

# *The Construction of Regionalism in Modern Japan: Koderu Kenkichi and his “Treatise on Greater Asianism” (1916)*

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## Abstract

Around a century ago, in his “The Ideals of the East”, Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzō) proclaimed that “Asia is one”. This phrase, quoted repeatedly ever since, has been interpreted as representative of the ideology of Pan-Asianism (*Han-Ajiashugi*) or Asianism (*Ajiashugi*) in Japan. However, Okakura’s writings were not widely read in Japan during the Meiji era and his originally English writings were translated into Japanese only in the 1930s. It must have been other authors that defined Pan-Asianism as a comprehensive ideology and brought this ideology closer to politics, a sphere where pan-Asian approaches were mostly rejected until the 1910s. This paper introduces the writings of Koderu Kenkichi (1877–1949), a politician and long-time member of the Lower House of the Imperial Japanese Diet, and identifies his “Treatise on Greater Asianism” (1916) as a central work in the history of the ideology of Asianism in modern Japan.

## I. Introduction

A quick glance at a map reveals the obvious fact that Japan is a part of Asia. It might seem odd, therefore, that an increasing number of scholars of modern Japan are investigating the question whether Japan actually is a part of Asia, or indeed an Asian nation. Certainly, the recent flood of publications on “Japan and Asia,” “Japan in Asia,” “Japan’s Asian identity,” or “The Japan that is neither West nor East” can hardly be ignored.<sup>2</sup> The topic is not a new one. As early as the

<sup>1</sup> The author thanks Li Narangoa, Christopher Szpilman and the anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Arano Yasunori: *Kinsei Nihon to higashi-Ajia* [Edo-period Japan and East Asia]. Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1988; Itō Ken’ichi (ed.): *Nihon no aidentitī. Seiyō de mo tōyō de mo nai Nihon* [Japan’s identity. Japan is neither Orient nor Occident], Nihon Kokusai

Meiji period (1868–1912), political and intellectual discussions over the modernization of Japan focused on the question “whether [Japan’s] future should be ‘Asian’ or ‘Western’”.<sup>3</sup> As Oguma Eiji has noted, in the context of these discussions, “Asia” for Japan was (and is) less a geographical term or any strictly defined term at all—rather it is “a mirror of Japanese national identity” itself, which also “reflects domestic political, economic and social conditions. When inquiring into what ‘Asia’ means for Japan, one is also interrogating Japan”.<sup>4</sup>

In Japan, intellectual discourses on “Asia” have never been isolated, but rather were highly relevant to the political arena in which they were constantly absorbed by politics and politicians, adjusted to suit political needs, and manipulated and exploited by various political actors. This is particularly clear in the case of the ideology of Asianism (*Ajiashugi*) or Pan-Asianism (*Han-Ajiashugi*), an integral part, or perhaps the most direct product, of discussions on the meaning of “Asia” for modern Japan. With the emergence of pan-Asian ideas since the Meiji period, the question of how to deal with Japan’s Asian neighbors became a crucial question for Japan’s foreign policy.<sup>5</sup> While the government’s foreign policy adjusted to the practices of the Western imperialist powers, many in Japan argued that the Empire should side (and eventually unite) with other Asian nations in order to fight Western imperialism and expel the Western powers from Asia.<sup>6</sup>

When approaching the subject of historical Pan-Asianism in modern Japan,<sup>7</sup> most scholars cite the infamous Kita Ikki (1883–1937), or refer to Okakura Tenshin (1862–1913), Tarui Tōkichi (1850–1922)

Fōramu, 1999; Katzenstein, Peter and Shiraishi Takashi (eds.): *Network Power. Japan and Asia*, Cornell University Press, 1997; Wakamiya Yoshibumi: *Sengo hoshu no Ajia-kan* [Post-war conservatism and Asia]. Asahi Shinbunsha, 1995 (Asahi Sensho 541).

<sup>3</sup> Pempel 1997, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Oguma 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Many, although not all aspects of Japanese Pan-Asianism since the Meiji period are dealt with in the various contributions in Saaler and Koschmann 2006.

<sup>6</sup> The roots of this argument went back to the Edo period, when, among others, Bakufu naval advisor Katsu Kaishū (1823–1899) spoke out in favor of a Japanese-Korean-Chinese alliance against the Western powers. Cf. Mitani 1997, p. 88; Eizawa 1995, pp. 16f; Matsuda 1998, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Published research on this important facet of political thought in modern Japan is still scarce. In Japanese, Takeuchi (1963) is still considered as a standard work on the history of Asianism; otherwise, only broad overviews studies with a narrow focus are available, such as Hiraishi 1994, Eizawa 1995, Hatano 1996. There are some useful works on individuals regarded as representative of the pan-Asian movement (Hatsuse 1980; Yamamoto 2000) and on some of the pan-Asian organizations (Hazama 2001–2002; Kuroki 2005). In addition, Oguma Eiji (1995 and 1998) addresses questions relevant to Pan-Asianism throughout his voluminous works. In

or the “continental adventurers” (*tairiku rōnin*) and their political associations (*seiji kessha*),<sup>8</sup> who made efforts to improve Sino-Korean-Japanese cooperation by creating strong personal ties with leaders in those countries.<sup>9</sup> When individuals such as Okakura proclaimed that “Asia is One”—his famous opening phrase from “The Ideals of the East”<sup>10</sup>—or advocated an “East Asian Union” as Tarui in his *Daitō Gappō-ron* (“Treatise on the Union of the Great East”), these pan-Asian writers were usually considered “romantic”, in that their views were unsuited to the world of “real politics,” i.e., imperialist *Realpolitik*. During the Meiji period Pan-Asianism was popular among the political opposition to the Meiji oligarchy, and was exploited to criticize the government’s foreign policy as well as a modernization that is accompanied by undue Westernization.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, since it is well known that some sort of pan-Asian ideology became the guideline for Japan’s foreign policy in the 1930s and 1940s, which reached its climax in the “Greater East Asia Conference” (*Daitō-A Kaigi*) in Tōkyō in 1943,<sup>12</sup> it is important to ask how pan-Asian ideology actually found its way into politics.

the European languages, material is even scarcer, although interest in the topic has increased recently: see Norman 1944; Jansen 1954; Jansen 1980; Egler 1983; Beasley 1987; Reynolds 1989; Koschmann 1997; Duara 1998; Szpilman 1998; Duus 2001; Doak 2001; Duara 2001; Saaler and Koschmann 2006.

<sup>8</sup> The best-known examples are the Gen’yōsha and the Kokuryūkai. These associations have often been called “patriotic societies” (Storry 1957), and their members “professional patriots” (Jansen 1954, p. 33). However, although their activities eventually led to nationalist-imperialist expansion, at the time of their foundation (1881 and 1901, resp.) they were clearly pan-Asian in orientation, pursued intrinsically anti-Western goals, and worked for “Asian unity” and “Asian solidarity” (*Ajia rentai*). See Jansen 1954; Saaler 2002b.

<sup>9</sup> See Jansen 1954; Takeuchi 1963; Eizawa 1995; Shimizu 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Okakura 1903. This work was first published in Japanese translation in 1935 and therefore had very little influence on discourse on Pan-Asianism in prewar Japan. Takeuchi Yoshimi (1963: 42f) also has stressed that Okakura was a isolated figure in discourse on Pan-Asianism and Japan’s relations to its Asian neighbors. However, the slogan has been repeated ever since its publication (cf. Duus 2001, p. 245). It is still in wide use today in a context of advocating regional integration in Asia, which can be easily illustrated by entering the phrase “Asia is One” into an internet search engine.

<sup>11</sup> Jansen 1954, chapter 1; Saaler 2002b; Eizawa 1995; Takeuchi 1963. The Meiji government at times heavily suppressed the early pan-Asian movement, but also supported several pan-Asian societies financially, such as the early Kōa-kai or the Tōa Dōbunkai, whose leader was Prince Konoe Atsumaro (see Jansen 1980). Some publications, such as the magazines *Kaihō* and *Kokuryū*, issued by the Kokuryūkai, were even temporarily banned.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hatano 1996, chapter 7 and passim for the most thorough analysis of Japan’s wartime Asia policies.



Fig. 1. The participants of the “Greater East Asia Conference”, November 1943.

The main representatives of the participating nations in the front row are, from left to right: Ba Maw [Ba Mo], Prime Minister of Burma; Zhang Jing hui, Prime Minister of Manchukuo; Wang Zhao Ming [Wang Jing-Wei], Chairman of the National Government of China in Nanjing, a puppet regime of the Japanese occupation forces; Tōjō Hideki, Prime Minister of Japan; Prince Wan Waithayakon, the representative of Thailand; José Paciano Laurel, President of the Philippines; Chandra Bose, representative of the Provisional Government of Free India (with permission of Mainichi Shinbun).

In this paper, I will attempt a response to this question by introducing the figure of Koderā Kenkichi (1877–1949), an expert on international relations and international law and a long-time member of the Lower House of the Imperial Diet; and by analyzing his views on “Asia,” Japan’s role in Asia and Japan’s foreign policy. It was Koderā who used the term “Asianism” for the first time in a major work, and who brought the ideology of Asianism closer to party politics and government circles. Despite the conclusions of previous research that Pan-Asianism was merely “a tendency in discourse and politics” rather than “an ideology with distinguishable and clearly identifiable contents”,<sup>13</sup> in this paper I demonstrate that, by the end of the First World War, Pan-Asianism had developed into a rigorous and systematic ideology (*shugi*) with concrete contents. Koderā’s writings are one manifestation of this trend, but, above all, his “Treatise on Greater Asianism” was the beginning of a wave of publications on

<sup>13</sup> Takeuchi 1963, p. 12.

Asianism and Asian regionalism (see section IV) that over time led to the establishment of the pan-Asian movement and the development of a number of related organizations. However, before discussing his works, I first present a biographical sketch of Koderu Kenkichi—since he is indeed a much neglected personality in historical research,<sup>14</sup> and it is necessary to know something of his background in order to understand the significance of his writings.

## II. Koderu Kenkichi (1877–1949) in Japanese Politics

Koderu Kenkichi was born on 14 April 1877 in present-day Hyōgo, the son of a former samurai (Koderu Yasujirō) from the small feudal domain of Sanda.<sup>15</sup> On graduation from Kōbe High School, Koderu went to Tōkyō and began to study under Sugiura Jūgō (1855–1924), an ultra-nationalist scholar and educator and a priest associated with Tendai Buddhism who had established an English school in the capital. Koderu's biographer suggests that, while the main reason he joined this school was to study the English language, "without doubt, Sugiura's strong nationalist beliefs must have influenced Koderu".<sup>16</sup> In 1897 Koderu went abroad, beginning a ten-year period of study at European and US universities, and eventually becoming one of the finest experts on Western and international law in Meiji Japan, as well as being well-versed in diplomatic history and the history of European imperialism. He studied law and political science at Columbian University (present George Washington University, here he received a doctorate in civil law<sup>17</sup>) and Johns Hopkins University. In

<sup>14</sup> The only work to deal in some detail with Koderu's *Treatise on Greater Asianism* is Nakamura Naomi's *Meiji kokka no keisei to Ajia* (Nakamura 1991a, pp. 335–346; see also Nakamura 1996: 806). Hashikawa Bunsō, in his "Tales of the Yellow Peril" (Hashikawa 2000), mentions Koderu's work as one of many in this period that argue against the "yellow peril" propaganda that was circulated in Western countries.

<sup>15</sup> For Koderu's life, cf. Nakanishi 1992, pp. 27–38; Koderu Kenkichi Sensei Shōden Inkaï 1962.

<sup>16</sup> Koderu Kenkichi Sensei Shōden Inkaï 1962, p. 7. Sugiura, who also had studied in England in the late 1870s, was a member of the political association Seikyōsha (Society for Political Education, founded 1888), which was known for its ultra-nationalistic views. Sugiura later also became a member of the first Imperial Diet and in 1902 he was named president of the academy Tōa Dōbun Shoin in Shanghai, an institution associated with the pan-Asian association Tōa Dōbunkai (cf. Jansen 1980; Reynolds 1989).

<sup>17</sup> Koderu was apparently quite proud of this degree: on the cover of the "Treatise on Greater Asianism", next to the author's name we find the words "Member of the

1902, he continued his studies at Heidelberg University under Georg Jellinek, a well-known expert in international law. Other stops during his ten years abroad were Vienna (1903–04) and Geneva (1906–07).

In 1904–05, Koderá was recalled to Japan for military service in the war against Russia. However, due to his language skills, he was not sent to the battlefield but was appointed interpreter and army spokesman, providing foreign correspondents with information in English.<sup>18</sup> After the war, with his brother he established a soybean factory, the Koderá Yôkô, in Manchuria, the new Japanese sphere of influence. Leaving the management of the factory to his brother,<sup>19</sup> Koderá headed back to Europe in 1906 to continue his studies, this time in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1908, Koderá Kenkichi was elected as a member of the Lower House of the Imperial Diet. At the time he was only 31 years old, and he set the record as the youngest-ever member of the Lower House. During his first term (Koderá was re-elected five times), he was affiliated in parliament with the Yûshinkai, a small group consisting primarily of constitutionalists (*kensei yôgo-ha*) such as Ozaki Yukio (1858–1954), Shimada Saburô (1852–1923) and Kôno Hironaka (1849–1923). In 1910, Koderá joined the newly founded party Rikken Kokumintô, and in 1912 he was re-elected alongside Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855–1932), Saitô Takao (1870–1949) and six other members of the Kokumintô, contributing to the foundation of the “Kokumintô Kingdom”—a Kokumintô stronghold in Hyôgo prefecture. In 1913, Koderá, along with Ôishi Masami (1855–1935) and about 40 other Diet members, defected from the Kokumintô and joined the Rikken Dôshikai, the new party founded by Katsura Tarô (1847–1913), a member of the ruling oligarchy, elder statesman (*genrô*) and until then the main focus of opposition to Kokumintô in the Diet.<sup>20</sup> The

House of Representatives” (*shûgin giin*) and “Doctor of Civil Law” (*Dokutoru obu shibiru lô*).

<sup>18</sup> Koderá Kenkichi Sensei Shôden Iinkai 1962, pp. 11f.

<sup>19</sup> The Koderá Yôkô was a great success, and Kenkichi’s brother Sôkichi was soon to be called the “soybean king” (*daizu-ô*). During the turbulence created by the First World War, however, the factory faced mounting difficulties and eventually filed for bankruptcy in 1923. To cover his brother’s debts, Kenkichi was asked by the Bank of Korea (*Chôsen Ginkô*) to sell the private school in Sanda that he had founded in 1912 (see below). He declined, and instead sold his Kôbe residence (*Koderá-tei*) to repay the debts (Koderá Kenkichi Sensei Shôden Iinkai 1962, pp. 7; 34f).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Koderá Kenkichi Sensei Shôden Iinkai 1962, p. 37; for Katsura Tarô, cf. Lone 2000.



Fig. 2. Koderu Kenkichi (used by permission of Sanda Gakuen).

national uproar that eventually forced Katsura Tarô to step down as prime minister on 11 February 1913 also affected Koderu, because the Hyôgo electorate identified him as one of the chief organizers of the defection of Kokumintô members to the “new Katsura party” (*Katsurashintô*), the Rikken Dôshikai. On 13 February 1913, several thousand people attacked the “traitor’s” residence (*Koderu-tei*), throwing stones and rotten eggs, and also the police station charged with guarding the *Koderu-tei*. On the following day, after several tens of thousands of demonstrators had gathered, the army was mobilized to support the local police force. The demonstrations soon dissolved when news of

Katsura's resignation spread and the army had become a threatening presence.<sup>21</sup>

In the following years, Koderu became an influential member of the Dôshikai and its successor party, the Kenseikai. Under the presidency of Katô Takaaki (1916–1925), Koderu rose quickly in the hierarchy of the party and became a member of its board of directors (*sômu*).<sup>22</sup> In 1926, he became a member of the organizing committee of the pan-Asiatic Congress held in Nagasaki. However, he was forced to leave the Minseitô, the successor of the Kenseikai, after internal struggles in 1928,<sup>23</sup> and, in 1930, he quit politics after failing to be re-elected. Subsequently he became active as an educator and founder/head of several private schools, as well as the owner and manager of a number of factories and mining companies. In 1912, he had founded the Sanda Middle School (*Sanda Chûgakkô*) in his hometown, which still exists today as the private school known as *Sanda Gakuen*. After the war, Koderu did not re-enter national politics, but instead became the president of a newspaper company (Shin Nihon-Shinbunsha) in 1946. He was elected as the first post-war mayor of Kobe in 1947, a position which he retained until his death in 1949.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from his writings and the Sanda Gakuen private school,<sup>25</sup> one further item of Koderu Kenkichi's legacy remains—the huge collection of books he donated to Waseda University in Tôkyô. After the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923, Koderu began donating books to Waseda University, and over time his gift grew into a valuable collection of foreign-language books on world politics, numbering more than 36,000 volumes in total. Today, the books are organized into the “Koderu collection” (*Koderu Bunko*).<sup>26</sup> Strolling along the shelves and looking at the titles, it is easy to get an idea of the background of Koderu's thought and his writings—the subject to which I now turn.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Koderu Kenkichi Sensei Shôden Iinkai 1962, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 54; Kôbe Shinbunsha 1994, pp. 144–162.

<sup>25</sup> For the present-day Sanda Gakuen, see their homepage at <http://www.sandagakuen.ed.jp/>.

<sup>26</sup> A substantial part of the collection concerns political subjects, which, in conjunction with law and economics, forms 60% of the total. However, the collection also contains a large number of books on history, biography and geography, supplemented by considerable holdings on philosophy and religion, and includes major works mostly in English and German from the first half of the 20th century. For the circumstances of the donation to Waseda, see Nakanishi 1992, pp. 38–40.



### III. Koderá's Writings on International Relations

Koderá's many years of studying international law and international relations abroad set the direction for his later activities, and throughout his life he remained interested in global affairs and published books and articles on Japan's role in the world, particularly during and after the First World War.<sup>27</sup> Although Koderá did not belong to any of the various pan-Asian organizations of the day, such as the Gen'yōsha (Black Ocean Society, founded in 1881), the Kokuryūkai (Amur Society, founded in 1901), and the Tōa Dōbunkai (East Asian Common Culture Association, founded in 1898),<sup>28</sup> his writings on international relations contain a strong pan-Asian bias.

#### *a) Koderá Kenkichi's "Treatise on Greater Asianism"*

Koderá's magnum opus, which summarized the results of a decade of study abroad, is his 1916 "Treatise on Greater Asianism" (*Dai-Ajiashugi-ron*), a massive work of more than 1,300 pages (the table of contents alone runs to 33 pages).

The work contains the following major chapter-divisions:

#### Introduction

1. The Lessons of the Great European War
  - 1.1 The Impossibility of Absolute Peace
  - 1.2 The Destruction of International Law and International Morale
  - 1.3 The Need for National Autonomy
2. The China Policies of the Western Powers
  - 2.1 The Imminence of the Pacific Problem
  - 2.2 Russia's China Policy
  - 2.3 England's China Policy

<sup>27</sup> Koderá translated several works into Japanese including two books by an anonymous author ("A Dutch diplomat in Japan"): "The Problem of Japan" (Koderá 1919) (*Rekkyōkan no Nihon Mondai*, Japanese translation, Kōbunkan 1919) and "The Isolation of Japan" (Koderá 1920) (*Nihon no sekaiteki koritsu*, Japanese translation: Kōbunkan, 1920). For a complete list of Koderá's works, see Koderá Kenkichi Sensei Shōden Inkaī 1962, pp. 69–71.

<sup>28</sup> On the Kokuryūkai and the Tōa Dōbunkai and its leaders, cf. Jansen 1954; Reynolds 1989; Saaler 2002b; Hatsuse 1980; Yamamoto 2000. Not only was Koderá not affiliated with the Kokuryūkai and other pan-Asian organizations, he was never cited in their publications. The only link between the Koderá family and the Kokuryūkai I have found so far is an advertisement for Koderá Sōkichi's (Kenkichi's brother) soybean trading company Koderá Yōkō in the English-language organ of the Kokuryūkai, "The Asian Review", e.g. in vol. 1, no. 5 (July 1920, last page [no number]). On the Koderá Yōkō, see above and footnote 19.

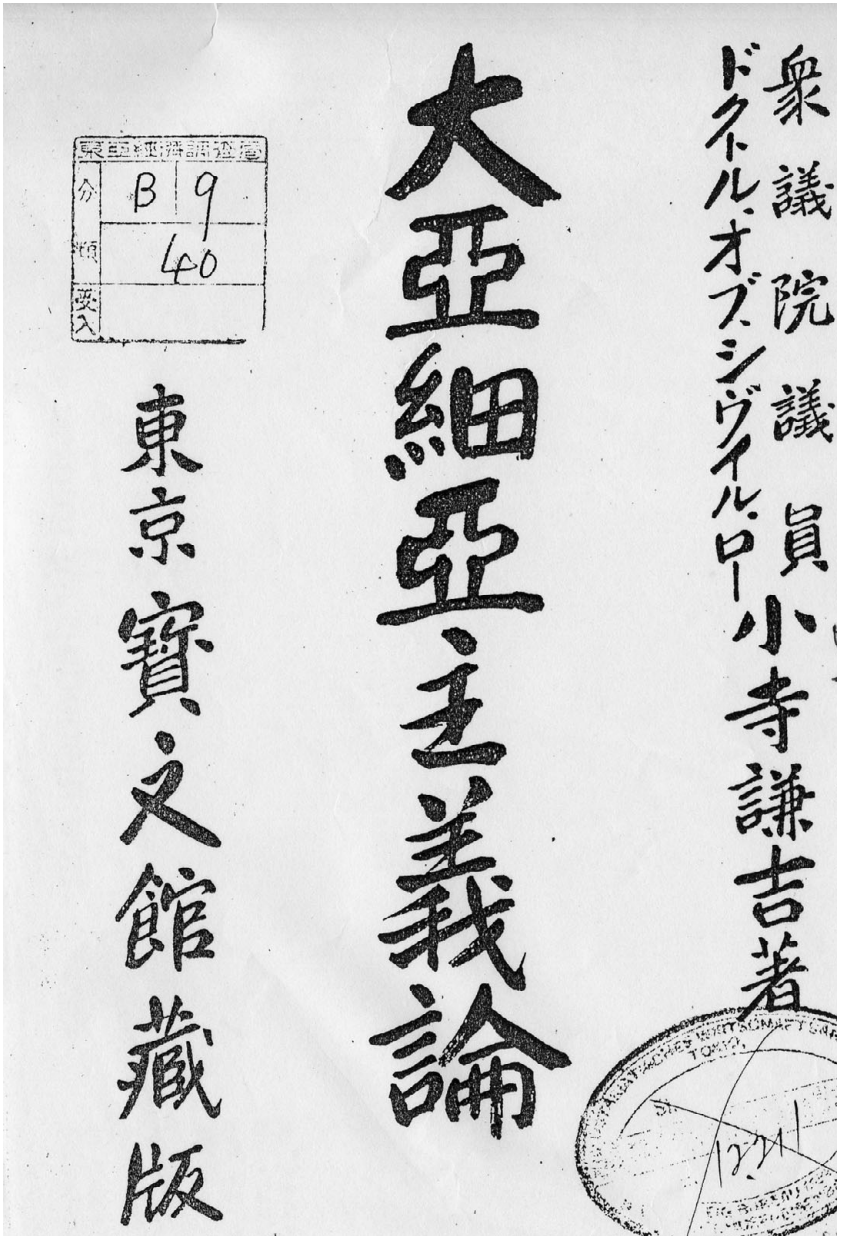


Fig. 3. The cover of “Treatise on Greater Asianism”.

- 2.4 France's China Policy
- 2.5 Germany's China Policy
- 2.6 The United States' China Policy
- 2.7 The Western Powers' China Policy and Japan
- 3. The Foundations of Greater Asianism
  - 3.1 The Character of Greater Asianism
  - 3.2 The History of European-Asian Confrontation
  - 3.3 The Debate over the "Yellow Peril" Among the Western Powers
  - 3.4 The Sino-Japanese Mission to Promote Greater Asianism
- 4. The Present State of China
  - 4.1 China's Political Illness
  - 4.2 China's Financial Illness
  - 4.3 China's Social Illness
- 5. The Security and Reform of China and Greater Asianism
  - 5.1 China's Resolution and Greater Asianism
  - 5.2 Territorial Integrity and Japan's Special Position
  - 5.3 Greater Asianism and the Reform of China
- Conclusion

In *Dai-Ajiashugi-ron*, Kōdera called for a "glorious new Asian civilization under Japanese leadership and guidance"; this was to be based on close Sino-Japanese cooperation with the aim of stopping the advance of the "white peril" (*hakka*) into Asia, and, ultimately, of bringing about the unification of the "entire yellow race".<sup>29</sup> Japan should become the "educator" (*kyōikusha*) for China and indeed the whole of Asia, and introduce Western, modern civilization to Asia in order to bring about the birth of a "new Asian civilization" (pp. 13, 81, 231, 258, 1127f). To promote his views to a wider audience, Kōdera's book was translated into Chinese and published in Shanghai in 1918.<sup>30</sup> The book begins with the following passage:

Isn't it strange? In Europe, which controls Asia at will and has completely subdued it, these days we hear voices that warn of a yellow peril (*kōka*). However, among the colored races, which are subjugated and threatened by the white race, hardly a peep against the *white peril* can be heard. Yet while there can be no doubt that the yellow peril is nothing more than a bad dream, the white peril is a reality (p. 1; cf. also p. 1269).

Here Kōdera gives testimony to his deep feelings of an imminent threat, which was still felt in Japanese politics by the time of the

<sup>29</sup> Kōdera 1916, pp. 13, 81, 231, 258. References given in brackets in the text hereafter refer to Kōdera 1916.

<sup>30</sup> Kōdera 1918b.

outbreak of the First World War. By then, Japan had become a member of the world's great powers (*rekkyō*) and was soon to become one of the “Big Five” at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.<sup>31</sup> Born in 1877, Kōdera had come of age in an era that saw the transformation of Japan from a minor country on the brink of colonization to a major regional power that claimed leadership in East Asia. However, he had also witnessed Japan's struggle for independence, which had been maintained by resisting Western imperialism and by simultaneously expanding into Asia and colonizing parts of the Asian continent. By the First World War, fears were emerging in Japan over an imminent clash with the European powers along racial lines (*jīnshū tōshōron*),<sup>32</sup> fueled by European and American voices warning of a “yellow peril”—the fear of the rise of Japan or a Japan-led “yellow” Asia against the superior civilization of the “white” and Christian West.<sup>33</sup> Many in Japan were convinced that the Empire could not survive in the future alone, but must prepare for the return of the European powers to the Far East, which was expected in the period following the end of the First World War (p. 992).

What should Japan do to prepare for this expected new wave of European aggression in East Asia? In Kōdera's view—a view which forms the thesis of his book—Japan should seek close cooperation with China, secure China's territorial integrity and promote that country's modernization and reform. Close Sino-Japanese cooperation was to be the first step toward the organization of an East Asian regional bloc.

[Japan] has to relieve (*kyūsai*) East Asia from the pressure of the white race—this is our highest mission (*saikō shimei*). To achieve this, we have to become the leader (*meishu*) of the yellow race and guide [the other nations], preserve the territorial integrity of China, and strengthen its population and culture. Following the politics of “same culture—same race” (*dōbun dōshū*) and the politics of the relationship between lips and teeth, we have to promote mutual trust and cooperation, resist [negative] developments in the world, and create a new, glorious Asian civilization (*idai naru Ajiateki shin bunmei o kensetsu*) [. . .]. [We must] revive the whole of the yellow race under this new ideology (*shugi*), attain political freedom and sovereignty, and unite the yellow race all over

<sup>31</sup> Shimazu 1998.

<sup>32</sup> Saaler 2002a; 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Saaler 2002a; Gollwitzer 1962; Hashikawa 2000; Iikura 2004; Kōdera 1916, chapter 3.3. The fear of the “yellow peril” is most directly manifested in the infamous Knackfuß painting; cf. Saaler 2002a, pp. 6f; Gollwitzer 1962, pp. 206f; Hashikawa 2000, pp. 21ff; Iikura 2004: chapter 3.

the world. [...] This Asianism I am preaching can be summarized in the slogan: “Asia is the Asia of the Asians”. (p. 13)

During his period of study abroad, Kodera had observed trends towards regional cooperation and integration all over the world, manifest in the so-called pan-movements, such as Pan-Americanism, Pan-Anglosaxonism, Pan-Slavism, Pan-Germanism, and Pan-Romanism (pp. 2f, 258f). Stressing that “blood is thicker than water” (p. 3), the concept of regionalism advocated by Kodera was strongly influenced by the racial theories popular in Europe and the United States from the mid-19th century.<sup>34</sup> Kodera advocated a similar pan-ideology for East Asia, an ideology aimed at uniting the peoples of East Asia—the “yellow race”—and eventually all of Asia. Parallel to the promotion of similar ideologies in Europe and elsewhere, Kodera proclaimed an ideology of “Greater Asianism” (*Dai-Ajia-shugi*) (pp. 4, 46of). Following the “Asian Monroe Doctrine” of Konoe Atsumaro (1863–1904), who in 1898 had proclaimed that “the Orient is the Orient of the Orient” (*tôyô wa tôyô no tôyô nari*),<sup>35</sup> Kodera demanded an “Asia for the Asians”, a slogan which, after the death of Konoe, had been coined by the founder of the newspaper *Kokumin Shinbun*, Tokutomi Sohô (1863–1957).<sup>36</sup> What seems to be new in Kodera’s writings is the emphasis he puts on an ‘Asian identity’ as a basis for the Asian solidarity and the political cooperation he was claiming.

#### b) *The construction of an Asian identity*

It is important to note that Kodera devotes considerable space to explaining in great detail the “Asian identity” he predicates as the “basis for Asianism” (*Ajiashugi no kiso*). Although Kodera calls the “Asian identity” he is advocating “a natural phenomenon” (p. 278)—particularly when compared to Pan-Americanism and other

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Hannaford 1996; Lauren 1988.

<sup>35</sup> See Jansen 1980; Yamamoto 2001, pp. 31–33, 91–94, 218–220; Saaler 2002b, pp. 21f. Konoe Atsumaro’s *Tôa Dôbunkai* was quite influential at the turn of the century and also found some response in politics (cf. Tsurumi 1965, pp. 95ff and Oguma 1998, pp. 323ff for the case of Gotô Shinpei; and Yonehara 2003, chapter 5 for the case of Tokutomi Sohô). Just as Kodera, Konoe also had spent many years of study in Germany, between 1885 and 1890 (Jansen 1980: 109).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Nakamura 1991b; Yonehara 2003, chapter 5; Yonehara 2002: pp. 186–193. Tokutomi around the same time as Kodera started referring to European pan-movements in his writings, the first time probably in 1916 (Yonehara 2002: 189).

similar movements—his lengthy attempts to identify the “basis for Asianism” indicate that he is actually *constructing* an identity of which certain elements are already present, but which have not previously been brought together to naturally *form* some kind of identity. Before defining this proposed Asian identity, Kodera sets himself to define the boundaries of the anticipated clash of races and therefore the “borders of Asianism”. To foster the development of Asian integration and Asianism, Kodera proposes four stages that coincide with the expected boundaries of an evolving Asianism (p. 270):

- 1) The unification (*tôitsu*) of Japan and China as the strongest and largest countries of Mongol ethnicity (which Kodera considers the core of the yellow race);
- 2) The inclusion (*hōyō*) of other independent states of the same Mongol ethnicity;
- 3) The integration (*tōgō*) of other ethnic Mongols who live under the rule of a different race (*ijinshu*);
- 4) The enlargement of these policies to include other ethnicities throughout the whole of Asia.

While Kodera regarded the implementation of these four stages as a long-term strategy, the immediate goal was the strengthening of Sino-Japanese cooperation as the first step toward regional integration under the banner of Asianism. Just as for other Pan-Asianists since the early Meiji period, for Kodera China still was the core element in any pan-Asian regionalist scheme. Therefore, when defining the “basis for Asianism” and thus an “Asian identity”, Kodera strongly emphasizes the similarities between China and Japan to enhance the possibility of Sino-Japanese cooperation and rapprochement. According to Kodera, the main elements of Asianism were to be defined according to eight categories which he borrowed from a work on Pan-Americanism cited in his book: a) geography; b) race; c) language, script and literature; d); political system; e) jurisdiction; f) religion; g) mixed marriages; h) popular culture (pp. 278–282).

According to Kodera, the “geography” factor is self-evident, since China and Japan are located close to each other and are even complementary in terms of military organization—China as a major continental power, Japan as a maritime, and thus naval, power. Economically, while Japan is more developed industrially, in a united Asia China would have the task of contributing raw materials and agricultural products. In racial terms, China and Japan both belong

to the yellow race (*ôshoku jinshu*) and share Mongol ethnicity (*môko minzoku*), forming a basis for closer cooperation.<sup>37</sup> As in other pan-movements, while there is no common language for Asianism, Kodera stresses the potential of Chinese characters as a common medium of written communication and thus a common bond uniting all the nations of East Asia.<sup>38</sup> Throughout the book, he repeats the popular slogan *dôbun dôshu*, “same script/culture–same race”, to stress the centrality of these two elements for a common Asian identity. In terms of the political system and jurisdiction, although the present state of Japan and China reveals great differences, Kodera points to a common base in the ancient past when Japan had borrowed its political and administrative system as well as most of its laws from China. Even though Japan had recently adopted many ideas from the West, Kodera considers that, in the future, both countries will again enter an age of commonality (*kyôtsû no jidai*). The religions of Asia, according to Kodera, have shared many common elements since ancient times, and Japanese religions have mostly originated from China, with Confucianism contributing much to the moral sensibilities of the Japanese people. In sum, Kodera stresses that Japanese civilization (*Nihon bunmei*) has been greatly influenced by Chinese civilization as a by-product of geographical proximity. These common bonds of race, script, culture, religion, politics and jurisdiction, Kodera emphasizes, are a “natural” product of historical developments in East Asia and can serve as a basis for future cooperation between China and Japan.

<sup>37</sup> As regards mixed marriages, Kodera admits that due to the Japanese policy of seclusion, there have been “few mixed marriages in recent times”, but he assumes that a connection in blood between the Japanese and continental peoples still exists and predicts another increase in mixed marriages for the future.

<sup>38</sup> Some Japanese Pan-Asianists practiced using Chinese characters (*kanbun*) as a means of communication with their Chinese and Korean counterparts: the Kokuryûkai published a magazine in Chinese, the *Tôa Geppô*, for a short period in 1908. In the academy Tôa Dôbun Shoin in Shanghai, Japanese students studied Confucian classics (Reynolds 1989; Yamamoto 2001, pp. 116–118; cf. also Yamamuro 2001, pp. 85f, 464f, 501 for the role of kanji as a means of communications amongst Pan-Asianists from various countries). Sato (1997) has pointed out that not only for Pan-Asianists *kanbun* was an important means of communication throughout the Meiji period, rather was *kanbun* an essential asset for everybody who wanted to secure “a good position in society” (Sato 1997: 127)—notwithstanding growing anti-Chinese sentiment in Meiji Japan.

c) *Sino-Japanese relations and Asianism*

Having created a common basis for close cooperation between China and Japan, Koderá continually stresses the importance of Sino-Japanese bilateral cooperation (*Nisshi teikei*), Sino-Japanese friendship (*Nisshi shinzen*) and mutual trust between China and Japan as the first and most important stage in fostering Asianism as the cornerstone of a broader regional Asian integration. Koderá sees both countries as dependent on each other:

Japan cannot reach economic independence without China, and China cannot reach political independence without Japan. (p. 75) [...] This alliance-like relationship (*dōmeiteki kankei*) has to be profitable for both sides. Japan has to provide knowledge to China, China has to provide [raw] materials to Japan; Japan has to provide military assistance to China, China has to provide economic assistance to Japan (p. 474; cf. also 1260).

However, Koderá leaves no room for doubt about Japan's role as the "natural leader of the Far East", or the "leader of Asia", once the region is united by Asianism (pp. 238, 445, 474). "As the pillar of East Asia and the strongest nation among the yellow race, it is the natural duty and the responsibility of our country to stand at the forefront [...] and preserve peace in East Asia" (pp. 12f; cf. also 1145, 1247, et passim) by uniting Asian peoples against the imperialist West, the "white peril" (*hakka*) (pp. 468f, 1016, 1114f). The idea of Japanese leadership and a Japanese "mission" (*shimei*) in Asia was very common in the tradition of pan-Asian discourse in Meiji Japan, and had been previously applied to Korea,<sup>39</sup> which was eventually annexed to Japan in 1910. It was Japan's lead in modernization that had contributed to the widespread acceptance of Japanese leadership in Asia at the time. Koderá himself notes that, at least amongst intellectuals and political leaders, some Chinese admitted the necessity of cooperating with Japan and accepting Japanese leadership to assist in modernizing China (pp. 1016f). It is hardly surprising to note Koderá quoting a speech given by Sun Yat-Sen (Sun Wen, Jp. Son Bun, 1866–1925) during his visit to Japan (pp. 1017ff), describing its contents as "pure Greater Asianism".<sup>40</sup>

Koderá shared a perception that rapidly gained popularity at that time, namely the perception that China is incapable of modernizing

<sup>39</sup> Jansen 1954, p. 44.

<sup>40</sup> Koderá 1916, p. 1018; on Sun Yat-Sen and the Japanese cf. also Jansen 1954, passim.



herself. He analyzes in great detail the China policies of the imperialist powers (pp. 75ff), which have contributed to China's decline and its present state of affairs. He particularly blames the policies of Western imperialism (pp. 82ff), and accuses the West of economically strangulating China by means of loans and economic concessions (chapter 4.2-B). However, in his analysis of "China's illnesses", he also attributes China's inability to modernize to an "astonishing degree of conservatism in the Chinese people (*Shinajin*)" (pp. 555; cf. also 903ff and chapter 4.3 passim), but also to other character traits of the Chinese people, politicians and above all bureaucrats, who "think of their own profit first and lack self-control" (p. 655; cf. also pp. 555, 655ff, 1116f). Whatever the reasons for them, according to Kodera "China's illnesses" can only be cured by "Japanese guidance of China and a reform of Chinese politics, economy, society and culture" (p. 467)—with special emphasis on disseminating education, medical supplies, and religion [sic] (pp. 1227ff). Kodera claims that since "turmoil in China or China's collapse would endanger Japanese security as well, Japan naturally has the *right* to raise its voice with regard to Chinese internal affairs" (p. 1118). Given these views, it is not surprising that Kodera supported the infamous "21 demands"<sup>41</sup> delivered to China in 1915, and could not understand the "harsh criticism Japan had earned worldwide" as a result (p. 1254). However, Kodera, as a matter of course, also supported this measure out of solidarity with his party president, Katô Takaaki, foreign minister and major advocate of the "21 demands".

In general therefore, Kodera's view of China—although claiming an "alliance-like relationship" that has to be "profitable for both sides"—differed little from other Japanese assessments of the period that looked down on China as a "backward" country (p. 1247) and one that was unable to modernize and establish a modern nation-state.<sup>42</sup> China was thought to require guidance as a junior partner in Asia that would not threaten Japanese leadership in the region, but

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Dickinson 1999, chapter 3.

<sup>42</sup> For other cases, such as Sugita Tei'ichi (1851–1929) or Ôi Kentarô (1843–1922), early proponents of pan-Asian thought in Japan, see Kôketsu 1999, pp. 24ff; for intellectuals such as Naitô Kônân (1866–1934) and Shiratori Kurakichi (1865–1942) see Tanaka 1993. Shiratori at the time of the revolution in 1911 had optimistically prognosed that "China, for the first time will become a united and sound nation" (cited in Tanaka 1993, p. 203), but by 1918, he agreed with Naitô that "the best leader for the reform of such a fragmented society [as the Chinese] was Japan". (Tanaka 1993: 207).

rather serve as a reservoir for resources and manpower and also as a buffer to prevent the Western powers from further penetrating East Asia (pp. 1068ff). Koderá, like other writers and politicians of the time, asserts that the aim of Asianism is to protect China's territorial integrity (*Shina hozen*) (pp. 1063ff) against the Western powers' ambition to partition the Middle Kingdom (pp. 1052ff).<sup>43</sup> However, for Japan to be able to fulfill her task, Koderá urges that China must give up her present foreign-policy stance of "allying with the far, resisting the near" (*enkô kinkô*) (p. 1005). He interprets China's foreign policy as an expression of the politics of "beat barbarians with barbarians", but comes to the conclusion that this position is obsolete in the modern, imperialist world. In concrete terms, this meant that China had to recognize Japan's "special position" (*tokushu chi'i*) in northeast China or Manchuria (chapter 5.2, pp. 1031ff). Koderá did not see any contradiction in his simultaneous call for the "protection of China's integrity" (*Shina hozen-ron*), which was to be applied only to the Chinese mainland (pp. 1100ff). The author excludes China's so-called "external possessions" (*gaihan*) such as Mongolia (Inner and Outer), Sinkiang, Tibet and Manchuria from "China proper" (*Shina hondo*).<sup>44</sup> Only the creation of a Japanese stronghold in the Amur basin (Korea, Manchuria and eventually Siberia) would give Japan sufficient strength to lead Asia in its fight for independence, and therefore a strong Japan would in the long run be profitable for China whose general security would be enhanced by cooperation with Japan. In the success or failure of this arrangement, the future of the entire yellow race was at stake: Asian unity under Japanese leadership "will eventually lead to a great and civilized China on the Asian continent, which again will contribute to the power and prestige of our yellow race" (p. 1254).

<sup>43</sup> Koderá also introduces Japanese voices advocating the partition of China into two, three or four independent states for the sake of Japanese security, since China was eventually expected to become a superpower in East Asia and thus a danger for Japan. According to Koderá, however, the partition of China would endanger peace in East Asia and increase the potential for the Western powers to seek an alliance with one of these newly created states. A division of China in Koderá's view had to be avoided, since the way Japan's position would change amid such rivalries could not be foreseen (pp. 1094f).

<sup>44</sup> Koderá further explains the differentiation of "mainland" vs. "external possessions" by comparing China's case to that of Turkey; pp. 1103ff.

d) *Asianism and the “Yellow Peril”*

The first paragraph of the “Treatise on Greater Asianism” (see above) demonstrates that the “race question” (*jinshu mondai*)—the fear of a clash between the yellow and the white races (*jinshu tôsô*), but also increasing fears of a “yellow peril” in Europe and the United States—is one of the predominant themes, if not the main theme, of Kodera’s 1916 opus.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, this concern is clearly one of Kodera’s major motives in promoting Asianism and Asian regional integration. Well aware of the possibility of contributing to an *increase* in European fears of a “yellow peril” with his own writings, Kodera time and again emphasizes the defensive character of his Asianism, which “only aims at world peace” (pp. 258, 264, 1272). However, at the end of the book—which of course was the product of many years of work and thus not free from inconsistencies—Kodera envisions that “the time has come for Japan to become the leader of China, raise a second army of Attila, raise a second army of Činggis Khan, and engage in revenge (*gyakushû*) against the white people”. (p. 1267)

Considering the strong disillusionment of Kodera and many of his contemporaries with Western racism, it is not surprising that in large tracts of the book the author harshly criticizes the Western powers and their racist attitudes, which for Kodera are the main reason for the “yellow peril” hysteria—rather than any real political developments: “The belief that the white race is a superior race and colored races are inferior races, that it is the privilege of the white race to rule the earth and make the earth her own, is a belief with several hundred years of history, and by now it is deeply rooted in the minds of the white race” (p. 248). Kodera quotes a number of Western writers who he believed had contributed to the spread of racism, including Wisconsin University professor Paul Reinsch, Austrian philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, and German army general Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849–1930) (chapter 3.1).<sup>46</sup> He attributes much of the recent racial friction within international relations to propaganda spread by the

<sup>45</sup> The history of the idea of the “yellow peril” is analyzed in great detail in chapter 3.3, pp. 319ff. Concerning the rise of the notion of “race” in Japanese foreign policy cf. Saaler 2002a; Saaler 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Bernhardi’s 1912 publication *Germany and the next war* had aroused much suspicion of German policies due to its bellicose character. Bernhardi in his book proclaimed that war was a legitimate means to guarantee the “future economic and biological development of the German race”. For another critical assessment of Bernhardi’s writing see Itagaki Taisuke’s 1914 memorandum on principles of Japanese foreign

German Emperor Wilhelm II as the major advocate of the notion of a “yellow peril” (pp. 136, 267, 320, 387ff), but also to the US policy of excluding Japanese immigrants (chapter 2.6; cf. also pp. 1267f).<sup>47</sup>

From his observations, Kodera interprets Western racism as a tool to legitimize imperialistic expansion. Kodera also identifies the historical roots of this racism, which he analyses in a chapter called “Historical recollections of European-Asian rivalry”. Drawing on the ancient encounters of Phoenicians and Lydians, Greeks and Persians, Romans and Carthaginians, Franks and Huns, and Europeans and Saracens as well as Mongols, and the Ottoman Turks with Europe, Kodera concludes that, due to the deep-rooted national rivalry that has always accompanied any increase in xenophobia and racism, a future clash between Europe and Asia, between the yellow race—as the last race to maintain a certain degree of independence from the imperialist West—and the white race is inevitable in the future (pp. 251, 255f, 267, 412, 460f). Rather, for Kodera it seems that “the idea of the yellow peril has gone beyond the discussion phase; it has actually entered the implementation stage” (p. 457). The evolving pan-movements, as described by Kodera, are a first step in this process; a “Great European Union” (*Ôshû Dairenpô*) could well be imminent and would finally set the stage for the “clash of races” anticipated after the war (pp. 1013f). Kodera emphasizes the inevitability of this clash, particularly toward the end of chapter 3.1-A (“The meaning of Asianism”), which he closes with a quote from Rudyard Kipling—“East is East and West is West [. . .] and never the twain shall meet”—adding succinctly: “Reading this, the significance of the Greater Asianism I am proposing should be self-evident” (p. 269).

Just as the trend toward regional integration within the Western hemisphere stimulated the development of Pan-Americanism, Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism, which Kodera discusses in the foreword

policy (Itagaki 1970, pp. 364–74). Bernhardt’s *Germany and the next war* can be found in full on the “Project Gutenberg” website (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/11352>).

<sup>47</sup> Germany and the US, the countries where Kodera had spent almost a decade as a student, appear most frequently as the objects of Kodera’s criticism throughout the book (pp. 24, 28ff, 35, 206, 387ff, 412 and chapters 2.5 and 2.6 *passim*). These two countries, according to Kodera, are not only the most protectionist in terms of economic policies (pp. 24, 257f) but the most aggressive in terms of foreign expansionism, with the US aiming at hegemony in the Pacific and in East Asia (p. 206) as well as becoming “the world’s policeman” (p. 203). Moreover, Germany is identified as the major culprit responsible for “the destruction of international law and international morals” as observed in its aggression against “eternally neutral” countries such as Belgium and Luxembourg (p. 28).

to his book (pp. 2f; cf. also 258f), Japan, according to Kodera, must aim to overcome state rivalries (*kokkateki kyôshô*) and ethnic rivalries (*minzokuteki kyôshô*) in order to establish the unity of the yellow race under the banner of Asianism and confront the “materialistic and barbaric West” (pp. 256ff, 265, 316f).

#### IV. The Impact of Kodera’s Writings

The publication of the “Treatise on Greater Asianism” had an immediate impact on Kodera’s position in his party, the Kenseikai. As the major opposition party, each year the Kenseikai confronted the government with a list of “questions on foreign policy”. Already during the 40th session of the Imperial Diet (1917/18), Kodera was one of the signatories on a list of questions submitted to Prime Minister Terauchi Masatake (1852–1919) and Foreign Minister Motono Ichirô (1862–1918).<sup>48</sup> In 1919, the Kenseikai chose Kodera Kenkichi to confront the new Cabinet under Hara Kei (1856–1921) and Foreign Minister Uchida Kôsai (1865–1936) with the list; the first question criticized the government’s policies on racial equality—a major topic during the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>49</sup> Although the government’s answers were quite evasive, as in previous years,<sup>50</sup> Kodera became firmly established as one of the leading specialists on foreign relations in his party.

Even more important was the influence of his work on the contemporary discourse on “Asia” and on pan-Asian rhetoric in Japan. Although Kodera’s writings have received little attention in postwar research, we can detect some significant changes in the discourse on Asia and discussion of Asia policies immediately following the appearance of Kodera’s book. As I mentioned in the introduction to this paper, pan-Asian thought had existed in Japan before 1916 in many forms, but was still very nebulous and did not amount to a systematic and coherent ideology, as Takeuchi Yoshimi has put it.<sup>51</sup> The early movement was exemplified by the slogan of Sino-Japanese

<sup>48</sup> Foreign Ministry Archives (Gaimushô Gaikô Shiryôkan), Tôkyô, Gaimushô Kiroku 1.5.2.2-3 (1188ff).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Shimazu 1998.

<sup>50</sup> Foreign Ministry Archives (Gaimushô Gaikô Shiryôkan), Tôkyô, Gaimushô Kiroku 1.5.2.2-3 (1606ff) (*Shûgin giin Kodera Kenkichi no shitsumon ni tai-suru tôbensho*). Kodera clearly became quite upset over the evasive answers of the government and provoked a row which received much press coverage in March 1919.

<sup>51</sup> Takeuchi 1963, p. 12; cf. also Mitani 1997; Chô 1997, p. 28f.

cooperation (*Nisshin teikei-ron*), the wish to “develop Asia” (*kô-A*) or the idea of an “Asian Monroe Doctrine” (*Ajia Monrô-shugi*) noted above, all of which were popular with the right-wing opposition, above all the so-called pan-Asian societies such as the Gen’yôsha (founded 1881) or the Kokuryûkai (founded 1901). However, no single book on “Asianism” or “Pan-Asianism” appeared in Meiji Japan,<sup>52</sup> and the phrase was not widely used in magazines—not even in the publications of the pan-Asian societies<sup>53</sup> or major political journals.<sup>54</sup> The publication of Kodera’s *Dai-Ajiashugi-ron*, however, triggered a wave of writings on Asianism that can hardly be ignored.

To date, I have found only one publication dealing with “Asianism” before the appearance of Kodera’s book. It was written by Ôyama Ikuo (1888–1950), a well-known writer, political analyst and proponent of Taishô democracy, and appeared just a few months before Kodera’s opus, namely in March 1916<sup>55</sup> in the magazine *Shin Nippon* (“New Japan”), a publication edited by Ôkuma Shigenobu.<sup>56</sup> The article, entitled “What will be the fate of Asianism?” (*Dai-Ajiashugi no*

<sup>52</sup> According to the electronic database of the National Diet Library of Japan (<http://opac.ndl.go.jp/index.html>).

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Matsuzawa 1978 for an analysis of the magazine *Kokuryû*, which, according to Matsuzawa’s listing of its table of contents, never used the terms Asianism, Pan-Asianism or Greater Asianism. Shimizu Hajime notes the use of the term ‘Ajia-shigi’ in *Ajia*, another magazine advocating pan-Asian thought in Meiji Japan, in 1892 as the first documented use of the term ‘Asianism’, although in this slightly different form (Shimizu 1993, p. 91). However, the article in *Ajia* remained an isolated instance in contrast to the widespread effects of Kodera’s book, which I am going to analyze in the following paragraphs.

<sup>54</sup> For example, in the magazine *Taiyô* (“The Sun”) we find the terms Pan-Asianism and Asianism used for the first time in December 1917 in an article by writer Uchida Rôan (Rôansei 1917) and in a poem (discussed in detail below) dating from summer 1918 (cf. Nihon Kindai Bungakukan 1999). *Taiyô* was, however, known as the platform for one of the most outspoken advocates of Pan-Asianism in Meiji Japan, Kono Atsumaro, who, as mentioned above (see section IIIa), had proclaimed an “Asian Monroe Doctrine” in this journal in 1898 (Yamamoto 2001, pp. 31–33, 91–94, 218–220).

<sup>55</sup> Kodera’s book was printed on 15 November 1916 and published on 21 November 1916. Thus, Ôyama’s article was unlikely to have had a major impact on Kodera’s voluminous work, which must have been the product of many years of labor and, in all likelihood, was almost finished by early 1916. In his article, Ôyama mentions an interesting detail of the use of the term “Asianism”—the “secret publication of a booklet” by a Chinese association which advocated Asianism as the ideology of “Asia for the Asians” (Ôyama 1916, p. 140). The term therefore had been probably fashionable in China before it came into regular use in Japan. In his detailed study on “Greater Asianism and China”, Chinese scholar Zhao Jun [Jap. Chô Gun] cites a text from 1919 as one of the first writings on “Asianism” in China (Chô 1997, p. 22ff).

<sup>56</sup> Nakamura 1991a, p. 243; Yonehara 2003, p. 185.

*unmei ikan*), criticizes what the author regards as the unrealistic approach of pan-Asian ideas to politics, and requests a clarification of the political aims of Asianism in the context of the current situation in Asia.<sup>57</sup> Ôyama considers pan-Asian ideas “dangerous” and “adventurous”, stressing the obstacles that block the realization of Asianism and arguing for a clarification of the place of pan-Asian thought between the poles of nationalism and cosmopolitanism.<sup>58</sup> In an article published at the same time as Kodera’s book, the well-known writer Tokutomi Sohô took a more positive stance towards pan-Asian thought by stressing the necessity for an “Asian Monroe Doctrine”, thereby following up on a major pan-Asian theme developed by Konoe Atsumaro.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the famous “continental adventurer” (*tairiku rônin*) and close friend of Sun Yat-Sen, Miyazaki Tôten (1871–1922), had used the term Asianism in his—unsuccessful—candidacy campaign for the Lower House in 1915.<sup>60</sup>

However, we can observe an upsurge in publications on Pan-Asianism after the appearance of Kodera’s book. Although Kodera was not a member of any of the pan-Asian societies and the pan-Asian movement did not acknowledge him as one of “theirs”,<sup>61</sup> he seems to have exerted influence on their ideas and writings. Shortly after the publication of Kodera’s opus, the monthly magazine *Ajia Jiron* (“Asian Review”), published by the pan-Asian society Kokuryûkai started making use of the term Asianism. The publication gist (*hakkô shushi*) in the first issue of the *Ajia Jiron* in July 1917 proclaimed that “East Asia and the Pacific will become the central focus of rivalries in world politics (*sekaiteki kyôshô no chûshinten*) after the end of the war”.<sup>62</sup> “What”, the magazine’s editors asked, “are the guidelines (*shugi*) that

<sup>57</sup> Ôyama 1916, pp. 142f. Ôyama does not refer to Kodera at all in his article, but rather cites, amongst others, an article by Sugita Tei’ichi in the magazine *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* (“Japan and the Japanese”) (Ôyama 1916, p. 141).

<sup>58</sup> Ôyama 1916, pp. 147f.

<sup>59</sup> Tokutomi Sohô, editor of the influential newspaper *Kokumin Shinbun* and later famous advocate of an Asian Monroe Doctrine, was a declared opponent of a pan-Asian Monroe Doctrine before World War I and only after 1916 actively propagated this slogan, which often is ascribed, above all, to him. Cf. Nakamura 1991b, p. 432; Yonehara 2002, p. 189.

<sup>60</sup> Hiraishi 1998, p. 196.

<sup>61</sup> There seems to be no mention of Kodera in the unofficial history of the pan-Asian movement, the *Tô-A senkaku shishi kiden* (History and Biographies of Pioneer East Asian Adventurers) published by the Kokuryûkai (Kokuryûkai 1966).

<sup>62</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), p. 3. All quotations refer to the original edition of the magazine. Most Kokuryûkai magazines are reprinted in Uchida Ryôhei monjo kenkyûkai 1992.

the Japanese ethnic (*minzoku*) as the leader of Asia must follow in order to fulfill its mission in the world?”<sup>63</sup> The answers were various, but remarkably similar to Kodera’s demands of a year before:

The danger posed by the white people (*hakujin*) to the yellow people (*ôjin*) is imminent. [...] The Japanese Empire, as the last representative of Asia, is the only one which can face and fight the West as the backbone of the yellow ethnicities (*ôshoku minzoku*). [...] We have to institute a comprehensive foreign policy, and implant the idea of Greater Asianism—the great achievement of the foundation of our country—in the minds of the people, and bring about a comprehensive solution to the East Asia problem based on this Asianism.<sup>64</sup>

In the same issue, Yoshimura Gentarô in an article entitled “On Asianism” (*Ajiashugi ni tsuite*) calls Asianism “the expression of the developing strength of our Empire”.<sup>65</sup> Yoshimura emphasizes that “Asianism is being advocated to [...] create opposition against the Western powers. [...] The rationale for Asianism lies in the need to deal with the outrageous danger posed by Western power”.<sup>66</sup> Although Yoshimura is skeptical about Asian unity in terms of language, culture and race, when comparing Asianism to Pan-Americanism (*hanbeishugi*) he nevertheless concludes that “Japan and China share the same culture and the same race (*dôbun dôshu*) and the same basis of civilization, but the United States and Latin America are racially different, have different languages, religions and cultures”.<sup>67</sup> Although dealing mostly with US politics and the development of a large US sphere of influence in the American hemisphere, Yoshimura, like Kodera Kenkichi, claims a leading role for Japan in East Asia and shows a similar awareness of the need for regional cooperation and, as an initial short-term task, Sino-Japanese rapprochement. The similarities to Kodera’s work can hardly be overlooked, although Yoshimura does not refer to Kodera directly. Another contribution to the same issue of *Ajia Jiron* by Uchida Ryôhei (1874–1937), founder and head of the Kokuryûkai, hardly surprising by proclaims that

<sup>63</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), p. 3. Interestingly, the “Editorial Foreword” of the inaugural number of the *English* version of *Ajia Jiron*, *The Asian Review* (published between February 1920 and November 1921) does not mention the term “Asianism”, and neither does Uchida Ryôhei in his contribution, “The Asian Review and the Kokuryûkai” (*The Asian Review* vol. 1, No. 1, 1920, pp. 1–5).

<sup>65</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), p. 35.

<sup>66</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), pp. 36; 40.

<sup>67</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), p. 37.



“the relief of the Russian [sic] and Chinese peoples is the mission (*shimei*) of the Japanese Empire”, and that this mission must be fulfilled through “the realization of Greater Asianism”.<sup>68</sup> Further, Inoue Masaji (1876–1947), in a congratulatory contribution to the inaugural issue of *Ajia Jiron* in the first chapter, which is entitled “Cultural Asianism” (*bunkateki Ajiashugi*) asserts: “If I think about the world, Asia is everything that counts to me. I feel for Asia as a whole just as I feel for my fatherland or my home village (*kyôdo*), and even towards the characters ‘Asia’, I feel some kind of intimacy”.<sup>69</sup> In a following issue (February 1918), the editorial of the journal entitled “The Future of Russia and the Crossroads for the Development of Greater Asianism” (*Rokoku no shôrai to Dai-Ajiashugi hakki no bunkiten*) praises a projected independent state of the Buryat Mongols<sup>70</sup> as “a bulwark against the eastward expansion of Western influence [and] as a prerequisite for realizing the idea of Asianism”,<sup>71</sup> thus bringing together pan-Asian thought with that of the Pan-Mongolian movement that gained prominence in the wake of the collapse of Tsarist Russia and civil war in Siberia.<sup>72</sup>

This series of publications and articles on Asianism or Greater Asianism in Kokuryûkai writings was no temporary phenomenon. In other magazines we can observe a similar upsurge of writings on Asianism. For example, the well-known journal *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* (“Japan and the Japanese”) published a special edition on “Greater Asianism” in 1924. In the *Tôhô Jiron* (“Eastern Review”), a platform for well-known political scientists, political writers and politicians including Yoshino Sakuzô (1878–1933), Nakano Seigô (1886–1943), Nagai Ryûtarô (1881–1944) and Mitsukawa Kametarô (1888–1936),<sup>73</sup> beginning in the July 1917 edition we find articles on Asianism written by various authors, particularly Nakano Seigô and Mitsukawa Kametarô, but also a writer using the pen name “An Asian” (*Ichi Ajiain*).<sup>74</sup> By the end of 1917 we can also spot the term

<sup>68</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), p. 14.

<sup>69</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 1,1 (July 1917), p. 98.

<sup>70</sup> The Mongols are praised here for being very similar to the Japanese in terms of religion, race and bravery.

<sup>71</sup> *Ajia Jiron* 2,2 (February 1918), p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> See White 1950.

<sup>73</sup> For a detailed list of contents of all published volumes of *Tôhô Jiron* cf. Arima 1978; for a summary of the special edition of *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* see Oguma 1995, pp. 168ff; for Nakano Seigô cf. Oguma 1998, pp. 223ff; Nakano 1988.

<sup>74</sup> Arima 1978, pp. 74f.

Asianism in the popular magazine *Taiyô*,<sup>75</sup> not only in an article by writer Uchida Rôan (1868–1929)<sup>76</sup>, but also in the poetry column (*Shibunran*):

Oh, our Asia, remember that this is the birthplace and the pioneer of ancient civilization; it must be resurrected in the twentieth century and recover its mighty position. [...] Asians, leave behind all minor quarrels! Relinquish selfish desires and suspicion and unite the hundreds of millions—then a new Asia will surely be reborn, and Pan-Asianism (*han-Ajiashugi*) shall be spread with the wind and the waves.<sup>77</sup>

Other writers who took up Koderas ideas were politicians like Nagai Ryûtarô<sup>78</sup> and Nagashima Ryûji, later to become a member of the Lower House. In a short pamphlet on the Siberian Intervention in 1918, Nagashima, like Koderas, claimed that Japan had the “duty to relieve (*kyûsai*) the Orient (*tôyô*) from European civilization”, which he considered being close to collapse due to an overemphasis on profit-centered individualism (*rikoteki kojishugi*).<sup>79</sup> The West, according to Nagashima, did not have the strength “to support the happiness of mankind”, and therefore Japan had “the large responsibility to think about how to achieve peace, at least in the Orient”.<sup>80</sup> To fulfill this responsibility, Japan had to “lay the foundations for a peculiar Oriental civilization in the Orient”.<sup>81</sup> Even though Nagashima avoided the term Asianism, he followed Koderas in his call for a “new civilization” (*shin bunmei*) in the Orient under Japanese leadership—a slogan in wide use in Japan during and after World War I, for example in the writings of politician Ôkuma Shigenobu.<sup>82</sup>

Other book publications were soon to follow, too: three years after the publication of Koderas *Dai-Ajiashugi-ron*, a book with the title “Asianism” (*Ajiashugi*) appeared.<sup>83</sup> The author, Sawayanagi Masatarô (1865–1927), was an educator and education ministry bureaucrat

<sup>75</sup> According to statistics kept by the Metropolitan Police Department (*keishichô*), *Taiyô* was the best-selling monthly magazine between 1896 and 1899, but was still widely read by the time of World War I. Suzuki 2001, pp. 38f.

<sup>76</sup> Rôansei 1917.

<sup>77</sup> *Taiyô* 23,14 (1917), pp. 62–64. The author, Kodama Kagai, frequently published poems with a pan-Asian bias in the magazine.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Duus 1971, p. 43f.

<sup>79</sup> Nagashima 1918, p. 50.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50f.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>82</sup> Ôkuma 1919: 74f; Ôkuma 1923.

<sup>83</sup> Sawayanagi 1919. Sawayanagi had written short articles on Pan-Asianism for magazines in the preceding years (Sawayanagi 1917; 1918).

(vice minister of education 1906–08 and founder of Seikei Gakuen University<sup>84</sup>) and, as rector of Tôhoku Imperial University, famous for admitting women to an imperial university in 1912. In his book, he puts particular emphasis on the cultural aspects of pan-Asian unity, a thought that he has in common with Koderá, as we have seen above. He particularly sympathizes with the pan-Mongol movement or even a creation of a “Mongol-Buddhist state” in East Asia<sup>85</sup> and proposes the “creation of a new civilization”,<sup>86</sup> just as Koderá before him.

Further publications, widening the scope of Asianism and analyzing Asianism in more detail followed. In 1924, a short booklet on “Islam and Asianism” (*Isureamu to Ajiashugi*) appeared,<sup>87</sup> widening the scope of Asianism to the Arab world; and in 1926 Murobuse Takanobu’s (1892–1970) three-volume “Asianism” followed, giving a detailed analysis of the role of Asianism in international relations in the post World War I world.<sup>88</sup> Soon, the institutional consequences of the pan-Asian movement could also be observed. The ideology was no longer the exclusive preserve of opposition political associations, but from the early 1930s was also being promoted by influential politicians. In March 1933, about 40 politicians, bureaucrats, military officers and intellectuals, including Konoe Fumimaro (1891–1945), Tokutomi Sohô, Hirota Kôki (1878–1948), and Matsui Iwane (1878–1948), founded the “Greater Asia Society” (*Dai Aja Kyôkai*).<sup>89</sup> The monthly journal “Greater Asianism” (*Dai-Ajiashugi*)<sup>90</sup> published by this association from May 1933 is firm proof of the fact that Asianism had become an established concept in Japanese politics by the beginning of the 1930s.

## V. Conclusion

The main theme of Koderá’s work is the need for the East Asian region, and eventually the whole of Asia with the “yellow race” at its heart, to unite against the danger posed by Western expansionist

<sup>84</sup> For Sawayanagi’s vita see Sawayanagi 1987.

<sup>85</sup> Sawayanagi 1917, pp. 214–16.

<sup>86</sup> Sawayanagi 1917, p. 221.

<sup>87</sup> Tanaka 1924. The author of this booklet, Tanaka Ippei (1882–1934), is said to be “the second ostensible convert to Islam” in Japan (cf. Esenbel 2002, p. 190).

<sup>88</sup> Murobuse 1926.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Mitani 1997, p. 98.

<sup>90</sup> Yomiuri Shinbun 2001, p. 57.

imperialism and racism. Based on his observation of increasing racial friction in international relations, and also regional integration in the form of pan-movements,<sup>91</sup> Koderá, like many of his contemporaries, anticipated a “clash of races” (*jinsu tósô*) in the near future, with Japan at the forefront of “yellow” resistance against “white” imperialism and aggression. In this coming conflict, *Japan* was for Koderá the only possible candidate as leader of a united Asia. Although this seems quite logical, from the viewpoint of the international balance of power at the time, we also can observe in Koderá’s writings an anti-Chinese bias. Koderá considers China’s politicians incompetent and its people greedy. He regards the country not only as a mere buffer to prevent further intrusion of the Western powers into East Asia, but also as an ancillary region for Japan’s economy.<sup>92</sup> Thus, Asian regionalism as advocated by Koderá at the beginning of the 20th century is not an end in itself or possessed of any intrinsic value, but rather is considered a tool for *national* foreign policy—even though a common base for regional cooperation is acknowledged in terms of race, language and script, religion, culture, geography and the economy.

The works of Koderá Kenkichi, as discussed in this paper, exemplify a current in Japanese thought and politics during the late Meiji and early Taishô periods, a trend which has been variously called Asianism (*Ajiashugi*), Pan-Asianism (*Han-Ajiashugi*) or Greater Asianism (*Dai-Ajiashugi*). Indeed, Koderá was one of the first to use the terms “Greater Asianism” and “Asianism”, (which he uses without distinction) as demonstrated in section IV above. Moreover, by *defining* the concept of “Asianism” for the first time as a set of *concrete* ideas and as a *comprehensive* policy of regional cooperation of Asian nations, and by systematically locating the “basis for Asianism” in a common Asian identity, Koderá has a central place in the development of Asianism in modern Japanese political history.

Of course, writing in 1916, Koderá was not the first advocate of pan-Asian ideas in Japan, and his work contains elements derived from earlier pan-Asian writings. As I mentioned above, during the

<sup>91</sup> As a result of his studies in Germany, Koderá was definitely influenced by the emerging idea of *geopolitics*, which praised pan-movements as a natural phenomenon.

<sup>92</sup> The same applies to Korea: Korea is rarely mentioned in Koderá’s work and is usually considered an integral part of Japan; the Korean question was considered a settled matter (which it was in 1916, juristically speaking). Interestingly, Koderá sometimes compares Korea with Belgium—an independent and neutral country which “for England has a similar meaning in terms of security policies as Korea does for Japan” (Koderá 1916, p. 241).

Meiji period pan-Asian thought was mostly the preserve of the right-wing opposition to the Meiji oligarchy and the pan-Asian societies such as the Gen'yōsha or the Kokuryūkai, while the government, foreign policy-makers and diplomats viewed such ideas with suspicion and followed imperialist *Realpolitik* to secure Japan's independence. In direct opposition to this course of "leaving Asia" (*datsu-A*) as a foreign-policy strategy, pan-Asian agitators demanded a "return to Asia" (*Ajia kaiki*) and cooperation of Japan with its Asian neighbors to expel the Western powers from Asia. By the end of the Meiji period, some politicians, such as Kōdera, considered Japan capable of challenging the West, if it could become the leader of a united Asia. Following the concept of the pan-movement, Kōdera discovered that the solution lay in combining the regionalist ideas of pan-Asian unity with the imperialist *Realpolitik* practiced by the government.

The example of Kōdera Kenkichi demonstrates that, by the end of the Meiji period, pan-Asian thought was no longer the exclusive preserve of the political opposition and the pan-Asian societies, but had become increasingly influential within government circles and party politics as well. Kōdera came from a completely different social background than the members of societies like the Gen'yōsha and the Kokuryūkai, and also represented a different view of world affairs: While most of the members of pan-Asian societies came from Kyūshū,<sup>93</sup> Kōdera was from Hyōgo; unlike them, Kōdera came from a wealthy family background and had spent a decade studying in Europe and North America; and while the pan-Asian societies represented right-wing opposition to the Meiji oligarchy, Kōdera associated himself with the established political parties. And most importantly, unlike the members of the pan-Asian societies, Kōdera had no preference for "values" such as "Oriental traditionalism" or the "samurai spirit",<sup>94</sup> but, thanks to his Western education, he was generally open to Western ideas. However, despite these differences, Kōdera reached a similar conclusion to the pan-Asian agitators from the Gen'yōsha and the Kokuryūkai: the need for Asian nations to unite against the imminent threat posed by Western imperialism. However, going beyond the demand for a purely Sino-Japanese alliance, Kōdera called for Asian unity on the basis of an ideology he calls "Greater Asianism".

<sup>93</sup> Chō 1997, pp. 14f.

<sup>94</sup> Marius Jansen saw these as typical attitudes of members of the pan-Asian societies; see Jansen 1954, p. 4; see also Chō 1997, pp. 108f and chapters 3 and 4: *passim*.

Although his long period of study abroad had made Koderá into a specialist in international and civil law, just as in the case of the “liberal party politician” Nagai Ryûtarô,<sup>95</sup> Koderá’s *Fremdheitserlebnis* abroad might explain his “revulsion against ‘white imperialism’”.<sup>96</sup> Such an experience may well have been typical of his and Nagai’s generation and probably decisively influenced their view of “the West” and Japan’s role in the world.

Eventually, Koderá’s introduction of Western pan-ideologies and racial concepts into political discussion in Japan, and his claim for the construction of an Asian version of these transnational pan-movements, offered a solution to the problem of integrating notions of Asian regionalism into Japanese foreign policy. While Koderá’s fusion of romantic ideas of regional Asian unity and imperialist *Realpolitik* paved the way for a wider acceptance of pan-Asian thought in Japanese politics, at the same time it must be seen as the beginning of an increased *utilization* of regionalist concepts for the purposes of imperialistic foreign policy and expansion. The push for Asian unity eventually led to rivalry over leadership in East Asia, and it was only a small step from Koderá’s concept of “Greater Asianism” under Japanese leadership to the legitimization of imperial expansion, with concepts of regionalism playing a purely ancillary role.

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. Duus 1971, p. 44.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. Another example, which needs to be examined in a separate study, is the famous writer and military doctor Mori Ôgai (Rintarô, 1862–1922). After spending many years in Germany, in a 1904 publication, Mori, similar to Koderá later, had argued that “I know there is a white peril (*hakka*) in the world. However, I would not know of anything like a yellow peril”. (Mori 1904, pp. 1–2).

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