groups to explain the liberal origins in the pan-Asian movement: Formal Japanese statesmen, members of private political organizations, and journalists. While the former worked in Japan's government directly, the latter two served to promote pan-Asian thought through spreading literature domestically and direct correspondence among pan-Asianists outside of Japan and into China. In some cases, Japanese politicians, such as former president of the Imperial Diet of Japan's House of Peers Prince Konoe Atsumaro would be involved in these private organizations in hopes of establishing stronger diplomatic ties.<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that some organization's positions changed, which was often due to significant historical developments in Japan, including the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895. For now, we must look into notable liberal pan-Asianists thinkers and groups who were prominent in the 1880s to understand the issues that motivated them.

From the early demands among liberal thinkers for greater constitutionalism and people's rights to elder statesmen's sympathy for the popular rights movement, liberalism was a prevalent political ideology in 1880s Japan. Not only did political reforms help promote democratic development in Japan, they also brought to light a different approach to Japan's foreign policy, primarily looking at more proactive economic trade and industrialization. Particularly before the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Japan's foreign policy was characterized as being more egalitarian, insomuch that Japanese diplomats wanted to remain equal to their contemporaries in China and Korea.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Asia Association and Early *Kōa* Pan-Asianism**

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<sup>34</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 75.

<sup>35</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 52.

The Raising Asia Society (*Kōakai*), later renamed to the Asia Association (*Ajia Kyōkai*) lasted from 1880 to the mid 1890s, and was one of the first pan-Asian groups that would set the stage for early pan-Asian thought. Fearing repercussions from Western nations against the notion of Asian solidarity, the Meiji government rarely made any formal ties with pan-Asianism. The Asia Association filled the demand for those hoping to promote pan-Asianism by remaining a private political entity. The Raising Asia Society was diverse in its membership, with several members having journalistic, progressive activist, and military backgrounds, such as Sone Toshitara, who served as a lieutenant in the Imperial Japanese Navy.<sup>36</sup> This specific organization sought a non-aggressive foreign policy plan, and advocated economic and democratic development in lieu of monarchical or feudal rule across Asia. In its 1883 foundation manifesto, the Asia Association suggests a more egalitarian mission in promoting pan-Asian cooperation rather than strict imperial conquest; “Neighborly relations are a country’s most prized treasure... However, good relations between neighboring countries are not solely the concern of governments and statesmen, but also of private men... [The name *Ajia Kyōkai*] suggests that we should join our forces and share a common purpose, benefit each other and thereby advance towards strength and prosperity... We hope to be more successful in our humanitarian efforts than previously, and we will not betray the purpose for which heaven has entrusted this mission to us.”<sup>37</sup>

The Asia Association’s foundational manifesto illustrates the importance of international cooperation and learning through diplomacy within the pan-Asian movement. Importantly, the

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<sup>36</sup> Cui, Lanying, and Sumako Kitahara. “A Fundamental Research on the Human Network of Intellectuals in East Asia from the Transitional Stage to ‘Modern Times’: Focusing on the Interaction between Chinese with Koa Board and Asia Association Through Poetry.” *Human Sciences* 36, no. 2 (March 2019): 18.

<sup>37</sup> Saaler, Sven, and Urs Zachmann. “Foundation Manifesto of the *Ajia Kyōkai* (Asia Association), 1883, Reprinted in Kuroki Morifumi and Masuzawa Akio (Eds.), *Kōakai Hōkoku/Ajia Kyōkai Hōkoku* (Bulletin of the *Kōakai*, Bulletin of the *Ajia Kyōkai*). 2 Vols. Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1993.” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 54–55. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

Asia Association specifies the importance of “private men” pushing the pan-Asia agenda, as they were seen at the time as the only ones realistically capable of formulating peaceful ties. This is reflective of the fact that Meiji statesmen at the time were more adverse to joining such organizations. It is important to note that while the Asia Association is the central subject, the manifesto does not suggest that its mission is exclusive to Asia Association, nor that other pan-Asianist organizations that may have more conservative elements cannot contribute to its mission to “advance towards strength and prosperity.” Despite this, this manifesto is emblematic of Japanese pan-Asian organizations as a whole, both liberal and conservative, of the idea that Japan ought to be at the forefront of the “Raising Asia” mission, implying a sense of national superiority. While it may be that Japanese pan-Asianists saw Japan as the rational answer to which country was most advanced in Asia, we cannot discern whether the sentiments in pan-Asian texts at this time were not genuine. This is in part due to the fact that several liberal pan-Asianists offered foreign policy alternatives to imperialism.

It can be difficult to interpret the Asia Association's mission statement due to the lack of clarity over what they view as “humanitarian efforts”. One might think that this can imply military interventionism, or some other form of imperialism. However, by 1883, when this text was written, the Japanese military was largely viewed as not being strong enough to invade other countries, notably Korea, due to its lack of size in comparison to the army of the Qing Dynasty.<sup>38</sup> We can therefore presume that the Asia Association, which included both Qing and Meiji literati, did not want to propagate militarism, as it would be to the detriment of Meiji society. Even with jingoist sentiments beginning to grow in Japan, Japanese pan-Asianists, both liberal and conservative, understood that Japanese imperialism by this time was simply not a rational option.

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<sup>38</sup> Conroy, Hilary. “Chōsen Mondai: The Korean Problem in Meiji Japan.” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 100, no. 5 (1956): 443–54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3143678>.

Instead, the Asia Association instead promoted peaceful and mutual relations between its contemporaries. They would accomplish this by promoting Chinese studies, educational efforts, and establishing stronger economic ties. According to the Raising Asia Society's foundation manifesto, "For a long time now, our country has had close contacts with China and Korea... However, they do not equal those established by the European powers. Thus, until today, our intercourse with China and Korea has lacked genuine trust and friendship—and even more so our relations with the other countries... As a result, we are now opening a language school in Tokyo to teach people who are interested in Chinese... We will learn each other's languages, understand each other's situation and thus make great progress in finding a common solution."<sup>39</sup> Cross-cultural education was seen as crucial to the organization's hopeful efforts in facilitating peaceful relations. Pan-Asianists in the Asia Association would take on this more progressive approach to facilitating relations due to it being the only reasonable option Japan could take. The emphasis on education was emblematic of Japanese liberals who viewed Education in Korea and China as a step towards both countries achieving independence and progress.<sup>40</sup>

The Raising Asia Society, later renamed the Asia Association, was at the forefront of mutual cooperation through educational efforts, and leading to what I will refer to as the early *Kōa* (raising Asia) movement. Early *Kōa* pan-Asianism is best described by its support of liberal sentiments of freedom and democracy by promoting non-militant, cooperative measures between Japan and other East Asian countries.

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<sup>39</sup> Saaler, Sven, and Urs Zachmann. "Foundation Manifesto of the Kōakai (Raising Asia Society, 1880), reprinted in Kuroki Morifumi and Masuzawa Akio (eds.), *Kōakai Hōkoku/Ajia Kyōkai Hōkoku* (Bulletin of the Kōakai, Bulletin of the Ajia Kyōkai). 2 vols. Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 1993." Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 54–55. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Conroy, Hilary. "Chōsen Mondai: The Korean Problem in Meiji Japan." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 100, no. 5 (1956): 443–54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3143678>.

The members of the early *Kōa* movement, and specifically the Asia Association, were staunch supporters of Asian regional development through economic commercialization and education.<sup>41</sup> This included journalists, activists, and literati who had a western style education. Early groups from the early *Kōa* school of pan-Asianism and early progressive thinkers shared similar interests in wanting to develop both Japan and Asia through promoting democratic ideals rather than through imperialism. This is clear because several members of the Asia Association were sympathizers and activists within the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (*Jiyū Minken Undō*) - often abbreviated to the Freedom Party (*Jiyūtō*).<sup>42</sup> The Freedom Party's primary goals included improving individual rights, notably freedom of the press and expression, as well as revising unequal treaties Japan had signed with the West (a shared goal with several pan-Asianists). A prime example includes Suehiro Tetchō, a prominent writer for both the *Chōya Newspaper* and the *Liberty Newspaper*, who was often at odds with the authorities due to his critical views towards the government.<sup>43</sup> In 1886, Suehiro's novel *Setchūbai* criticized the Meiji government's oppression of free speech, and advocated for a parliamentary government. *Setchūbai* helped open political debate through literature in Japan, while promoting liberal idealism through the narrative framework of his characters.<sup>44</sup> Suehiro's brand of pan-Asianism was intrinsically tied to anti-imperialism, where in 1879 he advocated for a trilateral alliance between Japan, China, and Korea in order to stop British and Russian aggression in Asia.<sup>45</sup> Suehiro's beliefs were indicative of the more left wing factions in Japanese political circles'

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<sup>41</sup> Saaler. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 2011, 63.

<sup>42</sup> Saaler. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 2011, 70.

<sup>43</sup> Morifumi, Kuroki. "Asianism of Koakai (Rise Asia Society)." *Journal of Law and Politics* 71, no. 4 (March 9, 2005): 247–87. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15017/3930>.

<sup>44</sup> Hill, Christopher. "How to Write a Second Restoration: The Political Novel and Meiji Historiography." *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 337–56. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.2007.0062>.

<sup>45</sup> Morifumi, Kuroki. "Asianism of Koakai (Rise Asia Society)." *Journal of Law and Politics* 71, no. 4 (March 9, 2005): 247–87. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15017/3930>.

views on foreign relations being more mutually beneficial, often in regards to opposing Western aggression.

Other early *Kōa* thinkers and founding members of the Asia Association included Arao Sei and his disciple Inoue Masaji, who were advocates for improving economic development between Asian countries in lieu of imperialism, particularly between Japan and China. Having established the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research in Shanghai in 1890, his method of educating Asian scholars in hopes of promoting regional trade and development is reflective of liberal thinkers such as Tokutomi Sohō, who advocated for Japan's industrialization as opposed to militarism.<sup>46</sup> The Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research was a direct forerunner to the famous *Tōa Dōbun Shoin*, which was founded by the eventual *Tōa Dōbunkai*, the eventual successor to the *Kōa* movement and the most influential pan-Asianism organization in Japan. While we can connect how pan-Asian organizations evolved, we must first see how the early pan-Asian movements shared similar interests and goals with liberal thinkers who vied for popular rights and constitutionalism.

### ***Kōa* Pan-Asianism and Tokutomi Sohō**

Japan's Popular Rights Movement during the mid-Meiji era often reflected early *Kōa* pan-Asian sentiments in their works. Though not explicit in calling themselves members of pan-Asian organizations, much of their works utilize similar arguments in developing Asia through democratic and commercial means. This includes Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957), a Japanese journalist and early proponent of Japanese populism and liberal democracy during the 1880s, and founder of the pro-Western *Minyūsha* group.<sup>47</sup> Originally born as Tokutomi Iichirō,

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<sup>46</sup> Saaler. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 2011, 63.

<sup>47</sup> Fogel, Joshua A. "Travelers to China and Reformers." Essay. In *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naito Konan, 1866-1934*,. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984, 58.

Sohō grew up in a farmer-samurai family, and was educated extensively in western studies.<sup>48</sup>

Though he would eventually turn more statist and pro-imperialist, his work during the mid-Meiji era emphasized a need for greater Japanese social development and constitutional reform through more egalitarian means.

In one of his most famous works, *Shōrai no Nihon* (The Future Japan), originally written in 1886, Sohō argues that Japan's development can come about without the need for militarism, going so far to praise Adam Smith and stating that “the principles of trade and war are as incompatible as fire and ice.”<sup>49</sup> Sohō concludes in his book that in order to gain power and prestige in the international system, Japan should become an industrialized nation with democratic values rather than a feudal state. He states, “I can state positively that [Japan] should be an industrial country; and as a natural consequence of, and in accordance with, the inevitability of the development of the industrial organ, she should also be a democratic country.” “In other words,” he added, “I believe that adopting peace, to make [Japan] a commercial and democratic country, is indeed the best means to maintain our national livelihood.” Sohō clearly shares similarities between liberal pan-Asianists from the Asia Association and, in general, the early *Kōa* movement. By sharing these sentiments, it is clear that pan-Asianism not only held liberal positions within its movement, but also Japan's liberal movement as a whole.

Despite his appreciation of Western culture, Sohō was critical of Western nations' encroachment in Asia. Throughout the Meiji restoration, Japan began viewing itself as a growing regional hegemon in East Asia. As a result, trade became an important factor among early pan-Asian thinkers. While having a standing military was also essential to a growing nation's

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<sup>48</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 229.

<sup>49</sup> Tokutomi Iichirō, Hiroaki Matsuzawa, Sinh Vĩnh, and Nicholas Wickenden. *The Future Japan*. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1989, 62.



power according to Sohō, it was only a pathway for a country to develop its industrial organ, which could help ultimately lead a nation in a more peaceful direction.<sup>50</sup> One of Sohō's main points in *Shōrai no Nihon* is that because of Japan's geographic proximity to China and other nations within the Pacific, it was in a position to utilize trade as a primary tool for Japan's peaceful foreign policy initiative, as Sohō believed that "Japan [was] endowed with the conditions to be a natural commercial nation."<sup>51</sup> By promoting economic development, democracy and regional trade, Sohō represents the liberal school of thought within the pan-Asian movement by the mid to late 1880s by campaigning against imperialism and promoting "Raising Asia" through economic means.

Writers who shared Sohō's views were a part of the growing liberal political movement in Japan, notably the *Jiyū Minken Undō* (the Freedom and People's Rights Movement), otherwise known as the Popular Rights Movement. The movement sought to expand representative government and popular rights in Japan, notably freedom of expression, and representative government.<sup>52</sup> Nakae Chōmin, the unofficial champion of this movement, represents the movement's ideological mission in his work entitled *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*. In it, he discusses the intellectually complex conversations taking place within the Popular Rights Movement, with a large emphasis on constitutionalism and the development of what he calls "all enterprises of human society."<sup>53</sup> Chōmin believed that constitutionalism was necessary for Japan's development, and could benefit the peoples' livelihood. "Only when a nation progresses beyond despotism and enters constitutionalism" Chōmin articulates, "can human beings realize their individuality... The right to participate in

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<sup>50</sup> Tokutomi, *The Future Japan*, 1989, 77.

<sup>51</sup> Tokutomi, *The Future Japan*, 1989, 126.

<sup>52</sup> De Bary, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2006, 733.

<sup>53</sup> Nakae Chōmin, Nobuko Tsukui, and Jeffrey Hammond. *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*, 1887. Boston, MA: Weatherhill, 2010.

government, to own personal property, and to choose one's livelihood; the rights to freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly - these are the kinds of rights which all human beings should possess, and only when they do possess these rights are they worthy of being called human."<sup>54</sup> Chōmin's liberalism is rhetorical to the early *Kōa* pan-Asianism.

### **Japanese Liberalism as *Kōa* Pan-Asianism**

Though a champion for Japan's liberal movement, Chōmin's beliefs manifest themselves within the pan-Asian movement. Chōmin illustrates how constitutionalism and democracy can manifest within the pan-Asian movement, and not just a solely Japanese mission. "What is the difference between the Europeans and the Asians, much less between the British, the French, the Germans, and the Russians, or between the Indians, Chinese and Ryukyuan?" He responded by stating, "[a] country's name simply designates a certain part of the surface of the earth. There are no borders between oneself and others and there arises no hostility...Democracy creates a single, large complete circle embracing the entire earth by bringing together the wisdom and love of the people of the world...Constitutionalism is not bad, but democracy is better." Here, Chōmin seems to implore that a constitutional monarchy was not the best answer, but rather a fully fledged representative government. He further states, "As the Chinese might put it, constitutionalism is a wise man, but democracy is a holy man. Or in the phrasing of India, constitutionalism is a bodhisattva, but democracy is a Buddha. Constitutionalism is to be respected, but democracy is loved."<sup>55</sup> Through looking at Chōmin's work, we can see what kind

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<sup>54</sup> Nakae Chyōmin, and Jeffrey Hammond. *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*. Translated by Nobuko Tsukui. Boston, MA: Weatherhill, 1984, 69.

<sup>55</sup> Nakae Chyōmin, and Jeffrey Hammond. *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*. Translated by Nobuko Tsukui. Boston, MA: Weatherhill, 1984, 75-76.

of rhetoric the Japanese liberal movement was utilizing in its goals during the Popular Rights movement. His claims illustrate that democratic regional development is possible, and can be a multilateral initiative. It sought not only to promote a less-aggressive foreign strategy in Asia, but also promote development through constitutionalism. This rhetoric is suggestive of the Asia Association's own brand of liberal pan-Asianism.

### **Beginnings of Liberal Effects in Meiji Politics**

The movement prompted not only political activists, but also the Meiji oligarchy itself to advocate for constitutional reform. Itō Hirobumi was one such elder statesmen who was sympathetic to the Popular Rights Movement and the liberal *People's Party* (Minto - 民党), and had active roles in drafting the 1890 Meiji Constitution. Though wary of the *Kōa* movement's informality, Itō was sympathetic to the liberal voices of the Popular Rights Movement, going so far as to say that they were important to the ethics of drafting a constitution. In his work *Some Reminiscences of the Grant of the New Constitution*, Itō Hirobumi discusses the liberal influence and rhetoric surrounding the drafting of the Meiji Constitution in 1889: "I believe nothing evidences more vividly the intelligence of our august Master-Emperor Meiji-than the fact that in spite of the existence of strong under-currents of an ultra-conservative nature in the council, and also in the country at large, his majesty's decisions inclined almost invariably towards liberal and progressive ideas, so that we have been ultimately able to obtain the constitution such as it exists at present."<sup>56</sup> As indicated by Itō Hirobumi and the Meiji Emperor's relatively progressive step towards constitutionalism, the Popular Rights Movement had a direct impact on Japanese politics during the mid-Meiji era.

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<sup>56</sup> Ōkuma Shigenobu, Marcus B. Huish, and Itō Hirobumi. "Some Reminiscences of the Grant of the New Constitution." Essay. In *Fifty Years of New Japan: (Kiaokoku Gojūnen Shi)*, 130–31. London: Smith, Elder. & Co., 1910.

As a result of growing *Kōa* pan-Asianism in conjunction with Japanese liberalism, the late 1880s saw an increase of liberal politics. In promulgating the Meiji constitution in 1889, political activists who were once “condemned on account of political offenses and alleged abuse of freedom of speech were released.”<sup>57</sup> Though these elder statesmen are often considered to be more centrist in their political views, their political activity and accomplishments suggests that they were leaning towards constitutionalism, stepping away from conservative feudalist sentiments.

Itō Hirobumi’s sentimentality towards the liberal movement is reflective of how Japan’s official foreign strategy incorporated early *Kōa* pan-Asianist thought. As several liberal thinkers suspected, a rise in constitutionalism may have directly influenced Japanese industrialism and trade, as suggested by Takeshi Masuda, the former member of the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce, who in 1910 examined how the Meiji government led to greater economic growth through industrialization and the liberalization of its politics. “Politically, the foundations of the empire were firmly laid on constitutional principles,” Masuda wrote, adding that, “socially, the people obtained a right to enjoy equal rights; and economically, unnatural restrictions were removed”<sup>58</sup> Masuda’s statement reflects not only how constitutionalism was positively viewed within the government and among the people, but reveals how it benefited Japan’s trade. Masuda continues to illustrate just how liberal reforms affected Meiji trade policies by totaling the amount of Japanese exports and imports. Masuda claims that by “[calculating] from that basis the proportions in which annual trade progress was subsequently made.

Year.	Percentage
1868	100
1870	184

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<sup>57</sup> Ōkuma Shigenobu, and Marcus B. Huish. *Fifty Years of New Japan: (Kiaokoku Gojūnen Shi)*, 161. London, UK: Smith, Elder. & Co., 1910.

<sup>58</sup> Ōkuma, *Fifty Years of New Japan: (Kiaokoku Gojūnen Shi)*, 1910, 623.

1875	185
1880	248
1885	253
1890	527
1895	1011
1900	2084
1904	2718
1907	3530 <sup>59</sup>

As seen by Takeshi Masuda's calculation, in 1890, the year after the Meiji constitution was promulgated, there was a drastic increase in international trade. This possibly in part due to Japan's increase in industrialization alongside its liberalization of foreign politics, enabled in large part due to the early pan-Asian movements at this time, particularly the Popular Rights Movement, and the Asia Association. In certain instances, we see how Japanese trade significantly grew during periods of war, notably the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, and the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, and can also presume that these trends in trade were made in part due to the growing production as a result of military demand. Establishing this rapid trade development was in large part a demand of the military, but it was also a key feature of the liberal movements in Japan, albeit with different motivations of economic development. Though perhaps economic and military development naturally leads to an increase in foreign trade relations, it is evident based on the time frame that the 1880s liberalization movement helped prompt Meiji Japan in its development efforts.

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By examining the political rhetoric of 1880s Japan, we can see how both “*Kōa*” style pan-Asianism and the Popular Rights Movement shared similar interests in political and

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<sup>59</sup> Ōkuma, *Fifty Years of New Japan: (Kiakoku Gojūnen Shi)*, 1910, 623.

economic development through constitutionalism and more improved trade relations. The progressive movement not only had cultural significance, but legitimate influence within Japan's political circles as seen through the establishment of the 1889 Meiji Constitution, and the development of bilateral relations through established institutions. Before Japan established itself as the Asian hegemon from its victory over the Qing Dynasty from the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the liberal political discourse and the Popular Rights Movement that defined 1880s Japan helped set the stage for pan-Asianism as an egalitarian foreign policy strategy that focused on popular rights, economic development, and equality among Asian nations. The pan-Asianist movement's initial bid for altruistic, bilateral support was supported by the Popular Rights Movement and progressivism that dominated informal politics in 1880s Japan.

This period can be characterized as a time of great optimism, as Japan's constitutional development and opening up towards the world, particularly in its mission to "raise Asia", without a great emphasis on imperialism, reflected the Asia Association and Popular Rights Movement's ability to influence dramatic social change in Japan. The mid-Meiji period was the most optimistic period when pan-Asianism could serve and was seen as a legitimate, progressive international movement that sought to develop Asia without the use of imperialism.

Pan-Asianism's anti-colonial and liberal sentiments would continue into the 1890s despite Japan's growing militarism within East Asia.

## **Section 2) CONFLICTING TIMES: LIBERAL PAN-ASIANISM DURING JAPAN'S RISING MILITARISM**

In this section, I intend to reveal how liberalism in Japanese politics helped promote the acceptance of pan-Asianism by encouraging similar economic and political development initiatives initially set forth by its *Kōa* predecessors, despite the growing militarism resulting from the First Sino-Japanese War of 1895. With the influx of Japanese liberalism during the 1880s, Japanese constitutionalism and popular rights were relatively successful in increasing individual rights and a constitutional government. The Freedom and People's Rights Movement's optimism went beyond domestic politics however, and into foreign relations as well, as we discussed in the previous chapter. Just as the pan-Asian model from the *Kōa* school of thought had already made significant headway in its projects, so too did the Meiji government seek out mutually benefiting initiatives between itself and other Asian countries. But due to increasing jingoist sentiment after the First Sino-Japanese war in 1895, the 1890s was a decade of growing nationalism due to Japan's growing military and economy, and while certain pan-Asian writers grew more conservative, many at this time attributed the successes of Meiji Japan to the growing liberalism enabled by social elites, constitutionalism, and the Popular Rights Movement. Though the Japanese government would eventually become more militaristic in the coming years, 1890 was a hopeful year and decade for Japanese liberals, as they were finally given the chance to influence Japanese politics. Despite the country's growing militarism and nationalist sentiment, Japanese politics ironically continued to pursue more liberal, anti-military approaches in its international affairs during the decade of the 1890s.

### **Emerging Liberal Politics and Pan-Asian Sentiments in the Imperial Diet**

While certain elder statesmen were optimistic about the provisions given by the constitution, several Japanese liberals were disappointed by the constitution's more conservative provisions.<sup>60</sup> This includes Article 6, which ensures the Emperor's almost unrestricted rule over Japan's legislative powers, as well as Article 34, which ensured that the Imperial House of Peers would consist of Meiji oligarchs and members of the imperial family, many of whom were opposed to democratic ideals.<sup>61</sup> However, with the promulgation of the new constitution on February 11, 1889, the Meiji government sought to ensure more rights to the people in the constitution's second chapter, where in article 29, it states; "Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of the law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations."<sup>62</sup> This statement was written to ensure the freedom of the press, including the more critical writings often found from liberal writers. As a result, many previously incarcerated proponents of the Popular Rights Movement were released. Though Japan was far from having absolute freedom and people's rights, this article reflects how by 1890, Japan's political climate was still relatively diverse, and took public opinion and parliamentarianism seriously as indicated by the different types of concessions.

The decision to accommodate both sides of the political spectrum was made directly by Itō Hirobumi, who is often regarded as a more progressive Meiji statesman (by Meiji Japan standards). As an early proponent of Meiji constitutionalism, Itō was tasked with traveling to Western countries to learn statecraft and help construct the Meiji constitution. Itō saw that the two camps of Japanese politics by 1889 were split between "former generations who were still full of theocratic ideas... who believed that any attempt to restrict the imperial prerogative

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<sup>60</sup> Tiedemann. *Modern Japan*, 114, 1962.

<sup>61</sup> Tiedemann. *Modern Japan*, 118, 1962.

<sup>62</sup> Tiedemann, Arthur Everett. "The Meiji Constitution." Essay. In *Modern Japan: A Brief History*, 117. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1962.



amounted to something like high treason”, and the “large body and powerful body of the younger generation educated at the time when the Manchester theory was in vogue, and who in consequence were ultra-radical in their ideas of freedom.”<sup>63</sup> The depictions of the loyalist conservatives and youthful progressives gives us insight into the political climate of Japan by the time the Meiji constitution was drafted. In doing so, he illustrates just how prominent liberalism was in Japan by viewing it as a relevant school of thought in Japanese politics. The significance of the liberal movement in drafting the constitution implies the prominence that Japanese liberalism would continue to have even after the constitution’s promulgation.

Liberal political factions eventually united to form the Constitutional Liberal Party (*Rikken Jiyūtō*) in order to hold a majority in the Imperial House of Representatives. It is important to note that despite the suppression of liberalism in the 1880s, the movement remained culturally prevalent in Japanese society, notably through the press and associated literature.<sup>64</sup> Liberalism rose in prominence within the Imperial Diet in the early 1890s, with several activists of the Popular Rights Movement going into politics to form new parties, including Itagaki Taisuke, one of the original founding members of the original *Jiyūtō* in the 1870s and 1880s. Upon the promulgation of the Meiji constitution, several other notable Japanese liberals were released from detainment, including Ōi Kentarō and Kōno Hironaka.<sup>65</sup> Ōi and Kōno would continue to promote Japanese liberalism during the new constitutional era by forming their own separate liberal parties. The establishment of these two political parties is representative of the burgeoning of liberal factions that would soon swarm the Imperial Diet.

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<sup>63</sup> Ōkuma Shigenobu, Marcus B. Huish, and Itō Hirobumi. “Some Reminiscences of the Grant of the New Constitution.” Essay. In *Fifty Years of New Japan: (Kiaikoku Gojūnen Shi)*, 130. London: Smith, Elder. & Co., 1910.

<sup>64</sup> Irokawa, Daikichi, and Marius B. Jansen. *The Culture of the Meiji Period*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

<sup>65</sup> Ukita, “The History of Political Parties in Japan.”, *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 161, 1910.

By 1890, four predominantly liberal parties all vied for seats in the House of Representatives; *Kyūshū Dōshi*, *Daidō*, *Jiyū*, and the *Aikoku*.<sup>66</sup> Due to the inability for any one of these liberal parties to gain a majority, they coalesced to form the Constitutional Liberal Party (*Rikken Jiyūtō*), which was able to hold a house majority in 1890 through 1893.<sup>67</sup> The rise of the liberal parties in the early years of the new Meiji Diet reflects not only the results of Japanese progressives, but also the beginning of liberal influences towards Japan's policies. This includes Japan's policies regarding foreign affairs.

As a result of the Popular Rights Movement's influx of liberal thinkers, the Meiji Constitution helped usher in a new era of liberalism and expose pan-Asianist voices to a wide political audience. Alongside the rise of liberal parties came their pan-Asian concerns over international affairs. Pan-Asianists such as pan-Asian historian Kuroki Morifumi, who by 1890 continued to advocate for Japan cooperating with Asian states, notably China and Korea, to restrict further Western encroachment.<sup>68</sup> Japan's growing industrialism, and fear that the geographic proximity of the Korean Peninsula posed a threat to Japan if a foreign empire -notably Russia- were to annex it. Much like how the members of the pan-Asianist organization the Asia Association argued a decade earlier, Japanese liberals promoted peaceful cooperation with Asian states in lieu of a militant one. The Asia Association's belief that a militant option was not realistic was shared among Japanese liberals in the Meiji government, but faced opposition as international security concerns grew more concerning within the Asian continent. Japan's insecurities were realized in 1890, when Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922) gave a speech to the Imperial Diet in which he states that when the Trans-Siberian railway was

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<sup>66</sup> Ukita, "The History of Political Parties in Japan.", *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 164, 1910.

<sup>67</sup> Ukita, "The History of Political Parties in Japan.", *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 164, 1910.

<sup>68</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 52.

completed, Korea would be under threat of Russian colonialism.<sup>69</sup> Though military and geopolitical concerns had been a prominently discussed subject within Meiji politics since the early 1880s, it wasn't until the mid 1890s that realpolitik would become prevalent.

Though Japanese proponents of liberalism came out of the woodwork to promote progressive reforms in the Japanese government, Japanese militarism also developed as a result of Meiji imperial rescripts. This is in large part due to the growth of State Shintō, a nationalistic religion founded in 1868 that sought to unify both religion and government through patronage of Shintō temples and imagery in hopes of promoting a national morality.<sup>70</sup> State Shintō not only nationalized religious ceremonies and temples, but also emphasized the importance of the Japanese emperor as the head of both Japanese spirituality and government. Imperial rescripts made by the emperor included the rescript of soldiers and sailors, where five articles were declared by the Emperor to incite obedience and nationalism among those who were drafted into Japan's army. In the rescript, we see how the Emperor utilized State Shintō; "Moreover these five articles are the "Grand Way" of heaven and earth and the universal law of humanity, easy to observe and to practice. If you, soldiers and sailors, in obedience to our instruction, will observe and practice these principles and fulfill your duty of grateful service to the country, it will be a source of joy, not to ourself alone, but to all the people of Japan."<sup>71</sup> Those concerned with State Shintō and its contemporary conservative supporters were some of the primary proponents of both early *Kōa* pan-Asianism and Japanese liberals entering Meiji politics. However, while the Meiji military and conservative factions would voice their concerns about national security, Japanese liberals were on the front lines of Japanese diplomacy.

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<sup>69</sup> Drea, Edward J. *Japan's Imperial Army, Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009, 74.

<sup>70</sup> Saaler, Sven. "Japan and Asia." Essay. In *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese History*, 26–30. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. 147.

<sup>71</sup> Theodore, De Bary Wm, Arthur E. Tiedemann, and Carol Gluck. "Imperial Rescript for Soldiers and Sailors (1882)." Essay. In *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 198–200. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1958.

### **Mutsu Munemitsu: Liberalism in Meiji Foreign Affairs**

The rise of liberal parties in the Imperial Diet is important because it reflects the political trends within Japanese social and political circles. When the First Sino-Japanese War broke out over how to handle Korea, conservative and liberal factions alike differed drastically on moving forward in Sino-Japanese relations. Liberal voices were finally being heard within Japan's Lower house, and began taking on significant stances towards foreign affairs. Not only were more liberal pan-Asianist institutions such as the *Ajia Kyōkai* beginning to take on international relations with China more seriously through its educational initiatives, but the Meiji Government itself began incorporating liberal politicians into key political events.

The individual who implemented early *Kōa* pan-Asianism with Meiji diplomatic policy was Mutsu Munemitsu. As the son of a *Shishi* samurai radical, Mutsu worked alongside Meiji bureaucrats to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogunate. During the Meiji restoration, Mutsu went on to work alongside Japanese liberals to promote utilitarianism and support individual freedoms. Mutsu is most famous for his work in drafting the Treaty of Shimonoseki, a peace deal that formally ended the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

Though no historical record clarifies any formal association with pan-Asian organizations, Mutsu can be considered a pan-Asianist belief towards a "Raising Asia" policy and influence over other pan-Asianist foreign policy makers. Mutsu was one of the primary influences of Uchida Yasuya, who served as Japan's foreign minister numerous times throughout the 1910s and the 1920s.<sup>72</sup> Mutsu influenced Uchida's own pan-Asian thought while serving as Mutsu's personal secretary in 1889. Uchida believed that "confronting the Western imperial

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<sup>72</sup> GATES, RUSTIN B. "Pan-Asianism in Prewar Japanese Foreign Affairs: The Curious Case of Uchida Yasuya." *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 37, no. 1 (2011): 1–27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41337639>.

powers was the true goal of a union” between Asian states, but that working with Western states when it benefited Japan was necessary.<sup>73</sup>

It may seem contradictory that pan-Asianism called for a more hardline stance against the West despite the liberalists’ aversion towards militarism. However, opposition to the West was a common goal among all pan-Asianists, but the methodology of Japanese liberal pan-Asianists was their inclination for more economic, cooperative reforms to help develop Asian countries, rather than strictly military defense growth. Both being pragmatic diplomats, it is likely that Uchida shared, or even developed these pan-Asian sentiments from Mutsu while serving under him. As an opportunist, Mutsu believed in working with Western states to promote cooperation with Japan and the West, while creating diplomatic wedges between said Western States in order to counter Western aggression. While negotiating the peace agreements between Japan and China, his major goal was to promote peaceful relations between China and Japan, while supporting reformist measures to promote Korean independence.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, Mutsu can be labeled as a pan-Asianist due to his support of the “raising Asia” policy in Korea and cooperative efforts between Japan and China.

An emblematic representation of liberalism and *Kōa* style pan-Asianism affecting Sino-Japanese relations during the mid 1890s Japan was the appointment of Mutsu Munemitsu as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1894. Considered to be “a man of singular talent” by his *Genrō* peers, who primarily controlled the Imperial Diet’s upper house (where the liberal movement had very little influence), Mutsu Munemitsu was a seasoned diplomat for the Meiji government, having lived and studied in numerous Western countries, notably in the United

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<sup>73</sup> *Ebid.*

<sup>74</sup> Mutsu, Munemitsu. *Kenkenroku, a Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95*. Translated by Gordon Mark Berger. Tokyo, JP: University of Tokyo Press, 1982. xiii.

States and Germany.<sup>75</sup> Mutsu eventually served Itō Hirobumi's ministry in 1895 during the drafting of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which formally concluded of the First Sino-Japanese War by having both China and Japan recognize Korea's independence, and granting Japan territorial cessions in Taiwan, the Pescadores Islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula located just Northwest of the Korean Peninsula.<sup>76</sup> While Mutsu served both the conservative and liberal elements of the Meiji government, his studies in constitutional statecraft and association with Progressive parties would influence his diplomatic relations with the Qing Dynasty in China.

Though Mutsu never formally joined any political party, he is associated with the Popular Rights Movement and liberal thought. Having translated Jeremy Betham's *Utilitarianism* in prison, Mutsu was a supporter of constitutional and liberal politics. Based on his interest in political work, we can assume that Mutsu himself was at least partly sympathetic towards utilitarianism, or at least Western political thought. This notion is supported by his foreign education, particularly from the liberal political economist Lorenz von Stein in Germany. Stein, who promoted welfare rights, taught Mutsu state-science, sociology, and administrative law.<sup>77</sup>

Through Mutsu's notes from von Stein's lectures, we can glimpse how liberal thought influenced Mutsu's administrative capabilities, and subsequently Meiji diplomacy. Mutsu's notes reveal the liberal influences in Stein's lectures. In a section titled 'Home Affairs', we see that Kutsu places importance on the economic development of Japanese citizens' economic and social well being (which he refers to as economic life and social life). In doing so, he highlights the importance of Agriculture and Industry as a means to improve "economic life" and the

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<sup>75</sup> Ōkuma, "The History of Political Parties in Japan.", *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 171, 1910.

<sup>76</sup> Mutsu, Munemitsu. *Kenkenroku, a Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95*. Translated by Gordon Mark Berger. Tokyo, JP: University of Tokyo Press, p. 191, 1982.

<sup>77</sup> Takao, Ueno. "Mutsu Munemitsu and His Lecture Notes from Lorenz Von Stein." *The Keiai Journal of International Studies* 1 (March 1998): 127-59.

“struggle between capital and labor”.<sup>78</sup> These reflect the quintessential needs of the people in Stein’s eyes when it came to development, and are similar to other Japanese liberal writers such as Tokutomi Sohō. More importantly however, Stein's views on constitutionalism influenced not just Mutsu, but even Itō Hirobumi’s decision to replicate the Prussian government’s constitutional monarchy when drafting the Meiji Constitution. Overall, the progressive teachings of Stein influenced Mutsu’s own political affiliation in the Meiji government, as he would remain a fervent leftist politician. Lastly, Stein may have influenced Mutsu’s views regarding rights in his lectures, stating how rights “may be either one which is by the nature of personal relation, or one which is constituted by a third will. The former is a natural right and the latter a positive right.”<sup>79</sup> This idea of natural versus positive rights reflects the notion that a state can provide rights to the people in addition to natural rights, a key concept in constitutionalism. Mutsu mentions in 1895 that the Sino-Japanese War started partly due to the fact that both “Japan and China sent troops into Korea to protect their rights and uphold the principles each had been advocating.”<sup>80</sup> Based on Stein’s teachings, we can assume that this notion of rights in Korea, and in developing the independence of a Korean State, implies liberal idealism was at the forefront of Mutsu’s diplomatic thought. By utilizing European liberal rhetoric used by his teacher Lorenz von Stein, Mutsu’s own diplomatic prerogative was influenced by European liberalism, supporting individual rights and constitutionalism.

While working as a diplomat and constructing a foreign policy plan for Korea after the First Sino-Japanese War, Mutsu Munemitsu often promoted the liberal ideals shared by Japan’s Popular Rights Movement. Not only did Mutsu view the antagonism between China and Japan as

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<sup>78</sup> Takao, Ueno. “Mutsu Munemitsu and His Lecture Notes from Lorenz Von Stein.” *The Keiai Journal of International Studies* 1 (March 1998): 127–59.

<sup>79</sup> Takao, Ueno. “Mutsu Munemitsu and His Lecture Notes from Lorenz Von Stein.” *The Keiai Journal of International Studies* 1 (March 1998): 139.

<sup>80</sup> Mutsu, Munemitsu. *Kenkenroku, a Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95*. Translated by Gordon Mark Berger. Tokyo, JP: University of Tokyo Press, p. 5, 1982.

a result of the friction caused by Japan's modern "new civilization" against China's "old civilization of the East", but also a lack of communication between the countries.<sup>81</sup> This is a justified concern for Mutsu, as with international affairs today, two countries who lack in communication may suffer from mirror imaging problems, believing that a country's actions may potentially threaten another, when in reality that is not always the case.

For Mutsu, China and Japan needed to communicate better and reestablish their relationship diplomatically before development could begin to improve. This is reflective of liberal activists' notion to promote modernization reforms in Japan in order to become prominent in the international community, on par with other Western States. Much like the reforms instituted during the Meiji Era, both during the restoration and the creation of the Meiji Constitution, Mutsu believed that it "fell to Japan alone to carry out the reform of Korea."<sup>82</sup> I believe that the "reforms" that Mutsu hopes Japan would carry is indicative of the progressive reforms carried out in Meiji Japan. Given Mutsu's political affiliation and prior liberal education and loyalty to the Japanese government, it is difficult to predict whether Mutsu was genuine in his goal to suggest progressive reforms in regards to the Meiji government's mission to assist development in Korea. Though the Treaty of Shimonoseki promoted early colonialism for Japan, this was likely a result of his associates desires, as well as the interests of the Japanese leadership itself, many of which were conservative expansionists. Mutsu's work addresses Formosa and other seized territories less passionately than with this relationship efforts with China, perhaps indicating his liberal hopes of facilitating cooperative trade with the country, as it was seen as a hopeful counterpart to Japan's modernization. However, given his emphasis on reestablishing

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<sup>81</sup> Mutsu. *Kenkenroku*, 1982. 28.

<sup>82</sup> Mutsu. *Kenkenroku*. P. 28, 1982.



Peaceful Sino-Japanese relations with China after the First Sino-Japanese war, we can interpret his China policy as more traditional towards the early *Kōa* movement.

Mutsu did not confine his liberal ideals to diplomacy, applying them as well to domestic Meiji politics. Ōkuma Shigenobu, a former Foreign minister in 1888, and member of the Meiji oligarchy, respected Mutsu's diplomatic skills. Ōkuma, came to recognize the importance of improving Japanese foreign relations with East Asia. Though a self-proclaimed centrist, Ōkuma's views often correlated with liberal politics and early *Kōa* pan-Asianism in his support of constitutionalism and Asian solidarity. While still a part of the Meiji Oligarchy, notes Mutsu's political involvement with the Liberal Party: "When amnesty was subsequently granted to him he remained in Tokyo and secretly lent aid to the *Jiyūtō*, being intimately associated with Itagaki and his friends".<sup>83</sup> This is a fascinating statement, as while Mutsu never formally joined a political party, Ōkuma clearly indicates his political affiliation leaning towards the Liberal Party. Aside from his help drafting the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, Mutsu's second major contribution in the Meiji government was creating a coalition between the government and the *Jiyūtō*. This is important when considering the development of liberal politics in Meiji Japan, as liberal ideologies were soon becoming more centralized within the Meiji Diet. Liberal ideals were considered within the government in part due to oligarchs such as Ōkuma utilizing their skills in establishing developmental norms of government.

As a pan-Asianist, Mutsu sought to establish more open communication between the Japanese and Chinese government after the First Sino-Japanese war. However, Mutsu reveals to us how the Japanese government believed that Japan's victory evoked "world recognition of Japan as the preeminent power of the Far East."<sup>84</sup> Though liberal, Japanese nationalism was on a

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<sup>83</sup> Ōkuma, "The History of Political Parties in Japan.", *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 171, 1910.

<sup>84</sup> Mutsu. *Kenkenroku*. P. 5, 1982.

steady incline, as the Japanese public and government now had proof of Japan's military prowess. Liberalism and nationalism are not incompatible in this regard. Even as Meiji bureaucrats and Japanese pan-Asianists began to view Japan as the predominant Asian power, it does not directly translate the same nationalist rhetoric used to promote Japanese imperialism. Instead, Japanese liberal pan-Asianism, as we shall explore, continued to promote independence movements and cooperative reforms, but now viewed Japan's mission as the new hegemon of Asia. Not only does Mutsu's work reveal to us Japanese nationalist sentiment growing within the pan-Asian movement, but also illustrates the government's continued willingness to promote cooperative relations in lieu of imperialism.

Mutsu Minemitsu is an important character in the story of Meiji liberalism, as his foreign ministry work emphasized the importance of cooperative measures between Asian countries. His vast knowledge of statecraft, friendships within the *Jiyūtō*, and affiliation with the Japanese oligarchy in the upper house helped legitimize liberalism within the entirety of the Meiji government. Through his diplomatic skills, Mutsu was also able to implement more liberal rhetoric in Japanese foreign affairs in part from his learning with Lorenz von Stein. His work during the First Sino-Japanese war introduced greater liberalism within both the lower and upper houses of the Imperial diet, and would help usher in the advent of pan-Asianism as a legitimate foreign policy strategy by advocating for the same cooperative measures that early *Kōa* pan-Asianists like the Asia Association advocated for. Though he was a supporter of Western learning, his forbearance of Japanese imperialism in the Asian continent was not dissimilar to the early *Kōa* pan-Asian movement. As with liberalism developing in the Meiji government, *Kōa* pan-Asianism began to find its way within prominent political circles as well, due to its close association with the *Jiyūtō* and like-minded liberal parties.

### **The Rise of Pan-Asianism Thought as a Foreign Strategy**

As the Meiji government continued to welcome liberal politicians and sympathizers into its bureaucracy, pan-Asianism subsequently became prominent within political circles. Much like the comparable leftist parties, liberally inclined pan-Asian organizations were often kept in the dark during the 1880s due to its often anti-governmentalism. Yet with the victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War, the Meiji government saw an opportunity to reassess its foreign policy plan; whether it sought the partition of China or its preservation. Despite the previous animosity between China and Japan during the First Sino-Japanese War, the Meiji government vied for a more peaceful, constructive approach towards Sino-Japanese relations, as a means to promote Asian independence and development in its attempt to prevent further Western interventionism and encroachment. This was apparent when Count Ōkuma Shigenobu gave an address to the National Diet, stating that Japan's "foreign policy must now be adapted to world-wide relations, must be steadfast and continuous, must not be subjected to international law, having justice and equity for its essential conditions, so as to command itself to the sympathy of the world."<sup>85</sup> This statement provides evidence of Ōkuma sentiments towards international relations in general, as opposed to any specific country or region. By "world-wide" he may be referring to the West in general. Yet with the fear of being "subjected to international law", he is referring to Japan's previous fears of military aggression creating tension between Japan and the rest of the world, both from Asia and the West. This statement represents the National Diet's desire to promote a non-militant foreign policy plan and establish greater relationships with other Asian countries.

The implication of Ōkuma's statement is that Japan must also establish better relations with its Asian neighbors, without gaining the indignation of Western countries.

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<sup>85</sup> Ōkuma, "The History of Political Parties in Japan.", *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 171, 1910.

Ōkuma saw the value of having a peaceful foreign policy plan, as it could help establish better relations with Japan and its Asian neighbors, while also it would persuade Western empires that Japan was not a threat, as Western countries were still wary of Japan's rapid development. As a result, pan-Asianist thinkers and organizations began to emphasize the importance of a *Kōa* policy by advocating for the development of Asia without the use of colonial policies, as well as emphasizing the importance of establishing friendly relationships and alliances between Asian countries to solidify strength within the Asian continent against the Western powers.

The prevalence of liberal views within the Imperial Diet's various political parties helped promote the anti-colonial, pro-development views towards a Japanese foreign strategy with China into the mid to late 1890s. The desire to not have a policy plan "subjected to international law", Ōkuma is directly addressing the Triple Intervention by Western Powers over the Treaty of Shimonoseki, and making a stance that Japan needs to promote a foreign policy plan that ensured Japan's predominance within the region that did not threaten the West as well. Both of these sentiments are primary attributes of pan-Asianism. As a result, this statement catalyzed various competing ideologies within the pan-Asian movement to promote themselves for consideration. Some of the loudest voices came from progressive activists and liberal pan-Asian thinkers who advocated *Kōa* policy of development and independence throughout Asia, and would contribute to the debate on Japan's approach towards its international relationships in Asia.

In regards to pan-Asianism, the sudden international profile Japan gained from its victory over China promoted strong nationalist sentiment throughout public and political circles. However, according to Hiroshi Tanaka from Hitotsubashi University, Japanese liberals viewed nationalism and liberalism as complementary to each other as a means to promote peaceful

relationships rather than encouraging colonial policies..<sup>86</sup> This seemingly contradictory relationship is representative of what proponents of *Kōa* pan-Asianism sought to achieve; encouraging Asian countries to be independent with Japan at the forefront of Asian development. Kuga Katsunan, founder of the Japanese newspaper *Nihon*, was one such liberal activist who shared this notion in his 1893 work *On International Affairs*.<sup>87</sup> According to Tanaka, Kuga believed in the notion of “special improvement of national life” (*Kokumin no Tokuritu*), which suggests that “relationships between nations should be equal and that no government should be allowed to invade or colonize another country...” It is clear that to Kuga, the word "national" refers not only to "Japanese citizens" but also to the "other people of Asia."<sup>88</sup> This idea emphasizes the importance of peaceful relations between countries in lieu of military conflict. In this case, Kuga’s nationalism stems from his anti-Western, anti-colonial beliefs. At the same time, the idea that “national” refers not only to Japan, but implies the entirety of Asia, suggests liberal elements in Kuga’s utilitarian views on development throughout Asia. Kuga’s liberalism supports his views towards nationalism, as he promotes the independence of Asian countries from Western powers. For the sake of the argument, I will continue referring to this concept as simply “liberal nationalism”. Though Kuga was never a formal member of the pan-Asian movement, his views represent what the liberal faction of pan-Asianism would seek for a foreign policy plan.

### **Adverse Effects of Nationalism in Liberal Pan-Asianism**

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<sup>86</sup> Tanaka, Hiroshi. “THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM IN MODERN JAPAN: CONTINUITY OF AN IDEA—FROM TAGUCHI AND KUGA TO HASEGAWA.” *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 21, no. 1 (August 1989): 259–68.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

*Kōa* pan-Asianism, now introducing this notion of liberal nationalism, was at the forefront of the Meiji government's continental plan. Yet while the *Kōa* strategy still included "raising Asia" through institutional reforms and commercial efforts, the nationalist fervor led *Kōa* groups, notably the Asia Association, to place emphasis on Japanese predominance within Asia.<sup>89</sup> This did not mean that Japan sought to colonize other Asian countries, but rather it would be at the forefront of promoting development in Asia. Yet in doing so, much of the rhetoric liberal pan-Asianists provided ultimately began to reflect the jingoist sentiments of the Japanese public. While certain liberal pan-Asianists continued to promote more cooperative measures similar to early *Kōa* beliefs. However, we also begin to see a radical shift within the liberal strain of the Japanese pan-Asian movement, with certain thinkers promoting pan-Asianist views that would later be used to justify Japanese imperialism.

Representatives of pan-Asian liberalism and *Kōa* policy includes Arao Sei, a former Japanese spy and founder of the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research (*Nisshin Bōeki Kenkyūjo*).<sup>90</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, Arao promoted liberalism within his pan-Asian views, advocating for advancing education in Asia and economic development within the region in lieu of military interventionism. Yet after the First Sino-Japanese War, much like other pan-Asianists by 1895, Arao Sei believed that Japan ought to be at the forefront of Asian development in order to assist Asia to self-strengthen itself to oppose Western colonialism; "The two continents of Europe and Asia are distinguished by Western and Eastern culture. White and yellow constitute two fundamentally different races. We must stand together as three countries and rely on each other, staking our domestic order and national prestige before the whole world,

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<sup>89</sup> SCOTT, PAUL DUNCAN. 1985. "ARAO SEI AND THE FORMATION OF JAPAN'S CONTINENTAL POLICY." Order No. 8615610, University of Virginia, 160. <https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/arao-sei-formation-japans-continental-policy/docview/303409362/se-2>.

<sup>90</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 63.

in order to show reverence to the supreme morality of our Imperial Ancestors.”<sup>91</sup> This statement not only reflects Arao’s alarmist views on potential conflict between the West and Asia, but also suggests that Japan, alongside Korea and China, can work together to oust the West from Asia. However, this statement also reflects State Shintō, which is often regarded as conservative. While this may seem to contradict Arao’s message, this may be due to Arao’s time serving in the Japanese military, and therefore was taught the Imperial edicts that promoted State Shintō ideals. As we shall see, Arao’s more militant background would continue to contradict his more liberal leanings towards his pan-Asian background.

Much like Kuga, Arao saw the independence of Asian countries as crucial for opposing Western colonialism, and even argued that Japan ought to aid countries in gaining their own independence and sustainability. “When we send troops to Korea to bolster its independence, it is to fulfill our mission...our plan to promote Korean independence and prosperity is the first step in securing the peace and prosperity of East Asia.”<sup>92</sup> As someone who is emblematic of early *Kōa* pan-Asianist groups such as the Raising Asia Society and the Asia Association, Arao Sei promotes this liberal nationalist view introduced by Kuga Katsunan into Japan’s political circles regarding Japan’s foreign policy plan. By involving itself in foreign politics, Arao was adamant in his belief that Japan could implement developmental reforms using a top-down approach as a means to promoting independence in Korea and China. The problem of the sentiments provided by Arao in 1895 is its comparability towards future Japanese imperialism.

Though Arao may be sincere in his desire to help develop Asia, and even constitute independence within Asian states, his voice serves as a harbinger for how pan-Asianism would

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<sup>91</sup> Inoue, Masaji, and Sven Saaler. “Kyojin Arao Sei. Tsuketari Jūni Resshiden” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 64–65. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

<sup>92</sup> Inoue, Masaji, and Sven Saaler. “Kyojin Arao Sei. Tsuketari Jūni Resshiden” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 64–65. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

eventually be used during wartime Japan. Arao goes so far as to suggest sending troops to Korea to bolster its independence, with a punitive force to the Qing dynasty possibly making both countries seek out radical reformation in their governments. “Not only will we achieve our aim of assisting Korea, but moreover we will arouse the Qing and incite radical reform there.”<sup>93</sup> By inciting “radical reform”, Arao is referring to not only the republican revolutionaries in China, but his own personal belief that the end goal of aiding China to “restore their wealth and power as the center of the continent, clarify their administration and education, and open the paths of employment and promotion, [as] they would dramatically capture the world’s attention for enhancing their national prestige and prosperity while also leading a resurgence of their human talents and institutions.”<sup>94</sup> It is evident that Arao still believed in the early *Kōa* pan-Asianism, as his end goal was to promote political and economic reform to ensure China’s growth. But in suggesting a more aggressive means, we begin to see the adverse effects of nationalism affecting the liberal pan-Asian movement.

### **Early Suggestions of a Co-Prosperity Field**

Even before the end of the First Sino-Japanese War, *Kōa* pan-Asianism began emphasizing Japan’s role as a leader for a multinational alliance for the purpose of aiding Asian development and securing Japanese security interests. Japan was able to successfully gain some territory as a result of negotiations between China and Japan after the Japanese victory, and despite popular belief that the two countries would hold animosity between each other, Japan and China ironically improved their relations after the war in large part due to pan-Asianist statesmen promoting developmental, cooperative measures. This includes Tarui Tōkichi, founder of the

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<sup>93</sup> Inoue, Masaji, and Sven Saaler. “Kyojin Arao Sei. Tsuketari Jūni Risshiden” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 64–65. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

<sup>94</sup> *Ebid.*



Oriental Socialist Party (*Tōyō Shakaitō*) in 1883, whose involvement in contentious politics alongside the leader of the Popular Rights movement pegged him as a political agitator by the Meiji government in 1885.<sup>95</sup> In his 1893 work *Arguments on Behalf of the Union of the Great East*, Tarui was an early visionary and anticipator of what would be later known as the Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, a term used to later justify Japanese colonialism during the Pacific War.<sup>96</sup> While scholars debate whether Tarui sought Japanese colonialism, many suggest Tarui's belief in an Asian Union was more egalitarian given his disposition for socialist reforms.

Tarui believed that an Asian Union between Japan and Korea could help strengthen Asian solidarity against the West while also aiding in the development of the Korean Peninsula. Tarui States that “It goes without saying that a union with our constitutional government will eliminate their accumulated vices and ultimately guarantee the safety of the country and the happiness of the people... A union of constitutional governments, in particular, is energized by the sense of honor and superior morality of both parties. Among all forms of government, therefore, nothing is better and more beautiful than a constitutional federation.”<sup>97</sup> Tarui's suggestion of establishing a constitutional federation between Asian countries reflects the leftist notion of progressive development as a mission for pan-Asianism. However, by alluding to a union between Korea and the Japanese government, Tarui's message reflects imperialist sentiments, due to its similarity to annexation.

Though he promoted constitutionalism within his proposed Union, it is difficult to say whether Tarui was genuine about his desire to aid the Korean peninsula, or if he supported cold realpolitik. Certain scholars, including Sinologist Takeuchi Yoshimi, argue that Tarui's beliefs

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<sup>95</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 66.

<sup>96</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 66.

<sup>97</sup> Tarui Tōkichi, and Saaler, Sven. “Daitō Gappōron (Arguments on Behalf of the Union of the Great East)” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 71.

were more egalitarian, and do not fully reflect the later imperialist interpretations of a Co-prosperity field.<sup>98</sup> At the same time however, Korean historian Hatada Takashi argues that despite Tarui's egalitarian beliefs towards an East Asian Co-Prosperity field, it did not serve as a counterargument to those who supported imperialism within the Meiji government.

For Tarui, Japan's involvement in Asian development was not just for smaller countries like Korea and Island nations in the South Pacific, but for the Qing Dynasty in China. However, unlike Korea, Tarui did not see China joining a possible Asian Union with Japan due to the Qing Dynasty's fundamentally different interests. Instead, Tarui believed that Japan "should proceed to build an alliance with [China], in order to defend [Japan's] dignity against other races." Tarui did, however, seek partnership with the Qing as a means to promote Asian solidarity through pan-Asianism. While he did not see China joining the same type of Union that Japan and Korea could formulate, this is perhaps in large part due to the circumstances after the First Sino-Japanese War, with Japan holding territorial rights in Korea, as well as the Qing Dynasty's already fully operational government, as opposed to Korea's dysfunctional internal politics at the time.

Tarui's vision of an Asian Union is reflective of the pan-Asian movement's national security interests as a secondary key benefit in assisting the development of other Asian countries. Because of Japan's geographic proximity to Korea and China, there was "no good reason for remaining separate from one another " in Tarui's mind. While his views are suspiciously reminiscent of Japanese expansionism, Tarui still maintains the early *Koa* belief that Japan was not ready to utilize a military in its foreign strategy, as it "would not only result in the depletion of national strength on [Japan's] part, but would give rise to feelings of vengeful

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<sup>98</sup> Ebid.

resentment by the Koreans.”<sup>99</sup> This statement reflects early liberal pan-Asianists' reluctance to engage in military interventionism and colonization during the early to mid 1890s, as it would only place Japan in a position of insecurity. While this does not imply that the Japanese government didn't have expansionist ambitions at this time, it does show why they would have been more apprehensive towards military conquest during this period.

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By analyzing the various proponents of pan-Asianism during the 1890s, we can understand how the rise of liberal politicians in the Meiji government was closely correlated with liberal pan-Asianism despite the country's growing military prominence after the First Sino-Japanese War. Though not fully integrated during this decade, leftist politicians advocated for *Kōa* pan-Asianism to promote peaceful international relations as opposed to increased militarism, despite its victory of China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. From the 1890s until the end of the Sino-Japanese War, the *Kōa* pan-Asian movement sought to promote Japan's leadership in developing Asian independence through peaceful, non-militarized approaches, such as Arao Sei's creation of the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research, in hopes of establishing cross-cultural education exchanges. Yet by viewing Japan as the predominant Asia country, we begin to see the adverse effects of nationalism impacting the liberal strain of the pan-Asian movement, as their rhetoric (despite their possible genuine nature) is reflective of future imperial justifications. Perhaps it was not their intention to promote imperialism, as with Tarui who continued to oppose relying on the Japanese military to fulfill its cooperative goals

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<sup>99</sup> Tarui Tōkichi, and Saaler, Sven. “Daitō Gappōron (Arguments on Behalf of the Union of the Great East)” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011, 72-73.

with other Asian countries. Nor perhaps was it their intention for their ideas to be used to justify future expansionist efforts, but rather the workings of Japanese conservatives and Japan's hawkish military that exploited these thinkers' works for their own aims. However, as a result of nationalism affecting Japanese liberalism, Japanese liberal pan-Asianists began to see Japan's role as the leader of Asian progress, and inadvertently contributed to Japan's future imperialist rhetoric.

Yet despite this growing jingoism among the Japanese populace, the Meiji government witnessed a burgeoning of left leaning politics entering its National Diet, primarily within the Lower House. We begin to see more liberal statesmen being taken seriously by the Japanese political elite. With the support of Meiji Oligarchs like Itō Hirobumi and Ōkuma Shigenobu from the Upper house in the National Diet, liberal statesmen who represented *Kōa* pan-Asianist sentiment, notably ensuring the independence and development of neighboring Asian States, became prominent leaders in Japanese foreign affairs. This includes Mutsu Munemitsu, whose education in leftist statecraft and constitutionalism from Lorenz von Stein earned him the reputation of reaffirming peaceful relations between the Meiji government and the Qing Dynasty in China. Mutsu's actions are contradictory to *realpolitik*; Japan did not seek out colonialism after its victory, but sought peaceful ties instead. In this light, we can interpret just how altruistic members of the liberal movement were, and just how they affected Japan's international relations during the mid 1890s. As promoted by Kuga Katsunan, liberal nationalism would continue to remain a key feature of pan-Asianism, and was closely associated with the goals of the *Kōa* school of thought. Both sought to "raise Asia" through non-militaristic approaches in lieu of commercial development and educational exchanges, but the introduction of liberal nationalism placed greater emphasis on Japan's role as the leader in Asia in carrying out these reforms. By

the end of the First Sino-Japanese War, it is clear to see through the written works of *Kōa* pan-Asianists that Japanese liberalism was well on its way to becoming a primary influence on Japan's foreign policy plan, as well as the direction future pan-Asianist organizations would head towards. As we shall explore in the next chapter, the liberal pan-Asianism of the *Kōa* movement would reach its peak by the turn of the twentieth century, and served with relative success in promoting its mission in Asian development.

### Section 3) LIBERAL PAN-ASIANISM IN ACTION: A CHINESE CASE STUDY

The height of liberal pan-Asianism would come through the form of the East Asian Common Culture Society (*Tōa Dōbunkai*), and its relationship with Chinese bureaucrats and revolutionary groups. Founded in 1898 by Prince Konoë Atsumaro, who was then president of the National House of Peers, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* is one of the most influential and well known pan-Asian organizations due to its role in establishing relations between China and Japan. Its creation was motivated by the Triple Intervention in 1895, in which Russia, Germany, and France all but forced Japan to return key concessions it gained after the First Sino-Japanese War, as well as the Far Eastern Crisis of 1897-1898, in which Russia took possession of the Port Arthur military base in the Liaodong Peninsula.<sup>100</sup> The increased expansionism of Western powers in East Asia ironically invoked a sense of commonality and solidarity between Japan and China, despite fighting a war against each other just three years earlier. The organization promoted constructive reforms in a non-aggressive way as a result of its liberalism, largely promoting educational and institutional reforms.<sup>101</sup> In this section, I intend to reveal how liberalism was a part of the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s relatively successful, non-aggressive approach to pan-Asianism, as it helped bring about radical transformations in Qing China.

#### The *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s Early Liberalism

The *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s brand of pan-Asianism is best understood by learning of the groups involved with its initial inception. Both the works “*Tōa*” and “*Dōbunkai*” are derivative of the

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<sup>100</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011. 75.

<sup>101</sup> Reynolds, Douglas R. *China, 1898-1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

two primary groups who founded the organization in association with Prince Konoe; the East Asian Society (*Tōakai*), and the Same Culture Society (*Dōbunkai*). By understanding their political and academic backgrounds, we can infer the political goals and motivations of the *Tōa Dōbunkai*. Though both groups held a wide range of political views, their respective views on liberalism helped define the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s approach to pan-Asianism.

It is important to understand that at this stage of pan-Asianism, liberalism was a more prominent force in Japan among its thinkers than their conservative counterparts. The *Tōa Dōbunkai* in particular attempted to create the idealistic, altruistic example of what Japanese pan-Asianism could have been by providing support and establishing correspondence with Chinese diplomats in order to enable Chinese development, all in hopes of China being able to oppose Western aggression. While previous pan-Asian writers such as Tokutomi Sohō viewed liberalism as the end goal for Japanese and other developing Asian countries' politics in the 1880s, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* is predominantly focused on Japan's international relations. Additionally, while *Kōa* pan-Asianism focused predominantly on international trade and economic development as the primary indicator of development across Asia, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* tended to look more towards political factors as a means of societal development. For example, by examining the relationship of both the Qing Dynasty and National Revolutionary Army led by Sun Yat-Sen with the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, much of their relationship seems to be based on the precedent of political reform rather than strictly economic and industrial factors. In this sense, their brand of pan-Asianism can be classified as relatively liberal due to their support of constitutional and republican movements in China.

The *Dōbunkai*, the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s first major predecessor, is perhaps most responsible for establishing liberal values among the *Tōa Dōbunkai*. Founded by Prince Konoe Atsumaro in

1898, the group largely consisted of several of Arao Sei's pupils, including Inoue Masaji, who opposed military interventionism in Japan's foreign policy plan.<sup>102</sup>

Though a nationalist, Arao's views towards *Kōa* pan-Asianism calls for more constructive trade relations and economic studies in order to facilitate peaceful relations. In Arao's mind, "trade is the basis of national economics, the key to the livelihood of the people... and the nation's security and people's happiness."<sup>103</sup> Arao's statement illustrates his commitment towards trade-liberalization not only as a policy platform, but as a necessity for Asian country's national security. Many of these views are consistent with the popular ideology of "manchester liberalism", which advocated for free trade and laissez-faire economics, while also promoting pacifism, popular rights, and freedom of the press.<sup>104</sup> This is a connection drawn from the fact that Japanese liberals who promoted Manchester liberalism shared their views with liberal pan-Asianists. Arao's views on trade indicates his inclination towards Manchester liberalism, as he views free trade as a means towards establishing development in Asia as well as strengthening Asian countries' security. These liberal ideals expressed by the *Dōbunkai* presented itself in the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s own pan-Asianist policies and writings. Liberal members of the *Dōbunkai* who advocated for Manchester liberalism would have continued promoting it after the *Tōa Dōbunkai* was founded. Arao Sei, his disciples, and the school he founded, the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research (*Nisshin Bōeki Kenkyūjo*), are considered prominent precursors to the *Tōa Dōbunkai*. Both prioritized "gathering information on China and creating personal networks as a means of furthering economic and strategic cooperation" with Chinese political circles.<sup>105</sup> The

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<sup>102</sup> Saaler, Sven. "Japan and Asia." Essay. In *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese History*, 26–30. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018.

<sup>103</sup> Inoue, Masaji. *Kyojin Arao Sei*. Translated by Luke Hahn, p. 180, 1910.

<sup>104</sup> Bresiger, Gregory. "Laissez-Faire and Little Englanderism: The Rise, Fall, Rise, and Fall of the Manchester School." *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 2018.

<sup>105</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 99, 2011.



*Dōbunkai*'s mission to promote peaceful Sino-Japanese cooperation would be a key part in the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s liberalism.

The second predecessor of the *Tōa Dōbunkai* was the *Tōakai*, which focused largely on the policy aspects of pan-Asianism, and advocated for spreading liberal politics abroad. The organization itself was founded predominantly by members of the Progress Party (*Shinpotō*) and the Nippon group, and focused on supporting bureaucratic reform both domestically and abroad. The organization consisted of notable liberal Japanese activists and politicians such as Inukai Tsuyoshi, founder of the Constitutional Reform Party (*Rikken Kaishintō*), the aforementioned Kuga Katsunan, and Etō Shinsaku, a devotee of the Freedom and People's Rights movement and member of the Constitutional Government Party (*Kensei Hontō*) in 1898.<sup>106</sup> As their respective party names suggest, many of these individuals advocated for greater constitutionalism abroad. Their activities include supporting the so-called "Hundred Days Reform", which sought to reform the Qing via numerous imperial edicts that targeted economic, military, and educational policies in order to modernize China. Many of these reforms, advocated by Chinese political intellectuals Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, were directly inspired by Meiji models.<sup>107</sup> Though these reforms failed, the advocacy of Japanese pan-Asianists facilitated political relations between the future *Tōa Dōbunkai* and members of the Qing political elite. The *Tōakai* viewed its pan-Asianist approach as policy oriented, advocating for liberal reforms such as China's attempted constitutional monarchy.

The *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s views towards pan-Asianism explicitly centered on relying on each respective country's businessmen and elites to bring about these liberal reforms. This is made apparent in their (December) 1898 foundation manifesto; "At this time, both governments, acting

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<sup>106</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912: The Xinheng Revolution and Japan*. Harvard University Press, 1993. 31.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

from above, must perform the requisite public duties, honor the traditional rites and increasingly strengthen the contacts between the two countries. Acting from below, the tradespeople of both countries must act faithfully for the common good and must steadily improve relations with each other.”<sup>108</sup> In its manifesto, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* calls for a close relationship with China’s political leaders and deep understanding of Chinese society itself. This specific quote indicates to readers the organization’s inclination towards economic partnership in addition to political ones, which is evocative of Manchester Liberalism. Improved relationships manifested as the *Tōa Dōbunkai* facilitated strong relationships with many of the Qing Dynasty’s elites, including Zhang Zhidong, an advocate of controlled reform in China and close friend of Prince Konoe. The *Tōa Dōbunkai* sought to bring about liberal reform utilizing a top-down approach.

As a result of the *Dōbunkai*’s liberal idealism towards improving Sino-Japanese cultural exchange and trade, and the *Tōakai*’s advocacy for constitutionalism, the *Tōa Dōbunkai*’s brand of pan-Asianism consisted of promoting liberalism through advocating for progressive Asian politics, education, and trade as a means for establishing peaceful relations in lieu of military conquest. Much like his predecessor Arao Sei, Prince Konoe places emphasis on Japan’s development as a reason for leading Asian development; “..it is true that Japan is more advanced than China in that it has established civilized institutions and has a civilized education system. Therefore, it is very well placed to guide China and assist it by means of its advanced civilization.”<sup>109</sup> Yet unlike Arao, Konoe expresses a greater need for Sino-Japanese solidarity as a means to strengthen both countries and thwart Western encroachment. “According to principle,” says Konoe in regards to China, “the fate of the government in Beijing need not unduly trouble

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<sup>108</sup> Saaler, Sven, and Urs Zachmann. “Manifesto of the East Asian Common Culture Society (Tōa Dōbunkai Shuisho). Tōa Jiron 1 (December 1898), 1.” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 101. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

<sup>109</sup> Saaler, Sven, and Urs Zachmann. “A Same-Race Alliance and on the Necessity of Studying the Chinese Question.” Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 78. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

the Japanese. However, the survival of the Chinese... touches on the vital interests of the Japanese. Therefore, the Japanese must make it a habit to treat the Chinese in a friendly manner, advance their progress through offers of help and guidance, concentrate on promoting their development and thus find ways of dispelling their suspicions and allaying their hostility as much as possible.”<sup>110</sup> While pan-Asianists have advocated for working together with China in taking steps towards development, Konoe is unique in that he advocates his pan-Asian policy as a partnership with Chinese political groups to improve Chinese political conditions. This goes against the traditional *Kōa* pan-Asian approach, which by 1895 emphasized Japanese predominance and leadership when instigating liberalization reforms, as Konoe expresses that Asian races (specifically Chinese and Japanese peoples) ought to work together in unison to achieve their intended nationalist goals.

Pan-Asianism under the *Tōa Dōbunkai* consisted largely of liberal ideals gained from its predecessor organizations and members. As a result of the merger between the *Tōakai* and the *Dōbunkai*, Prince Konoe’s organization focused largely on promoting strategic economic cooperation with China, while advocating for constitutional progressivism within the Qing Dynasty. This included close contact with senior official Zhang Zhidong, who promoted cooperation between the Qing Dynasty and Meiji Japan. According to Ezra Vogel, “what was new in [Zhang’s] *Exhortation to Study* was the emphasis on revising the civil-service exam, centralizing education planning, and promoting a study-abroad program that specifically mentioned Japan.”<sup>111</sup> Given their close ideological proximity to the Manchester school of thought, it is clear to understand how the organization’s early philosophies were correlated with liberalism. By bringing together private and public entities, the *Tōa Dōbunkai*’s pan-Asianism

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Vogel, Ezra F.. *China and Japan: Facing History*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2019. 137.

also sought to establish greater nationalism for both countries while ensuring mutual cooperation over reformation programs. It accomplished Arao Sei's early dreams of Japanese leadership in Asian development initiatives, while promoting liberal ideals including open trade and pacifism. With a government sponsor, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* would continue to enable moderately liberal reforms in China.

### **The *Tōa Dōbunkai* and Involvement in Chinese Liberalism**

As a pan-Asianist organization, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* involved themselves with multiple progressive movements that sought to modernize China through liberal reforms. Working in association with both Qing bureaucrats and Republican revolutionaries in China, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* sought to improve Chinese development in order to accomplish core pan-Asian goals, including Chinese independence against Western encroachment. While prior Japanese pan-Asian organizations such as the *Kōakai* included Chinese dignitaries and literati, their relationship was largely to denote friendly relations between their members.<sup>112</sup> While previous pan-Asian organizations established friendly relations and institutions for mutual benefit, none were more popular or widely known than the ones made by the *Tōa Dōbunkai*. For example, the relative success of the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research was overshadowed by its *Tōa Dōbunkai* based successor, the *Tōa Dōbun Shoin*, where Japanese students were trained in China to learn linguistics and technical skills to support the Qing government and entrepreneurs. As the predominant representation of pan-Asianism at the time, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* sought to promote its own liberal ideas by involving itself with various progressive organizations and politicians in China. The *Tōa Dōbunkai* was much more involved in Chinese political affairs than its predecessors by supporting constitutional and republican organizations in China.

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<sup>112</sup> Saaler, Sven. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*. London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

What made the *Tōa Dōbunkai* so accomplished was their determination to reach out to several different parties within China. While the Meiji government at the time was interested in working in conjunction with the Qing government in China, they kept their distance from other important, more contentious political factions in order to save face with the Chinese Imperial Court. The *Tōa Dōbunkai* was able to fill in this role by associating itself with both the Qing Dynasty and the Revive China Society (*Hsing Chung Hui*), a nationalist revolutionary group led by Chinese republican activist Sun Yat-Sen, which sought to modernize China by ousting the Qing in place of a Han based Chinese republic. It is evident that both parties were important to the *Tōa Dōbunkai* in their diplomacy, as they were seen as being the only two groups who had the capacity to enact developmental change within Chinese society. This is evident in Etō Shinsaku's essay "China Improvement Theory" published in the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s editorial journal, the *Tōa Jiron*. In it, he argues that "...under the current stipulations of China, political improvement must precede social improvement. In addition, political improvements must be obtained to have a positive effect on society... There are two groups who are capable of making such improvements, and those who have the power of carrying them out. The emperor of China, and the power of the revolutionary army."<sup>113</sup> While both parties differed greatly in their political goals, Etō implies that it should be the goal of pan-Asianism to improve the Chinese government's political integrity, rather than only policy reform. For this reason, he argues that both the Qing and the Revolutionaries provide a means for that integrity. In hopes of bringing about more liberalized modernity to China, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* would support both sides of China's political turmoil through educational and bureaucratic reforms.

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<sup>113</sup> Etō, Shinsaku. "China Improvement Theory (Shina Kaizen Ron)." Translated by Luke Hahn. *Tōa Jiron* 1 (1898): 15.

## 1) The Qing Bureaucracy, Constitutionalism, and Education in Relation to the *Tōa Dōbunkai*

The *Tōa Dōbunkai* facilitated mutual support with the Qing Dynasty's more liberal bureaucratic statesmen in order to promote self-strengthening programs. This includes working alongside Zhang Zhidong, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, the former a noted moderate who advocated for gradual reform, the latter two both liberal politicians who sought to bring constitutionalism in China.<sup>114</sup>

Many self-strengthening programs under the Qing were designed to facilitate bureaucratic, military, and economic development to ensure the states' power. Self-strengthening projects were popular in China, in which the Chinese state began adopting Western methods of statecraft in hopes of reforming its military, fiscal, and diplomatic policies.<sup>115</sup> Though it sought Western style learning, it also relied on Japanese support, who had been translating Western texts into Japanese and Chinese since the start of the Meiji Restoration. While the term “self-strengthening” would imply a purely domestic effort to improve conditions, many self-strengthening projects were supported by internationalists. Qing bureaucrats such as Li Hongzhang and Zhang Zhidong relied heavily on Japanese learning, largely due to Japan's geographic proximity and linguistic similarities. Additionally, Japanese *Shishi*, who were former samurai who traveled to other countries out of a spirit of adventurism, often lent aid to both Chinese revolutionaries and bureaucrats alike in hopes of spurring some form of modernization, notably promoting constitutionalism, Western studies, and Asian cultural studies.<sup>116</sup> Chinese language and sinology were of special interests to several Japanese scholars and pan-Asianists.

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<sup>114</sup> Theodore, De Bary Wm, and Irene Bloom. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999. 244.

<sup>115</sup> Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Self-Strengthening Movement." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 7, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Self-Strengthening-Movement>.

<sup>116</sup> Fogel, Joshua A. “Travelers to China and Reformers.” Essay. In *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naito Konan, 1866-1934*, Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984.

The sudden inclination towards modern education and constitutionalism was a major effort of pan-Asianists. Much like Arai Hakuseki before him, Prince Konoe Atsumaro envisioned establishing a school that taught both Chinese and Japanese youth, which would eventually come to be known as the Tōa Dōbun Shoin, established in Shanghai. Konoe Atsumaro represents the feeling that liberal pan-Asianists shared in the *Tōa Dōbunkai* regarding educating Japanese and Chinese students; “The instruction of Chinese Students, centered around the Japanese language, will instill scientific thinking in them, and arouse a sense of nationhood... It is hoped that by bringing Japanese and Chinese students together, close friendships and prolonged mutual help and mutual support will serve greatly to expedite our future dealings.”<sup>117</sup> Konoe’s vision on Sino-Japanese education included pragmatic learning with the intention of bringing about modernity, while enabling cross-cultural communication with the hopes of establishing beneficial relationships between both countries. The implication still, however, was that Japan would remain at the forefront of development throughout Asia. This sentiment was held not just by Japanese pan-Asianists, however, but by Chinese ones as well, including the aforementioned Zhang Zhidong, who used Japanese models as a means for modernizing Qing political systems. Additionally, an important consequence of Sino-Japanese cooperation on education included the influx of liberal idealism to Chinese students and Qing dignitaries. Though neither state was exactly free by conventional standards, Meiji Japan was much more liberal relative to Qing China. New ideas surrounding constitutionalism and popular rights drove Chinese students learning in Japan to support implementing similar liberal reforms back in their home countries.<sup>118</sup> It is evident that several pan-Asianists focused on improving Chinese development sought to

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<sup>117</sup> Duus, Peter, Banno Junji, and Douglas R Reynolds. “Training China Hands.” Essay. In *The Japanese Informal Empire in China: 1895-1937*, 211–73. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1989.

<sup>118</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*. Harvard University Press, p. 190, 1993.

encourage liberal political reform through introducing Japanese education to China and Meiji culture to Chinese students.

Zhang, who promoted these improved educational systems by implementing “Western learning” through his work *Exhortation to Learn*, was supported by Japanese pan-Asianists. This was due to his support of more liberal studies in contrast to the Qing’s largely Confucian based education.<sup>119</sup> Japanese pan-Asianists were fond of Zhang Zhidong due to his respect for Japanese leadership in education reforms. While promoting a more liberalized curriculum, Zhang ordered Chinese scholars to meet with Japanese lecturers and government officials - including Prince Konoe Atsumaro - on Japanese education and administration in hopes of improving Chinese educational reform.<sup>120</sup> For pan-Asianists, this was seen as a victory in cross-cultural cooperation, and for the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, a victory of promoting liberal norms to Chinese students and scholars.

More liberal politicians such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were more useful to Japanese pan-Asianists as they were able to contribute to China’s intellectual revolution. Kang Youwei and his disciple were major proponents of Japanese style modernity as a source of inspiration for Chinese reformation.<sup>121</sup> Kang's ideology was akin to pan-Asian idealism, as he viewed Asian development as a universal problem, and not strictly a Chinese problem. In a memorial to the Qing throne, Kang writes “Consequently, I beg Your Majesty to adopt the purpose of Peter the Great of Russia as our purpose and to take the Meiji Reform of Japan as the model for our reform. The time and place of Japan’s reform are not remote and her religion and customs are somewhat similar to ours. Her success is manifest; her example can be easily

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<sup>119</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*. Harvard University Press, p. 137, 1993.

<sup>120</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*. Harvard University Press, p. 135, 1993.

<sup>121</sup> Theodore, De Bary Wm, and Irene Bloom. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999. 269.



followed.”<sup>122</sup> It is clear from this letter that he saw the similarities between China and Japan as a key reason for China and Japan to work together to bring development into China. Because he liked Meiji style reformation, we can presume that similar liberalized reformations suggested during the Hundred Days Reform by Kang were directly inspired by Meiji Japan itself. In regards to Japan’s pan-Asian movement, Kang Youwei was a popular figure among the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, as they supported Kang’s liberal views supporting constitutionalism within the Qing court.

Pan-Asianists would be more successful in promoting liberal political reformation after Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Though initially protested by more conservative members of the Qing court, constitutionalism began to be an important topic within the Qing court, as the resulting Japanese victory over Russia signaled “a victory of constitutionalism over autocracy”.<sup>123</sup> In an effort to learn more about Japanese politics, Zhang Zhidong ordered Qing diplomat Zhang Jian to “investigate modern industry, education, and government” in 1904.<sup>124</sup> Both Zhang Zhidong and Zhang Jian could be considered pan-Asianists in the sense that they accepted the notion that Japan could help usher in greater political and economic development. In doing so, Zhang Jian prepared multiple drafts in support of constitutionalism to the Qing Court, which were supported by the Empress Dowager. By 1908, the Qing court began publishing documents that explained the Japanese constitutional and administrative systems, and established the “Office to Draw up Regulations for Constitutional Government” in 1907 for the sole purpose of drafting a potential constitution. In 1908, the office prepared the “twenty-three-article Principles of the Constitution” for the purpose of using it as a temporary

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<sup>122</sup> Theodore, De Bary William, Irene Bloom, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph Adler, Kang Youwei, and Kang Youwei. “The Need for Reforming Institutions.” Essay. In *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 270. New York, NY: Columbia University press, 1999.

<sup>123</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*. Harvard University Press, p. 187, 1993.

<sup>124</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*. Harvard University Press, p. 186, 1993.

constitution under the Qing Dynasty.<sup>125</sup> It is clear from these political developments in China that the Qing court revealed their gradual interest in relatively liberal reforms inspired by Japanese politics during the Meiji Era, perhaps in hopes of spurring modernization not too dissimilar to the Meiji Restoration.

Inspiring interest in progressive reforms was partially planned by the Tōa Dōbunkai and its associates. In May of 1903, Nezu Hajime, a Meiji official who worked on establishing educational needs in China's Yangtze region, believed that the Tōa Dōbunkai and Japan's educational efforts in China were vital for the preservation of China against Western partition by making Chinese regions more self-sustaining.<sup>126</sup> Having developed schools in China with the backing of the Tōa Dōbunkai, Nezu declared in 1904 that "if things work out as planned, there will be an explosive growth of modern education in the three provinces [in Liang-Jiang]. Along with the similar efforts of other provinces, I believe we should see substantial educational progress throughout South and Central China."<sup>127</sup> This statement was made in the midst of the Russo-Japanese War, and would result in the Kwantung Lease of territory to Japan. Yet Nezu's intention was not to shed light on the militarism, but rather to ensure Japan's supportive role in facilitating mutual relations with China and Japan. This may in theory have been a form of counterinsurgency for Japan to win the hearts and minds of the Chinese government. Even still, Nezu's optimism of the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s mission to implement education appears here to be genuine, with the hope that the organization's mission could develop China through modern studies alongside the liberal inclinations of Meiji Japan at the time.

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<sup>125</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*. Harvard University Press, p. 190, 1993.

<sup>126</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*. Harvard University Press, p. 95, 1993.

<sup>127</sup> Report of the secretary general to the fall membership meeting of Tōa Dōbunkai, 30 July 1904, in *Tōa Dōbunkai shi*, p. 366

Working with Qing bureaucrats, it is clear to see that pan-Asianists, mostly from the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, intended to implement liberal reforms within China. As a primary model for political reformation, the Meiji government inspired the Qing dynasty in their own constitutional efforts, first under Kang Youwei, and later under the efforts of Zhang Zhidong. These efforts were backed not only by the Japanese government, but members of the *Tōa Dōbunkai* itself, many of whom were members of the government as well. Additionally, the efforts of the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s educational program brought liberal ideals to light through their educational exchanges and implementation of new education systems in China itself. With relative success, pan-Asianists were able to promote liberal reforms within China. We can indicate its successes by evaluating the Chinese state's willingness to promote developmental programs, whether or not said programs were effective. Yet given the organization's apprehension towards fully trusting the Qing dynasty, its mission in promoting development in China would reach to more contentious politics within China.

## **2) Sun Yat-Sen and the *Tōa Dōbunkai***

While certain leftist members of the *Tōa Dōbunkai* focused on establishing ties with the Qing Dynasty, more radical members of the pan-Asianist organization placed their focus on equally relevant revolutionary issues within China. The primary target of Chinese contentious politics for pan-Asian organizations was the Revive China Society (*Hsing Chung Hui*), later forming into the China United League (*Tong Meng Hui*) in 1905, which was under the leadership of the revolutionary Sun Yat-Sen. Sun, who was educated in several western societies, was a staunch advocate of Republicanism, and was dedicated to uprooting the Qing Dynasty in hopes of establishing a Republic within China in hopes of spurring progress and modernization. Several

members of the *Tōa Dōbunkai* took a liking to Sun's revolutionary vigor, some due to their shared leftist viewpoints, and others due to their mutual distrust of the Qing Dynasty's ability to spur development in China. Though the liberal movement in Japan and its effects on pan-Asianism tended to promote liberal economic values, it also encouraged liberal political values as well. In effect, some liberal Japanese pan-Asianists sympathized with Chinese republicanism, and even supported their revolutionary efforts to some degree. The *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s association with Chinese revolutionary republicans is indicative of Japanese liberalism.

Supporters of traditional Japanese liberalism during the Freedom and People's Rights movement assisted the Republican efforts of Sun Yat-Sen. While relatively liberal Japanese pan-Asianists may have appreciated liberal values in conjunction with Japan's own expansionist goals, the small faction of liberal idealists within the *Tōa Dōbunkai* still supported pan-Asianism as a means to promote freedom and political rights across Asia. One such pan-Asianist was Miyazaki Tōten, a committed devotee to the Freedom and People's Rights movement in Japan during the 1880s, whose revolutionary ideas even pushed the limits of liberal back then, and early member of the *Tōa Dōbunkai*. Miyazaki was considered more radical within the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, in large part due to his staunch support of Chinese revolutionaries, notably Sun Yat-Sen and the Revolutionary Army in China. Miyazaki grew up with a liberal education at the Ōe Academy, a school founded by Tokutomi Sohō, who was himself an advocate for people's rights and Manchester liberalism by promoting economic and industrial development as a means to promote peace between countries rather than militarism. According to Miyazaki's own autobiography *My Thirty-Three Years Dream*, "it was a paradise of progressive liberalism and democracy", where he learned the teachings of progressive Western thinkers including Herbert

Spencer's *Principles of Ethics*, which taught individualism and self-preservation, and a staple of classical liberalism.<sup>128</sup> Inspired by the more radical thinkers in Europe at the time, including Peter Kropotkin and Henry George, the former a socialist, and the latter a progressive political economist who promoted natural resources being shared equally throughout society. Miyazaki's pan-Asian idealism was heavily influenced by traditional liberalism, believing that progressive politics and revolutionary action was a viable means for development throughout Asia.

Miyazaki's inclination towards traditional liberalism inspired him to support Sun Yat-Sen's revolutionary efforts as well as Chinese liberals. By renting a house in Tokyo, Miyazaki was able to house Sun Yat-Sen, who was then a political outsider and exiled due to his previous coup attempts against the Qing Court.<sup>129</sup> By understanding Sun Yat-Sen's ideas, it is clear to see how Miyazaki would have been enamored by Sun's revolutionary zeal. Sun stated to Miyazaki "I believe that the highest order of government is one in which people govern themselves. Therefore the political principle I advocate is republicanism... Some people argue that republican institutions will not fit a barbarous country like China. But those who take that view are ignorant of the facts... They govern themselves today; they select elders to judge suits and they follow their direction... This republicanism is the finest natural form of government, and it is essential because it suits the Chinese People; moreover, it will work to our advantage in carrying out the revolution."<sup>130</sup> Much of what Sun allegedly said to Miyazaki resembles the same type of individualistic idealism that he learned in his liberal studies at the Ōe Academy. Both supported providing people's rights within their respective countries; Miyazaki supported the Freedom and People's Rights Movement and Sun dedicated to his notion of the "People's

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<sup>128</sup> Toten, Miyazaki. *My Thirty-Three Year's Dream: The Autobiography of Miyazaki Toten*. Translated by Marius B. Jansen and Eto Shinkichi. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982. p. 13

<sup>129</sup> Toten, Miyazaki. *My Thirty-Three Year's Dream: The Autobiography of Miyazaki Toten*. Princeton University Press, 1982. p. 138.

<sup>130</sup> Toten, Miyazaki. *My Thirty-Three Year's Dream: The Autobiography of Miyazaki Toten*. Translated by Marius B. Jansen and Eto Shinkichi. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982. p. 134-135.

Livelihood”, which sought to improve people’s lives by promoting “the well-being of our people as a whole” by establishing a greater distribution of wealth while facilitating a constitutional government.<sup>131</sup> This indicates that the liberal strain within the pan-Asian movement, specifically within the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, was conducive to the liberal sentiments felt by revolutionaries in China. It was traditional liberal idealists like Miyazaki Toten that continued the liberal tradition in a pan-Asian context.

Miyazaki was more than a benefactor to Sun, however, as he participated in revolutionary efforts himself. “I proceeded to Hong Kong,” Miyazaki stated, adding, “I looked up old friends and made new acquaintances, and met up secretly with members of the *Hsing Chung Hui* and *San-ho hui*, to investigate the state of affairs.”<sup>132</sup> These ‘affairs’ were that of influencing the Qing court to promote constitutionalism by representing Sun’s allies in giving support to Kang Youwei. Much like the Conservatives’ opposition to Kang, Miyazaki’s Chinese revolutionary allies became distrustful of Kang after his leaving to Tokyo as a political refugee. As a result, Miyazaki became more doubtful of the Qing’s ability to reform from the inside. This only made Miyazaki more hopeful of the revolutionary efforts of Sun Yat-Sen, perhaps not only out of idealism, but believing that there was no one else more capable of doing so.

Miyazaki Toten would continue to support Sun Yat-Sen throughout the revolution until 1911, when Chinese revolutionaries took control of the capital and ousted the Qing Dynasty for good. While Sun Yat-Sen and his organization were able to develop a Republic within China, it did not last long before it fell into ruins, leaving the country overrun with warlords. Despite its failures, Japanese pan-Asianists like Miyazaki were hopeful of the republican efforts of Chinese

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<sup>131</sup> Sun, Yat-sen, Julie Lee Wei, Ramon H. Myers, and Donald G. Gillin. *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-Sen*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University. Hoover Institution Press, 1996. 48.

<sup>132</sup> Toten, Miyazaki. *My Thirty-Three Year's Dream: The Autobiography of Miyazaki Toten*. Translated by Marius B. Jansen and Eto Shinkichi. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982. p. 141.

revolutionaries, as it coincided with their own liberal ideas of people's rights and national independence. Sun's anti-Western views and dedication to progressive reforms was viewed positively within the liberal strain in Japan's pan-Asian movement.

While Miyazaki Toten was more radical than his counterparts within the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, he was not the only one who shared the same hope for Chinese independence through revolutionary action. Though a politician of Japan's National Diet, Prince Konoe Atsumaro was a pragmatic political activist who was receptive to "outside ideas and institutional models."<sup>133</sup> Though Konoe tried to remain non-partisan in his support of either Qing officials or Sun Yat-Sen in reforming China, Konoe and Sun shared similar views in political progressivism. By this, I refer to Konoe and Sun's mutual dedication towards individual rights and National Independence. Coining the term "Asian Monroe Doctrine", Prince Konoe promoted a policy with reformers like Kang Youwei that geared for both China and Japan that would hopefully reduce the presence of Western powers; "Asians alone should have the right to solve Asia's problems,... presumably it is this very notion that is the principle behind America's Monroe Doctrine. And, as a matter of fact, the task of developing a Monroe Doctrine for Asia is the responsibility of your country and mine."<sup>134</sup> This plea fell on deaf ears for Kang, prompting Konoe to consider if a republic was a legitimate alternative to the Qing's Dynastic power.<sup>135</sup>

However, Sun Yat-Sen would continue to propose this notion of an Asian Monroe Doctrine in his own revolutionary thought. In his essay on the "Question of China's Preservation or Its Partition", Sun argues that preservation is ideal, but difficult to achieve. But it is likely if China were to establish its own style of the Monroe doctrine, much like the one Konoe

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<sup>133</sup> Vogel, Ezra. *China and Japan: Facing History*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019, 142.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in Paula S. Harrell, *Asia for Asians: China in the Lives of Five Meiji Japanese* (Portland, Maine; MerwinAsia, 2012), 43.

<sup>135</sup> Vogel. *China and Japan: Facing History*. Belknap Press, 2019, 142.

advocated for. “The only way [to secure order in East Asia] is to leave it to the Chinese people. Let them, in tune with their national situation and their own national character, work things out by themselves and create a new China.”<sup>136</sup> Many pan-Asian writers, including Tokutomi Sohō, saw an Asian Monroe doctrine as ensuring a sense of Asian solidarity, as opposed to any specific country gaining legitimacy over East Asian Affairs. Prince Konoë himself believed in the traditional thought of the Asian Monroe Doctrine acting as a pragmatic alternative to a strong Japanese foreign policy approach.<sup>137</sup> Though he supported the idea of an Asian Monroe Doctrine, he did not necessarily oppose the support of outside nations, notably Japan, which Sun would become closely associated with throughout his Revolutionary career until the 1911 Revolution. Though he liked the prospect of Sun Yat-Sen’s republican efforts, he would have abstained from meeting much with the revolutionary due to him saving face politically with the Qing Court. This indicates that even top leaders within the pan-Asian movement in Japan were relatively supportive of liberal politics abroad in China due to their own interests in progressive politics and nationalism.

In its involvement with Chinese nationalist politics and statecraft, Japanese liberal pan-Asianism began to lean towards paternalistic tendencies towards China. The Tōa Dōbunkai’s initial mission may have been to support Chinese development in opposition towards the West, but perhaps not without some ulterior gain. As stated in the previous chapter, Japanese liberal pan-Asianism began to see Japan as the leading hegemon in Asia, and justified its mission to lead Asian development with its victories over the Qing in 1895, and later Russia in 1905. As nationalism in Japanese society and Japan’s international predominance expanded even into

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<sup>136</sup> Sun, Yat-sen, Julie Lee Wei, Ramon H. Myers, and Donald G. Gillin. *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-Sen*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University. Hoover Institution Press, 1996. 29.

<sup>137</sup> Saaler *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011. 99.



Western political circles, it became more difficult for Japanese pan-Asianists to resist paternalistic reservations about China.

Japan's paternalism is expressed by Suematsu Kenchō, a Japanese diplomat during the End of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. After Japan's victory, Western states feared that Asian countries could possibly unite, with Japan leading a pan-Asian coalition against the West.<sup>138</sup> Fearing repercussions from Western powers, Baron Suematsu (Suematsu Kenchō) states, "Peace-loving as the Japanese also are, the characteristics, notions, and feelings of the Japanese and Chinese are not so different that there is no possibility of their complete amalgamation in one common cause; and what is true with regard to the Chinese holds even more true with regard to other Asiatic peoples. Japan aspires, moreover, to elevate herself to the same plane and to press onward in the same path of civilization as the countries of the West."<sup>139</sup> Despite this being written during the Russo-Japanese war, Kenchō addresses its "peace-loving" nature to its diplomatic relations within Asia, rather than the West.

Liberal pan-Asianists saw peace between Asian states as idealistic, while making stronger stances against the West. Kenchō's argument, while serving to reassure Western powers' fears over the rise of Asian states, takes the position that Japan is the one in charge of China's development aspirations. "This seems to be about the correct description of the feeling of the Chinese as against the rest of the world." Kenchō argues, "China has her moral notions, which are by no means lacking in refinement. It is well for outsiders not to despise the Chinese too much, or, rather, it is desirable that they should be treated with proper consideration. If they are so treated, they will always prove themselves to be a good nation with which to maintain

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<sup>138</sup> Saaler, Sven. "Pan-Asianism, the 'Yellow Peril,' and Suematsu Kenchō, 1905." Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 118–23. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

<sup>139</sup> Saaler, Sven. "Baron Suematsu (Suematsu Kenchō), The Risen Sun. London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1905, 269–97." Essay. In *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, 118–23. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

peaceable and beneficial intercourse.”<sup>140</sup> While Kenchō argues over Japan’s alleged peaceful intentions, his argument of China’s nature is presumptuous. By addressing the West on behalf of China, Kenchō is representing not just the State, but the liberal pan-Asian movement’s stance on Japanese paternalistic inclinations towards China. This tells us that while Japanese pan-Asianism and its liberal strain were still optimistic about peaceful development in Asia, its national security fears towards the West enabled the belief that Japan was the sole administrator and representative of Asia. This is possibly an early indication of the Japanese state’s use of pan-Asianism as a justification for its involvement in Chinese affairs and future imperialism.

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While liberalism in Japan had altered to take on a greater nationalist approach by the 1890s and 1900s, it is clear that liberalism persisted in Japan’s pan-Asian movement with *Tōa Dōbunkai* members embracing and encouraging Chinese independence and progressive, revolutionary reforms. By analyzing the *Tōa Dōbunkai*’s predecessors, we can see how their goals and political views were more nationalist than previous pan-Asianists, but still promoted liberalism as a means to achieve mutual relations with China. This includes not just their support of constitutional reforms within the Qing Dynasty, but support of revolutionary groups such as Sun Yat-Sen’s *Tong Meng Hui*. Though it is difficult to determine whether pan-Asianists supported these reforms out of liberal idealism or with ulterior imperial motives, it is evident that they continued to utilize leftist ideologies as a means to facilitate a stronger relationship between Japan and China. These efforts by the *Tōa Dōbunkai*, regardless of their success, indicates that there was an association between pan-Asianism and liberal idealism within the 1900s.

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<sup>140</sup> Ebid.

## CONCLUSION

While Japanese pan-Asianism would eventually be used as a tool for imperial expansion, Japan's early pan-Asian movement during the mid to late Meiji period was one of diverse political backgrounds. In this thesis, I highlighted the impact of the pan-Asian movement's liberal strain, which was associated with liberal politics and activism stemming from the Freedom and Peoples' Rights Movement (*Jiyū Minken Undō*), and its liberal China policy through the 1911 revolution. While fearing Western encroachment, Japanese statesmen who brought enlightenment thinking to Japan had a profound influence not only on Japanese society, but Japan's international outlook; this came to be the origins of Japanese liberal pan-Asianism. Inspired in part by Manchester liberalism, Japanese liberal pan-Asianists promoted cooperative, peaceful international policies in lieu of a strong militarized approach. Yet with the rise of Japanese predominance in Asia as a result of its own self-strengthening program, my research reveals how despite the liberal movement promotion of peaceful development in Asia nationalist sentiment prompted liberal pan-Asianists to support Japan as Asia's sole hegemon.

In section one, I reveal just how the Japanese liberals from the Freedom and Peoples' Rights movement affected the development of the liberal pan-Asianism. This was in large part caused by the progressive trends during the 1880s, where Japanese political activists who supported increased civil rights and legislation. Because liberal politics were still oppressed by the Meiji government during the 1880s, much of the liberal pan-Asian thought was developed by political activists, including Nakae Chōmin and Tokutomi Sohō, who suggested that Japanese development, and in turn Asian development, was achievable via democratization and focusing on economic and industrial reforms to modernize states, while also promoting free trade and educational exchanges between Asian cultures. This would amalgamate to what I call early *Kōa*

pan-Asianism, which primarily focused on laissez-faire economics to promote international cooperation rather than military expansion. The relative popularity of this approach was in large part a response to Japanese conservative notions that to become an empire like its Western counterparts, Japan had to invade Korea to become a formal empire. Believing that its military was not strong enough, and fearing repercussions from the international community, Japanese activists presented a peaceful alternative via liberal pan-Asianism, as to promote more efficient development within the region while keeping Western suspicions at bay.

In the second section, I show how Japanese liberal sentiments from the Freedom and People's Rights Movement and early *Kōa* pan-Asianism, affected the Meiji government's foreign policy plan after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution. Though the Meiji constitution served to accommodate both conservative and liberal politicians, its promotion of greater civil rights is indicative of the success of the liberal movement's efforts. Politicians who would promote this liberal foreign policy would include pan-Asianists including Mutsu Munemitsu, who drafted the Treaty of Shimonoseki after the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, in hopes of establishing peaceful relations between both Japan and China. This becomes clear with Mutsu's liberal educational background, having studied statecraft with Lorenz von Stein. Ōkuma Shigenobu, who wanted to expand Japan's foreign influence and avoid Western indignation, vied for more liberal concepts due to their promotion of peace. Yet as a result of Japan's victory over China in 1895, Japanese nationalist sentiment soon became a critical development to Japanese liberalism during the 1890s. Liberal pan-Asianists, including Arai Sei, who while in the past promoted non-militaristic measures in its foreign policy, began to utilize nationalist rhetoric that promoted Japanese predominance in the region. While liberalism was being implemented within the Meiji government, early *Kōa* pan-Asianism began to decline in lieu of liberal nationalism,

which sought the same thing, but with Japan at the forefront of Asian development as opposed to more equal partnerships.

In the third section, I reveal how the Japanese liberal strain of pan-Asianism came into prominence within Asia through the *Tōa Dōbunkai*'s efforts. The *Tōa Dōbunkai* achieved pan-Asianist goals of intercultural learning and intergovernmental cooperation to promote Chinese political and bureaucratic government by establishing schools and establishing ties between both Qing and Meiji government officials. This includes Prince Konoe Atsumaro, who saw economic development as a means to promote mutually beneficial cooperation between both China and Japan. Though nationalist, the organization prompted political change and activism in China, notably by its support of Kang Youwei, who attempted to reform China's government during the Hundred Days Reforms. Tracing back to its activist roots, the *Tōa Dōbunkai* also sought out Chinese revolutionaries, with some pan-Asianists like Miyazaki Toten and Etō Shinsaku arguing that they were more capable in bringing about necessary reforms in China.

Though the study of pan-Asianism is difficult due to the complicated politics of the Meiji era and sometimes paradoxical nature, understanding the various parties of Japan's pan-Asian movement is important to the study of international affairs. It shows how even early attempts to promote mutual cooperation can evolve in a nationalistic direction, a prerequisite for Japan's future imperialism. This research provides context of the complicated political ideologies influencing the Meiji government's foreign policies, as well as the national trends that influenced Japanese scholarly thinkers at the time. From my research, we see not only how Japanese liberal pan-Asian thought influenced the Meiji government and pan-Asian organizations, but also how liberalism itself changed throughout the Meiji period to reflect Japan's more nationalist sentiments. From my research, we begin to see the underlying implications of how seemingly

altruistic international movements can become conflated to reflect a nation's own self-interests. Though the liberal strain of Japanese pan-Asianism may have started off as a genuine attempt to promote development and cooperation throughout Asia to stop Western encroachment, Japan's rapid international predominance changed the movement's mission to be more emblematic of Japanese nationalism rather than altruism.

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