Why There is no non-Western IR Theory in Japan?: Genealogy of Japan's Cultural IR, and the Study of Regional History

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Today's globalised world has witnessed astonishing political and economic growth in the regions of Asia and Africa. Such progress has been accompanied, however, with a high frequency of various types of conflicts and disputes. The Afrasian Research Centre aims to build on the achievements of its predecessor, the Afrasian Centre for Peace and Development Studies (ACPDS), by applying its great tradition of research towards Asia with the goal of building a new foundation for interdisciplinary research into multicultural societies in the fields of Immigration Studies, International Relations and Communication Theory. In addition, we seek to clarify the processes through which conflicts are resolved, reconciliation is achieved and multicultural societies are established. Building on the expertise and networks that have been accumulated in Ryukoku University in the past (listed below), we will organise research projects to tackle new and emerging issues in the age of globalisation. We aim to disseminate the results of our research internationally, through academic publications and engagement in public discourse.

1. A Tradition of Religious and Cultural Studies
2. Expertise in Participatory Research/ Inter-Civic Relation Studies
3. Expertise in Asian and Africa Studies
4. Expertise in Communication and Education Studies
5. New Approaches to the Understanding of Other Cultures in Japan
6. Domestic and International Networks with Major Research Institutes

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Introduction

This paper attempts to introduce a neglected aspect of Japanese international relations (IR), the study of regional history and its relation to the unpopularity of non-Western IR in Japan. I also argue, despite the negligence of Japanese IR scholars, the approach of regional history contains a rich potentiality to contribute to the contemporary non-/post-Western IR literature.

There are comprehensive surveys on Japanese IR in the past. Most prominent was by Inoguchi Takashi who has been making a long lasting effort to introduce and analyse the genealogy of Japanese IR for more than ten years (Inoguchi 2002, 2007, Inoguchi and Bacon 2001). His texts are, among other introductory text to Japanese IR, particularly detailed, informative, and comprehensive. In his articles, Inoguchi argues that there are at least four distinctive traditions in Japanese IR; the *Staatslehre* tradition, Marxism, Historicism, and American style methodology. The *Staatslehre* tradition is politics for the state. It is aimed to contribute to making state policies and external strategies. Marxism was very strong until the 1960s and associated with the conception of *Oppositionswissenschaft*, literally means opposition science. Historicism, a history-centred approach to international relations, is still strong and many researchers of IR in Japan take this tradition. The American style methodology tradition appeared after the World War II. European influence over Japanese intellectuals was evident before the war, and the American methodology took over the similar role from the European discourses (Inoguch and Bacon 2001, 11-12; Inoguchi 2007, 371-373).

Although Inoguchi's introduction of Japanese IR to the Anglophone audience is comprehensive and detailed, he has not made much-detailed explication of historicism, particularly when it comes to the collaborative works of historical IR with area studies of Asia, while he explain historical approach to international relations only in terms of diplomatic history or *Staatslehre* tradition. In fact, when an introduction to Japanese IR is made and study of history is touched upon, it usually means the diplomatic history, not the historicism. This propensity is also evident in other introductory texts to Japanese IR recently published (Murata 2010; Yamamoto 2011). Like Inoguchi, they mention the historical approaches in explicating Japanese IR in general, yet their explanations solely focus on Japan's diplomatic history and stopped at an introductory level, and they have never substantiated the study of regional history to the adequate level it deserves.

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The study of regional history is one of the historicisms grew on Japanese IR mainly developed together with regional studies of Asia. It is called *chiikishi* or regional history. It mainly focuses on economic and cultural exchanges among Asian nations and their influences on the diplomatic and political relations. It naturally makes a sharp contrast with the mainstream historicism of diplomatic relations of Japan, which either separate diplomatic history from economy and culture or takes determinism of foreign relations over economy and culture. While the latter has been generally regarded as a part of IR, the former has never been so as a legitimate approach to contemporary world affairs.

The questions to answer in this paper therefore include: What is the study of regional history? Why is it important to the contemporary international relations? Why has the mainstream Japanese IR scholars regarded it as unimportant? To what extent does it contribute to the existing post-Western IR literature and how? In order to address these questions, I start with genealogical descriptions of Japanese IR discourses. Secondly I will focus on a particular approach to diplomatic history, which attempts to historicise the Japanese foreign policies by concentrating on cultural relations among nations. This is an example of historicism with an exclusive focus on the relationship between diplomacy and culture. Thirdly, I will take up intercultural politics, which was an even more radical departure from the traditional diplomatic history tradition. This approach differs from the radical approach to diplomatic history introduced in the second part in a sense that it takes into account the intercultural relations as a whole and became a bridge between diplomatic history and the study of regional history. Here I will also try to answer the reason why Japanese IR has neglected cultural historicism. Fourthly, the study on East Asian history will be introduced and I will make an attempt to assess it in terms of the contribution it may make to the contemporary IR literature.

Genealogy of Japan's IR

There are numerous books and articles published on Japanese IR. Just to name some books published in this new millennium, Glen Hook published two edited volume in 2001 titled *Japan's International Relations: Politics, economics and security* (Hook et.al. eds. 2001) and *Japan and Okinawa: Structure and subjectivity* (Hook et.al. eds. 2003). The focus of Suzuki Shogo's recent critique of English School is also on Japan and China (Suzuki 2009), Chris Goto-Jones published a single authored monograph *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School, and Co-Prosperity* (Goto-Jones 2005) and an edited volume *Re-Politicising the Kyoto School as Philosophy* (Goto-Jones ed 2008). If we take into account the historical understanding of Japan's diplomacy, Alan Tasman's *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* (Tansman ed 2009), Hotta Eri's two consecutive books *Japan 1941: Count down to infamy* and *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War: 1931-1945*, Louise Young's *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* make good examples.

However, works published in the book form mainly deal with Japanese foreign relations and diplomatic history, and not many with intellectual history or theories of Japanese IR as an academic discipline. As to the theories and discourses of IR, it seems that we can find the more in journal articles than book form publications. In fact, the four traditions of Inoguchi which I mentioned in the introduction were developed in his journal articles (Inoguchi 2007; Inoguchi and Bacon 2001) and there have been several articles published successively. Some of them are overview of Japanese IR (Murata 2010; Yamamoto 2011), some engage in critical reflection (C. Chen 2011; 2012), some focus upon particular figures of Japanese intellectuals (Nakano 2007; Shimizu 2011; 2015; K. Chen 2012; Lee 2013).

However, what characterises these works on Japanese IR is a total lack of attention to the study of regional history of Asia. For example, Inoguchi contends that the four distinctive traditions, which I mentioned in the introduction, are clearly evident in Japanese IR even today (Inoguchi and Bacon 2001, 12-13; Inoguchi 2007, 373), but never gave a slightest glance at the regional history.

Japanese IR has been more concerned with pragmatic issues than abstract theory and as a result, Japanese IR literature is concentrated on concrete issues and historical events surrounding Japan's foreign relations. Yamamoto Kazuya for example insists that 'Japan's IR studies have been characterized by their historical approaches'. Yamamoto maintains, this is, like Inoguchi suggested, the reason why Japanese IR has been characterised with the low interest in theoretical development (Yamamoto 2011, 260). While Inoguchi and Yamamoto did introduce historicism, they introduce historicism, which is, in their perception, characterised by its concreteness, in order to emphasise the lack of the development of abstract theories in Japan.

The historicism Inoguchi and Yamamoto mentioned require a further explanation. In the article on the same topic of Japanese IR published in 2007, Inoguchi exemplified two different traditions within historical studies; *Staatslehre* and historicism. The *Staatslehre* tradition is 'greatly influenced military and colonial studies in the pre-war period and remained strong in a metamorphosed form even after 1945' (Inoguchi 2007, 372). This tradition's priority was given to provide sufficient historical-institutional backgrounds and describing events and personalities in contexts and their consequences in detail. Recently researches conducted in this tradition have been seen in the form of regional studies on the basis of sovereign state (e.g. Chinese studies, Thai studies, Indonesian studies, etc.), and maintained a close relationship with the government. In fact a bulk of research on this tradition have been conducted by government-related think tanks (Inoguchi 2007, 372). In this tradition, Foucault's power/knowledge relations appear very much intact.

One of the reasons for this intimate relationship between government and regional studies is related to the inception of the international relations. According to Kawata Tadashi and Ninomiya Saburo, prior to World War I, world affairs were not so important as domestic affairs as a subject of scholarly interest. They were rather dealt with in the field of international law or diplomatic history (Kawata and Ninomiya 1964, 190). This parallels with E. H. Carr's argument in the *Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939* and Stanley Hoffmann's 'An American Social Science: International relations' article published in 1977, that international relations was exclusively the business of diplomats and international lawyers before the WWI (Carr 1946; Hoffmann 1977, 78-9). The post-war Japanese IR inherited this perception and, as a consequence, *Staatslehre* became the mainstream discourses of Japanese foreign relations.

The other research tradition in the historical studies is historicism. Interestingly, Inoguchi and Yamamoto all agree that the some, if not many, IR scholars are categorised in this tradition. In fact, most of scholars working on historical approaches of not *Staatslehre* tradition appear in the form of area studies, thus regarded as scholars of humanities. This is precisely the reason why, according to Inoguchi and Yamamoto, theory of IR has not been sufficiently developed (Inoguchi 2007; Yamamoto 2011).

Inoguchi explains 'the strong salience of area studies in Japan's IR study…reflects in part the reaction of academics to the domination of *Staatslehre* tradition' (Inoguchi 2007, 372), and many scholars of this tradition have taken the methodology of historicism. On the historical survey of the Japanese post-war IR theories, Yamamoto also touches upon the historicism of area studies in explaining the diversification of Japanese IR theory. He explicates that Japanese IR has been diversified after the end of the Cold War, and

area studies is one of them. He defines the branch of area studies in IR under profound influence of World Systems Theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, and contends;

> Wallerstein's macroscopic theory based on rich historical detail fascinated many scholars who, while appreciative of the traditional emphasis on history, strove to develop general arguments about world politics, economy and society. Although these scholars did not always fully embrace the ideological bent of Wallerstein's argument, many arguments pertaining to regional systems, particularly in Asia, were developed (Yamamoto 2011, 270).

However, Yamamoto virtually stops at the brief introduction and does not go further. This is because the American IR profoundly influences Yamamoto's interpretation of IR as an academic discipline, and when he says 'theory', that actually means Eurocentric discourses of world affairs.

When Inoguchi and Yamamoto mention IR theory, it must be abstract and constructed on the basis of universality, objectivity, regularity, predictability and falsifiability. In other words, it must be scientific. This was particularly salient in the American IR, and there is an undeniable influence from it. As a result, historicism of area studies developed in Japan appears to be worth mentioning only when it has an appropriate counterpart in the Western, American in particular, IR literature. In fact, the portion to touch upon historicism of area studies in Yamamoto's article is substantially smaller than that of diplomatic history.

However, this understanding of theory is too narrowly defined if we become receptive of the recent development of IR theory such as global civil society and world governance both of which take into account non-state actors in comprehending contemporary world affairs. Therefore Japanese IR must widen its scope of theory to what have not been considered to be inside of IR, that is, the study of history.

But how? The following sections will introduce some discourses of historicism mainly developed on the margins of the Japanese IR community, in order to clarify how the historicist discourses can contribute to the existing IR literature.

Diplomatic History and Culture

Diplomatic history definitely resides within the boundary of IR, although it is not on the core when it come to the theoretical concern. The most widely known to Western readers among the Japanese scholars taking a historical approach to world affairs is Irie Akira, Professor of Emeritus of Harvard University. He is a historian, in fact a professor of history of the department of history at Harvard University. He is also known for his extensive writing on external relations of Japan, particularly on 'cultural internationalism'. He experienced the defeat of WWII and the chaotic social condition of post-war period, and this could have influenced his research in his later life.

Generally speaking, the study of diplomatic history consists of research on the history of foreign relations of one or a few countries, and the main target is either nation-states or diplomats. While Iriye is a historian of Japanese diplomatic history in the ordinary sense, he unconventionally tends to focus on cultural aspect to diplomacy. Iriye wrote in explaining the aim of his research;

> Japanese foreign relations are not simple. If we are to understand international order as a whole,

we need at least to take into account three dimensions of military, economy, and thought (or culture). Sometime they are complementary to each other, sometime they are contradictory. Either way, this will provide a perspective to understand the ways in that Japan has interacted with the world by focusing upon the changes of Japan's military, economic, and cultural relations in the last fifty years (Iriye 1991, 8).

Although he has been contending that we need to focus on all of three dimensions to world affairs in understanding the contemporary international relations, his academic inclination towards the cultural activities of international arena has been very much salient throughout his writings. This means a radical departure from the conventional understanding of diplomatic history and marked an advent of the new era of cultural diplomacy later fully developed Joseph Nye's soft power politics. In fact, he published such culture oriented monographs as *Power and Culture: the Japanese American War 1941-1945* (Iriye 1981), and *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Iriye 1997), both of which have exclusive focus on culture and its relation to diplomacy.

Focusing on culture contains, according to Iriye, important meanings to international relations literature, that is, to move away from the state-centric view of international relations to an academic area previously unfocused. He wrote in explaining the purpose of his book *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* published in 1997 'I hope the book will show that it is perfectly possible to narrate the drama of international relations without giving principal roles to separate national existences' (Iriye 1997, 1). Iriye maintains that while nation-state is, no doubt, a main focus of international relations, he also believes that

interactions outside the (state-centric) framework exist, for which international relations may be an inadequate term but which, whatever one calls them, constitute just as much part of the story of world development as do the activities of national entities (Iriye 1997, 1).

This belief in the importance of activities of the non-state actors in shaping world affairs is the theoretical foundation on which his argument of the cultural politics is based.

Focusing on culture not only contributes to making sense of the shaping process of world affairs, but also of changing process of the world. He maintains;

Individuals and groups of people from different lands have sought to develop an alternative community of nations and peoples on the basis of their cultural interchanges and that, while frequently ridiculed by practitioners of power politics and ignored by historians, their efforts have significantly altered the world community and immeasurably enriched our understanding of international affairs (Iriye 1997, 2).

In this way, he contends that the cultural dimension is undeniable or indispensable in understanding world affairs.

However, this task is not all that easy because the term culture is very much confusing. There have been a numerous definitions and interpretations of the term, there seems no universally accepted definition of it on which every researcher has agreed. Iriye is well aware of this, and conscious about the need to find his own interpretation of the term 'culture'. He was, therefore, in need to provide his version of definition of

'culture', and contends that it is 'structures of meaning'. In this interpretation, the main focus in the cultural dimension to world affairs is on 'a variety of activities undertaken to link countries and peoples through the exchange of ideas and persons, through scholarly cooperation, or through efforts at facilitating cross-national understanding' (Iriye 1997, 3).

Iriye is very much aware that this task is also imperative in bridging the gap between international politics and domestic politics which has, for a long time, divided the literature of history of international relations. In the traditional explication of world affairs, researchers have usually been forced to choose international factors such as balance of power and anarchical structure of international society or domestic factors such as individual efforts and contributions to political decision making as decisive determinants of foreign policies. He maintains that the challenge in this attempt has been somehow to try to bring the two perspectives together; to develop a scheme in which local forces integrate themselves into a global situation (Iriye 1997, 179).

Iriye is very much concerned with this gap between the international and the domestic, and fulfilling it by utilising the concept of 'culture'. He argues that domestic and global politics may be connected, and this does not have to be done in terms of geopolitically defined international system, but of a culturally conceptualised world order. This in tern directs us to a new definition of international relations. Iriye wrote:

> cross-national cultural forces and developments, linking the societies and peoples of different countries, can never be fully understood in a framework of geopolitics, economic mobilization, security, strategy, and the like. One needs an alternative definition of international relations, a definition of world affairs not as an arena of interstate power rivalries but as a field for interdependent forces and movements, not as a structure of power relations but as a social context for interchanges among individuals and groups across national boundaries. If such a cultural formulation were adopted, it would become easier to link international to domestic affairs (Iriye 1997, 180-1).

However, Iriye sees that this approach is pushed not only out of the general academic interest, but it is also out of the political concern in general. In the pre-war period, similar arguments to Iriye's, that cultural exchange would lead to peaceful reconciliation of contending nation-states, were in fact advocated by some historians and international relations scholars such as the Kyoto School of philosophy, but history tells us a tragic story that their discourses were abused by nationalists in justifying the aggressive territorial expansion of Imperialist Japan (Shimizu2011; 2015). To avoid a repetition of this sad history, Iriye proposes that:

> cultural internationalists in all countries will need to struggle against cultural chauvinists as well as geopolitical nationalists; that is, both against parochial tendencies that deny possibilities for cross-cultural communication and against policy formulations that give primacy to military considerations (Iriye 1997, 185).

In this way, focusing on the third dimension to world affairs is inherited and further developed by Iriye into academic development as well as political practice.

Then, what was the consequence? Iriye definitely expanded the intellectual territory of IR and opened a space for a new development of what the diplomatic history could have made.

Intercultural Studies

While Iriye's attempt to widen the scope of IR definitely made a step forward a more culture oriented IR theorisation, not many Japanese scholars clearly captured the meaning of Iriye's contention. As a result, Japanese IR theoreticians did not pay sufficient attention to Iriye's cultural diplomacy and Iriye's argument was naturally placed back into the category of diplomatic history, which has nothing to do with theorisation of IR, despite its potential to be developed into an alternative theory of IR.

After Iriye's attempt, Hirano Kenichiro made another try to involve the cultural dimension in the theorisation of IR. He was born in 1937, and is also a scholar of the Japanese diplomatic history tradition. He received an undergraduate and masters degrees of liberal arts from the University of Tokyo, and moved to Harvard University later on where he obtained his Ph.D. He moved back to the University of Tokyo after his doctoral study at Harvard, and taught international relations and intercultural relations there. He published wide-ranging subjects of international relations as well as cultural interactions of world affairs but he has been consistent in a sense that he has been focusing on the 'culture' in making sense of world affairs.

If one is to study international relations on culture, his textbook titled *Kokusai Bunkaron* (International Cultural Theory) is usually referred to as the starting point of the subject (Hirano 2000), and the book is now regarded as a not-to-be-missed. Like Iriye, Hirano has also been concerned mainly with the term 'culture' and diplomatic history. However, his approach is substantially different from Iriye's. While Iriye defines 'culture' as an area, which consists of a part of world affairs, Hirano advocates seeing world affairs through cultural lenses. In other words, Iriye sees 'culture' as a separated realm from other areas such as political and economic, Hirano attempts to analyse world affairs as a whole with anthropological and cultural methodology.

But what exactly does this mean? If it is not to focus upon the cultural realm of world affairs as Iriye did, how could we place 'culture' in the theorisation process of IR? Hirano's explication is not only to focus on culture, but also to find out the cultural influence on the theorisation process. According to Hirano, theorisation is also a human activity, thus inevitably cultural. Thus Hirano states 'IR itself is cultural' (Hirano 2000, ii).

What exactly does 'culture' mean to Hirano then? He defines the term as 'distinctive 'bodies' of a variety of individuals and groups' which can be regarded as subjects performing important roles in shaping the world (Hirano 2000, ii). In the age of globalisation, these subjects are no longer static. They are rather active and dynamic in terms of geography and social class. People are moving here and there easily transcending national borders and socio-political boundaries. Thus a theory of international relations which does not count them including the theoretician themselves should be severely criticised for its lack of attention to the ever-changing nature of the world.

However, Hirano's definition of 'culture' sometimes becomes unstable. On one hand, he defines, as stated above, 'culture', in a very much abstract way, to be 'bodies' of subjects, thus cultural relations means the relationship between the 'bodies'. On the other hand, he also uses the term 'culture' in referring to concrete individuals or non-state communities which supposedly perform crucial roles in shaping international structure. In this sense, Hirano's 'culture' contains both abstract and concrete meanings which

have, in either way, been forgotten in the IR literature.

One of the good examples of Hirano's interpretation of international cultural relations is a story of the end of the Cold War. This incident has been often understood as the victory of the West and the collapse of the communist regimes. According to Hirano, this is too simplistic an interpretation. He argues instead that the end of the Cold War was not suddenly marked in the form of the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The inception of the end of the Cold War was long before that, which is, at least from the 1960s when civil movements for democracy elapsed everywhere on the planet such as the Prague Spring and the May Revolution of Paris. He contends that these movements are intimately related to the end of Cold War although they were deeply hidden in the civil society, thus invisible to those perceiving IR in terms only of interstate and diplomatic relations. In other words, the perception of theoreticians of IR and diplomatic history were biased by the culture of the traditional IR, which exclusively relies on state-centric view of the Westphalian system. That the contemporary IR theorists and diplomatic history specialists failed to predict the collapse of the Soviet Union means another important theoretical implication. This means, Hirano maintains, that the end of Cold War refers not only to the internal decay of the East, but also to the internal decay of the West (Hirano 2000, 190).

Hirano's argument parallels with the postmodern critic of the American realism of IR. Jim George, for example, criticizes the U.S. foreign policy specialists for their lack of attention to the realms traditionally regarded as residing outside of IR in explaining their failure in predicting the demise of the Soviet Union. Although George does not explicitly use the term culture, practically he develops the same theory as Hirano does, and contends that the really the U.S. foreign policy analysts was the reality they made themselves (George 1994).

Another example of his argument on intercultural relations is his severe critique of Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilization' theses. Hirano contends that Huntington's theory confuses two similar but different words – 'civilization' and 'culture'. Huntington unquestionably uses these two words in an interchangeable manner, thus he confuses 'clash of civilization' with 'cultural friction'. Hirano, on the other hand, strictly distinguishes these two words and argues that 'cultural friction' leads to efforts of the parties involved for reconciliation, thus becomes one of the main means to avoid the 'clash of civilization'. Hirano maintains that this moment takes place mainly in individuals' minds. Taking cases of Japanese citizens and politicians encountering the West in the 19th century as examples, Hirano argues that it is the hope for reconciliation, which resides in the minds of individuals that make it possible to eventually avoid the 'clash of civilizations'. Therefore 'cultural frictions' are always reconciled locally. However, the possibility of local reconciliations of 'cultural friction has been intentionally eliminated from Huntington's argument in order to emphases the confrontational nature of international relations (Hirano 2000, 28-33). Thus, to Hirano, Huntington's exclusive focus on 'clash of civilization' rather than 'cultural friction' is a characteristic of his theorisation on the basis of the perception towards sovereign actors, which is very much Western cultural product, and the concept of 'clash' is pre-given and assumed prior to 'civilization' in the theorisation process of the post-Cold War political environment.

In this way, Hirano's contention of international cultural relations provides new lenses through which we look at world affairs. His approach to world affairs is very much on the tradition of Japanese IR which focuses on cultural relations among not only different nations, but also among different individuals and communities. However his approach unfortunately failed to capture the attention of IR audience or has never been recognised as a legitimate approach to world affairs in the Japanese IR community, and

inevitably he set up a new academic society called the Japan Society for Intercultural Studies (JSICS) and became the founding chair of it.

The Study of Regional History

Despite the unceasing academic efforts on culture and IR, and significant addition of a new dimension to the traditional international relations made by Hirano, the mainstream IR theory is still constructed on the basis of unhistorical perception towards security and state sovereignty even today. All those working on the relationship between culture and IR has found its place rather under the name of different academic subjects; the study of regional history. Notably the most prominent scholar in this context is Hamashita Takeshi, a historian and regional studies scholar of Asia.

Hamashita was born in the Shizuoka Prefecture and academically trained in the University of Tokyo. He has written wide variety of subjects such as modern Chinese history, the tribute system, Okinawa and Japanese imperialism, and critical IR. Among those, his interpretation of the China-centred world system until 18th century and its demise afterwards is widely known, and in fact his argument inspired the Andre Gunder Frank's *Re-Orient* (Frank 1998), and challenges John King Fairbank's interpretation of the tribute system as the cause of China's failure to protect itself from the Western dominance (Fairbank and Ch'en, 1968).

The tribute system has been the central focus of the so-called recently emerging Chinese School including David Kang or Yaqing Qin. They show how stable the world was under the tribute system and argue that due to the tribute system from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth century, according to Kang, East Asia had enjoyed peace and order before the violent arrival of Western imperialism. In contrast to the Westphalian system of interstate relations, which was defined by its formal equality and incessant interstate conflict, the East Asian tribute system was characterised by formal inequality and 'centuries of stability among the core participants' (Kang 2010, 201).

Kang's and Qin's contentions were developed relatively recently, Hamashita had already developed a similar argument of governance and the tribute system as early as 1980s. It is also worth noting here that his analysis of the system is very much detailed and in some ways far more radical than the narratives recently developed in IR. According to Hamashita, the world before 1800 was China-centred. What supported the development of China in that era was the tribute system. The tribute system involves such tributary states as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Ryukyu, Vietnam, the Philippines, and so forth. They sent tributary missions to China regularly, while China sent envoys to tributary states for official recognition when they had new rulers. What is important in this context is merchants and traders who accompanied the envoys. Hamashita sees that the volume of private trade progressively enlarged over time while the categories and quantities of goods traded were officially regulated. As a consequence, the main purpose of the tribute trade 'came to be the pursuit of profits through the unofficial trade that was ancillary to the official system' (Hamashita 1989, 75-56, Arrighi 2007, 261).

On the basis of his explication of the tribute system, Hamashita develops his contention that the core of world economy resided in East Asia up until 1800 with the tribute system. According to Hamashita, Europe was no exception.

George III's envoy Lord Macartney was dispatched to the court of the Ch'ien Lung Emperor with the

title of Ambassador and Plenipotentiary Extraordinary in 1793. Macartney recorded in his journal, 'I pretend not to notice that 'English Ambassador with Tribute to the Chinese Emperor' is written on the ship's flag, and I have not yet complained about it. Given an appropriate opportunity, I shall give them warning' (Hamashita 1989, 76-77).

According to Hamashita, China was losing its momentum sometime around 1800 in terms its transcendental power over its tribute states, and obviously the above passage was written around the time. However, it still shows China's perception towards the world, and it is evidently clear that it regarded England as one of the tribute states.

Hamashita contends that the study of regional history has a tremendous potential to change the wide spread perception of IR towards the world. It shows the possibility of different interpretations of world history as the record of tribute system shows us. It also proves that the world order has been constructed not on the basis of a universalised principle of non-intervention or state sovereignty. It is rather on the basis of interactions of economy and culture, the centre of which human beings, not nation-states, reside. While it is still possible to argue that the tribute system itself was hierarchical, thus constructed upon a universalised principle, it was rather flexible and fluid in terms of economic and cultural exchanges among peoples, which took place over the blurred state borders (Hamashita 2008).

Then what does this study mean to the contemporary IR literature of Japan in general? Inoguchi, as I mentioned in the introduction, emphasises the differences in the four traditions of Japanese IR; the *Staatslehre* tradition, Marxism, Historicism, and American style methodology. Each of them has its characteristics and disadvantages according to Inoguchi, thus he emphases the differences among them. However, researchers from other countries in the Asia-Pacific rather see similarity among them. Ching-Chang Chen contends, for instance, these four traditions seem to be based on at glance different assumptions and theoretical compositions, none of them pay sufficient attention to the narratives developed in other countries in Asia. This is because 'Japanese IR academics believe they can learn little from the concepts and experiences of other Asian countries, because Asia lacks Westphalia' (C. Chen 2012, 471). In fact, all four traditions Inoguchi mentioned have their origins in the European or American tradition, and imported to Japan in the course of its modernisation process. Therefore it can be argued that the reason why the study of regional history has long been neglected in the Japanese IR literature lies in the history of IR as an academic discipline itself which developed as a subject to make sense of and analyse the events and occurrences taking place in the world. Obviously the world they see is divided by strict and robust state boundaries. In other words, the study focusing on the different interpretations and explanations of the world based on the regional history remain residing outside Japanese IR as far as IR is a self-claimed discipline of the Western tradition and based on the Westphalian subjectivity.

This is precisely what Hamashita makes his argument against. For him, history must be narrated from the margins if it is to understand the world in terms more of concrete human interactions than of abstract concepts of nation-states. Narrating the history of margins has at least two important and intertwined meanings. First, it gives us a clue of hidden aspects of world affairs, which has never been previously revealed. It complements and reinforces more precise understanding of the contemporary world, thus becomes the basis of our future vision. Second, while it complements the existing knowledge of contemporary IR, it also relativise the traditional knowledge. The relativisation is in some ways political. As the world has been constructed upon a particular perception to the world, it has benefited those who share

the same way of looking at the world and damaged the others. Thus, narrating the world from the margins contains an ethical meaning, and thus its action is political.

Then, why has Japanese IR neglected the voices from the margins? Sakai Tetsuya, a diplomatic history specialist of the University of Tokyo, attempts to situate narratives on the margins of IR by focusing humanities and argues that the reason why the voices of margins has been disregarded was because of the two different but intertwined world orders of IR (Sakai 2007). By taking up some intellectuals in the past who can be seen as being situated on the margins of the conventional IR literature, he argues that many of them concentrated on non-state actors and their interactions across the state boundaries.

According to Sakai, study of regional history in Japanese IR has actually a long history. Initially, the study of Japan's foreign relations was divided into international law and politics, and colonial policy studies. Sakai contends that the former was inevitably associated closely with law, politics and economics, the latter with humanities including literature, ethnology and history. Sakai argues that IR literature used to be developed on the basis of the division of international relations and colonial policy studies, as the disciplines researching the 'international order' and 'imperial order' respectively.

'International order' here refers to the relationship between equal states mostly in the European context, while 'imperial order' was an order mainly forcibly placed on the areas outside of it. The former was, and still is, more about the institutional arrangements and organisational management of politics and international law effective to relatively equal members – mainly European nation-states, and the latter was more about blunt and bare economic and cultural power over those who were colonised (Sakai 2007).

These two orders of the world profoundly influenced the development of the intellectual society, and the former became the core of the discipline of international relations, and the latter of the regional and colonial studies. Although both are by no means separable in a sense that the international order was practically maintained by the suzerain states' unceasing exploitation of the colonised areas, thus by the imperial order.

The two-order understanding of world affairs is by no means limited to Japan of course. Similar argument can be found in Edward Keene's explication of the Westphalian system and colonial system (Keene 2002; loc.1346/2642) and Suzuki Shogo's criticism of English School, in which he contends that English School only concentrates on the international society and did not pay sufficient attention to the function of imperialism to support the former (Suzuki 2009, 11).

Japanese IR has been mainly developed in terms of the international order in Sakai's sense, and rarely gavels an academic attention to the imperial order simply because the latter was regarded as the subject of regional and colonial studies. On the other hand, the scholars of regional studies were well aware how important the violent control over the colonised areas was for maintaining the international order. As a result, those who were engaging in the regional and colonial studies, particularly in the post-WWII era, has inclined to formulate counter discourses to the mainstream IR and gradually moved to the discipline of regional studies. In fact, Hamashita explicitly criticized the IR discourse repeatedly in his articles and monographs.

Implications to the Post-Western Discourse

Then what does this specifically indicate to the post-Western IR discourse? There are at least two implications we can find there. First, Hamashita's analysis of regional history reveals how much our

perception is biased by the Westphalian presumptions of state sovereignty and strict state borders, and the extent to which we are looking at the world on the basis of strictly demarcated borders. His investigation of the tribute system lays out the stable political order before the arrival of the European modernity was mainly supported by the enormous amount of transactions and exchanges in the economic and cultural relations, which was, in turn, guaranteed and encouraged by the system of rather blurred boundaries of the concerned states.

Hamashita's explication of regional history also shows us the importance of looking through the lenses of the periphery. In this context, Hamashita was particularly concerned with the history of Ryukyu. During the 17th to 19th century, Ryukyu was under two different state controls, China and Japan. However, both of suzerain states did not intervene each other, but practically ignored the fact that Ryukyu was at least formerly under control of the other state. What is remarkable here is that the system of the blurred state boundaries made it possible in practice that a state became under the control of two different state jurisdictions. In other words, it shows a different interpretation of the state sovereignty and proves the autonomous state sovereignty of non-interventionism is merely a particular provincial interpretation.

Second, it is evidently clear here that Hamashita's argument surely contribute to the existing IR literature by providing a moment to reflect upon our mind-set in term of state sovereignty and strict boundaries. However the genealogy of Japanese IR in which the mainstream scholars have ignored Hamashita's insistence in the importance of regional history made it clear that a different interpretation and understanding from the mainstream Westphalian perception towards world affairs has a difficulty to be sufficiently recognised to be developed into a new theory of IR. In fact while the Kyoto School philosophers before the WWII, for instance, made similar contention, their argument of World History, which was indeed similar to the contemporary Chinese School, was later abused by the imperial government in order to justify their operational manoeuvre to occupy the lands of the Asian continent as well as Taiwan (Shimizu 2011; 2015).

Third, the perception on the basis of the Westphalian nation-state is more persistent than we presume. In fact, there is an irresistible temptation in every moment we talk about world affairs to use such concepts as Japan, China, and the US as nation-state in the Westphalian sense. This temptation appears a variety of forms. As the case of the study of regional history in Japan indicates, we might be simply excluded from the discipline of IR. Or, in order to obtain the recognition of the IR community, we might be forced to make a deal by using nation-states to formulate our theory as the Kyoto School philosopher did before the WWII. As a consequence, we become forced to think of the contemporary world of the decline of the US hegemony in terms of the strictly demarcated state boundaries, thus uncritically ask which nation-state will the next hegemony. However, as Hamashita suggests, what we need to question in making sense of contemporary world affairs is not about which nation-state in the Westphalian sense will become the next provider of universalised political principles, but how we stop our exclusivist thinking of the world based only on the Westphalian system for a post-Western world.

Conclusion

In this article I tried to clarify the importance of perception of regional history in understanding and imagining the contemporary world. It also shows how much our perception towards the world is limited by the Westphalian principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention on the basis of state

borders. While historical understanding is widely recognised as an important approach to contemporary international relations, its scope is also limited by the universalised principles, and as a consequence only diplomatic history has barely been seen as a part of IR. However, despite the introduction of culture into the IR literature made by diplomatic history such as Iriye, Hirano and Hamashita, the importance of cultural exchange has never attracted sufficient attention of the IR audience. As a result, when we think of an alternative to the contemporary international order such as the tribute system, it is narrated by the Westphalian mind-set such as 'China's tribute system', in which China directly connotes PRC, rather than China as a governing system of the world. Therefore what we need to have in mind is a question in understanding Japanese IR is 'What Japan are we talking about?'

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