International Journal of Asian Studies, **3**, 2 (2006), pp. 255–268 2006 Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017|S1479591406000350 Printed in the United Kingdom

REVIEW ARTICLE

THE "WASHINGTON SYSTEM" AND ITS AFTERMATH: REEVALUATING *AFTER IMPERIALISM* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE JAPANESE HISTORIOGRAPHY

Shigeki Mori

Kurume University
E-mail mori_shigeki@kurume-u.ac.jp

Iriye, Akira. *After Imperialism.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, and New York: Atheneum, 1973, paperback; "Preface to the New Edition." In the republished edition. Chicago: Imprint Publications, Inc, 1990.

Though it lasted only a decade, the "Washington System" brought Japan the only opportunity to enjoy peace and prosperity as an equal among the Great Powers. The system had been established in the wake of World War I as the first framework of its kind for international peace and diplomacy in the Far East. It is perhaps because of the system's lofty goals as well as the horrors of the period that followed its demise that Japanese scholars of diplomatic and international history have devoted their time and energy to better understanding it. This review article is aimed at reconsidering this historiography by returning to what could be called the scholarly foundation of the inquiry, Akira Iriye's *After Imperialism*, in order to illuminate the fruits of Iriye's and subsequent scholars' research, as well as the remaining problems among the scholarly works on this topic.

When Iriye's book was first published, it challenged the then-prevalent view among scholars of the 1920s as a period of transition between two turbulent eras of war and expansion. Iriye's new view is a system of multinational cooperation among the powers to deal with the situation in China after the breakdown of the "diplomacy of imperialism." He employed two methodologies, which enabled him to construct a novel image of the 1920s in the Far East as a separate epoch. First, his analysis considered the "international framework," within which each player's behavior is restricted. Secondly, he adopted a multi-archival approach, through which he successfully incorporated not only the decision-making and behavior of multiple powers, but also newly emerging forces in this era, such as Wilson's "new diplomacy," the Soviet Union as a revolutionary advocate, and Chinese nationalism.

This book's vast scope and analytical conclusions have made a great impact on the Japanese scholars working on diplomatic and international history. Consequently, the

prevailing view on the "Washington System" among Japanese scholars has been that it was the first attempt to establish a new order of multinational cooperation in the Far East. At the same time, most Japanese scholars have considered this framework not so much "multinational" as "multi-great-power," in which Euro-American powers and Japan were the major players, who had to work against the potentially disrupting forces of Chinese nationalism and Soviet revolutionary internationalism.[1]

This somewhat ambiguous image of the system brought disagreement over the nature of its fundamental significance, which provided the setting for two divergent currents to emerge from Iriye's work, and a group of dissenters from that view. The first is a group of works focusing on the policy-making process of the governments of the Washington powers, especially the United States and Japan. Laying beneath this approach by the Japanese scholars has been their interest in understanding the conditions under which American–Japanese friendship succeeds or fails. While the works of the elder generation, including Chihiro Hosoya and Sadao Asada, began this current of studies,[2] this topic has continued to interest younger scholars down to the present, reflecting the significance of the relationship between the United States and Japan.[3]

The second group of works explores the Washington System in a universal context of the pursuit of international exchange and cooperation. These scholarly works, focusing on the system of international law or other norms of the kind, might well claim to be the legitimate heirs to Iriye's work. In the wake of the publication of *After Imperialism*, Iriye gradually shifted his interest from specific cases of interaction among nations in the field of the Pacific and East Asia to a more general and global international order, as mentioned later in this essay.[4] Thus, recent Japanese scholars consider Iriye as an outstanding example of this approach. Among the works of the younger scholars who inherited this research interest are Hatsue Shinohara's study of the thought relating to international laws during the inter-war era, Hiroharu Kobayashi's study on the system of international laws and the League of Nations, and some other monographs on the effort to outlaw war during the 1920s.[5]

However, another analytical current dissenting from these two emphasizes the importance of Chinese nationalism and Soviet internationalism, and criticizes the failure of the first two currents to address these forces. Early works in this group insist that the system was little more than a reorganized imperialistic order for the Great Powers to deal with emerging Chinese nationalism.[6] Recently, however, scholars are changing their views on China, from seeing it as a mere subordinate to the powers to treating it as an active player. They are now beginning to appreciate the significance of the Wilsonian idea, on which the Washington System was based, calling for China to establish itself as an independent nation state. Tōru Kubo is among the exponents of this view, as seen in his monograph

1 For the latest Japanese historiography on this subject, see Koike 2003. See also Kubo 1995.

2 Hosoya, 1978; Asada 1993.

3 The most outstanding among the latest Japanese works on this subject is Hattori 2001.

4 Iriye 1984; Iriye 1997.

5 Shinohara 2003; Kobayashi 2002; Ikō 2002.

6 For example, Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai ed. 1971.

on "The Versailles and Washington System."[7] Thus, by emphasizing the importance of the China factor in the international relations of the Far East, they are challenging the previous image of the system as a framework of cooperation solely among the international powers.

Therefore, while Iriye remains an outstanding figure in the scholarship on the "Washington System," it seems that many other scholars are now emerging who have improved upon Iriye's work by making more detailed analyses and even presenting other alternatives. However, we might say that Japanese scholars have failed to pursue further an important angle that is absent from Iriye's *stated theses*. While *After Imperialism* represents the origin of the former two of these views and discussions, it also includes what we might call the origin of the dissenting discussions. Adopting the "international framework" as his analytical instrument, he is overarchingly occupied with the question of why and how the Washington signatories failed to cooperate in establishing a new order in the Far East. At the same time, his book is rich in *narrative* implying China's significant role as an active agent and participant in this system. While Iriye finds the cause of the system's frustration in the failure of the powers to deal with the disruptions in China, he also implies that China might have been the cornerstone of a stable system. Had it not been for even an ineffective China, the situation of the Far East would have been worse to the extent of armed clashes among the powers. While his multi-archival research into the policy-making process of the powers aims to demonstrate the causes of the powers' failure, his book also implies that some Japanese diplomats realized the significance of China. Therefore, while he is surely the founder of the aforementioned first group of works, his narrative relating to this topic goes beyond his successors. Also, while his analytical framework and theses are the origin of the second current of works, they do not engage many points raised in his narrative, which is the progenitor of the third, dissenting current of works. Iriye's narrative goes rather further than his own analysis and theses, leaving many questions unaddressed.

Despite raising these interesting issues in *After Imperialism*, Iriye's later work has not pursued this fertile avenue of inquiry into East Asian history. In his *Power and Culture*, Iriye points out that even during World War II, the United States considered cooperation with China to be difficult because of its apprehension of possible racial conflict between China and the West, and because of China's internal rift, which implies that he has reduced the significance of China in international cooperation in the Far East. The State Department went so far as to prefer Japan to China as the United States' postwar partner in Asia.[8] At the same time, he (Iriye) continued to concentrate on questions relating to international exchange and cooperation, including the discussion of the quest for a new order, or "cultural internationalism," often borne by actors other than the sovereign states.[9] Because of this view he seems to share his interests with the aforementioned second group of works. In his preface to the new edition of *After Imperialism* republished in 1990, he confines his discussion to international cooperation and interdependence during the 1920s and hardly

7 Kubo 1995.

8 Iriye 1981, pp. 142–47 and pp. 201–13.

9 Iriye 1997.

mentions other factors, which implies that the interests of the author himself have shifted away from addressing the points in his narrative of this book.[10]

Therefore, it might be this gap between the narrative and the thesis that accounts for the divergence among his academic offspring in Japan. Though not clearly addressed in the analytical framework, this book still raises many points relating to the active role played by China within the context of the multinational cooperation in the Far East during the 1920s, which might shed new light on the Sino–Japanese relationship, and lead to a synthesis of the divergent offspring. The Washington System might have been neither an imperialist order aimed at stifling Chinese nationalism nor leverage for China to attack the powers, but might have offered an opportunity of equal cooperation between China and the powers. Accordingly, it is worth reevaluating this classic on the fortieth anniversary of its first publication.

Let us now examine two of Iriye's points in this book: the failure of the Washington powers in dealing with China, and "the lack of comprehensive policy," which Iriye asserts was the primary cause of the Washington powers' failure, in order to illuminate the gap between his narrative and analysis.

We can begin with the first point of why Iriye emphasizes the failure of the powers in multinational cooperation and insists on "the collapse of the Washington System" as early as in the middle of 1926. From the very beginning of this system, he argues, the Washington signatories failed to cooperate in responding to the situation in China. The reasons for this failure were their disappointment with the inability of the Chinese government to establish domestic order, their conflicts of interest, and their policy of non-interference with Chinese internal affairs in keeping with "the spirit of the Washington Conference (chapter 1)."

Iriye also emphasizes that China had become inspired by the Soviet campaign against imperialism. China became more anti-imperialistic than it would have been without this influence (pp. 37–43), and began to attack the foreign powers' rights that had been granted by the unequal treaties. Alarmed by this situation, the powers abandoned the multinational approach in favor of a unilateral approach toward China in order to protect their interests to the greatest extent possible. Thus, by the fall of 1926, the Washington System had ceased to function (chapter 2).

The next stage began with the progress of Chinese unification after 1928. The powers began to compete for bilateral understandings with the Nationalist government on the issues of restoring tariff autonomy and abolishing extraterritoriality. Faced with a powerful China, Japan realized that it should secure Western support to deal with China. At the same time, Japan began to seek cooperation with the Western powers in order to get assistance for returning to the gold standard. Because of the world depression beginning in the fall of 1929, however, the interest of the powers in China became incompatible with Japan's, which hampered Japan's foreign policy. The depression also brought about an alliance in Japan between the critics of this diplomatic failure and the extremists in the Japanese military. Thus, this alliance resulting from Japan's failure in cooperating with the powers to deal with an ascending China gave these military extremists support for the Manchurian Incident in 1931 (chapter 8).

10 Iriye 1990.

This series of failures may well make us skeptical about the feasibility of this system of multilateral cooperation. Iriye, however, asserts the significance of the cooperative 1920s. Despite these failures, he insists, the course that the powers followed marked an irreversible change from the prewar diplomacy of imperialism. He claims that the stability of international relations in the 1920s was not solely predicated on a balance among the powers, and even unilateral action in China by one of the powers would not necessarily have led to an armed clash with others (pp. 87–88).

We have now come up with two questions regarding the issue of the Washington powers' failure. First, was there an international norm in the Far East, regardless of "the collapse of the Washington System," which forced the powers to bow to the principle of multinational cooperation? Secondly, if there was a norm forcing the powers into cooperation, what was the significance of the "Washington System?" Would it not be plausible to say that the system itself continued to work even after 1926?

The former question might be answered positively by Hatsue Shinohara and other scholars who believe in the significance of the system of international cooperation. However, Iriye asserts that the powers' reluctance in taking a positive step toward China was one of the causes of the powers' failure. Thus, if the norm worked as a binding force, it ironically undermined the system of cooperation based on this norm. At the same time, some other scholars doubt that international norms are fully binding on sovereign states, and argue that even the Washington System was based on a balance of the specific interests of the various powers. For instance, Sadao Asada, though his essay preceded *After Imperialism*, describes the ambiguous "security" clause of the Nine-Power Treaty as representing a subtle balance between Japan's "special interests" in Manchuria and the United States' open-door policy.[11] Among the younger scholars, Ryuji Hattori emphasizes the importance of the power balance and particularistic understandings, not adherence to international norms among the United States, Britain, and Japan in maintaining the stability of the Far East.[12] This point has some validity, since no one can force a sovereign state to give up its interest and follow an idea or norm.

However, Iriye's point of the irreversible change from the pre-World War I era to the 1920s is highly persuasive. Therefore, if we accept that there was no international binding force, what brought about this change? Regarding the Washington System, we might address this question by pointing out that the system relied on the stability of the Chinese state and society rather than the powers' loyalty to benevolence and other lofty ideas. It was not an ordinary framework of international cooperation among equal participants, such as those dealing with collective security or global warming. It was established within the specific sphere of Chinese territory in order to coordinate the powers' activities so as to maintain their properties and interests in this area. Accordingly, the system was a domestic as well as an international system. Domestic system as it was, it could and had to depend on the police and other Chinese authorities to maintain order and the integrity of the state, which was a great difference from international relations without any authoritative power above the sovereign states. Its function was fundamentally predicated on the

11 Asada 1961.

12 Hattori 2001.

stability of Chinese society. Thus, China was not a mere disrupting force, but was in fact a critical supporting pillar in the Washington System. However extreme its attitude toward the powers was, and however unstable its society was, the powers had no alternative other than relying on Chinese authority.

It is likely that Iriye himself would have concluded this thesis regarding the dual nature of the system, since he also highlights the importance of the China factor. For example, he points out how internal factors in China after the launch of the Northern Expedition encouraged ever harsher attacks against the rights and interests of the foreign powers. Although the friction among the revolutionary factions and the Peking government was intensifying, both the factions and the government endorsed anti-imperialism and in fact competed to be more anti-imperialistic in order to win mass support. They unanimously attacked the existing treaties, and never departed from this course, let alone disjointed China itself (chapter 3).[13]

While Iriye insists that Russian manipulation caused the Chinese revolutionaries to be extremely anti-imperialistic, he spares little room for the Russian activities compared to his lengthy description of the situation in China (chapter 1). This might be partly because of the difficulty at the time of accessing the Russian archives, but it also suggests that he overestimates what was a catalyzing role played by the Russians. The author's description of the contending factions implies that Chinese society had developed a unified nationalistic consciousness by the mid-1920s and, therefore, a revolutionary drive had already developed in China. Iriye himself describes the expulsion of the Soviet advisors from China as a result of domestic political conflicts (pp. 147–48).[14]

On this point, Iriye's narrative went beyond his analysis in advance of more recent scholarly views. As previously mentioned, it was not until recently that some Japanese scholars have shown that China utilized the Wilsonian ideals embodied in the Washington treaties to uphold its demand for complete sovereignty. China felt that the Washington powers had to accept its demands not only because the Wilsonian idea required them to do so, but also because Chinese domestic acceptance and support of this system were just as necessary for maintaining the order of this area as was the active participation of the powers.

Under these circumstances, armed intervention in China would cost rather than benefit the powers. The Chinese authorities could save the Washington powers the expense of maintaining orderly commercial markets. On the other hand, any armed intervention in China would encounter fierce resistance backed by nationalism, and also run the risk of colliding with other powers. Political and military control of China by force would not pay, even if the powers still remained imperialistic. As Gallagher and Robinson aptly stated in their monumental essay, the powers would retain "control informally if possible, and formally if [only] necessary."[15] In China, it seemed to be possible. The powers themselves could concentrate on maintaining and promoting their economic interests, which

13 One of the latest Japanese works of modern Chinese history demonstrates that even during the era of the Peking government, there was considerable cooperation among local governments, the Canton government, and the Peking government on fundamental diplomatic policy. See Kawashima 2004.

14 According to Kawashima, the Nationalist government of Canton adopted a policy based on nationalism and revolution in order to contrast itself with the Peking government and assert its legitimacy. Kawashima 2004, pp. 428–44.

were not as costly and risky as pursuing military interests would have been. This can help explain why the Great Powers did not respect the Wilsonian idea of national self-determination elsewhere, as evidenced by their colonial policy of formal control in other parts of the world, including Southeast Asia.

Iriye and his Japanese followers are in disagreement over the second question of when the "Washington System" truly met its demise. In chapter two of this book, Iriye asserts that the system collapsed when the powers' failure in resolving the difference among their interests had thwarted the Peking Tariff Conference in the summer of 1926, and the powers shifted to a unilateral approach. He seems to assume that making "an overall, well-integrated policy encompassing all aspects of foreign relations (p. 221)" is indispensable for international cooperation and that the system was disrupted because these requirements were not fulfilled.

However, some other scholars, including Chihiro Hosoya, have criticized this point and argue that this system existed up to the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident of 1931, for the reason that the powers never gave up their efforts to cooperate with each other. The powers were loyal to "the spirit of the Washington Conference" even after the adjournment of the Tariff Conference.[16] These scholars consider what Iriye calls the "essential difference" from the pre-World War I diplomacy of imperialism as the "Washington System."

We might resolve this disagreement by again considering the China factor. By whatever name we might call this international system in the Far East, we should never fail to keep in mind that China was at the center of this system. Before the Tariff Conference was convened in the fall of 1925, this system had a type of "China vs. the powers" structure. After the adjournment of the conference, the system was reorganized by China so as to consist of separate bilateral ties between China and each power. Thus, we might agree with the view that the system of multinational cooperation did continue up to the incident at Mukden, but that it continued not out of "the spirit of the Washington Conference," but because of China's involvement.

Iriye's next point to be examined here is "the lack of comprehensive policy." He argues that not only Japan but also all the Washington powers lacked a "comprehensive foreign policy," and as a result, they failed to prevent the Manchurian Incident. Before the world depression, he argues, the powers were so engaged in pursuing the promotion of their economic interests that they dealt with political and military problems separately from their economic policy regardless of the contradictions among these areas (chapter 4, pp. 301–02). Although this is a very interesting and enlightening point, it might make us exaggerate the importance of the Western powers in this system compared to China.

Iriye implies that, without any support from the Western powers, Japan's quest for a new order on the basis of the bilateral understanding with China would be inevitably doomed in the face of the surge of Chinese nationalism. After the frustration of the Tariff Conference in the fall of 1926, Japan adopted a unilateral approach toward China. However, Iriye points out that Japan mistook the competitiveness among the factions of the Chinese revolutionaries for a simple division between the extremists and the moderate "reasonable" factions, and believed that the latter were amenable to a bilateral agreement.

15 Gallagher and Robinson 1953, p. 13.

16 Hosoya 1978.

Iriye simply describes this as "a failure" and mentions the opposition of the Nationalists to Japan's plan regarding Manchuria (p. 191).

Iriye points out that it was not until the Nationalists successfully concluded their Northern Expedition campaign and resumed their control over China's diplomacy in mid-1929 that Japan realized the failure of its unilateralism, and tried to return to cooperation with the Western Powers. Unfortunately, Japan would find no support from the powers in dealing with China because the powers were hit by the world depression in 1929 (pp. 255–64). Meanwhile, the Japanese leadership did not fully realize that its independent policy in Manchuria would precipitate a serious confrontation with the Western powers (p. 191). In short, Iriye insists, Japan failed to coordinate its diplomatic policy toward China with its policy toward the Western powers, which brought about a setback to Japan's diplomatic goals, and encouraged the recklessness of the military. Iriye's course of discussion leads us to conclude that it was the depression that was the most important cause of Japan's failure in returning to feasible cooperation with the Western powers.

However, we might raise some questions about this thesis. First, if the depression destroyed cooperation, what would have happened without the depression? The Washington powers failed again and again to cooperate successfully during the 1920s. Why could it have been possible on this particular occasion, even if it had not been for the depression? Would it not be plausible to say that the powers must have failed to cooperate regardless of the depression? Then, would successful cooperation among the powers have led to favorable agreements with a unified Chinese government? Would this approach have been a mere restoration of imperialistic control over China, which was inevitably doomed in the face of the rise of Chinese nationalism?

These questions suggest that Japan's cooperation with the Western powers would not have contributed to creating an advantageous agreement with China. At the same time, Iriye dismisses the possibility of a successful unilateral approach of Japan toward China, as mentioned above. If both of these views are true, Japan would have had to steer between Scylla and Charybdis toward an understanding with China. This might sound as if the Sino–Japanese relationship at the time was to inevitably deteriorate toward war. However, we might reconsider Iriye's negative evaluation of the Japanese unilateral actions. Again, *After Imperialism* gives us ample data on this topic showing that Japan could have succeeded in coming to a bilateral understanding with China regardless of the attitude of the Western powers, although such examples are not engaged in the theses of this book.

The first example is that under the Tanaka Cabinet (1927–1929), most of the Foreign Ministry officials were amenable to accept whatever regime ruled in China if it brought stability to Manchuria and guaranteed the protection of Japanese rights and interests (pp. 167–69). In the summer of 1928, when the Northern Expedition was ongoing, some of the diplomats went so far as to advocate rapprochement with the Nationalists while Prime Minister Tanaka pursued cooperation with Zhang Zuolin, the warlord of Manchuria (pp. 239–41).

The second example is that although these views were not reflected in Tanaka's formal foreign policy, they seemed to be at least partly coming true by the spring of 1929, after the Jinan Incident and the assassination of Zhang Zuolin. Japan and China resolved issues including a graded schedule of tariff raises, abolition of internal transit duties, and the solution of the Jinan Incident, each of them on the basis of give-and-take. Only the problems relating to Manchuria remained as pending (pp. 246–50).

Iriye himself postulates that these "terms of settlement revealed Japan's retreat" (p. 250). As for the term after the resignation of Tanaka, he only mentions the restored Foreign Minister Shidehara's setbacks in his attempt to reach agreement with the Nationalists (p. 263). But this view is questionable in light of the latest works on Sino–Japanese relations, which suggest that Iriye's narrative goes beyond his analysis again. For instance, Tetsuya Sakai describes the acting minister to China, Shigemitsu Mamoru (in office 1930–1931) as an advocate of a bilateral Sino–Japanese partnership.[17] Seiichi Koike develops this view and demonstrates that Japan's "appeasement policy" toward China led by Shigemitsu was virtually in the process of being realized on the eve of the incident at Mukden.[18] Although these works use a similar fact base as Iriye's, they challenge his interpretation by asserting the possibility of a successful bilateral agreement between China and Japan.

After all, according to the facts in Iriye's narrative, the only major hindrance to Sino–Japanese bilateral understanding was Japan's unwillingness to sacrifice its interests in Manchuria. However, we should remember that it was not so much economic as military, compared to the interests around the Yangtze River. It was the Army rather than diplomats that was unwilling to yield Japanese interests in Manchuria. Thus, it was the Army that considered the outcome of the Sino–Japanese negotiations as a "retreat," with which diplomats might disagree. Moreover, it was not until the mid-1930s that the Army consolidated its sway over the policy-making process, which implies that we should not overestimate its influence during the 1920s.[19]

Since the new order that Japan pursued in the Far East was centered on China, Japan should have reached a bilateral agreement with China on this new order prior to the arrangement of cooperation with the Western powers. Japan, however, prioritized cooperation with the powers in order to force China's recognition of Japan's interests in Manchuria. This adherence to Manchuria eventually brought an appeal to arms. The Japanese leadership approved this military action on the expectation that the Western powers would acquiesce in this action.[20] It was not the "lack of comprehensive foreign policy," but the existence of impractical comprehensive foreign policy that hampered Japan's quest for a new order in the Far East.

Finally, let us discuss the significance of the 1931 Manchurian Incident by reconsidering the perspective of this book in the aftermath of the "Washington System." Iriye states in his conclusion that the stage for the Far Eastern crisis of 1931 was set by the absence of any recognizable framework of international relations after the demise of the old system of imperialist diplomacy. This absence drove players in the region to pursue a new order, out of which came the motive of Japan's occupation of Manchuria (pp. 302–03). Later, Iriye develops this view in another essay and emphasizes the similarity of the cooperative

17 Sakai 1989.

18 Koike 2003.

19 Most Japanese scholars agree that the turning point in Japanese civil–military relations was the 2.26 Incident of 1936. For example, see Fujiwara 1951; Hata 1962.

20 The most prominent example is a recollection by the Showa Emperor that Manchuria was so marginal an area that the Great Powers would not be concerned about it. See Terasaki and Miller 1991.

1920s and turbulent 1930s in that both involved the quest for a new order.[21] We might say, however, that although the contemporary statesmen and diplomats might have believed in the continuity of the quest for a new order throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Manchurian Incident actually brought about a great change. There was a gap between their perception and the reality of international relations in the Far East.

Iriye depicts both Prime Minister (and concurrently Foreign Minister) Tanaka and Foreign Minister Shidehara as being committed to maintaining Japan's interests in Manchuria (chapter 4). Although professional diplomats would not necessarily agree with the policy of their superiors, as mentioned above, it is true that the diplomats' view was seldom reflected in the formal diplomatic policy of Japan. Therefore, Iriye's discussion implies that the Manchurian Incident of 1931 never interfered with Japan's fundamental goals in China, but that armed force simply took over the role of diplomacy in pursuing these goals.

Recent scholarly works on this incident follow the view of this book and downplay the impact that the Incident had on the international order. Many historians point out that in the League of Nations, the powers were indifferent to China's appeals, and instead recognized Japan's requests.[22] This implies that Japan apparently could have made an advantageous bilateral agreement with China by isolating China from the Washington powers. Toshikazu Inoue demonstrates that Japan withdrew from the League of Nations not because of its intention to confront the Western powers, but because of its desire to reach bilateral agreements with the major powers in order to isolate China. Meanwhile, Inoue argues, China realized its unfavorable position and adopted a policy of appeasement toward Japan.[23]

Under these circumstances, the Japanese diplomats might be convinced that now the rapprochement with the National government had become compatible with the protection of Japanese interests in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. Accordingly, instead of opposing the military activities in Manchuria, the Foreign Ministry began to rehash ex-Prime Minister Tanaka's plan of segregating Manchuria from China proper, and sought an understanding among China, "Manchukuo," and Japan.

Tetsuya Sakai and Inoue demonstrate that the Anti-Comintern Pact concluded with Germany in late 1936 (and with Italy in 1937) was a similar attempt to enhance cooperation with the powers in order to isolate China. Claiming that the pact aimed to contain international communism, Japan attempted to separate the Soviet Union from China and to secure recognition as the only "stabilizing power" in the Far East to deal with the disrupting forces of extreme nationalism and communism. Japan intended to use this pact to isolate China from other countries and impose its demands through bilateral negotiations.[24]

These works have made a new contribution to the research on this subject. However, while they focus on the perceptions and views of statesmen and diplomats, they fail to notice that the military acted out of the need to procure necessary resources for a possible

21 Iriye 1984.

22 For example, see Hosoya 1995.

23 Inoue 1994.

24 Sakai 1990; Inoue 1994.

war with the Soviet Union, irregardless of the dictates of foreign policy's quest for a new order. The military needed the hinterland in preparation for war with the Soviet Union. Thus, the military takeover of the policy toward China after 1931 actually marked a critical change, even if apparent goals were unchanged. The military expansion went so far as to penetrate beyond the Great Wall into the area around Peking and finally, brought about all-out war with China in the summer of 1937.

Therefore, we can see that there was a great difference between the quest for a new order in the 1920s and the quest of the 1930s. Even in the 1920s, the Japanese diplomats had to walk a fine line between the demands of China and the Japanese extremists, including the military. In the 1930s, the diplomats began to lean increasingly toward the military. The Japanese leadership failed to realize how seriously the situation had been deteriorating. A recent scholarly work demonstrates that the 1938 Japanese manifesto of "A New Order in East Asia" was not meant to exclude the powers from the Far East but rather to establish a new framework for cooperation with the powers.[25] Japan continued to pursue what seemed like a comprehensive foreign policy toward the Western powers and China, but the policy had already become impractical.

We might say that Iriye and his successors' contribution to the research into the 1930s illuminates the continuity of the views and perceptions of the Japanese leadership. On the other hand, these works almost ignore the substantial forces undermining Japan's plan for an international framework.

Even the most successful, enduring works of history tend to make teleological interpretations. They want to find a single, logically consistent course leading to their own time. Each history, however, consists of contradictory elements, and the present is but a mere incidental offspring of the past. The nature of history is such that the more amply and vividly the history is described, the more contradictory and less integrated that description becomes. We can reread, reconsider, and reinterpret such historical descriptions from any viewpoint of any era. Accordingly, these descriptive texts will survive over decades and centuries, and beyond the life of the author's own perspective. These fertile texts we call classics.

This book, *After Imperialism*, describes vividly how active and influential China was in the Far Eastern framework of multinational cooperation during the 1920s. But this narrative is not engaged fully in the author's analysis and theses. Also, this book implies that Japan could have realized that the best way to establish a new order in the Far East was to form a bilateral agreement with China, even though this would have required the sacrifice of quite a few of Japan's interests. However, Iriye's thesis does not address this point and states only that Japan should have integrated its policies toward China with those toward the Euro-American powers.

Due to these very contradictions, however, we can gain a more profound understanding of the history than were it not for them. The first contradictory point leads us to the view that the "Washington System" was not an ordinary multilateral system of international cooperation but was partly a sort of domestic system of order dependent on the Chinese authorities. The second contradictory point leads us to the view that Japan had the consistent intention of isolating China from the powers in order to create an advantageous

25 Inoue 1993.

bilateral agreement. Thus, we might say that Japan pursued cooperation with the Western powers in order to put China under the Japanese sphere of influence. This impractical goal prevented Japan from realizing that China could have been its primary partner in establishing a new order in the Far East, and, therefore, this intention set the stage for Japan's isolation not only from China but also from the powers. *After Imperialism* has achieved its status as an enduring classic because it offers us such a wealth of multi-interpretable implications.

REFERENCES

Asada 1961
Asada, Sadao. "Japan's 'Special Interests' and the Washington Conference." *The America Historical Review* 67:1 (Oct. 1961), pp. 62–70.

Asada 1993
Asada, Sadao. *Ryōtaisenkan no Nichi-bei kankei* 両大戦間の日米関係 [American–Japanese relations in the interwar era]. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1993.

Fujiwara 1951
Fujiwara, Akira. *Gunjishi* 軍事史 [Military history]. Tokyo: Toyo keizai shimposha, 1951.

Gallagher and Robinson 1953
John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson. "The Imperialism of Free Trade." *The Economic History Review*, New Series 6:1 (1953), pp. 1–15.

Hata 1962
Hata, Ikuhiko. *Gun fashizumu undōshi* 軍ファシズム運動史 [The history of military-Fascist movement]. Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1962.

Hattori 2001
Hattori, Ryūji. *Higashi Ajia kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon gaikō, 1918–1931* 東アジア国際環境の変動と日本外交 [The foreign policy of Japan in the dynamic East Asian arena, 1918–1931]. Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2001.

Hosoya 1978
Hosoya, Chihiro. "Washinton taisei no tokushitsu to hen'yō" ワシントン体制の特質と変容 [The characteristics of the Washington System and its transfiguration]. In Chihiro Hosoya, *et al.* ed., *Washinton taisei to Nichi-bei kankei* ワシントン体制と日米関係 [The American–Japanese relationship in the Washington System]. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1978, pp. 3–39.

Hosoya 1995
Hosoya, Chihiro. "Shinjuwan e no michi" 真珠湾への道 [The road to the Pearl Harbor]. In Chihiro Hosoya ed., *Nichi-bei kankei tsūshi* 日米関係史 [General history of US–Japanese relations]. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1995, pp. 110–52.

Ikō 2002
Ikō, Toshiya. *Kindai Nihon to sensō ihōka taisei* 近代日本と戦争違法化体制 [Modern history of Japan relating to the illegalization of war]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 2002.

Inoue 1993
Inoue, Toshikazu. "Kokusaikyōchō, chiikishugi, shinchitsujo" 国際協調、地域主義、新秩序 [International cooperation, regionalism, and a new order]. In Junji Banno, *et al.* eds., *Shirīzu Nihon kingendaishi: kōzō to hendō* シリーズ日本近現代史：構造と変動 [Series of monographs on modern Japanese history: its structure and dynamism]. Vol. 3. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993.

Inoue 1994
Inoue, Toshikazu. *Kiki no naka no kyōchō gaikō* 危機のなかの協調外交：日中戦争に至る対外政策の形成と展開 [Cooperative foreign policy during the era of crisis]. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1994.

Iriye 1973
Iriye, Akira. *After Imperialism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, and New York: Atheneum, 1973, paperback.

Iriye 1981
Iriye, Akira. *Power and Culture: The Japanese–American War 1941–1945*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Iriye 1984
Iriye, Akira. "Sōron–Senkanki no rekishiteki igi" 総論—戦間期の歴史的意義 [The significance of the inter-war era: an overview]. In Akira Iriye *et al.* ed., *Senkanki no Nihon gaikō* [The Japanese foreign policy during the inter-war era]. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1984, pp. 3–17.

Iriye 1990
Iriye, Akira. "Preface to the New Edition." In the republished edition of *After Imperialism*. Chicago: Imprint Publications, Inc, 1990.

Iriye 1997
Iriye, Akira. *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Kawashima 2004
Kawashima, Shin. *Chūgoku kindai gaikō no keisei* 中国近代外交の形成 [The formation of Chinese modern diplomacy]. Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2004.

Kobayashi 2002
Kobayashi, Hiroharu. *Kokusai chitsujo no keisei to kindai Nihon* 国際秩序の形成と近代日本 [Modern history of Japan relating to international order]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 2002.
Koike 2003
Koike, Seiichi. *Manshū jihen to tai Chūgoku seisaku* 満州事変と対中国政策 [The policy toward China and the Manchurian incident]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 2003.
Kubo 1995
Kubo, Tōru. "Berusaiyu taisei to Washinton taisei" ベルサイユ体制とワシントン体制 [The Versailles and Washington Systems]. In Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai, ed., *Kōza sekaishi* [Commentary on world history] Vol. 6. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1995, pp. 75–106.
Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai ed. 1971
Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai, ed. *Taiheiyō sensō shi* 太平洋戦争史 [History of the Pacific War]. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1971.
Sakai 1989
Sakai, Tetsuya. "Ei-bei kyōchō to Nitchū teikei"「英米協調」と「日中提携」[Cooperation with the Anglo-American powers or partnership with China]. *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyu* 年報近代日本研究 [Annual on Modern Japanese Studies]. Vol. 11 Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppan, 1989, pp. 61–92.
Sakai 1990
Sakai, Tetsuya. "Bōkyō gainen no dōnyū to Nisso kankei no hen'yō" 防共概念の導入と日ソ関係の変容 [The transfiguration of Russo-Japanese relations out of Japan's adoption of Anti-Comintern policy], *Hokudai hōgaku ronshū* 北大法学論集 [Hokkaido Law Review], 40:5, 6 (1990), pp. 2285–2332.
Shinohara 2003
Shinohara, Hatsue. *Sensō no hō kara heiwa no hō e* 戦争の法から平和の法へ [From wartime laws to peacetime laws]. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 2003.
Terasaki and Miller 1991
Terasaki, Hidenari, and Mariko T. Miller. *Shōwa Tennō Dokuhakuroku; Terasaki Hidenari goyōgakari nikki* 昭和天皇独白録: 寺崎英成・御用掛日記 [The monologue of the Showa Emperor and the diary of Terasaki Hidenari]. Tokyo: Bungei shunju, 1991.