

The Asian Construction of Asia

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When the Maya were asked the name of their lands they replied *uic athan* (we do not understand). This “expression of incomprehension became the colonial name of the land that is wrested from them.” Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press), 1991 pp. 103–104

Introduction

Distortion, incomprehension and domination have played their part in naming places. The history of colonial domination left behind a legacy still readable in existing names and prevailing ideas. Successor governments and the peoples of these nations have been wrestling with the vexing question of suitable alternatives. What intellectual baggage do the new names carry? How far back does one need to go to recover the “original” name of the place? In some cases mere orthographic change to bring the spelling closer to the correct native pronunciation is sufficient; in others the name is replaced and further debate ensues. (In India for instance Bombay is now written Mumbai but Madras has become Chennai).

And what of Asia? Where does it begin and where does it end? Does it have either cartographic or intellectual boundaries; does it refer to a supra-regional community bound by spiritual, social and cultural affinities? Or, is it merely “this enmapped place [which] has never been more than a simulacrum of something that has no substance” (H. Haratoonian)¹⁾; an invention of Orientalism and inseparable from Euro-American power over Asia (Edward Said, *Orientalism*). Geographical boundaries are drawn on the basis of political and intellectual principles and are not merely markers for natural boundaries. Yet these constructed identities and territories are not illusory.

What area falls within Asia?²⁾ Originally it was used to denote the western part of Asia Minor, Proconsular Asia a Roman province with Ephesus as its capital.³⁾ The area expanded with the times to include ultimately the whole continent. The knitting of the region within the structures of colonial domination bound the countries of the region in a relationship that was often distorted and skewed but nevertheless inextricably linked.

Asian nations have had in their long and complex histories forged a sense of self and territory that cannot be homogenised. These evolving identities have changed and developed in many ways, often in conflict and at odds with their neighbours. This history needs to be considered along with the mental categories imposed from the

outside by the colonial powers. This essay is an exploratory attempt to examine the processes that have shaped the way the peoples and nations of this region, Asia, have categorised their neighbours and the world. In this essay the focus is mainly on Japan but here I will touch only very briefly on China and India as well.

The history of these processes can be divided into three very broad periods. The first is the pre-modern period when Asian nations came into contact with European powers and their knowledge of the world increased and began to alter under the growing hegemony of the Western nations. The second period was marked by the colonisation of large parts of Asia but even the countries that were not fully colonised or independent, such as Japan, worked within a colonial environment where the superiority of Western civilisation and power was a widely acknowledged fact. Japan within this structure created its own colonial empire and therefore had to redefine its relations with its neighbours as well as its own sense of being Japanese. In the third phase after World War II, as the process of de-colonisation strengthened, the old verities of Asia and Asianness were questioned and discarded as new principles, such as Marxism or Non-alignment, bound the nations together in their search for equity and dreams of progress. The last two decades have seen a growing expression of Asianness and an assertion of difference based on values, culture and religion that replay the colonial denigration with pride. This enmapped place has become embodied. What are we to make of this?

It is with this question in mind that this essay will look at some of the conceptions of the region and the world articulated within Asia, in particular in Japan. The purpose of this exploration is to reflect on how to deal with intra-regional perceptions and relations and the processes by which the history of this region has been inextricably bound together. It is necessary to consider these inter-regional perceptions along with Euro-American impositions in any formulation of a regional identity.

Europe and Asia

The early contacts between Europe and Asia were sustained by well-developed trade routes and flourished till the time of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia but were disrupted in the seventh century as Islam spread in the region. Islamic kingdoms then became the major conduit for the exchange of information and knowledge between the two regions, but as European explorations and trade expanded by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the nature and scale of interaction changed dramatically.⁴⁾ Asia had represented the three rich kingdoms of Cathay, Cipangu and the “Indies.” The Renaissance adopted the “Indies” as a description for the lands east of the Indus from the writings of Ptolemy and Strabo, who had used it to mark the limits of Hellenistic world.

European maps from the later part of the sixteenth century had begun to define Asia by its present boundaries: in G. Rucelli (1561), S. Munster (1575) and J. M. en Messina (1587).⁵⁾ The voyages of exploration and discovery, trade and conquest as European power expanded were accompanied by extensive gathering of information:

maps, records of social and political systems, grammars and descriptions of the flora and fauna of the region. The maps, however always had Europe in the top left corner, the traditional place to start reading a book in Western culture. Maps, as one of the “technologies of surveillance” (Michael Foucault), were visual representations of power. An illustrative example of the interest in acquiring and codifying information is Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt in 1798 which included a party of nearly two hundred savants — scientists, cartographers, surveyors, botanists, architects, geologists, artists and others who recorded their findings and produced, *La Description d’Egypte*. Their work laid the basis for the modern study of Egypt.

European society displayed a great desire to learn if only to control, but there were other equally important reasons for this increasing curiosity. The Jesuits, for instance, were interested above all in winning converts to their faith but in the process they made great efforts to understand the societies that they worked in. In India and China, for instance, they made a close study of the language, culture and philosophies of the people. They became the major interpreters of China to the West and their reports inspired and moved others to the study of China.

In the nineteenth century India became the centre of attention in Europe while China, which had been the focus of Enlightenment interest, was now seen as a corrupt and decrepit society. Alexis de Tocqueville, for example, “found it incomprehensible that the eighteenth century Physiocrats should have had such an admiration for China.”⁶⁾ The new interest in India fuelled scholarly work. The translations of philosophical texts by scholars like Anquetil Duperron (1723–1805) who translated the *Upanishads* or William Jones (1746–94), who founded the Asiatic Society, deepened knowledge of this area. This interest in Europe of Asia was a product in part of Romanticism and served as a radical critique of European society. So for Jules Michelet, for instance, it was “lofty Asia, the profound East.”

The opening decades of the nineteenth century saw another reversal as India began to be appraised more critically. John Mill in the *History of British India* (1817) set the trend and he was followed by others: J. Stuart Mill, Leopold von Ranke, (“nations of eternal standstill”), and Karl Marx (“Asiatic Mode of Production”).

The critique of Orientalism, a “structure erected in the thick of an imperial contest whose dominant wing it represented and elaborated not only as scholarship but as partisan ideology,”⁷⁾ does provide an overarching conceptual frame. However, this needs to be tempered by an understanding that by drawing attention to alternative conceptual schemes the study of non-Western societies has served Europeans as a way to critically confront their own countries. They have searched for philosophical and social systems that answered their needs and spoke to their concerns. This has been evident in the past and is equally noticeable in the present: in the similarities that postmodernist positions share with certain philosophical schools in Asia (eg. Lao Tzu’s opposition to the artificial conventions imposed by language or the emphasis by the Madhyamaka school of Nagarjuna on stripping away forms of language and experience on the human mind and its affinities with the “linguistic turn” of Nietzsche and

Jacques Derrida). The popularity of Buddhism, particularly Zen with its emphasis on the transient present as opposed to the timeless and eternal is also in part linked with the de-centring of the self.⁸⁾

Asia and the Outside World

In India the earliest records describing and categorising the world are found in the Puranas.⁹⁾ The world is divided into seven *dwipas*¹⁰⁾ and the central *dwipa* is known as *Jambu dwipa*.¹¹⁾ The idea of the world being divided into seven *dwipas* or seven climates, seven seas, seven skies is first clearly mentioned in the Ramayana and Mahabharata. This method of categorising the world, by climates, has its origins among the Greeks. Ptolemy, for instance, described the world as divided into twenty climates (Gr. Klima for inclination).

The Arabs too, used this division but it applied to what they called the “habitable quarter” as opposed to the “inhabitable quarter” which lay beyond. There was however, no agreement on either the starting point or the boundaries of the climatic zones. Abul Fida, an Arab scholar writes that the first climatic zone started from the 12 degree northern latitude. The Persians who borrowed the idea in the early years of the Christian era equated climate with empire or nation. The *Zend Avesta* mentions seven empires or climates: the Arab, Persian, Slav, Turkish, Roman, Sind and Indian and the Chinese empire. An Arab account divided the world into five major political divisions with Iraq in the centre (Abu Zaid). As with other empires and countries each saw themselves at the centre. In the medieval period it was Arab maps and knowledge of the outside world that formed the basis of Indian understanding of the outside world. Trade and cultural contacts with Western and Central Asia were extensive and with China sporadic. Southern India had trade and cultural contacts with Southeast Asia and so there must have been an understanding of this region though research on this aspect is still very limited.

China

The characters 亜細亜 to designate Asia were first used in Mateo Ricci’s map of the world (1602) and they were placed on the Ural region in the map. China was named as the Great Ming Empire 大明国. There is some debate whether the term Asia was an overarching reference which included the Ming or not but it is clear that the characters used did not represent a good image of the area. There were other characters available that would have been better. Originally, perhaps, there was a sense of hierarchy as the character 亜 refers to the next rank (次) but it gradually acquired a sense of inferiority (劣). In modern Chinese, America is 美国 whereas originally it was 亜美利加.

China has over the centuries had trade and cultural links with its neighbours in the north-east, south-east and in the west. The interaction with the outside world has a long history and there are geographical records describing the countries of the region but it is not really clear how well they knew the political situation of these countries. Buddhist travellers such as Fa Xian or Xuan Zang or later the Sung dynasty official

Zhao Rugua have left records. The voyages of Zheng He and the records of those explorations left by Ma Huan, the *Yingyai shenglan* do show that they were developing knowledge about these areas as they sought to ensure an environment conducive to trade.¹²⁾ Much as the Europeans had done, Zheng He carried not only gifts and goods to trade but was accompanied by scholars and doctors who collected and catalogued medicinal plants. The termination of these voyages meant that China, much as Tokugawa Japan was to do later, went into a more isolationist period that would end only with the coming of the Europeans.

In the early nineteenth century, as China came to confront the Western powers, her scholars and intellectuals sought to understand this new world. The works of scholars such as Wei Yuan (*Haiguo Tuzhi*) or Xu Jiyu (*Yinghuan Zhilüe*) show that the Chinese were learning about the world largely through Western sources and attempting to gather information about Asia because it was the site of European colonisation and rivalry. References to India in the Qing archives centre on the fact of its subjugation. This is comparable to the concern in late Tokugawa and early Meiji Japan. The Opium wars and the disruption that followed in the mid-nineteenth century drove many Chinese to ponder the meaning of modernity and the onslaught of imperialism and how best to defend itself. The success of the Japanese transformation as well its military victory over China paradoxically attracted many Chinese to study in Japan. In the 1890s many Chinese Republicans, as well as Japanese such as Miyazaki Toten, began to see the fate of the two countries as inextricably linked together. However, Japanese expansionist policies put an end to any East Asian alliance and the legacy of that conflict continues to colour present day relations.

Japan

In the pre-Tokugawa period, the Japanese understanding of the world was largely limited to China, Korea and India. Knowledge of India was indirect and very limited. Even between China and Korea direct contact because of the exigencies of travel was circumscribed and textual. The Portuguese Jesuit Luis Frois commented on Japanese ignorance of the world. He wrote that once contact has taken place that the Japanese were energetic in trying to learn geography and mathematics.¹³⁾ Early maps are largely Buddhist cosmologies rather than depictions of geographic formations. Maps based largely on imagination began to change gradually and display a selective accuracy. Mateo Ricci had produced what was then the most accurate representation of the physical world in this region and this became the basis of the Japanese world view as well.

G. B. Sidotti's map of the world (1645) also played an influential role in the Japanese understanding and depiction of the world. His map along with Mateo Ricci's map, which reached Japan in 1605, was to provide the basis for most maps of the world until the Bakumatsu period. These maps showed that the world was round and that there were five continents. The new maps, based on Western methods and data, were more detailed and drawn to scale providing greater accuracy and reliability.

Arai Hakuseki using G. B. Sidotti's map in *Sairan igen* replaced the Chinese characters for Asia with *katakana* for the first time. These two usages, one using the characters for Asia and the other of using *katakana* began at that time, but up to the time of the Pacific War in the mid-twentieth century, the majority of maps used characters, and it is really only since then that *katakana* has become the accepted way of writing Asia. The word for east or tōyō originally referred to Japan and the surrounding seas, but in the Meiji period it came to be associated geographically with Japan, China and India and then with Asia or the Orient. Japan was indisputably a geographical part of the East but whether it was part of Asia was open to debate and question.

The restrictions on trade and movement within Japan meant that the foreign population within Japan was limited. The Chinese trading community was confined, as were the Dutch. Koreans or Ryukyuan embassies were occasional and seem to provide more spectacle than any sustained contact. The Korean embassies, however, did influence popular culture along the routes that they traversed. The Ainu in the north enjoyed a degree of autonomy until the Russian explorations and attempts to establish formal ties led the Tokugawa bakufu to strengthen its control over the area and began the process of turning them into Japanese, even if an inferior version.¹⁴⁾ Early illustrations of foreigners show people from Asian region, such as the servants brought in by the Dutch, but the basis of difference is seen in dress, custom and language (*fuzoku*) rather than any racial qualities. It was the modern world that transformed this way of looking.

The Meiji use of Asia was not just a geographical description but represented a political construction. In the Meiji agenda of developing the nation along Western lines, Asia came to play a crucial role, either as an ally, or as a hinterland waiting to be colonised to provide the resources for Japan to compete and equal the West. However, this was not an agenda that came fully articulated but was worked out over a period of time. In the early Meiji period, for instance, the word *minzoku* (racial or ethnic group) is hardly found and where it is, it is used in the sense of nationality, just as *kokutai* (national polity) is also used by thinkers such as Fukuzawa Yukichi. Japan is distinguished because it is an independent country with its own customs and manners and not because it has a unique culture.

Fukuzawa Yukichi, as in many other aspects, provides an illustrative example of how attitudes to this region were in the process of acquiring a modern, European stamp. His writing introducing the West to Japanese readers have been widely studied, but they also introduced Asia through European eyes to Japan and that is an area that needs to be looked at in more detail. Here let me just touch on this briefly. Fukuzawa provides a geographical description along with a survey of the major cultural and political characteristics of the world in *Bankoku ichiran* and *Sekai kuni zukushi*.¹⁵⁾ The latter book devotes thirty-one pages to Europe and North America and twenty-eight to the rest of the world (Asia nine pages, Africa and South America seven each and five for the Pacific Islands). Fukuzawa says the world can be divided into five continents (or six depending on whether north and South America are taken sepa-

rately), or three regions (Asia, Europe and Africa), or into the New (North and South America) and Old World (Asia, Africa and Europe). The Pacific Islands form, according to him a separate world.

In *Bankoku ichiran* he begins with Asia arguing that though man had a common ancestor, differences in climate and food have divided the population into five groups: white, yellow, red, black and brown. The White people (race?) (*jinrui*) live in Europe and Western Asia, North Africa and America. The Yellow people live in China, Finland and Lapland and the Red people are found in North and South America. The black, who have yet to understand the meaning of “civilisation and progress” (*kaika shinpo*), live in Africa south of the Sahara and as slaves in the United States. The Pacific Islands, African coast and the East Indies (Malacca) are populated by Brown people.

Fukuzawa goes beyond using merely geographical or racial differences. He also divides the world according to the stage of development, first between barbarian and civilised. The barbarians are distinguished by having no fixed abode and forever searching for food and sustenance. The civilised, in contrast are settled, have rites, believe in principles, have the ability to build and protect a social order. These two broad categories are further sub-divided into four, a scale starting not from barbarian but from mixed (confused) and moving through barbarian, undeveloped to civilised. The mixed are represented by Central Africa, New Guinea and the Australian aboriginal; the barbarians by North Africa and Arabia, (though while describing Afghanistan and Turkestan he writes, “while they have names as independent countries they are only *iteki*, alien peoples left underdeveloped by China, Turkey and Persia.”¹⁶) In these countries even though there is learning and culture the societies are underdeveloped because they dislike foreigners, discriminate against women and oppress the weak. Finally, the civilised at the top of the scale are the United States, England, France and Germany.

Fukuzawa then proceeds to divide the world according to the type of political system: empire, kingdom or republic. He makes further distinctions based on the degree of freedom and on that count both Germany and Russia are found autocratic. It is the United States that he sees as the ideal of existing civilised society: its people enjoy freedom and exercise control over authority. They lead a good life.

Fukuzawa gives a short description of Asia. He writes the word in katakana on the map and he uses the characters 亜細亜. He sees both Turkey and Russia as border areas that span both continents and consequently they have characteristics of both these areas. He sees the Mongolian race as the dominant group in Asia but writes that there is a great variety of people as there is of physical and climatic zones

From the Meiji period under the influence, even assault of Western ideas, the Japanese became more self-conscious and in the process of building a nation sought to identify their unique qualities. These they sought in the past and in their culture. Enlightenment philosophy with its focus on generic human nature and singular civilisation did not lead to the polemical use of the Other to critique contemporary social

forms. These are totally absent in Japanese writing. The Japanese subservience to the West led them to seek ways to underscore their equality or even superiority. Building on earlier intellectual currents that had asserted the superiority of indigenous ways over foreign Chinese ideas some Japanese thinkers and the government sought to define the sense of being Japanese by crafting a history of Japan based on its unique past. One of the first “modern” histories of Japan, *Nihon shiryaku* was written for the Paris Exposition and then used as a textbook in the Imperial universities.¹⁷⁾ A divine Emperor provided a convenient symbol of these assertions of the special origin of the Japanese.

In this context it would be useful to explore the history of racial theories and how they sought to define either the uniqueness or the commonalties that they shared with their neighbours. But as Japanese domination extended from Taiwan to Korea and then sought to bring continental China under its control it became necessary to find links that would bind the empire together. Koreans were then seen as having the same origins even if their present state did not match the Japanese. Kita Ikki for instance, denies that Korea is a colony but asserts that it is really a part of Japan and should be known as Seikaido.¹⁸⁾ As Japan extended its empire, an empire that ultimately included Manchuria, Siberia, Mongolia, China and the Philippines, Malay, Micronesia, Polynesia the study of ‘men as a race’ (*jinshuminzoku*) became important. Similar developments can be seen in the development of a national language (*kokugo*). The idea of race (*minzoku*) first appears in the magazine *Nihonjin*, which stressed the purity of the Japanese, in the early 1890s. These developments lead to defining nationality (*minzoku*) in racial terms (*jinshu*).¹⁹⁾

In the case of Korea, for instance, travellers writings hardly speak of the people, except as part of the scenery. In their white clothes the Koreans recall for Japan a bygone era, of Nara and Heian, but without its energy. The distancing of a people both in time and space allowed them to be viewed as objects to be civilised while at the same time arguing that they had the same origins.²⁰⁾

Japan found in the idea of Asia a weapon to meet the challenge posed by Western power and its claims to superiority. More than any feeling of commonality this instrumental use was dominant. As soon as Asia was discovered, often through European eyes, Fukuzawa formulated his call to “transcend Asia” (*datsu-A*). The proliferation of societies seeking the regeneration of Asia in general, and China in particular, as a necessary pre-condition for the development of Japan, attest to the importance of an Asian alliance. However, even the proponents of a regenerated Asia saw it more as a way to defend Japan against the onslaught of Western culture than of any great unity with Asia. Okakura’s famous sentence “Asia is one” was followed by “The Himalaya’s serve to divide.” Even as Japan extended its imperial control over peoples in Asia, a number of societies proliferated which sought the regeneration of Asia: for example, in 1877 the ShinA-sha (New Asia Society) (renamed Kō-A kai, the Raise Asia Society, in 1880) was established by Okubo Toshimichi and others, followed in 1883 by the Ajia Kyōkai (Asian League) and in 1898 with the Higashi-Ajia-Dōbunkai

(Society for Common Culture in East Asia). In 1898 the Dōbunkai merged with the Tō-A kai (The East Asia Society), with Konoe Fumimaro as its head. The tension between *Datsu-A* and *Kō-A* (to transcend Asia or to regenerate Asia) was later submerged in the drive for empire and the creation of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Dai Tō-A kyōei ken*).

The drive for independence among the colonised also worked to bring them closer as they pursued common goals. The victory of Japan against Russia in 1905 was heralded as the victory of an Asian power, even though within Japan many saw it as capitalist aggression. Yet the legacy of colonial rule also had introduced new problems. Indians, for instance, had been used in China as part of the British India army and fought in the Opium Wars, as well as to suppress the Taiping and the Yi Ho Tuan or the Boxer's. The image of India, in China, was coloured by this presence. Japanese occupation of large parts of East and Southeast Asia has also left a bitter legacy and the presence of overseas Chinese has often been seen as detrimental to the nationalist efforts of the country.

Contemporary Asia

In March-April, 1947 the Asian Relations Conference was held in New Delhi. This meeting sought to chart a course for the newly emerging nations and idealistically hoped to build new bonds of Asian brotherhood. This attempt proved abortive as Cold War politics divided the world into camps. Within the Asian region alternative paths were sought: India found its future in non-alignment, China in Marxism, as interpreted by Mao, and Japan within the U.S. military alliance. These positions generated their own compulsions and rivalry for leadership within the region. The American presence in Asia and its war in Vietnam polarised the countries of the region so that the demands of U.S.-U.S.S.R. rivalry shaped local and regional politics. The collapse of the USSR has helped to attenuate these compulsions.

The intensification of global economic ties as well as the emergence of a so-called global culture dominated by conglomerates from the developed world has produced new tensions even as talk of a borderless world began to spread. Even as advocates of civilisational conflict have found a strong voice, a global cultural practice has emerged that subsumes differences within the dominant Euro-American system. Assertions of Asian or other cultural/civilisational identities must be understood within the context of these trends. The conflict between Asian values and universal values espoused by the United States has caused conflict as it is argued to be a way to impose its political ideas in this region. Asian intellectuals have reacted sharply to Huntington's thesis of a "clash of civilisations."

Is Asia a colonial concept that has lost its meaning in the contemporary world? Or are we witnessing the emergence of a regional identity? And should we have present relations within the region skewed because of the colonial legacy or do we need to go back to pre-colonial times to look at the pattern of intra-regional relations and perceptions? While considering these and other related questions it is also necessary to un-

derstand that the world we live in is still very unevenly divided between the haves and have-nots. The developed nations still control the resources, have preponderant military power and exercise a cultural hegemony over the world. In the media industry this is clearly apparent as an increasingly fewer number of corporations dominate the globe and this has led to the erasing of differences of locality and region. An increasingly mobile professional class peoples these institutions. Thus even though the people may be of diverse cultural origins the cultural and political frame is Western

The new technologies of communications have allowed dispersed communities to maintain links with the home country as well as with each other. Their role in “national” politics has become increasingly important as well. In the Asian region the colonial dispersal of populations and the post-war movement needs to be examined to see the way national and regional identities are evolving and the shape they are taking. It also is imperative to examine how far it is possible today to go beyond the parameters of the global corporations and articulate truly local alternatives.

What of Asia? Is there a need to redefine and re-imagine this place? Is it bound by religion (Islam, Hindu, Buddhist), ethical and value systems (Confucian, family), the market (Japan and the erstwhile Tigers), or anti-colonialism (the non-aligned movement, socialism). Are there other affinities that link the people of this region? And what divides them? These are questions that will vary with place but they have an importance for the countries of this region. In trying to understand these questions I have argued that it becomes necessary to look at the varied genealogies of the idea of Asia to understand the dynamics of contemporary interaction. The differences between an ideal of citizenship and the prevalent idea of race is an important pointer to the type of tensions that exist and colour relationships today.

Notes

- 1) Quoted in Arlif Dirlik, “No Longer Far Away: The Reconfiguration of Global Relations and its Challenges to Asian Studies” in Leo Douw (ed.) *Unsettled Frontiers and Transnational Linkages: New Tasks for the Historian of Modern Asia*, Comparative Asian Studies 19, VU University Press, Amsterdam, 1997.
- 2) The present continent of Asia (85°N-10°S and 25°E-170°W) covers an area of 44, 614, 399 sq. km and has a population of over 3 billion. There are five distinct physical divisions on the mainland (The plateaux of Inner Asia, the plateaux of Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, the lowland areas of Siberia, the great river plains of Huang he, Yang-tze, and Se-jiang and the Indian sub-continent along with Sri Lanka. beyond these are the circle of islands including Japan, Philippines, and Indonesia. Consider the diversity: temperatures fall to -50°C in Verkhnyansk and are 50°C in the shade in the Persian Gulf.
- 3) The word Asia is derived from the Greek *asu* or where the sun rose and Europe from *ereb* where the sun set: Asia and Europe. Though some scholars have traced it to the word used by the Hittites for Anatolia. It was applied to this region in the Homeric epics but by the 5 C B.C the Greeks were dividing the *oikumene*, the known world, into Europoe, Asia and Africa (or Libiya). Alexander sought to unite these under his rule. The Romans accepted this division and it has become part of the western intellectual tradition. The *Asiarchs* were wealthy men who were elected as chiefs to preside over religious festivals and games. This contrast between east and west became in Latin the Orient and the Occident.
- 4) J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment*, London: Routledge, 1997 An extremely useful examina-

- tion of the European-Asian relationship from a European perspective. I am indebted to it for much of the information for this section.
- 5) The most comprehensive treatment of the history of cartography for this region is J. B. Harley and David Woodward, *The History of Cartography Volume Two, Book Two Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press) as well as the work of Kazutaka Unno. See his *Chizu ni Miru Nippon Wakoku, Zipangu, Dainippon*, Taishukan shoten 1999.
 - 6) Ibid., p. 55
 - 7) Edward Said, *Orientalism*, p. 211
 - 8) See J. J. Clarke, op. cit.
 - 9) The *Puranas* were popular sectarian compilations that treated creation, genealogies of the gods and patriarchs, the reigns of the *Manus* and the history of the ancient dynasties. They were written over a long period, from as early as the 8 B.C to 3 AD. The *Vishnu Purana* is the only one that follows the classical scheme and is considered the most representative.
 - 10) A *dwipa* refers to land between two arms of water but can also refer to an island. The account in this section is largely based on See S. M. Ali, *The Geography of the Puranas*, New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1966.
 - 11) The *dwipas* could merely have been islands or they could be references to areas outside India, probably the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, Java, Sumatra and Arabia. At the centre of these concentric circles of territory was Mt. Meru the abode of Brhama.
 - 12) The earliest Chinese map to give adequate representation of southern Asia was published around 1422 by Mao Kun (1511–1601) who worked for the governor of Fujian Province. See O. R. Dalthorne, *Two Thousand Years of Constructing the Other*, Westport Conn. 1996, particularly p. 96. The oldest Japanese maps of the world are the maps of India or *tenjiku zu*, the Gotenjiku zu (Map of the Five Indias) drawn by the priest Jukai (b. 1297). See Harley and Woodward, op. Cit., p. 373.
 - 13) Letter 1565
 - 14) See Brij Tankha, “Japan: Defining a Modern Identity” *Geminal* (New Delhi) Vol. I/1994. The exact date when the Mateo Ricci map entered Japan is not known, but copies were used for teaching in the Jesuit academy in Kyoto from 1605. See Harley and Woodward, op. cit., pp. 405–06. These maps were later modified as other European maps became known.
 - 15) Tomita Masayuki (Ed.) *Fukuzawa Yukichi senshu*, vol. 2, Iwanami Shoten, 1981. See also John G. Caiger, “Adjusting Mental Maps: New Geography Texts in Meiji Japan,” *Asian Cultural Studies*, vol. 20, March, 1994, pp. 61–74.
 - 16) *Sekai* p. 116
 - 17) See Tsukamoto Manabu, *Tokai to inaka, Nihon bunka gaishi*, Heibonsha, 1991, particularly pp. 155–57. The most representative work till 1945 was Kuroita Katsumi’s *Kokushi no kenkyu* (1908).
 - 18) Kita Ikki, *Nihon Kaizo Hoan taiko*, in *Kita Ikki chosaku* vol. 2 Misuzu shobo, 1969. pp. 282–351. See particularly Chapter 7, “Reorganisation Plan for Korea and Other Present and Future Possessions,” pp. 331–37. “Korea is like a part of Japan, just as Hokkaido, and should really be a *Seikaido*. The union of the Japanese Imperial House and the Korean ruling family will really be the last concrete step in the great principle of making them into one race. This is in no way comparable to being forced to marry an Imperial princess to a common Hun. Japan’s present Korea policy is in its fundamental spirit based on British colonial policy and because of this it is contrary to the correct (*tendo*) policy of the unification of Korea and Japan.” (p. 333 from Note 5) (From my unpublished translation)
 - 19) See for instance Yasuda Hiroshi, “Kindai nihon ni okeru minzoku kannen no keisei-kokumin, shimin, minzoku” *Shiso to gendai*
 - 20) Seung-Mi Han, “Korea Through Japanese Eyes: An Analysis of Late Meiji Travelogues on Korea” *Asian Cultural Studies*, 24, March 1998, pp. 49–72. The comparison with Nara Japan is made by the Minyusha historian Yamaji Aizan who goes on to say that the Koreans are bigoted, servile, mean and should be “whipped like a worn out horse” pp. 60–1.