

SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

# The Wilsonian moment in Yanaihara Tadao's political thought

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## Abstract

Albeit with little reference to Woodrow Wilson, Yanaihara Tadao, the Chair of Colonial Policy at Tokyo Imperial University in the 1920s and 1930s, and a pious Christian, adapted the core ideas of Wilsonian liberalism such as national self-determination, multilateralism, and democracy to the political and legal framework of imperial Japan. Yanaihara advocated the principle of autonomy for the Japanese empire to transform itself into the core of a liberal international order. He articulated that the combination of colonialism and unfettered capitalism had detrimental effects on the colonized and advocated for a Japanese empire that reflected the voice of its colonized people. However, having seen little improvement in the status of the colonized, Yanaihara increasingly regarded Japanese pan-Asianist ideas in the 1930s as a cover-up of Japanese expansionism. Almost abandoning his earlier ideas about empire as a multiethnic society, he criticized Japan's military venture as economically unprofitable, and policies toward Manchuria as stoking the rise of Chinese nationalism. He advocated for the normative framework advanced by the Mandate System of the League of Nations as a way toward the universalization of sovereignty, and protection of stateless populations. The failure of the Wilsonian moment in Japan forced Yanaihara out of Tokyo Imperial University but also strengthened his inclination towards liberal internationalism.

**Key words:** Colonial studies; empire; liberal internationalism; self-determination; Wilsonian; Yanaihara Tadao

## 1. Introduction

Much exposed to a wide range of political, social, and economic theories and philosophies from the West, Taisho Japan undoubtedly developed a liberal intellectual sphere in support of labor movements and civic activism despite its authoritarian state system. However, if the Wilsonian moment simply means a political pursuit for national self-determination in colonies, it is not easy to find such advocates in Japan, like in Western colonial powers. Only a very few, such as Ishibashi Tanzan, a Japanese economic liberal and journalist, and those on the far-left, including Hosokawa Karoku, supported colonial independence (Sai, 1979: 149–174; Nolte, 1987; Asada, 1989). However, even Ishibashi tolerated Japan's intervention in China at the end (Ueda, 2016: 159–161). The majority of Japanese intellectuals who were sympathetic to Wilsonian liberalism aimed to find a way to solve colonial issues within the existing imperial framework. In Imperial Japan, it is almost impossible to find an uncompromising support for national self-determination.

This does not mean that Japan experienced no Wilsonian moment. As I suggested above, its core ideas can be identified in some writings of Japanese thinkers. Among them, this paper explores the political thought of one of the prominent Japanese liberals, Yanaihara Tadao (1893–1961), and identifies the ways in which the thread of the Wilsonian moment has emerged and developed in his thought. Yanaihara has been remembered as a Japanese liberal and 'non-church' (*mukyokai*)

Christian<sup>1</sup> who condemned Japan's colonial policies and militarism in the Taisho and early Showa periods. With a recommendation of Nitobe Inazo, who had to leave Tokyo to serve as an Under-Secretary General of the League of Nations, Yanaihara obtained an academic position at Tokyo Imperial University in 1920 to teach and study colonial policy and related issues. In his major work on colonial Taiwan, Yanaihara provided a critical insight into the politico-economic structure of Taiwan. His assertion on the political rights for the Taiwanese<sup>2</sup> and Koreans directly challenged the authority of the Japanese colonial governments (Peattie, 1984). At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, his critical attitude toward Japanese military expansionism and his controversial remark at a Christian meeting, 'Japan should be buried' (*kono kuni wo hōmutte kudasai*), made inevitable his resignation from professorship (Yanaihara, 1964 [1937]: 654).<sup>3</sup> After 1945, he returned to the university, initiated the establishment of the Liberal Arts College at Tokyo University, and became the president of the university in 1951. His disciples, friends, and followers, both in academia and a Christian circle, therefore remembered him as the conscience of the Japanese nation who did not abandon his liberal and Christian aspiration to peace and spoke up against militarism even at the most difficult time of Japan (e.g. Okawara, 1987; Kawata, 1996).

The reason for examining Yanaihara's political thought in relation to the Wilsonian moment is that despite his liberal credentials, how and to what extent we can find the thread of Wilsonian liberalism in his political thinking is not totally clear. He rarely mentioned the name of Woodrow Wilson in his research and hardly used Wilsonian vocabulary. Thus, it is worth exploring his ideas from the light of the Wilsonian moment. Yanaihara was different from another liberal, Ishibashi, who explicitly marked the Wilsonian moment in Japan for his words on the outright rejection of colonialism (Funabashi, 2015: 113–116). The main difference between Yanaihara and Ishibashi is twofold: status and moral orientation. With the status of a professor at the top imperial university in Japan and the protection of the ivory tower, Yanaihara was able to research on colonial policy and other related matters extensively with both theories and fieldwork. In contrast, Ishibashi, who, in the private sector, regularly wrote for the general public in news media. Because Yanaihara was as an insider of Japanese imperial institutions, his writings tend to be more self-censored and elaborate than Ishibashi's, especially in the 1930s, to avoid political interference in his academic life (Townsend, 2000: 267–269). Yanaihara was also spiritually closer to Wilson in the sense that they were both Christian. As I will explain later, his choice for a less radical route for colonial autonomy was grounded on his moral conviction in the creation of a good society. While Ishibashi's concern was what the greatest benefit would be for Japan, Yanaihara had a cosmopolitan perspective as Christian, even if it was flawed.

Asada Kyoji (1990) and Kang San Jun (1993, 1995) suggested that Yanaihara never fundamentally objected to imperial expansion in which states seek material wealth beyond their borders and establish alien rules to control other populations. From their view, he was an 'imperialist' for not objecting to the status quo of the Japanese colonial empire. However, other scholars emphasize his liberal internationalist nature. Susan Townsend (2000) described in her monograph Yanaihara as an opponent to imperialism who tried to redeem the ideal of empire. Kevin Doak (2003) labeled Yanaihara as a Taisho 'liberal nationalist' who regarded the 'concept of the ethnic nation as a potential source of liberal democracy'. I also argued elsewhere that he envisaged empire as a society in which multiple ethnic nations could live and interact with each other without sacrificing the interests of any particular group (Nakano, 2013). His imagined empire encompassed L.T. Hobhouse's liberal socialism that emphasized community and the common good in society. Yanaihara saw the incompleteness of liberalism for its

<sup>1</sup>The idea of 'non-church' is based on the notion that an individual can directly relate to God by studying the Bible without the teachings of the church establishment or any other authorities.

<sup>2</sup>I use the 'Taiwanese' to describe the Han-Chinese in Taiwan.

<sup>3</sup>The expression 'Japan should be buried' is Yanaihara's quote from his close friend Fujii Takeshi. For Fujii's original remark, see, Tsukamoto and Yanaihara (1946): 622–624.

exclusive focus on individualism and stressed that harmony and cooperation were essential to the sustenance of freedom for all.

Building upon the existing literature, this paper will further explore how Yanaihara incorporated into his international perspective Wilsonian liberal ideas including national self-determination, democracy, and multilateralism. Because Yanaihara himself hardly wrote about Wilson, I do not intend to examine the influence of Wilson's ideas on Yanaihara. Rather, this paper aims to draw the contours of Yanaihara's ideas compatible with Wilsonian liberalism and explain a covert shift in his liberal internationalist vision from a colonial empire of multiethnic unity to universal sovereignty as political equality, which became the main feature of a new international order after World War II.

The remainder of this paper is as follows. First, I will explore the foundation of Yanaihara's liberal philosophy in conjunction with the classical liberal tradition. Second, I will review his studies of colonial economy in Korea and Taiwan to elucidate what he identified as a fundamental problem of economic development in colonies. Third, I will illustrate how Yanaihara aimed to bring a democratic idea into Japanese colonies and why. Fourth, I will demonstrate that Yanaihara moved to emphasize the importance of sovereignty as political equality by pointing to the importance of Chinese nationalism and a normative significance in the Mandate system of the League of Nations. Fifth, I will argue that although the failure of the Wilsonian liberalism in Japan forced Yanaihara out of Tokyo Imperial University, his inclination towards liberal internationalism became strong and eventually merged into the postwar Japan's political and normative structure. At the same time, his stance did not lose its critical edge in its understanding of the US-led liberal international order. In the conclusion, I will summarize the findings of this article.

## 2. From classical liberalism to liberal imperialism

Like Woodrow Wilson, who as a Christian searched for private piety and public justice (Hankins, 2016), Yanaihara also believed that a search for scientific truth accorded with his Christian faith and did not need to be questioned theologically. He conducted his social science research without explicitly showing his religious orientation. Nevertheless, the inkling of his Christian faith can be found in his sensitivity to individual freedom. His appreciation for individual freedom has a deep root in his 'non-church' Christian belief in which individual morality must be cultivated to create a good society. Having joined Uchimura Kanzo's Bible study class, Yanaihara saw the ideal form of religious community in the concept of Ecclesia, where collective salvation was deeply connected to good works of individuals (Hakari, 1989: 227–228). Whereas individual freedom should be ensured for the development of moral quality and personality, each individual should make conscious efforts to reach God and appreciate the moral equality of all individuals. The importance of self-discipline and self-cultivation was laid side by side with the protection of an autonomous will in Yanaihara's philosophy (Yanaihara, 1964 [1929]: 180–198; 1964 [1936]: 547–574).

His notion of moral, autonomous individuals did not contradict the possession of national identity. Yanaihara consistently sought to reconcile a search for individual freedom and loyalty to his country, Japan, and its sovereign, the emperor, along the line of liberal nationalism. According to Kevin Doak (2003), Japan has developed a historically specific form of liberal nationalism, which is predicated on the idea that the members of the nation should enjoy equal individual rights and that the state should uphold the principle of cooperation between states. Yanaihara familiarized himself with this vision through interaction with his Christian mentors and liberal intellectuals such as Nitobe Inazo, Uchimura Kanzo, and Yoshino Sakuzo. Although Uchimura distinctly embraced the notion of original sin and Adventism compared with the other two, they more or less shared the same ideal as Christian in which each individual should be disciplined and educated as civic agents to serve for the benefit of society. The people should not be mere subjects of the emperor but autonomous citizens who exercise conscience in politics. When Yanaihara studied at Tokyo Imperial University, Yoshino was an influential intellectual figure in the new political activism during the Taisho era (known as 'Taisho democracy'), in which a number of student and labor unions, as well as other civil society groups,

demonstrated to gain more rights for political representation. Yanaihara succeeded to the legacy of those Japanese Christian liberals with great emphasis on self-discipline and autonomy (Nakano, 2013: 18–26).

The idea of autonomy directed Yanaihara to the classical liberal view of population migration. In classical liberalism, ventures to seek the land and opportunities for development are recognized as essential to human nature. They indicate human progress in the sense that the cultivation of land maximizes the wealth of humankind as a whole. Yanaihara's view of population migration reflected John Locke's idea that labor establishes the ownership of land, Adam Smith's perspective that connects economic migration to enlightenment views on progress and development, and Thomas Malthus' argument on population growth (Nakano, 2006). Yanaihara (1963 [1926c]: 465–467) understood that commercial or economic migration would serve the purpose of solving a practical problem of overpopulation because it allowed maximum use of resources and cultivation of other parts of the world. His support for free movement of people was further reinforced by a moral reason that he found in the Zionist movement. In his view, the settlement of Jews in Palestine occurred due to the need of fleeing physical danger, economic insecurity, and a loss of identity (Yanaihara, 1963 [1923]). Sympathized with those in search of survival and freedom, Yanaihara endorsed Immanuel Kant's concept of hospitality and even suggested the introduction of the 'right of abode' (Nakano, 2013: 55–58).

To accommodate this liberal vision of the world, the concept of empire fits better than the nation-state model. Thus, Yanaihara was drawn to the framework of the British Empire. He argued that political separation within the British Empire would create a distinctive unification in the form of 'imperial federation' twisting the statement by the pre-Revolutionary French economist and comptroller-general Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727–1781): 'colonies are like fruits which only cling till they ripen' (Yanaihara, 1963 [1929a]: 163).

### 3. Recognizing the problem of colonial economic development

Despite his initial remarks that can be described as imperialistic, Yanaihara soon pointed to the obstacles to the realization of solidarity in colonial diversities. He even implied that the British Empire was destined to break up, and that Turgot's proverb was, in fact, correct (Yanaihara, 1963 [1930b]: 436–437). His emphasis on the problem in colonial economic development was theoretically connected with a Marxist–Leninist approach. Although he was Christian, he found this approach as scientifically useful to understand the socioeconomic hierarchy of society. At the newly established Department of Economics at Tokyo Imperial University, he became familiar with the Marxist–Leninist economics and theory of imperialism.<sup>4</sup> Drawing from the works of Rosa Luxemburg, Nikolai Bukharin, and Vladimir Lenin, Yanaihara (1963 [1930a]) acknowledged that capital forces drove an imperial society to seek a new place for economic activities. In a colonial context, an imperial state forcibly introduced capitalism to a new society under its own conditions and inevitably created a socioeconomic hierarchy through the change of land ownership and the use of local inhabitants as a laborer (Yanaihara, 1963 [1926c]: 186–191). As a result, local inhabitants had no choice but to accept the rule and the system of an imperial state that gave more economic opportunities for its own people and their companies.

In his studies of colonial Korea and Taiwan, Yanaihara described in detail how local inhabitants were forced to be the subjects of exploitation. Like Yoshino Sakuzo, he critically saw the Japanese discriminatory treatment of the Koreans as a lower class. As a researcher in the Department of Economics, Yanaihara pointed to the mechanism of economic exploitation of Korean farmers under the Japanese rulers. In 'Chosen Sanbei Zōshoku Keikaku ni tsuite' (On the Campaign to

<sup>4</sup>In 1919, the Department of Economic was borne out of the demands of progressive scholars and practitioners who were dissatisfied with the conservative orientation of the College of Law. This scholarly circle regularly discussed the works of Marx and Kuroptkin among others, even though it became minority in the Department by 1925 (Marshall 1978: 529–551).

Increase Rice Production in Korea), he asserted that the Korean farmers got poorer despite an increase in Korea's rice production and trade (Yanaihara, 1963 [1926a]: 692–724). The Governor-General's Office in Korea launched the Campaign to Increase Rice Production in 1920. Yanaihara argued that this campaign resulted in a considerable burden on Korean farmers, and under the logic of the market, Korean farming land was mortgaged to Japanese firms (Schneider, 1999). After they lost their land ownership, some of them had to relocate to Manchuria, the northeast part of China. Yanaihara suggested that the Korean situation was comparable with that of Indian farmers whose standard of living did not improve or even worsened despite an increase in agricultural production under the British rule.<sup>5</sup> At the end of his article, he scornfully wrote that none of the Japanese law-makers dared to notice a gap between the Japanese rhetoric of *nissen yuwa* (unity and integrity of the Japanese and Koreans) and the severe situations of Korean farmers under the Japanese rule.

More extensively than Korea, Yanaihara studied the case of colonial Taiwan and published *Teikokushugika no Taiwan* (Taiwan under Imperialism) in 1929, which became the most accredited, reputable book on the political economy of colonial Taiwan during the Japanese colonial era.<sup>6</sup> The main theme of this book is how capitalism became the dominant mode of production in Taiwan. Yanaihara sketched out how the Governor-General's Office, Japanese banks, and conglomerates functioned as the engine of Taiwan's political, economic, and social reorganization for its rapid increase in agricultural production. He strongly criticized the practice of Japanese companies for the development of sugar industry in Taiwan. Taiwanese sugar farmers, lacking labor unions or anything equivalent, endured low wages and constantly needed cash to repay debts to the Japanese sugar refining companies. Once again, like Korean farmers, he acknowledged the predicament of the local inhabitants who lost their land ownership in exchange for market bonds and eventually turned out to be 'slaves' or equivalent (Yanaihara, 1963 [1929b]: 446).

In studying the colonial economy of Korea and Taiwan, Yanaihara admitted that the colonial policy of imperial states, in addition to the economic activities of imperial citizens, increased the overall productivity of commercial products in colonies, and he did not deny the success of Japan's economic policies in this sense. However, by closely examining the process in which the Japanese state agents and private companies forcibly introduced the logic of capitalism to colonies, the political and economic hierarchy was created and consolidated in favor of colonizers' interest. The prospect of colonial economic development and prosperity, prescribed by the imperial authorities, critically differed from the wealth and prosperity of the colonized.

#### 4. Introducing self-rule to colonies

While the Wilsonian ideas of self-determination failed to go into the framework of the League of Nations, they encouraged anti-colonial, nationalist movements in the colonial world (Manela, 2007). Korea was not an exception. The March First Incident (1919) exemplified the Koreans' public resentment of Japan's 'military rule' and the outcry for national independence. However, what Japan did was only the introduction of a 'cultural rule' (*bunka seiji*) to Korea, whereby the government adopted a softer administrative approach rather than resorting to force and this allowed elite Koreans to participate in local advisory bodies (Kasuya, 1992). In Taiwan, a moderate nationalist movement had appeared in the form of cultural and educational campaigns. In response, the Governor-General declared the gradual integration of the Taiwanese into the Japanese empire and introduced the Law 3 of 1921 that in principle placed Taiwan under the legislation of the Japanese imperial diet (Chen, 1984: 256–257). Although the Governor-General's Offices presented those

<sup>5</sup>In India, the bureaucratic institutions and private or semigovernmental corporations destroyed the traditional economic structure and created new burdens on the colonial population. Korea's situation was not far from India's. See Yanaihara (1963 [1926a]): 718.

<sup>6</sup>This book was later translated into Chinese and Russian, and also was published twice in Taiwan in the 1950s. See Wakabayashi (2001): 339.

legislative measures as a way of assimilating the Koreans and Taiwanese with the Japanese and diffusing tensions, the inadequacy was apparent. The Japanese rulers had little intention to change the superior and privileged position of the Japanese over the rest.

Having seen this as a political problem, Yanaihara (1963 [1926b]: 388) called for the introduction of democratic measures, such as the establishment of a national assembly and suffrage provision to the local populations. To enhance the political participation and representation of the colonized, he used the term, autonomy (*jishu*). In his definition, the principle of autonomy respects the cultural and social distinctiveness of the colonized: ‘the ultimate goal of the principle of autonomy is that each group achieves a maximum development under their own historical constraints and circumstances, and that the world community of humankind is integrated through mutual cooperation’ (Yanaihara, 1963 [1926c]: 250). As Sakai (2008) suggests, Yanaihara’s textbook on colonial policy and population migration (1926) described the British Commonwealth as a better model than the League of Nations for governing a diverse international society. Yanaihara found the implementation of the principle of autonomy in the form of British dominions, whereby Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and others could exercise their autonomy over domestic affairs. Theoretically, Yanaihara admitted that the principle of autonomy would lead to the end of ‘territorial possession of colonies’, but he did not directly promote a breakup of empire or the immediate independence of colonies. Nevertheless, some may find his remarks on the principle of autonomy equivalent to an effort for paving a path to decolonization (Schneider, 1999).

For the introduction of autonomy and self-rule to colonies, Yanaihara supported a particular type of civic activism in colonies whose vision was inclusive and cosmopolitan. In Taiwan, he found Ts’ai Pei ho. Ts’ai became Christian while he studied in Japan and served as a core member of the Taiwanese civic movement for the establishment of a Taiwanese parliament. He wrote and edited a monthly bilingual journal, *Taiwan Seinen* or *The Tai Oan Chheng Lian* (Youth Formosa) and started a cultural campaign to promote a new writing system to be shared by the Taiwanese. Influenced by the Taisho democracy in Japan, Ts’ai (1920) took a moderate approach to his civic movement, refraining from the use of force and focusing more on the consolidation of a Taiwanese cultural and societal base within the Japanese colonial empire. Having witnessed ‘civilized’ Japan, he was willing to accept the Japanese imperial citizenship. Since Ts’ai’s political vision did not exclude the Japanese residents in Taiwan, Yanaihara acknowledged in Ts’ai’s movement a potential of coexistence among different ethnic groups.

Yanaihara’s preference to a moderate type of civic activism indicated the limit of his liberalism. Although he said that anti-colonial movements were inevitable, the movements he supported did not fundamentally challenge the existence of the Japanese empire. In this sense, he did not differ from his predecessor, Yoshino Sakuzo, who differentiated ethnic cultural identity from the making of an independent nation-state (Stegewerns, 2003). It was a pragmatic decision of those liberal nationalists when taking the logic of national self-determination under the Japanese imperial framework. This stance resonated with the attitude of Woodrow Wilson who dismissed the universal application of national self-determination. What was unique about Yanaihara was that he made it clear that autonomy and self-rule were directly connected with an ambition for the creation of a political and social space for all ethnic groups. When discussing Korea’s autonomy, Yanaihara (1963 [1926b]: 742) suggested that the Korean attainment of autonomy or independence would be less important than the ideal of coexistence and co-prosperity. For him, national self-determination was important, but it should not be the end of political activism. More important was the creation of a good society, which is grounded in his Christian belief (Nakano, 2013: 32–33). What is required therefore is not just a change in rulers’ policies but the development of a civic attitude open to the idea of an inclusive society.

## 5. Universal sovereignty as political equality

Although Yanaihara’s line of liberal internationalism was relatively moderate and practical, it did not gain Japan’s state and public support. Having seen little improvement of the political status of the

colonized, Yanaihara moved away from his earlier ideas about empire as an ‘imperial federation’. In this section, I will shed light on Yanaihara’s growing attention to sovereignty as political equality by examining his writings in the 1930s on the two major topics: the level of importance of Manchuria for Japan and Japan’s naval ruling over the South Pacific islands (former German territories; Micronesia). Both Manchuria and the South Pacific islands were incorporated into the sphere of Japan’s geopolitical and economic interest while they were not designated as Japan’s colonies. Manchuria was at the heart of the Sino-Japanese conflict in the 1930s whereas the South Pacific islands were not under Japan’s sovereignty but were administered by Japan with the mandate of the League of Nations. In working on those topics, Yanaihara emphasized the importance of sovereignty, national self-determination, and multilateralism.

### 5.1. *Manchuria and beyond*

Yanaihara made a research trip to Manchuria in 1933 to make ‘academic criticism’ of the direction being taken in Manchurian issues and to counter the ‘many empty, opportunist arguments prevailing today’ (Yanaihara, 1963 [1934]: 483). He criticized Japan’s military venture as economically unprofitable, and policies toward Manchuria as stoking the rise of Chinese nationalism. To evaluate the validity of the pan-Asianist claim that Manchuria was Japan’s special interest, Yanaihara examined the historical connection between Japan and Manchuria, Chinese nationalist influence on this region, and economic data on agriculture, material sources, and trade relations. As Townsend (2000: 182–183) suggests, a co-operation and co-prosperity concept were compatible with Yanaihara’s work. However, Yanaihara himself never supported the incorporation of Manchuria into the Japanese bloc both for economic and moral reasons. In *Manshu Mondai* (The Manchurian Question), he did not deny the importance of Manchuria for Japan’s economy while concluding that Manchuria was not particularly special to Japan (Yanaihara, 1963 [1934]: 588). In his short commentary for Christian readership, he suggested that Japan’s behaviors over Manchuria should be examined from the point of justice (Yanaihara, 1964 [1933]: 196). In this sense, he should be distinguished from Japanese pan-Asianists who later became the brain trust of the Japanese government.

If Yanaihara was not explicit about his view on Japan’s increasing influence over Manchuria, he was more outspokenly opposed to any further military expansion. As Mitani (2000) suggests, Yanaihara critically regarded Japan’s policies as indifferent to the rise of Chinese nationalism. Although the Japanese Sinologists’ description of China not as a state but as a civilization can be easily used to justify Japanese expansionist policy,<sup>7</sup> he emphasized an economic and normative basis for Chinese nationhood. First, he acknowledged the collaboration of Chiang Kai shek’s nationalist government and T.V. Soong (Sung Tzu-wen)’s financial corporations as a strong drive for the development of Chinese capitalism (Yanaihara, 1963 [1937a]: 332). Second, pointing out the similarities of China’s chaotic and unstable situation with what the Meiji leaders in Japan once had to confront, he argued that ‘although the Meiji government was a feudal one and had a sufficient reason to be accused in terms of a lack of democracy, it cannot be denied that the Meiji government achieved national unification’ (Yanaihara, 1963 [1937a]: 332). Although he mistakenly undervalued the growing influence of Chinese communism, in this way, he urged the Japanese readers to respect Chinese nationalism and the democratic process of national unification.

His article on Japan’s ‘continent’ policy (1937) also brought the idea of multilateral cooperation and diplomatic solutions to the fore. By that time, Japan had withdrawn from the League of Nations and Japan’s military clique had taken the dominant position in the imperial government. Yanaihara argued that the Japanese government should not allow any more military expansion beyond Manchuria,

<sup>7</sup>By 1930 Japanese Sinologists such as Uchida Ryohei (1874–1937) and Naito Konan (1866–1934) had already argued that ‘China was not a state but merely a civilization’ (Teow 1999: 175). Around the late 1930s, this perception of China became dominant.

because it would destroy its relations with Western state powers such as Britain, the USA, the Soviet Union (Yanaihara, 1963 [1937c]: 105). Yanaihara urged Japan to take a multilateral approach and decrease the economic burden and political pressure on the Japanese people. He implied that this multilateral approach was consistent with the Japanese public voices even though silenced in the political crisis after the 15 May incident (Yanaihara, 1963 [1937c]: 105).

## 5.2. The South Pacific islands

The Mandate system was created under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations to govern the non-European territories and local inhabitants of the defeated great powers in World War I, one of which is the South Pacific islands under the mandate of Japan. Commissioned by the Japanese Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Yanaihara conducted his research on the South Pacific islands in the 1930s. He made two research trips to the islands and published the result of research and discovery in *Nanyo Gunto no Kenkyu* (A Study of South Pacific Islands) and journal articles. How he described the island populations fit with the image of those who were 'not yet able to stand by themselves' in the Covenant. Unlike the Koreans and Han-Chinese in Taiwan, they did not seem ready for international membership and citizenship. He endorsed the need of tutelage, as described by the Covenant and specifically supported the Japanese 'civilizing' mission for indigenous populations living there. His attitude was characterized by paternalism, assuming that those people were underdeveloped or 'unacculturated', and thus in need of being protected and enlightened by 'civilized' others (Tomiya, 1997).

In 'Shokumin Seisaku yori Mitaru Inin Tochi Seido' (The Mandate System from the View of Colonial Policy) (1937), Yanaihara did not hide a deeply entrenched skepticism of the practical use of the Mandate system to achieve its mission (Yanaihara, 1963 [1937b]). The League lacked the mechanism to monitor and bind the mandatory states even if they failed to fulfill their obligations to protect the interests of the Mandate societies. There were little measures to prevent imperial states from overriding the noble idea embedded in the Mandate system. However, Yanaihara pointed out that the Mandate system had new principles such as non-annexation, freedom of commerce, and the tutelage of people in mandated territories. What was significant in his eye was that the norm embedded in this system would surpass narrow national interests, tolerate political and cultural differences, and promote a civilizing mission. He considered the Mandate system innovative as it was an embryonic institutional arrangement that could open up a new political space to manage the political and cultural divide between the imperial sovereign states and stateless non-Europeans.

Compared with the 1926 textbook that set the British Commonwealth as a potential framework for governing diverse populations, his emphasis on the importance of sovereignty was strong in a later period. In 1927, he categorized it as one of 'new colonial policies', which would abolish 'state utilitarianism, exploitative control, monopoly, and exclusive competition' (Yanaihara, 1963 [1927]: 525). In 1929, he presented the Mandate system as part of a long process toward international cooperation (Yanaihara, 1963 [1929a]: 165–167). The last one in 1937 highlighted the significance of the Mandate system (Yanaihara, 1963 [1937b]). In those articles, he sounded more favorable to the Mandate system than the British Empire or the Commonwealth.

The Mandate system was the last viable reference point that Yanaihara could turn to in the 1930s to correct Japan's wrongdoings in the South Pacific islands. At the heart of this shift toward the universalization of sovereignty was his observation of unequal relationships and unfair treatment of indigenous populations. By affirming the progressive and moral value of the liberal norm embedded in the Mandate system, he encouraged Japan to fulfill its mission as a mandatory state by reforming the indigenous societies to fit the 'standard of civilization'. He endorsed the development of institutional arrangements to protect the wealth of stateless peoples and made it clear that the use of a hard or coercive power to achieve the objective of acculturation would defeat the objective. In the end, this is a way of achieving national self-determination and universalize sovereignty as political equality. The direction illuminated by Yanaihara can be contrasted with that of Japanese pan-Asianism in the 1930s, characterized by regionalism and anti-Westernism.



## 6. Yanaihara in new Japan and a new liberal international order

The failure of Wilsonian liberalism in Japan forced Yanaihara out of Tokyo Imperial University in 1937. Only after the defeat of Japan in 1945, a new political space was opened up under the US occupation. Japan experienced a number of political, legal, and constitutional changes to make the country more democratic without the supreme authority and command of the emperor. Japan was also invited to participate in the US-led international system to pursue its economic interests through trade and diplomacy. Soon after the war, he was asked to return to Tokyo Imperial University and act freely as a professor with the major role in the reconstruction of the Department of Economics. Yanaihara (1964 [1946]: 116–117) rejected this invitation four times, saying that he wanted to devote the rest of his life to evangelical activities. When he finally accepted the fifth offer, he made it a condition that, (1) he would continue to work on the evangelical activities such as issuing his leaflet, *Kashin* (Joyful News), to the Christian audience; (2) he would work only to the extent that the academic and administrative work in the University did not affect his evangelical activities. Yanaihara then returned to the previous working place, became the Dean of the Social Science Institute at the University from 1946 to 1949, the Dean of the College of Arts and Science from 1949 to 1951, and the President of Tokyo University from 1952 to 1957. While gradually withdrawing from academic research activities, Yanaihara continued his lecturing on the Bible and took more administrative duties to turn his university into an independent academic and educational institution.

Compared with Japanese conservative politicians and professors, Yanaihara ‘embraced’ Japan’s defeat rather willingly (for the expression of ‘embracing the defeat’, see Dower 1999). For him, it was an opportunity from God to realize an unfulfilled Taisho liberal dream of making a more democratic state and pursuing multilateral cooperation. He welcomed the trend of internationalism that provides nations with an equal status of state sovereignty to facilitate agreements among states: it would contribute to the strengthening of the basis for a new international organization, such as the United Nations, and maintaining international peace (Yanaihara, 1963 [1955]: 72). Yanaihara also regarded economic interactions as one of the constituents of international peace. However, he identified ‘US imperialism in the guise of liberalism’ since its declaration of an ‘open door’ policy in 1899 (Yanaihara, 1963 [1955]: 58). Discerning an imperialist ambition for economic exploitation in the postwar US technical assistance for developing countries (such as Truman’s Point Four program) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (or the World Bank), he suggested that the underlying purpose of US financial aid after 1945 did not stem from a moral concern with the wealth and development of other countries but its own interest (Yanaihara, 1963 [1955]: 67). For him, this remain of imperialism was a cause for the instabilities and inequalities of a new liberal international order.

With a deep concern for the immature development of a shared norm that we should go beyond the logic of power politics and capitalism, Yanaihara placed greater stress on the establishment of comprehensive political control and regulations of international economic and social affairs. He raised five conditions for world peace:

- (1) Freedom of economic, social, and cultural exchange among nations
- (2) Global regulation of resources and economic markets
- (3) The abolition of military arms and the right of war
- (4) The abolition of secret diplomacy, secret treaty, and secret police
- (5) The establishment of international law and international criminal court (Yanaihara, 1963 [1955]: 71–72).

To get closer to the fulfillment of those conditions, Yanaihara called for ‘cosmopolitan rationality’ (*sekai risei*) (Yanaihara, 1963 [1955]: 72). Having experienced the Japanese wartime era, he returned to the starting point of individual freedom and aimed to create the basis of world peace within Japan. In his belief, while the freedom of speech and communications should be protected, each individual

also should make an effort to nurture moral quality and personality through self-discipline and self-cultivation. With this conviction, he was more active in education and Christian activities in postwar Japan. As the president of Tokyo University, he tried to protect the university's autonomy from an interference of state authorities at the Popolo Incident, which was a symbolic example of the postwar conflict between the university and the police (Toyama and Yokota, 1964). In 1952, Popolo, a theatrical group accredited by the university, presented in campus a play based on the Matsukawa Incident of 1949. Because the incident was highly controversial, considered to be a conspiracy of the USA and the Japanese government to purge the Japanese communists, plain-clothed policemen secretly monitoring the play confiscated students' notebooks as evidence and arrested some students as communist suspects. At the Committee of Judicial Affairs in the House of Representatives, Yanaihara stood up and argued that the University should have autonomy and that the police have no right to interrogate teachers and students in academic institutions.<sup>8</sup>

Yanaihara's moderate but persistent defense of individual freedom for education and Christian activities fitted in the postwar Japan's political and normative structure and contributed to the anchoring of Wilsonian liberal ideas such as democracy and working through diplomacy in postwar Japan, even though he never regarded those ideas, together with national self-determination, as the end but the means of establishing world peace for humanity. Underneath his dedicated work and contribution, there remained his critical view on the structure of power politics and economic exploitation in the new liberal international system.

## 7. Concluding thoughts

A wide range of Yanaihara's writings demonstrate the main thrusts of Wilsonian liberalism such as national self-determination, democracy, and multilateralism. Yanaihara subscribed to Lockean classical liberalism, which could justify the expropriation of the land beyond national borders to increase the wealth of all humanity. At the same time, a concern about human oppression contributed to his conviction that free movement of people should not be interfered. This initial tone of liberalism and humanitarianism may sound like an excuse of colonial settlement, but in his study of colonial Korea and Taiwan, he aimed to uncover the fallacy of colonial economic development for all. While recognizing the problem of racial and ethnic inequality rigidly embedded in the colonial economic and political structure, he endorsed civic activism in colonies as an engine for creating an inclusive colonial society. Regarding national self-determination not as the end but as the means, Yanaihara imagined multiethnic coexistence in a more democratic empire. This idea would never provide a satisfactory answer to those who want to achieve national independence at any cost.

When the pan-Asian ideological and military aggrandizement obstructed the consolidation of liberal internationalism in Japan, Yanaihara's sense of disillusionment with the reforming prospect of the existing empire deepened. Having examined the uneven development of the colonial economy in Korea and Taiwan, he doubted the ability of existing international and imperial institutions to moderate state interests for proper treatment of the colonized, in particular, less advanced and unorganized indigenous populations. Imperial states incorporated various parts of the world into their governing framework to maximize the economic and military opportunities outside the national borders. Their purpose was not a fair distribution of wealth, and Japan was no different in this sense. Yanaihara, therefore, had to abandon the idea of realizing the liberal internationalist vision in a colonial empire and pushed forth the idea of universal sovereignty as a way of achieving political equality. His recognition of state failures to realize the coexistence and cooperation among different ethnic

<sup>8</sup>After the death of Yanaihara, the Judgment of Supreme Court (1963) quashed the first judgement of the Tokyo High Court on the grounds that Popolo's gathering 'must be said to cease to be one for truly academic study and expression', and hence, 'the entry of the policemen in to the gathering in question did not infringe academic freedom and the autonomy of the university'. Primarily because Popolo portrayed the controversial Matsukawa case, as part of a fund-raising campaign in an 'anti-colonialism struggle day', the court regarded this gathering as 'political' act, which was out of the scope of academic freedom and university autonomy.

groups in colonial settings also explained why Yanaihara was more alert to Chinese nationalism and more cautious about Japan's pan-Asianist ideas than other liberal scholars in Japan. Yanaihara's view preceded a general normative shift in Japan from a liberal imperialist world order to a liberal internationalist one.

Yanaihara's political thought included the thread of Wilsonian liberalism but it also illuminated the fact that liberalism should and could be constantly challenged because of the contradictions within. Yanaihara's dedicated works and activities in education and Christianity after 1945 demonstrated his ambition to develop the foundation of civil society to make liberal democracy work in Japan. Although Yanaihara never considered himself Wilsonian, he was a proof that Wilsonian ideas existed and survived in Japan.

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