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Translated Title :: 捏造された伝統。西洋の歴史学が日本の物語をどう形成したか

Abstract :: 1887年、ルートヴィヒ・リースが東京帝国大学のカリキュラムに西洋の歴史学の方法を導入したことに始まる。その講義の内容は、起承転結の関係、歴史叙述の意味、中立的な立場からの歴史表象の義務などであった。日本の知識人は、自国の文化に対する西洋の偏見に強く気づいており、近代を通じてこうした見方に対抗するために奮闘していた。西洋に対する戦略の1つは、日本を東洋から切り離し、西洋人の頭の中で、日本が老朽化した後進的なアジアの領土であると想像されないようにすることであった。

日本が近代的な制度を持つ国民国家を形成する過程で直面したのは、技術、産業、政治、制度の創造よりもむしろ文化の問題であった。先進国の輪に入るためには、国史を形成することが不可欠であった。そのため、日本の政治家や経済界のエリートたちは、一人ひとりにナショナル・アイデンティティを付与し、同じ国民共同体の一員となるような物語を想像するためのさまざまな戦略を支持しました。

研究論文では、「大日本沿革史」のプロジェクトと、西洋の歴史記述法との関わり方について解説しています。さらに、本居宣長の「国学」の執筆が、西洋化の動きに刺激を与えたと続く。また、福沢諭吉のような知識人の役割や、日本が西洋の技術の原理を学び、適切な制度構造を作ることがいかに重要であったかが述べられている。

過去へのノスタルジアの量が国民性の形成に関係するため、国史を学ぶことが重要な課題となった。このように、歴史の活用は、共通に共有される文化という感覚を構築し、正当化するための重要な要素であったと論じている。

日本の学者にとって、科学的な西洋のパラダイムを学ぶことは、中心的な要素となった。西洋の文脈では独自性を、アジアの文脈では優位性を打ち出すことが、フランスの文明開化の使命 mission civilisatrice の思想とドイツの Kultur の重要性の主張とを組み合わせた主要な目標になったのである。

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Invented Tradition

How Western Historiography shaped the Japanese narrative

04 2020

Ludwig Riess (1861-1928) was twenty-six years old when he arrived in January 1887 in Japan. A student of Berlin University, he brought with him to Japan the concept of positivist history with focus on scientific methods of objectivity and the use of physical historical materials. Riess taught history, and historical methodology in the newly established history department, emphasising the scientific and rationalistic methodology and the objectivity of his famous historical scholar Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). Coming from London to Japan, he introduced Western methods of historiography into the curriculum, which included the relationships of origins, the meaning of historical narrative, and the obligation of historical representation from a neutral point of view.

Riess was not aware that his contract to teach Western methods of historiography would last for the next fifteen years and that he would have a particularly large affect on the direction that Japanese historical research took in the years that followed.¹ Teaching only Eurocentric history he suggested to establish also the subject of national history, which was implemented in 1889. Riess was active in the Historical Association, participated in the social life of the university and was very influential at his students of which some became the most famous and eminent scientists on Japan's history.² After he left in

1901 the courses were again reorganized and three central pillars were determined as separate academic fields: national history, Chinese history which became later in 1911 Oriental history, and Western history.³ This classifications lasts until today.

Without any doubt, the scientific methods, de-claimed with international authority by Riess, had profound impact on Japanese scholarship. The new methods exposed the limits of the traditional positivistic research, carried out in the Confucian framework that affirmed existing authority and the invariable triumph of viewing history as a record of rewarding the good and punishing the bad.

The scholarship of Riess at Tokyo Imperial University was a catalyst in the development of history and also a great influence on his colleagues Shigeno Yasutsugu (1827-1910), Kume Kunitake (1839-1931), and Hoshino Hisashi (1839-1917) who moved there in 1888 in dual roles as university professors and as compilers of *Dai Nihon Hennen Shi*, the 'Chronological History of Japan.'⁴

It first appeared in 1878 at the Paris international exposition and its twice revised version of 1888 was

¹ Usually foreign experts under the government's program were hired for only one year. Riess was specialised on English history but despite his brilliant scholarship he was unable to obtain an university position because of his Jewish heritage. In Japan this was an asset, because he lacked the Christian faith of famous scientists as his teacher Ranke, who still put God in charge of orchestrating history at all.

See John S. Brownlee: Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jimmu, UBC Press, 1999, p.73ff

² Riess also married a Japanese woman, Otsuka Fuku, with whom he raised five children. Unfortunately, when he departed from Japan in 1902, he left them behind.

³ When Kurakichi Shiratori, (1865-1942) became a professor at Tokyo Imperial University, after a two year period of study in Europe the academic courses were rearranged and the three pillars of national history, Chinese history, and Western history in 1904. The first Oriental history lecture was given at Kyoto Imperial University in 1907 (Meiji 40) by Konan Naito. In the 1890s, a number of textbooks were therefore written as teaching materials for 'Oriental history' at secondary education, within the overall boundaries outlined above. The most influential of these was most probably Jitsuzo Kuwabara's (1871-1931) 'Secondary Oriental History,' published in 1898 in Fujita Takao: The Establishment of the Field of 'Oriental History' in Japan, A Selection of Essays on Oriental Studies of ICIS Overseas Publication Series Vol.1, Kansai University Institutional Repository, 2011, p.22

⁴ As members of the Iwakura-Mission, who visited the United States and several European countries in 1871-73, Itō Hirobumi, Kume Kunitake and Iwakura Domomi became key in the making of the national history and tradition of Japan based on the models they experienced abroad.

adopted as the official history textbook in the newly created history department of Tokyo Imperial University.⁵ Pointed at 'Western readers' as its primary target, the main purpose of the compendium was to present an unbroken imperial lineage as the source of Japan's assumed political sovereignty within a hierarchical international order. An attempt to legitimise an autonomous history of their own and to establish Japanese exceptionalism within East Asian history. Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909), architect of the modern Japanese constitution, believed that a sort of historical legitimacy would provide the grounds to revise the unequal treaties with the Western powers. Other than most of the non-Western nations, Japanese intelligentsia was highly aware of the prejudiced Western views of their culture, and struggled throughout the modern era to combat these views. In order to prevent colonization by the West at the end of the 19th century, Japan's bilingual intellectuals have actively sought to participate in the construction of Japan as a nation with a collective identity. Within their international communication at exhibitions and other occasions they accepted the European hegemony as an origin of culture, civilisation and innovations in which they tried to reflex themselves.

One strategy towards the West was the attempt to disassociate Japan from the East so it would not be imagined in Western minds as a decrepit and backward Asian territory.⁶ To distance Japan from its subaltern Asian neighbours, historians expended considerable effort to prove that Japan's history was equivalent to Europe with similar elements like feudalism in its past. Inventing their own Orient in China and Korea, Japanese national 'geo-body' took shape as a natural and organically integrated territorial unit

5 John S. Brownlee writes in his book, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, that in 1869 Emperor Meiji gave a written order to start a history beginning from 887, 'to set right the relation between monarch and subject, to make clear the distinction between civilization and barbarity, and to implant the principle of virtue throughout the empire.' Planned to be written in Classical Chinese, an office which became after many reorganizations the Shushikan, Bureau of Historiography in 1877. Shigeno and his colleagues became very critical of the project when they started to teach history with Ludwig Riess, and *Dai Nihon Hennen Shi* was suspended in 1893 and never completed.

See John S. Brownlee: *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu*, UBC Press, 1999, p. 82ff

6 Jansen referring to Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), early advocate for reform and founder of Keio University, in

Marius B. Jansen: *The Making of Modern Japan*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 427

and centralised nation-state. By establishing Japanese Orientalism as a separate academic field, historical and scientific authenticity was generated to escape the East-West dichotomy. The new conceptual entity reflected Japan's attempt to become detached from East Asian history and its neighbouring countries. In the trinity of National, Oriental and Western history it was indicated here that Japan is not included in East Asia and shall only be handled as it relates to the other countries of the orient and that national history shall exist as an independent body from it.⁷ A further attempt in creating the stage of Oriental history was to place China relative to it, which would mean a greater focus on history and an escape from the former Chinese centrist point of view. Kurakichi Shiratori (1865-1942), founder of Oriental studies at the Tokyo Imperial University and Riess' first pupil, expanded the fields of research into Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, and the Western Asian territories. Instructed by European scholars he took their work as his foundation and then used it to bring the level of Japanese academic research up to the same standard as that in Europe.

Learning much about the orient from the teachings of Westerners he advocated to scholars of the orient to pour all of their powers of research into everything concerning these regions.⁸ As he was strongly aware of European lead in Oriental studies he naively saw the affairs of the First Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War as possibilities to make it much easier for Japanese researchers to actually go to these places and examine historical materials.

7 Similar to the European legacy of Greco-Roman civilization, transmitted by the Roman Empire, Japan was greatly influenced by the Chinese civilization transmitted by the Tang dynasty. A systematic introduction of the Chinese civilization started in Japan around the year 700 with the basic components of civilization, including Chinese characters kanji, law *ritsuryo*, scholarship Confucianism and religion Buddhism, which all flooded into Japan around this time. Borrowing from the achievements of the Chinese civilization and modeled after the official history of China the first official history, *Nihonshoki* or *Chronicles of Japan 720* appeared during this period. With the last volume of these chronicles the introduction of Tang civilization switched to a creation of Japanese civilization when the writing changed from Chinese to Japanese verse, and the style of historiography also changed from Chinese classic style to the historical written style of Japanese. The birth of this new style which is believed to have been completed around 1030 by female poet Akazomeemon, was inspired by the *Tale of Genji* which is generally pointed as the origin of Japanese civilization.

See Ueyama Shunpei: *The Originality of the Japanese Civilization*, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 1999

8 Kurakichi Shiratori: *Geography of Manchurian History*, Kanko-no-Jyo, 1913 in Fujita Takao: *The Establishment of the Field of 'Oriental History' in Japan*, A Selection of Essays on Oriental Studies of ICIS Overseas Publication Series Vol.1, Kansai University Institutional Repository, 2011, p.26

Shiratori's pioneering move into the fields of history in Manchuria and Korea was in alignment of an national attempt to surpass the tradition of Chinese studies up until that point and to place Japan within the center of the region. The establishment of a sub-Orientalism towards its neighbouring countries gave historical and scientific authenticity to a new conceptual entity within the outlines of the debates established by European historians. Fulfilling patriotic desires to escape the East-West dichotomy, Japanese historians developed over time their own explanations for their past and no longer relied on European models. In this narrative Asia was viewed as the origins of Japanese civilization, but its history supposedly followed a separate trajectory separated from China. By gaining imperial power due its military success at the turn of the century a colonial historiography was manifested that drew a distinct line between Japan as the civilized state and China, Taiwan and Korea as backwards and stagnant. This helped, the main discourse of the prospering Japanese Empire, as to not be associated in Western minds with a decrepit and backward Asia and to avoid the fate of becoming an Western colony, like China the former leader of the region.

Japan's own history with the Chinese cultural rule in the pre-modern period helped to come along with the influence of those Western nations.⁹ In a combination of admiration and antagonism, Japan followed a similar line to that which it had shown to China, appearing not to suffer any cultural colonization despite of different elements in one single culture.¹⁰ As Japan experienced radical change in its cultural system, Westernisation was not a process of intrusion of the Other, but a kind of simulation done by Japanese themselves. Japan did not suffer any cultural colonization from outside and so the contradicting slogans of modern Japan, *bunmei kaika* (Civilization and Enlightenment) and *sonnō jōi* (Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians) could synchronically exist in modern Japan.¹¹ In this

stage, switching between modernisation and tradition, Japan's diverse self-recognition was only possible in the process of constituting an identification with an Other. That Japan could make up its own self, the new core of the national identity was constituted through the internalized eye of the West on the one side and historically on the other side by differentiating from its pre-modern impact of China with two types of tradition: those which emphasized the differences with China and those which identified with it. As China remained a cultural antagonist even after Japan's modernization and experience of a new great Other, presenting Japan to the world did not merely imply 'Westernising' the country, but also getting the Japanese themselves to understand their cultural heritage from the inside.

To create a modern identity in the hegemonic mirror of European history, Japan had 'Western readers' as its primary target in mind. As an effort to construct Japan's national history the nations own, indigenous, and peculiar cultural tradition had to be invented to make it more convincing and appealing to Western readers. Artistic and cultural enlightenment became a key issue, next to military strength and industrial independency, to prove that Japan was unlike other non-Western countries, 'civilized' and 'rational' and a worthy member of the community of non-colonized nations.

In the process of nation-state formation with modern institutions during Meiji period (1868–1912), Japan faced rather than its technically, industrially, politically, and institutionally creations a problem of culture. After a phase of active research in the West by multiple politicians and intellectuals it followed the European developmental pattern, but had also to deal with the basis of Japanese cultural traditions which had been made in the Edo period. During the early modern Edo/ Tokugawa period (1600–1868) Japan remained relatively isolated from the rest of the world, so Japanese culture seems to have developed internally with very little outside influence. The socio-political and economic structure, the integration of science and knowledge entangled in a transparent society of this time constituted important factors in the successful modernisation of Japan. But besides some unique customs which were created solitary most Japanese tradition was influenced

9 David Pollack: Reading against Culture. Ideology and Narrative in the Japanese Novel, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992, p.39

10 Yoshioka Hiroshi: De-colonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power, Edited by Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Bhikhu Parekh, Zed Publishers, 1995

11 With changing admiration for Westernisation during the early period of modernization, and increasing antagonism with the rise of Pan-Asianism.

and developed in cultural and economic exchange with its neighbouring countries and the use of its Western enclave in Dejima /Nagasaki. The establishment of a national market, an improved communications system, the impoverishment of the samurai class and the enrichment of the merchants, the rise of a new artistic and literary culture serving an increasing urbanization, were adopted and harmonized within global history. But the ordinary Japanese people who carried along these enormous social and cultural changes going on in the period, did not know about their outside influences as they had no reference to compare with. Before Japan became a modern nation-state it was defined not only as a geo-political entity but as a cultural one, characterized due customs and aesthetics. Following Stefan Tanaka: 'Aesthetics primarily art and ethics is not something 'cultural' that exists separate from temporal and spatial constructions of the nation-state', rather than that art and ethics are a main part to construct that political and cultural unit.¹² In many scholarly works historians and social scientists of Japanese studies argue that cultural heritage, traditional values and practises which predated Japan's modernization are the main contributor to its success and directly led to the Restoration of 1868. The modernist approach on basically postmodern theoretical ground totally denies the validity of such explanations.¹³

In this interpretation, nations are 'imagined communities' which are established relatively recently through the communication of common stories, myths, and the shared experience of life. This process of social construction is described by Eric Hobsbawm as the 'invention of tradition' which is supposed to mean that many cultural practices, cus-

12 Stefan Tanaka: *Imaging History, Inscribing Belief in the Nation*, in: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no.1 February 1994, p.24-44

13 See Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative Review*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996

Stephen Vlastos: *Tradition. Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History*, in Stephen Vlastos ed.: *Mirror of Modernity. Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998

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Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983

Eric Hobsbawm: *Inventing Traditions*, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds.: *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1983

Homi Bhabha: *Nation and Narration*, London Routledge, 1990

toms, and values which were thought to be old are actually of quite recent origin. To gain access to the circle of the leading nations it was an economical and militaristic imperative, to form a national history that would combine and motivate a regionally disparate population into a single people expected to work and die for the nation. Therefore the Japanese political and economical elite supported different strategies to imagine a narrative that would stamp each individual with an indelible national identity conferring membership in the same national community. This act of constructing a national narrative was especially preoccupied with the task of removing multiple distracting alternative temporalities for the homogenous and untroubled linear trajectory of a singular national story-line. In the nineteenth century, when modern countries constructed their representations of self-identity in national narratives to participate in a Hegelian configuration of world history, it was always bonded to history. Getting membership status in the system of sovereign states and access to the world market, reflected the agenda of a positivist historical practice to identify the nation as place where the 'moral energies' were enacted and the secret of history revealed.¹⁴ This focus on the subject of history and its attending demands, resulted later in the appeal to a 'crisis of historicism,' that Japanese intellectuals committed to find a new philosophy of world history to reconfigure a new spatial and temporal order.

National Learning

The political construction of an unified country to maintain Tokugawa supremacy over the other powerful lords in the country and its seclusion policy *sakoku* led to a healthier economy with a society more specialized and a production more efficient. The economic benefits of these developments enabled a flow of culture between the metropolis and the periphery which enriched the lives of individuals and fostered the growth of shared cultural values throughout the Japanese islands.

Compared to contemporary China and Korea, where learning was the domain of a limited class who aspired to become bureaucrats, Japan's urban-

14 See Christopher I. Hill: *History and the World of Nations: Capital, State, and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France, and the United States*, Durham and London Duke University Press, 2008

isation and the emergence of a market economy created a set of condition for a vibrant intellectual life with a wide variety of participants. By the time of the Edo period, Japan had a higher literacy comparable to that in central Europe. An estimated 40 percent of boys and 10 percent of girls went to school by end of Edo period.¹⁵

In this peaceful times, samurai, especially those of lower rank, who had a foundation not only in military arts *bu* but also in Chinese studies and arts *bun*, had to redefine their role in society. Many of them became courtiers, bureaucrats, and administrators and some used their artistic skills to support themselves. The popularity of literati painting can be traced as a result of this leading class, as the art scene was dominated by samurai painters.¹⁶ But as education and literacy increased, and national learning *kokugaku* got quite popular, appreciation of art and culture developed along the lines of economic class and social status. *Kokugaku* was a response to Sino-centric, Neo-Confucian theories by revealing the true Japanese spirit and removing a thousand years of Chinese learning.¹⁷

Defining a Nation

In the earliest moment of the new restoration government Emperor Meiji gave in 1869 order to conduct a history writing beginning from 1392, to resume as it had been practised in the Heian period. Written in Classical Chinese it was aimed to set right the relation between monarch and subject, to reflect the distinction between civilization and barbarity, and to serve moral purpose and devotion to the state throughout the empire. The director of the project *Dai Nihon Hennen Shi* was Shigeno Yasutsugu (1827-1910), a former samurai of Satsuma who had received training in the Hayashi academy and systematically reached out to learn from Western methods of historical writing. He embarked on trips all over Japan but his research made him increasingly sceptical and the project was suspended in 1893. It

was the latest attempt to create a national history within the pre-modern and sino-centric paradigm. Prior to that and decades before Westernisation there has emerged a cultural nationalistic sentiment in Japan, to oppose *kangaku* Chinese Learning, then the official form of scholarship of most Japanese that overwhelmed intellectual society in the early Tokugawa period. It began with a natural and somewhat inarticulate notion that the Confucian scholarship *kangaku* was inappropriate to Japan, whose political and social traditions were vastly different from those of China. Known as *kokugaku* National Learning, it affirmed the superiority of Japan and Japanese culture and unified Japanese scholars, who felt uncomfortable with the application of Chinese historical theory to the Japanese emperors. Outside the entire field of Confucian studies, it began with historic literary study and carried a powerful political message in the early nineteenth century where it found resonance with many other trends in the intellectual life and gradually emerged into a school equally and sophisticated as Confucianism.¹⁸ Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) was one of the most famous scholar and advocate looking for truth in ancient Japanese myths rather than promoting universal principles of the Neo-Confucian synthesis. Norinaga reconstructed the ancient *Kojiki*, the oldest collection of myths, early legends, songs, genealogies, oral traditions and semi-historical accounts, dating from the early 8th century, and proceeded to deep philological studies to show it to modern readers who had not that extensive knowledge of ancient Japanese and Chinese works. With the systematic work of Norinaga, his views and interpretations about ancient Japan and ethos, tradition and language spread all around the country and became a source of religious, ethical, social, and political values unique to Japan. Norinaga showed how *Kojiki* could be interpreted to make it the source of individual and cultural identity and relevant to contemporary life. He transformed the *Kojiki* into a central work in the Japanese cultural canon, rewriting it from

15 Randall Pouwels & Philip Adler: World Civilizations. Since 1500, Cengage Learning, 2007, p.369ff

16 Sato points out that high government officials, like Kido Takayoshi and Sanjō Sanetomi practised *bunjinga* and were a force behind its popularity.

Satō Dōshin: Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty, The Getty Research Institute Los Angeles, 2011, p.86

17 David E. Margarey: Emperor and Nation in Japan, Political Thinkers of the Tokugawa Period, University of Washington Press, 1964, p. 67ff

18 The first representative was the monk Keichū (1640-1701), who worked quietly in Kyoto on ancient poetry and began studies in Japanese philology. Kada no Azumamaro (1669–1736) established the first school in Kyoto in 1728 and *Kokugaku* teachings spread rapidly. In 1765 Kamo no Mabuchi (1697–1769), student of Kada, wrote *Kokuikō*, 'A Study of the Idea of Our Country.' It was published in 1806, and represented a frontal attack on the Chinese tradition, from Confucianism to the writing system. Kamo argued that the Chinese history with its changeovers of dynasties stood in startling confrontation to the purity of Japan's tradition of an unbroken imperial line.

its Chinese characters into the Japanese syllabary *kana*. He claimed the discovery of the ancient language within this complex system of inscription and transformed thereby Japanese conceptions of their own history and culture. To argue the singular importance of the Age of the Gods, the period preceding the accession of Jimmu first Emperor of Japan, National Scholars believed that Japanese civilization had originated independently.

Norinaga used his work to distinguish China and Japan, showing ancient Japan as a natural community which had not been influenced by Chinese civilization until 3rd century when written Chinese language emerged into Japan and thereafter accordingly classical civilization. This narrative suppresses the fact that Japanese civilization was developing progressively under the continuous influence of Chinese civilization, often transmitted through Korea, during all of the prehistoric periods of Japan as Jomon (14,000-300 BC), Yayoi (300 BC-300 AD), and Kofun (300-538). What *Kokugaku* scholars collectively produced in the late Tokugawa period was a complex and contentious discourse on the nature of Japan and enduring Japanese language as a powerful means to explain and thereby constitute a distinctive cultural entity *kokutai*.¹⁹ This approach of unique true Japanese characteristics had to negate thousand years of Chinese learning and became quite popular in the 19th century. Hirata Atsutane, who was important as a systematizer and propagandist; thanks to him and his disciples the ideas of *Kokugaku* became very widespread in the early 19th century. After Hirata, *Kokugaku* ceased to be a type of scholarship, and instead acquired the rudiments of a nativist movement. But this discourse to make Japan into the source of individual and cultural identity happened still within the old paradigm, that China was the more civilized and advanced country, while Japan was in the understanding of Rousseau, more humane, natural and pure. The widespread ideas paved the way for the return of imperial rule in the Meiji restoration opposing state *Shintō* and lay ground for the new slogan *sonnō* 'revere the emperor' and the term *kokutai* 'national body' later expressed the new concept of the state. Most of what

was considered to be uniquely Japanese was largely an invention of the *Kokugaku*, the National Learning movement and what Meiji scholars invented as traditions were revivals of the *Kokugaku* principles.²⁰ Despite the teachings of *Kokugaku* became not part of the new Meiji education policy, with the containment of old cultural heritage those conceptions of Japan gave a stimulus to the movement of Westernisation when people were motivated to reflect and reconsider their own national culture.²¹ But due its approach of an original, authentic, and enduring Japanese language *Kokugaku* was a powerful means to explain and thereby constitute a new national consciousness. The importance of language as the primary bearer of national and cultural identity became later a main element when Japan gained imperial power and carried out colonial rule in Taiwan and Korea.

With the exposure of China in the mid 19th century as weak and powerless in the face of the West the paradigm shifted dramatically. The defeat of the Chinese Empire against the British Empire in the Opium War was a traumatic key experience in the eye of the Japanese elites. This made obvious the urgent need of transforming one's own empire as quickly as possible into a modern, self-sufficient state in the Western sense in order to escape a similar fate. However well Japan had done by taken the best of Chinese civilization and improved on it, when faced with the Western warships and aggressive imperialisms even the former ruler and most civilized and powerful country in the Asian world, became now a 'backward' region populated by 'barbarians.' Despite its highly advanced pre-industrial society, with a complex civilization stretching back thousands of years, cultural sophisticated with high literature and superb crafts, Japan's organic world would be

20 Shintō which embodied the spirit and character of the ancient Japanese for *Kokugaku*, was almost not known before the arrival of Chinese culture. With Chinese influence Shintō was integrated into Buddhism in practice and ideology and later the *Kokugaku* scholars recovered the original form Shintō in order to purify Japanese culture. Tadashi Fukutak.; *The Japanese Social Structure*, Tokyo University of Tokyo Press, 1989

21 Supposed to be part of the new Meiji education policy, the teachings of *Kokugaku* were meant to abolish the old institutions of the Tokugawa regime which emphasized Confucianism and Buddhism. due to various kinds of resistance this attempt failed.

See Uchino Goro, *Early Modern Kokugaku (National Learning) and the New Kokugaku: Their Growth and Significance*, in *Cultural Identity and Modernization in Asian Countries: Proceedings of Kokugakuin University Centennial Symposium*, Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1983

19 Susan L. Burns: *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan*, Durham Duke University Press, 2003

overtaken by those who had already cracked open China in the Opium Wars, colonized India, South America and much of the Pacific.

To avoid the fate of becoming an imperial colony, the changes that were needed as a society went far beyond the importation of new technology, like to follow China in buying weapons from the West. For intellectuals like Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901) it was essential that Japan learnt the principles behind the technology and to create the appropriate institutional structures.²² Therefore it was to undertake a comparative anthropology of civilizations to understand the deeper nature of the whole of Western and Eastern civilization. Fukuzawa was fascinated of all the new knowledge that was to gain from Western sources and encouraged his readers that learning, doubt, and investigation was the reason for the present high level of civilization in the West.²³ If Chinese learning in the Tokugawa period had given a wider intellectual perspective to Japanese views of their origins and history, Western learning in the Meiji period put Japanese into awareness of human civilization.²⁴ Japanese intellectuals believed that, through the combined efforts of Japanese people, their level of civilization which was dominated by Chinese culture, could be elevated to that of Western societies. Through study and experience, Japanese encountered forms of civilization outside the ancient East Asian world and followed the Meiji government in their slogan 'Adopt what is best in the culture of Europe to compensate for shortcomings in that of Japan.'

While the policy of the Tokugawa government had led to over two centuries of isolation, the Meiji government promoted the immediate opening of Japan in all possible senses in its ambition to consolidate the strength of the new state by using Western technology and adopting Western institutions. In his writings Fukuzawa pointed out some of the elements he

encountered on his travels that Japanese society lacked in comparison to the West. The very concept of allowing political parties to express their dissent, or even exist, was alien to the Japanese tradition. Another problem he laid out was that in Japan there were no rules of procedure for meetings because of the lack of any set rules for discussion. In his opinion this had to be learnt from western civilization, developed on the basis of Greek philosophy and Roman jurisprudence, to make decisions and sift out the best arguments. Furthermore he argued, that in Japan there were not even places in which conferences, speeches, or lectures could take place. Fukuzawa set up the first lecture hall in Japan, what would become Keio University. The art of speech-making was totally absent in Japan and his book *Kaigiben* 'How to Hold a Conference' became the first guideline in Japan in 1873.

However, Japan emerged in an unprecedented speed from a tribal monarchy pretending to be an Empire, to feudalism and then to a relatively centralized absolutism, up to the revolutionary breakthrough to modernity, which was in many ways very similar to aspiring nations in Europe. But a main difference remained as the formation of national identity was created in front of the formation of a modern nation state, which happened the other way round in Western occasion.

Together with Hiroyuki Katō (1836-1916), Fukuzawa promoted the values and institutions and practices as decisive concepts to gain liberty, equality and democracy similar to the advanced countries of the West. Both believed in the superiority of Western civilization, and urged progress upon the Japanese nation not merely to introduce science, technology and institutional structures, but to change culture and ideology. Heavily influenced by the French and Scottish Enlightenment, they wrote the interpretations of *Kokutai* the National Essence, which served from the Meiji Restoration to 1945 as an inspiring and unifying ideology. In his early writings Katō attacked traditional Asian theories of government, and the theories of Japanese National Scholars in particular. Influenced by German political theory, he discussed democratic republics and developed a theory of the state in constitutional monarchies. Encountering Social Darwinism, he did not persist in his liberal

22 Fukuzawa Yukichi: *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, tr. David A. Dilworth and G.Cameron Hurst Tokyo, 1973

23 He founded Keio University, a national newspaper and introduced the art of public speaking and debate in Japan and was called by Basil Hall Chamberlain the most influential teacher that Japan has seen in this era of enlightenment.

Basil H. Chamberlain: *Things Japanese*, first published 1890, p. John Murray London 1905, p.365ff

24 His models were 'Histoire de la civilization en Europe' (1828), by Francois Guizot, and 'History of Civilization in England' (1871), by Henry Thomas Buckle. See John Brownlee: *Japanese Historians and the National Myth*, University of Tokyo, UBC press 1997, p.72

positions and returned to the classical theory of the *Kokutai*.

Fukuzawa was far more progressive when he contradicted in his 'Outline of a Theory of Civilization' everything that was determined about *Kokutai* the National Essence so far. Since Motoori Norinaga and all other National Scholars who carried out the Meiji Restoration, everyone believed that the fundamental characteristics of the National Essence did apply solely to Japan and were found in ancient times. For them *Kokutai*, despite it was a construction out of the 18th century developed by Motoori Norinaga and promoted by Aizawa Seishisai (1782-1863), was a solid entity from ancient times. Unaffected by the contact with Chinese civilization, the breakdown of feudalism, the contact with the West since the 16th century, the advent of Civilization and Enlightenment or the vast accumulation of knowledge through the ages. Other than that Fukuzawa identified the National Essence not with matters of ancient Japan, but with national sovereignty, and claimed that *Kokutai* would be subject to considerable change and not apply solely to Japan but instead to every country.²⁵

Furthermore he found the ancient myths about the Emperors and the history of the Age of the Gods obscure but agreed in the uniqueness of Japan's unbroken succession of Emperors. However, he made himself clear that this did not constitute the National Essence. Being an atheist thinker, Fukuzawa recognized an instrumental value of religion only as moral guidance for 'the ignorant masses' and classified the narrative of the imperial lineage as useful to promote Japan's national sovereignty, to teach common people morality by focusing on their sentiments.²⁶ He and many of his contemporaries did not consider the West inherently superior, but only historically advanced, which would not remain forever.²⁷ In these ambitions Fukuzawa became a central figure in the wider Japanese period of enlightenment.

Establish National Body

With the promotion of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 conservative advocates proclaimed as a sign of uniqueness of Japan's identity the return to the ancient form of its polity *saisei icchi*, the theocratic unity of politics and rituals. However, the Meiji government faced practical difficulties with implementing the theocratic ideal and instead opted to build a constitutional monarchy to counteract the apparent cultural alienation.²⁸ Nevertheless, the production of a National narrative of the unbroken imperial line, maintained through the official history textbook, was assumed to provide legitimacy and political sovereignty to the West. In order to repeal the unequal treaties that came along with the enforced opening of the country, and to protect the nation the Meiji oligarchy regarded comprehensive reforms which were represented by the slogan 'Civilisation and enlightenment'. Appointed in 1881 to research various forms of constitutional governments in the West, Itō Hirobumi became head of the committee to draft the new constitution which would build the framework for the modernisation of the country. He enforced the establishment of the legitimate imperial genealogy, so the Japanese national 'geo-body' could take shape and would provide grounds to revise the unequal treaties with the West. Ruling out Buddhism and Shintoism as a cornerstone to become the foundation of a constitutional government, by downplaying the role of existing religion in Japan, he enforced the Imperial house with a sacralised monarch, representing the unbroken imperial line down from the mythic origin of the Japanese polity to present, to become the center of the constitution. Within that pseudo-religious concept Hirobumi misinterpreted the Western model of religion which he and other Japanese scholars analysed as source of power that held European nations together and disciplined communities. In this mindset, creating a nation was to construct a system of common belief which could form a national body and also take con-

25 Until today many insist upon the same points about the National Essence, as determined in ancient times.

26 John S. Brownlee: Four Stages of the Japanese Kokutai, JSAC Conference, University of British Columbia, October 2000 Fukuzawa, Yukichi: Fukuo hyakuwa One Hundred Stories by the Revered Old Mr. Fukuzawa, in Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshu Selected Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi, vol. 11, Tokyo Iwanami Shoten, 1981 (1897), p.5ff

27 Stefan Tanaka: Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993, p.37

28 The central issue of the Meiji Constitution was the balance between sovereignty vested in the person of the Emperor, and an elected representative legislature with powers that would limit or restrict the power of the sovereign. Under the guidance of Ito Hirobumi it was drafted by Inoue Kowashi, with revisions and deletions by Itō after joint investigations with Ito Miyoji, Hozumi Yatsuka, Tomii Masaaki with others, along with a number of foreign advisors, in particular the German legal scholars Rudolf von Gneist and Lorenz von Stein. After numerous drafts from 1886–1888 in secret by the committee without public debate, the final version was submitted to Emperor Meiji in April 1888. Promulgated by Emperor Meiji on February 11 1889, it came into effect on November 29, 1890.

trol of its elements. Other than the enactment of the constitution in 1889, the proclamation of the Imperial Edict of Education, the 'secret constitution' of Japan, in 1890, gave this period the decisive accent.²⁹

Together with Inoue Kowashi (1844-1895), an intellectual statesman who was central in the contribution to shape the Meiji constitution, Fukuzawa shared a secular position on the nature of nationalism pursued in the formative period of prewar Japan.³⁰ He defined the purpose of his work as to open the 'closed' country and bring it wholly into the light of Western civilization to preserve political independence through economic wealth and military power. Independence was the main goal with civilisation of the people its path. Both provided the ideological framework within to place the system of constitutional monarchy borrowed from the West under the Meiji Constitution. Task was to establish a state religion, while sincerely believing in the non-religious nature of Shinto rituals underlying the emperor cult. They vehemently opposed theocracy and the establishment of church and state religion, as Fukuzawa opposed Shinto scholars who require the unity of politics and religion to be embodied in the emperor as it would 'lead men further down the path of stupidity' and 'make the people ignorant' in order to establish political authority.³¹ Inoue basically regarded religion as a potential source of conflict and called for separation from politics and voted for control on religions for the sake of public security.³²

29 From the 1880s onwards, the government increasingly used education to teach nationalistic ideas and to control the textbooks. In 1890, it issued the Imperial Rescript on Education *Kyōiku chokugo*, which made clear that traditional Shintō values should serve as the basis of moral education. To persuade the people that Japan's new form of government was based on a historical bond between the emperor and his loyal subjects, it emphasized that '... my subjects should show their loyalty to me and show filial love to their parents.' The fundamental purpose of education was to cultivate virtues, especially 'loyalty' and 'filial piety.' R. Tsunoda, W. De Bary, & D. Keene.: *Sources of Japanese tradition* (Vol. 2), New York: Columbia University Press, 1964, pp.139

30 Fukuzawa's book 'Conditions in the West' 1866, exerted a powerful influence on the Japanese public of the time. The drafters of the Charter Oath and the new proto-constitution for the Meiji restoration relied almost exclusively on this work. *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*. Kodansha, 1983, s.v. 'Seiyo Jijo' p.54

Ito, Yahiko: *Ishin to jinshin Renovation and the People's Heart*, Tokyo University Press, 1999

On important political issues and orientation they are diametrically opposed to each other, as, pluralist thinker Fukuzawa stood for the British model in which 'the king reigns but does not govern,' whereas Inoue a conservative bureaucrat opted for the Prussian type that gives the emperor more prerogatives.

31 Fukuzawa Yukichi: *Fukuo hyakuwa One Hundred Stories by the Revered Old Mr. Fukuzawa*, in *Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshu Selected Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi*, vol. 11, Tokyo Iwanami Shoten, 1981 (1897), p.39ff

32 Kowashi Inoue: *Shukyo shobun iken Proposal on Religion Policy*, in *Inoue Kowashi Den*, vol. 6., Tokyo Kokugakuin Daigaku Toshokan, 1977 (1883), p. 162ff

For both, religions should be allowed for everyone as a inner conviction serving for social purposes but had to be kept away from politics.³³ Shinto, by many as the main religious pillar of Japanese nationalism, was to be distanced from theocracy. What seems in Western view problematic, adopting a functional concept of religion as a standard foreign to what Meiji elites thought, was settled with an official declaration of Shinto as a non-religion. Regarded as non religious, they defined the essence of Shinto in National or Nativists Learning, as a body of knowledge concerning state rituals and general education and as something particularly Japanese in the midst of Westernisation. In this sense it would serve as the basis for the study of national history and language to nurture a national character and cultivate people's patriotic feeling. A state-Shinto, ripped of its religious shell and purified into a set of national classics and history, would make it serviceable to the secularist project of nation-building. As Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit in their book 'Occidentalism' carried out: 'The most common view was that Japan needed its own state religion, and this was to be State Shinto, a politicized version of ancient rites, mostly to do with nature and fertility.'³⁴ Thereby a facade of a secular modern state and hence deceiving the nation and foreign countries was kept.

Learning national history became an important issue as Fukuzawa included in his writing 'An Outline of a Theory of Civilization,' because an amount of nostalgia for the past would be a relevant issue among other decisive factors to form nationality. The non-religious view of Shinto indeed gained a broad support including religious groups, such as Buddhists and Christians.

However, regarding the question of the emperor system and his imperial legitimacy they needed support of the secularist and religious nationalists. From their secularist perspective of nationalism, the part of the Meiji constitution, which declares that Japan is governed by 'a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal,' presented a serious problem.³⁵ In a prag-

33 Due to the social and intellectual tradition of the samurai class, their skeptical stance towards religion was widely shared among contemporaries.

Émile Acolas: *Philosophie de la science politique*, 1877, p.461

34 Ian Buruma, Avishai Margalit: *Occidentalism. The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*, The Penguin Press New York 2004, p.63

35 The chapter was penned by Inoue himself, though published in the name of Ito Hirobumi. Takashi Kibe: *The Irony of Secularist Na-*

matic use of religion which demanded that a religious basis of polity is not expedient nor that the worship of the emperor should be religious, they turned to a two-layer view of society consisting of the minority of intelligent upper classes and the majority of 'the ignorant masses.' In Fukuzawa's view the emperor system was to be used as an expedient means to unite people and particularly to gain the hearts of 'the ignorant masses' by appealing to their natural and semi-religious emotions of awe and respect towards time-honoured things and thereby to control them.³⁶ Turning to a moderately secularist position he recognized the need of sacralising the emperor and to utilize the non-secularist type of nationalism for the purpose of nation-building.

Inoue and Fukuzawa presented the same paradox to prevent an unrestrained politicization of society. By de-religionising civil religion of Shinto into a set of national rituals that should serve a secular nation-state with the emperor sacralised they unintentionally opened the way for religious nationalism culminating in wartime Japan. This moderate secularism decisively opened the way for future religiously tinged ultranationalism to permeate the Meiji regime and to overwhelm secularist nationalists particularly in the 1930s and 1940s. Government's gradual shift from theocracy brought about deep disillusionment and frustration among protagonists of theocracy and particularly traditional Shinto and National Learning scholars who believed in the idea of 'Japan as God's country.' The resurgence of this theocratic concept in wartime Japan is an irony of secular nationalism pursued by the Meiji elite.³⁷

Many scholarly works on Japan explain the specific phenomena on how fast the country was capable of becoming a modern state in such a short period of

tion-Building in Japanese Modernity: Inoue Kowashi and Fukuzawa Yukichi, ISA Asia-Pacific Conference 2016, Hong Kong, Conference paper, p.12

36 Fukuzawa Yukichi: *Fukuo hyakuwa One Hundred Stories by the Revered Old Mr. Fukuzawa*, in *Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshu Selected Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi*, vol. 11, Tokyo Iwanami Shoten, 1981 (1897), p.222ff

In a sequel to *Fukuo hyakuwa*, he claims that people should worship and respect the emperor, 'as if he were a god, as if he were their father and mother' Fukuzawa, Yukichi: *Fukuo hyakuwa yowa – A Sequel to One Hundred Stories by the Revered Old Mr. Fukuzawa*, in *Fukuzawa Yukichi Senshu Selected Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi*, vol. 11, Tokyo Iwanami Shoten, 1981 (1901), p.196

37 Hashikawa Bunzo *Nashionarizumu: sono shinwa to ronri*, Nationalism: Its Myth and Logic, Tokyo. Kinonuniya Shoten, 2005 (1968), p.129-139

time, that, despite its feudalism it did not provide the European dynamic, it was already laid out in the pre-Meiji Tokugawa period. But more than that, Japan's intellectual and political elite realised after the opening that the country required a form of assimilation that went beyond superficial adaptation to encompass the entire structures of everyday life, which also required the formulation of a common vision that enabled ideological subsumption under a national identity. Within the second half of the nineteenth century the contours of Japan were not only established with the effort to Japanese the non-urban periphery to create the official image of a united and centralised nation-state. Beyond the territorial unit it was to design an identity throughout historical time with its own, indigenous and peculiar cultural tradition to prove the rest of the world. Artistic and hand-crafting skills became crucial translators in the invention to make Japan's identity more convincing and appealing to Western readers.³⁸

Use of history

The use of history in order to legitimate a sense of a commonly shared culture differed not much how it was constructed in the emergence of other nation-states. Hobsbawm and Ranger describe this process of social construction of national identity as the 'invention of tradition', arguing that many cultural practices, customs, and values which were thought to be old are actually of quite recent origin.³⁹ Following that argumentation, tradition has to be seen not as the sum of actual past practices that have perished into the present, but rather as a modern set of

38 This transformational process of transforming ideologies to a foreign audience is also known as cultural borrowing. See Marius Jansen: *Cultural Change in Nineteenth Century Japan* in Ellen P. Conant eds.: *Challenging Past And Present: The Metamorphosis of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art*, University of Hawaii Press, 2006

James O. Young: *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts*, John Wiley & Sons, 2010

Mark Silver: *Purloined Letters. Cultural Borrowing and Japanese Crime Literature, 1868-1937*, University of Hawaii Press, 2008

Robert E. Ward, Dankwart A. Rustow: *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, Princeton University Press, 2015

39 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger: *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1983

Hobsbawm distinguishes invented tradition, which he identifies with superstructural institutions and elites, from custom, which he conceives as popular and capable of being mobilized by groups at society's base. Drawing out the contrast, Hobsbawm argues that while traditions impose fixed practices, custom is flexible, capable of accommodating a certain amount of innovation. Both are embedded in larger social structures that continuously reshaped by capitalistic modernity. There is a similarity to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Pierre Bourdieu: *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford University Press, 1990

prescriptive representation of institutions and ideas thought to have been handed down from generation to generation. Key to successfully nation-building 'myths' is to be believable and imaginable and to be embedded in memory and experience to take root. In the dilemma of changing their cultural directives without losing the established identity the ambivalent attitude of the Meiji authorities towards modernisation served the dichotomy of creating a Japanese spirit born from ancient times and tailoring Western technology to its own needs. Avoiding colonisation by Western imperialism, Japan chose self-colonization through the adoption of a bureaucratic framework modelled out of the toolbox for the modern nation. With this transfer of Western practices into the Japanese context two conflicting ideologies emerged - rational bureaucracy for the elites, and a communal, cooperative identity for the rest had to be developed.

As Benedict Anderson suggested, that nations are 'imagined communities' constituted by the media only relatively recently, Japan was a prototype of the modern era, collecting and adapting nation-building cornerstones from all over Europe and the United States.⁴⁰ When the government invented a new, modern state, Japanese individuals had to learn a fresh collective and unified image of themselves, which had to be established through common stories, the formation of communal myths, and a wide selection of value orientations and symbolic representations interpreted and used for the invention of modernized traditions. Despite that emperor and Shinto myths were completely alien to the majority, the myth-making process resonated well and was broadly accepted as its moral ideas were embedded in traditional moral language. These inventions were workable precisely because they were seen as an imaginable part of Japanese life in the past and could thus be so again.⁴¹ Myth and reality interacted, with myth used as the basis for policy and policy creating myth. The modern nation-state relied on the

40 Anderson declares nations as imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them. Yet in the minds of each lives the images of their communion and community, because the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, verso London, (1983) 2006, p.6f

41 W. Dean Kinzley: *Industrial Harmony in Modern Japan, The Invention of a Tradition*, London Routledge, 1991

construction of this coherent set of national traits to function as an imagined community.

The success in interpreting and disseminating this modern myths as that of a continuous emperor centred polity is partly explained by the fact that provincial officials and local notables played a key role. Other than that, the mechanisms of imperial myth making focused on vehicles of meaning such as national ceremonies, exhibitions, emblems, and art works, which created such as a common memory of an emperor centred national past that, actually had never been known. The wide circulation of common practices that claimed to represent continuous and stable culture aimed to bring the common people into a highly disciplined national community embedded in an unified and totalising culture.⁴² Promoting a consciousness of being imperial subjects became part of the process of (mis)using history to create a distinct and unified Japanese identity. It is not that the historical past played no role in the formation of modern Japanese identity, but rather than cultural traditions are inherited, they are chosen and fashioned from both material and discursive antecedents. The rhetoric of these formed traditions authorized communalism and cultural particularism as the invention of the 'abiding folk', the ideological position that Japan achieved modernity without abandoning its original culture.⁴³ With the opening of the country and its unequal treaties, the wind of enforced change was largely limited to the commercial sphere. But in Japan's retention of sovereignty, beside the accelerated political, social, and economic modernization, the formation of a customized international identity created the basis for new forms of cultural production, including traditions as been created directly by god and been ruled by his descendant.

As the use of history was the key element in order to construct and legitimize a sense of a commonly

42 About half a century later in 1941, the ideological manifesto *Shinmin no michi* the 'Bible of the Japanese People' was issued by the Ministry of Education to explain how subjects to the Emperor were to behave. and also presented a brief overview of world history from the Japanese viewpoint.

43 Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), the father of folklore studies, is a typical example who idealised the virtue of communitarian village life in Japan. He called his own study *shin-kokugaku* new nativism, and enforced thoughts which Japanese authorities recuperated to promote nationalism and to preserve pre-modern values of agrarian life in the Japanese mind, against emerging liberalism in urban Japan. See Ronald A. Morse: *Yanagita Kunio and the Folklore Movement. The Search for Japan's National Character and Distinctive Culture*, New York: Garland, 1990

shared culture, learning this scientific Western paradigm became a central element for Japanese scholars. The modern research method helped to determine Japan's own narrative, interpret it scientifically and present it within the international framework of global history. The presentation of this new knowledge, the collection of remote traditions, craftsmanship became a media of its own to translate not only literally but also visually the Japanese narrative and maintain sovereignty of interpretation. The personal and representative exchange with the West after two centuries of seclusion, emerged as an important field to provide a sustainable picture of the other and vice versa. The new state monopolised in

those pre-industrial times the visual exchange and production of arts and craftsmanship to control the image of Japan in the West. Like a modern company with restricted communication channels departments were assigned to individually research the foreign markets and design products especially for export. The World expositions, an actual invention of the 19th century became a perfect testing ground to promote the new national identity. The reflexive acquisition of cultural tradition to create uniqueness in Western context and superiority in Asian context became a primarily goal combining the French idea of a civilizing mission *mission civilisatrice* and the German insistence on the importance of *Kultur*.