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Citation: Japan's Diplomacy Series, Japan Digital Library,
http://www2.jiiia.or.jp/en/digital_library/japan_s_diplomacy.php

Japan's Grand Strategy

—State, National Interests and Values*

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I. The State and the National Interests

The reason human beings form a community known as a state is to provide for their survival as individuals and, simultaneously, as a group known as a state. At the root of this social instinct of humans, yet another great force is at work: the imperative to maintain the survival of the species. This force is often at work in situations beyond the limited scope of human intelligence. It is as Mencius says, what might be called “the will of Heaven made manifest through the will of the people” or, in the words of a European Enlightenment thinker, “the general will of the people.”

Human beings form groups in order to survive. They choose a leader, capable persons follow that leader, and power results. The members of the group expect their leader to ensure their survival and this expectation secures their voluntary obedience. The weak are protected. Neither the group nor power is the objective. These are but the means to ensure survival. At present, the most powerful human group is the state.

In modern international society, businesses and NGOs that operate on a global scale are said to have great power, but the sovereign state still plays the leading role. A powerful human group like a super state that encompasses the whole globe still does not exist. Those of us alive today strive for our survival as individuals and, simultaneously, as a nation-state, Japan.

What are the objectives of the state? As was just said, the state itself is not the objective. Human beings form groups and try to live in them in order to ensure their survival as individuals. That is the reason they create a state. What, then, should the state do to ensure the survival of individuals and the group itself, that is, the state? To answer that question is to determine the objectives of the state. Those objectives are what the members of the state determine them to be. In what way, then, should they determine them?

The objectives of the state are determined, first, by strategic thinking. Its leaders look objectively at the outside world and consider the means appropriate to avoid and overcome the threats that menace its survival while simultaneously considering the means appropriate to improve the conditions to ensure that survival. That is what is known as strategic thinking.

Strategic thinking is purpose-oriented thinking. It is thinking about how to ensure survival. In the Japanese and Chinese languages, the word “strategy” is translated by a word containing the Chinese character meaning “war”; for that reason, strategic thinking is easily mistaken for military considerations.

* *This article was originally published as 兼原信克「国家、国益、価値と外交・安全保障」谷内正太郎編『論集 日本のお交と総合的安全保障』、ウェッジ、2011年、17-56頁。*

Strategic thinking is thinking about what means should be combined, in terms of both foreign policy and military affairs, in order to achieve the state's highest objective—survival.

Second, the objectives of the state are determined by universal moral feelings. In order to live as a group, human beings have been endowed with a faculty called conscience. Conscience gives rise to a deep inner sense of kindness and compassion for others. Confucianism teaches love and compassion. Mencius also preaches compassion, giving the example of unconditionally rescuing and caring for others' children who are in serious danger. Christianity preaches love; Buddhism wisdom and compassion; Gandhi love for humanity. All of them teach us to scoop up conscience with our bare hands.

Through human activities to ensure survival and improve the conditions for it, a deep sense of love overflows from people's hearts, as does a sense of happiness. Happiness is a feeling that validates the joy of living with loved ones. On this basis, people sometimes do not hesitate to sacrifice themselves for those whom they love. Conversely, suffering flares up from human activities that hurt others and damage the group, thus reducing its chance of survival. From there a sense of guilt and feelings of remorse well up. These are moral feelings. They are innately endowed. Ethics arises from them and so does the ability to discern right from wrong.

The faculty that teaches us how to discern right from wrong is conscience. Conscience is an innate faculty endowed to humans for the survival of the group to which they belong. Conscience seeks deep inner happiness. Therefore, human beings are driven to seek happiness. And, as a result, human beings necessarily continue to seek ethical perfection. Meanwhile, conscience is constantly being cultivated. In that process, decisions and judgments to discern right from wrong that arise from conscience are transformed through numerous experiences into a set of beliefs. When these beliefs are systematized, a value system emerges. This value system is further developed with the consent of the majority into the ethics, morality, institutions, and laws of the society as a whole.

The ethics, morality, institutions, and laws thus created differ from people to people and from state to state. They are unique. And yet the conscience that underlies them is a faculty that is universal in humankind. For that reason, human beings transcend the state; they transcend ethnicity; they are able to understand one another and live together. The politico-ethical ideas that form the mainstream in international society today are basic human rights and democracy, which arose out of European Enlightenment thought.

Third, a state's objectives are determined through discussions: free exchange of ideas, thoughts and speeches among the members of that state. Through open discussions, they mutually understand and share the strategic thinking and moral feelings referred to above, and, as a result, "the general will of the people" is formulated. The "will of Heaven" manifests itself clearly as the voice of the people. Ordinarily, what confirms the general will of the people is the parliament and it is the administration that carries out its decisions. Thus, the parliament is said to be the highest organ of the state, and the administration is called the executive branch.

Freedom of thought and speech and open discussions are indispensable activities for people living in a group. Human intelligence is limited. Human society is not driven by human intelligence alone. The idea that all the activities of human society can be controlled and managed intellectually is an arrogance to which those in power all too easily succumb. The breadth of social changes easily breaches people's intellectual horizons. In fact, social changes always continue to surprise people. People who are surprised are forced to activate their conscience and revitalize their strategic thinking. An even more primitive or animal instincts for survival commands them to do so. Words are born from this. Borrowed words come from outside, but real words always burst forth from conscience in the inner depths of the heart. These

real words create a new society and change the old one.

In particular, there are times when the situation in the outside world undergoes dramatic changes and the survival of the group is threatened; old words can suddenly lose their meaning. Ethics, morality, laws, and institutions quickly lose theirs as well. It is an “age of upheaval.” At this time, new words burst forth from the depths of many people’s hearts. From the instinctive urge for survival that drives the human intellect, words are born. Particularly important are the words that conscience formulates. When the new words that conscience formulates rise to the level of becoming the general will of the people, they give rise to new ethics, new laws. Thus, the violence that would sometimes accompany social changes could be avoided, and society would change gradually and peacefully in a moderate way, in accordance with newly acquired experiences. What is important for achieving this is freedom of thought and speech as well as open discussions.

In a democratic state, open discussions among liberated people determine the state’s objectives. This is called defining the national interests.

II. Defining the National Interests

For Japan, what are the most important interests to ensure its survival? To answer that question is to define the national interests. When we define the national interests, there are two points that we must pay attention to.

The first is that we as humans are made in such a way as to work to ensure the survival not only of Japan as a nation, but also of humankind as a species. Accordingly, pursuing narrow self-interest alone will ultimately harm Japan’s own interests. Even Japanese medieval war lords who were used to making cold, Machiavellian calculations realized that they could not disregard “Divine Providence.” The dominance realized by those who forget the public interest and pursue only their own narrow interests is always short lived. We who live in the twenty-first century must always keep in mind the common interests of humankind as a whole in defining the national interests.

Second, we must not confuse the end with the means. As was previously stated, the supreme objective of the state is always the survival and happiness of its people, not the reverse. As Mencius in China once said two thousand and several hundred years ago, “The people are the most important element in a nation; statehood comes next; the sovereign is the lightest.”¹ This starting point must never be forgotten. If the end is wrong, all will be for naught. Even worse, if the end is confused for the means and those in power sacrifice the interests of those whom they govern, the errors of totalitarianism will once again be repeated.

In what follows, let us attempt to define the national interests. Just as it is difficult for a person who does not know what his/her own interests are to have consistent relations with others in society, it is difficult for a country that does not know its national interests to carry on relations with other countries. Diplomacy begins, first of all, from a firm understanding of one’s national interests.

The national interests are the supreme interests of the state. Specifically, they are security, prosperity, and the value system that the state and its people uphold. In Confucius’s *Analects*, “adequate armaments,” “adequate food” and “trust in the Heaven’s law embodied by the ruler as Heaven’s agent” are cited as key to governance.² These can be translated into modern terms as security, prosperity, and the value system. The essence of the national interests is constant, transcending time and space.

1. Security

The number one interest of the state is security. Security means physically protecting the nation from

external threats. Those in charge of diplomacy and national security must be highly sensitive to what happens outside their borders, and always be concerned that any external change may or may not pose a threat to their own national security. Mencius stated that for a state, life springs from difficulties and calamities, and death from ease and pleasure.³ Like the children playing in a burning house mentioned in the Lotus Sutra, a nation that is indifferent to the dangers around it will inevitably perish.

In the common understanding of modern international law, a nation is regarded as being comprised of people, a territory, and a government. Mencius, too, cited “the territory,” “the people,” and “the government” as the three precious treasures of a nation.⁴ Today, maritime rights and interests—the continental shelf and a 200-nautical-mile economic zone—are added to a nation’s territory and territorial waters.

How should Japan’s security be protected? In considering this question, one must think in terms of a combination of diplomacy and military affairs. The field that deals with the interrelation of diplomacy and military affairs is called national security. Under a strong climate of pacifism in Japan after the last war, terms like “military” and “national defense” were avoided, and so military matters came to be called national security matters. This is clearly too narrow and a dangerous mistake.

The key to national security is, first of all, diplomacy. It would be fair to say that national security is a chessboard created by diplomacy, on which the military moves the chessmen. Seventy percent of national security policy is diplomatic policy. For the most part, the outcome of a war is determined by diplomacy before the fighting even begins. The result of the game can be known even without fighting, depending on when, with whom, against whom, and for what great cause a war is to be fought.

If one loses on the diplomatic front, even if one wins the battle, one always loses the war in the end. Sun Tsu said, “To achieve a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the highest excellence”;⁵ the highest excellence is to win without fighting through strategy. He also said that, in time of war, one must first undermine the enemy’s strategy, break up the enemy’s alliances, and then fight only when necessary.⁶ In Japan, too, Yagyu Munenori, a sword master of Tokugawa Shogunate in the *Heiho kadensho* (The Hereditary Book on the Art of War), quoting the annals of Emperor Gaozu in the *Han shu* (The Book of Han), stated that one should defeat the enemy from one’s headquarters a thousand leagues away.

Conversely, once a war has begun, the military chain of command—the prime minister, the minister of defense, the chiefs of staff—begins to move, and, except in matters of military administration such as legislative policy and securing a budget, as well as strategic matters such as the timing for ending the war, civilians have no say in planning military combat operations. If civilians interfere in a tactical and operational level, even a war that could be won will inevitably be lost. Sun Tzu says, “One whose general is able and whose ruler is not interfering will be victorious.”⁷

In diplomacy, an alliance policy, in particular, determines the fate of a state. In the Chinese book of strategy, the *Liu Tao* (Six Secret Teachings), which Fujiwara no Kamatari, great vassal of Emperor Tenchi in the seventh century, is said to have loved reading, the great strategist Tai Gong Wang says that to ally oneself with the strongest partner and establish friendly relations with neighboring countries is the best way for a small nation to protect itself from a big one.

There is no need to quote Sun Tzu on this; the Chinese have traditionally excelled in strategic diplomacy. When neighboring countries try to encircle them, they fight back fiercely in diplomacy. For thousands of years, China continued to be troubled by northern equestrian tribes that again and again breached the Great Wall; bitter memories of the hardships suffered from being conquered by the Mongols and the Manchus during half of the last millennium in particular are likely written into their DNA.

Both Great Britain and the United States, too, demonstrate a genius for strategic alliance policies.

The quintessence of the diplomatic strategy at which the Anglo-Saxon countries excel is to carefully forge alliances and balance them so that hostile forces do not overwhelm international power relations. Without ever becoming overwhelming empires themselves that dominate the globe as a whole, they have been good at managing the international balance of power in ways that are not disadvantageous to their own national security. This is a way of thinking suitable for an island nation like Britain. The US, too, in its relations with the European Old World was once like a giant island nation.

By contrast, since the attempted invasions of Japan by Kublai Khan's Mongols in the thirteenth century, there have been no significant incursions by foreign enemies, and the Japanese people have enjoyed peace as an isolated island kingdom. For that reason, it is undeniable that there is a side to Japan that is unacquainted with strategic thinking. But during the long and brutal Muromachi Sengoku period of civil wars (1467-1568), medieval Japanese war lords acquired a strategic sensibility all their own, and their DNA has somehow managed to help Japanese today understand international power politics.

Diplomatic strategy should, first, be considered in terms of hundred-year spans and then in terms of ten-year increments. The rise and fall of a nation, for the most part, lasts about a century. A nation that fails at realizing good governance internally or executing a good diplomatic policy externally, even if it is a great power, will not last a hundred years. Neither Hitler's Germany, nor the Japanese Empire nor the Soviet Union lasted a hundred years. One must not join forces for any length of time with a state whose ability to survive long is weak. And, as in the case of Bismarck's diplomacy, a number of short-term military alliances that are intricately put together like puzzle rings easily become unstable. One needs to build basic, long-term, stable interstate relations with nations that excel in military might, economic strength, and political power, that have the same fundamental value system of basic human rights and democracy and that share fundamental strategic interests such as national security and economic prosperity. This is just what the *Six Secret Teachings* says: to ally with the strongest one in the true sense of the word.

How has Japan's diplomatic strategy traditionally evolved? As a matter of fact, before the modern period, the strategic pattern around Japan was relatively simple; in addition, the geopolitically favorable condition of being an island nation made both diplomatic strategy and alliance policies unnecessary. Fortunately for Japan, for more than two thousand years, the East Asian strategic pattern was one of offense and defense between the northern equestrian tribes and the Han Chinese on the continent; and the North-South axis on the continent was the axis of conflict. The continental powers that had designs on Japan to the east, on isolated islands in the sea protected by strong, sword-wielding samurais, did not venture forth with the exception of Kublai's Mongols. Moreover, because the dynasties of the Korean peninsula, Silla, Goryeo and Joseon, built stable relations with China through wise diplomacy, Japan did not directly confront Chinese military forces across the straits of Tsushima. The only exceptions were, as stated above, the two invasions by Yuan (Mongolian China; their invasion forces comprised of Mongols as well as Hans and Koreans who had been previously defeated by Mongols) in the thirteenth century. The invaders were destroyed and pushed back by the samurais of Kamakura Shogunate. Since then, Japan, which had guarded itself against hostile Mongolian China, took advantage of being a remote island nation to maintain its independence and kept a distance from China. The only exception was Toyotomi Hideyoshi who tried to conquer the Ming dynasty in China and invaded Korea twice in the late sixteenth century. After his defeat and ruin of the ruling Toyotomi family, Tokugawa Shogunate was established in the beginning of the seventeenth century. It put into practice an isolationist policy (*sakoku*, or closed country policy) against foreign countries including European nations at the beginning of their Age of Exploration.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was becoming an Age of Imperialism, as the European nations, having achieved huge national power through industrialization, began to divide up the globe among them. In place of the Qing dynasty in China, which was in sharp decline, czarist Russia, awaiting its chance to move south from the north, consistently became an important strategic concern for Japan. Unlike the British empire and other great powers of Europe, which had made inroads on the rich and colorful seaboard of the Eurasian continent, Russia annexed the countries of central Asia and seized vast cold territory from the Qing dynasty, dominating the Eurasian continent from the inside, from north to south and from west to east, almost like the armies of Genghis Khan moving in reverse.

Imperial Russia and modern Japan, which had with difficulty just started its modernization, agreed once to a demarcation of their national borders in the Treaty of St Petersburg in the late nineteenth century. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, they clashed over the Korean peninsula. After the victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War, there was the Japanese annexation of Korea. Then domestic disorder in Russia resulting from the First World War and the Russian Revolution followed. And finally with the establishment of Manchukuo in 1931, the power relations between Japan and Russia stabilized temporarily as power was divided along the border between Manchukuo and Far East Siberia of Stalin's Soviet Union.

As the Russian threat from the North receded, Japan took advantage of the upheaval among the European powers after the First World War to try to achieve its ambitions on the Chinese mainland. At the time, the United States, which had been rapidly increasing its national strength, possessing the Philippines in Asia as a result of the Spanish-American War in the late nineteenth century, was beginning to show interests in the Chinese market, calling for an open-door policy. Japan would subsequently clash with the United States.

Unfortunately, after the 1930s, nationalism was being whipped up in Japan, and discontent with social disparities and sudden poverty after the Great Depression found an outlet here. Furthermore, the leadership, within which the military's influence became dominant after their aborted coups d'Etat, was blinded by Japan's rapid modernization since the Meiji period and overly confident in Japan's military prowess. As a result, Japan made an empty alliance with Hitler's Germany, attacked Pearl Harbor and not only made the three powerful nations of the US, Britain, and the Soviet Union its enemies at the same time, it recklessly took on dozens of allied nations at once.

After the Second World War, the Japanese Empire collapsed, and the powerful communist military bloc of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea arose in northeast Asia. In place of the European colonial powers that had begun to withdraw from Asia, the United States extended its influence to the west coast of the Pacific, and much of the territory of the Japanese Empire and the former US territory of the Philippines came under American influence. In the former Japanese territories of the Korean peninsula and the island of Taiwan, a power vacuum was created after the defeat of Japan, and the bipolar magnetic field of the East-West Cold War came into play: Korea and China split, giving rise to a bifurcation between North and South Korea on the one hand and mainland China and Taiwan on the other. The Korean peninsula and the island of Taiwan continue to be among the greatest destabilizing factors in northeast Asia even today.

Postwar Japan fortunately was not forced into neutrality by the Soviet Union as Austria was. And thanks to the bold decision of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, which went against the strong domestic opposition that favored equidistance diplomacy between the East and West camps, Japan ensured its security by choosing the liberal camp and the Japan-US alliance. At the same time, it entered the American-led free-trade system and achieved a miraculous economic recovery. Fending off heavy

pressures from the Far East Russian Army through forwardly deployed American forces in Japan, Japan was able to apply its meager financial resources to its economic recovery. In the 1970s, it achieved economic rehabilitation, as Japan along with the US and Germany drove the world economy after the oil shocks. In the 1980s, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone made Japan's status clear as a "member of the West," and, together with Germany, it regained its position of leadership as an advanced democratic nation and achieved political rehabilitation.

As can be seen from this summary, except for the brief period between the 1930s and 1945 when, isolated, Japan pushed its way into the Chinese mainland and clashed with the US, Japanese foreign policy in modern times has drawn diplomatic might beyond its naked national strength from the alliance with Britain in the first half of the twentieth century and from the alliance with the US in the second half; one can perhaps understand from this that it was diplomacy which was hard at work all the time against mighty Russia.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the strategic composition of northeast Asia has once again begun to change greatly. For the first time since the Meiji period, China instead of Russia is emerging as the largest and strongest continental power. Also, yet again for the first time since the Meiji period, the comprehensive national power of China is beginning to surpass the comprehensive national power of Japan. The importance of alliance policy is more and more being called into account. Today, Japan and China, with their size, can make a difference in the global balance of power. An alliance policy for twenty-first century Japan must put its focus to the balance of power not only on a regional scale but also on a global one.

Next, let us turn our attention to military matters and national defense. In thinking about how to protect Japan, we ought to consider how an enemy might attack Japan. For that, we must, first, have a good knowledge of the country's topography and position (its geopolitical conditions). Second, if an enemy were to appear from a neighboring country, we would have to consider how it would attack Japan (methodology of attack). Japan's defensive strategy would emerge from these considerations.

First, let us see the country's topography and position; Japan is an arc-shaped archipelago situated at the eastern edge of the Eurasian continent. At the end of the Ice Age twelve thousand years ago, the ocean surface rose, and the landmass that had formed mountain ranges on the continent's eastern extremity became the Japanese archipelago. Its four main islands alone, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, extend 2,000 kilometers, a length that covers the greater part of the coastline of China or the west coast of the United States. Spreading out from this is a long chain of islands ranging from Okinawa to Taiwan and another long island chain clustered from Iwo Jima to Guam. The former chain is a part of the above said mountain range that rimmed the continent. The latter chain is in reality a big mountain chain submerged in the sea. One should note that one more mountain chain is extended from Kyusyu to Palau that is also submerged with the only exception of Okinotori-shima. Japan's territory itself is narrow, and its entire land area of 370,000 square kilometers is around the size of the Caspian Sea, about 1/25 of the size of the United States, China, Australia, Canada, or Brazil. The length of its coastline and its 200-nautical-mile economic zone, however, are among the foremost in the world, and the waters of its economic zone are the world's sixth largest.

Second, let us consider how Japan would be attacked and could be defended. Although the topography and position of Japan remain constant, the possibilities for any war are infinite in respect to the conflict scenario, the combinations of enemies and allies, the enemy's tactics, and how much support an ally would supply. Properly speaking, the basis for formulating a defense strategy is to examine each and every adversary and conflict scenario and prepare for the ones among them that seem most likely, but

because that is not possible in the space allotted, let us consider the simplest and most basic cases here.

First, a nation like Japan that is surrounded by sea would be hard for a foreign enemy to invade. It is like being encircled by a vast moat as the castles at Edo (old name of Tokyo) and Osaka were. A nation like Japan, where for two thousand years foreign invasion has been virtually unknown, is rare. This is thanks to the sea.

If a sea-girt Japan were to be attacked, first of all, projectile weapons like ballistic missiles or cruise missiles would be effective. It is worth noting that, since the end of the twentieth century, because of the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons and the ballistic missiles that carry them, Japan's national security in the past twenty years has been dramatically weakened. At the beginning of a conflict, numerous ballistic missiles are likely to instantly paralyze the centers of Japan's government, economy, and military affairs. And if these missiles could be equipped with weapons of mass destruction, these strategic weapons will instantly decide the outcome. Furthermore, for Japan, which does not possess nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, they constitute powerful instruments of intimidation.

Next, to attack Japan, the enemy must break through the air and sea barriers of the Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces. Air battles and naval battles will come next. From the enemy forces' perspective, the basis for an attack on an island country like Japan is to gain air and naval superiority around it. Once enemy forces are able to achieve predominance in the air and at sea, not only will Japan be cut off from maritime traffic and suffer attacks on its supply lines, it will become instantly fragile, and it will be subjected to widespread air bombing and amphibious attacks at any place where the enemy chooses. In a war with a great naval power, this is all too likely to be the result, a fact that hit home to Japan when it fought the US during the Second World War.

Finally, if the sea and air barrier is broken, the enemy's army will land. To bring Japan under control, the enemy must inject massive land forces into the Japanese archipelago, neutralize the capital city, Tokyo, force the Japanese government to surrender, and establish a military administration. A territory that is very long, narrow and mountainous and consists of many isolated islands is one in which it will be difficult for enemy land forces to maneuver effectively but also hard for the Ground Self-Defense Force to protect. If, however, enemy forces are unable to ensure naval superiority, the enemy will probably carry out its amphibious operations where the distance by sea is the shortest to avoid the danger of having its transport ships attacked and sunk; for that reason, one can to some extent assume where a land invasion might take place. The strategically important points for Japan are the route to Hokkaido from the Soya (La Pérouse) Strait and the route to northern Kyushu from the Korean peninsula or from the coast of the Chinese mainland across the East China Sea.

In fact, historically as well, Kublai's invasions were in the northern part of Kyushu, and Hokkaido was where the Far East Soviet Army was expected to invade during the Cold War. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the emergence of the Chinese maritime and air forces, for the first time in history, the center of gravity for the defense of Japan, strategically speaking, is moving even further down south beyond Kyushu, and the defense of the Nansei Islands (Satsunan islands and Ryukyu islands that comprise Okinawan islands and Sakishima islands) floating and widely spread out in the vast ocean is becoming an urgent concern.

If we look at the situation this way, we realize that Japan exists in an extremely challenging strategic environment. Japan stands face to face with the vast military forces of a continent that contains Russia and China, and nearby it has the North Korean nuclear problem and the Taiwan problem.

To defend Japan, we must prepare, first, for missile attacks, especially for attacks by missiles armed

with nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. Next, we must take advantage of our geopolitical condition as an island nation and strengthen our air and sea defense. Finally, we must prepare for an enemy land invasion and defend the land with high strategic maneuverability. It is impossible for Japan by itself to hold its own against Russia or China, great military powers that possess nuclear weapons, and it is also difficult to cope with the threat of nuclear-armed North Korea alone. The only thing that will enable Japan to guarantee its national security in this geopolitical condition is an alliance policy: the alliance with the US.

2. Prosperity

The second national interest is prosperity—what might also be called sustainable economic development. Whereas use of military force becomes necessary only in armed conflicts where fire power is everything, economic power enriches everyday life. In addition, national power that depends only on military might is quick to decline. The basis of national power, it would be fair to say, is economic power, for industrial power is the basis of military power.

There are conditions for today's economic prosperity. The reason that Japan's postwar economy achieved what has been called "miraculous" growth is not simply because the Japanese people were hard-working. External factors were involved.

The first is the establishment of an open free-trade system. Japan is poor in natural resources and Japan's only national asset is its highly capable and hardworking people. To prosper, the Japanese must be given fair competitive opportunities to export to foreign countries the goods and services they produce with creativity and innovation or invest there directly. Not only that, the free trade system makes possible the continuous development of the world economy by appropriately and efficiently distributing resources, creating newly industrialized nations one by one. That gives Japan new opportunities.

This free trade is a postwar system. Before the war, after the Great Depression of 1929, Japan suffered from being shut out of the world economy, which had formed blocs. This produced friction between the "have-countries" and the "have-nots" and became a remote cause for the Second World War. The free trade system is also a system to avoid unnecessary violence.

At the end of the twentieth century, with the breakup of the Soviet Union, the communist economic bloc collapsed, and most of the communist nations changed course and became capitalist. As in the case of developmental dictatorships, the planned economies of the communist bloc had been effective at the beginning stages of modernization and industrialization but proved actually inefficient when the economy attained some level of development. In economic activities too, there are limits to human intelligence. It is impossible for a government to plan and control all aspects of the national economy. Today, a market economy has spread all over the world, and together with the development of information technology, a single global economy is emerging.

The second condition is the stability of the market for natural resources, in particular, the energy market. Energy resources are unevenly distributed. For that reason, the principles of a market economy do not necessarily apply, and politics easily intervenes. While it is important to promote electric power generation using sunlight and other environmentally friendly sources, for the time being the main sources of energy in this century are likely be the same as they were in the previous century: oil, natural gas, and nuclear power.

In the case of oil, when resource nationalism erupted out of the anti-colonialist sentiments in the latter half of the twentieth century, the oil-producing countries formed a cartel and immediately made oil a political commodity. The impact of the two oil shocks in the 1970s was huge, and the advanced

industrialized countries were forced to develop policies such as maintaining strategic reserves of oil. Even today, Russia, Venezuela, Iran and other countries at odds with the US sometimes show signs of working together. With the exception of OPEC, however, no country has much ability to set prices. Conversely, because the demand for oil is determined by world market conditions, no matter what the intentions of the oil-producing countries might be, the price of oil fluctuates wildly depending on trends in the world economy.

The size of the oil market, even at the seventy dollar per-barrel level, is around ten trillion yen (ten billion dollars, supposing one dollar is one hundred yen), quite small compared to the international financial market in which a part of the world's gross financial assets, said to exceed several quadrillion yen, circulate.

Now with the Chinese economy slowing down and given its consequence to the world economy, oil price is low. In the long-run however, in anticipation of the economic rise of newly industrial nations, such as China and India, sound capital from pension funds, etc., will continue to flow in for investment purposes, and the flow of money into the international financial market will inevitably soar more. If supply and demand become tight once again, oil could once more become a political commodity. But, albeit today's confusion, if Iraq, which has vast oil fields comparable to those of Saudi Arabia, should completely recover as an oil-producing country in the future, the oil market will probably be relatively stable even with the growth of potential superpowers like China and India.

At the beginning of the present century, natural gas suddenly became a political problem when Russia abruptly suspended shipments via the pipeline which passes through Ukraine on its way to Europe. The reason these troubles occurred is that Ukraine, which had become independent of Russia, was no longer able to purchase gas at the Russian domestic price that it had once paid. Political considerations were also at play in Moscow, which did not look favorably on Viktor Yushchenko, the pro-American Ukrainian president at the time. In the case of natural gas, it is a fact that Russia's reserves are overwhelmingly vast, but the Ukraine incident alone does not necessarily mean that Russia is using these reserves as a political tool. Even for Russia, credibility as a stable supplier of gas is important.

Russia also tried to play its hand with liquid natural gas (LNG); with the aid of Japanese companies the natural gas in Sakhalin is turned into LNG and exported. Russia reportedly tried to form a gas cartel with Qatar and other natural-gas producing countries, but under the impact of the world economic slowdown after the Lehman shock, gas prices dropped. Now, the Chinese economic slowdown is again tending to push down prices. In addition, the US was said to be on the point of exploiting shale gas, which had previously been thought to be technically impossible. In the future, shale gas will be a major game changer in the supply side of natural gas.

Japan has no pipeline for either oil or natural gas, and its distinctive feature is that these fuels are brought in by ship.

The third condition is the safety of the sea lanes. Japan's trade is 90 percent dependent on shipping. Open 360 degrees, the ocean is a giant medium in which one can always choose the shortest course. Enormous container ships are now the leading players in the world's maritime transportation. Japan's sea lanes stretch eastward to the North American continent and westward to Europe and the Middle East. The main pillars of the East Asian economy are the three countries of Japan, China, and Korea; reflecting its economic might and geological conditions, Japan is one of the countries that make the most frequent and heavy use of the sea lanes.

Threats to the safety of the sea lanes are pirates, terrorism, and war. Particularly in recent years, pirates in the Gulf of Aden have been threatening the sea lanes to and from Europe and the Middle East.

By the end of the twentieth century, the place in most danger of pirates' attacks was the Straits of Malacca, and in a bad year there would be 200 incidents. As a result of international cooperation, Malaccan pirate attacks have been reduced to a few dozen incidents a year since the beginning of the century, but, conversely, pirates in the Gulf of Aden drastically increased, and nearly 200 incidents a year has occurred. The reason piracy is rampant in the Gulf of Aden is the virtual civil war situation inside Somalia, and the weakness of the Somali government; thus, a final solution is difficult. At present, Japan and many other countries dispatch naval vessels and aircraft to counter the pirates. Thanks to the extensive international cooperation, the number of pirates' attacks is now decreasing substantially.

The maritime expansionism of China in the South China Sea is now a new international concern. China claims that almost all of the South China Sea is its sea enclosed by a self-proclaimed and legally groundless "nine dotted line." And China is hurrying reclamation works of reefs and islets there. China has taken these islands by force on several occasions from Viet Nam or the Philippines since the 1970s. China newly constructed runways of 3000 meters on these artificial islands. The South China Sea is the crossroads which sustains very heavy maritime traffic. To claim and enclose the South China Sea is like pretending to possess and block Times Square in New York City. The sea can never be possessed by any nation. It is open to everybody. That is the international law.

III. Protecting the Value System

1. What Does "Protecting the Value System" Mean?

It is not only physical objects—territory, people, or government—that a nation protects. It is not only its national interests like security and prosperity that a nation protects. A nation protects its value system. "Value system" is a term indicating a set of beliefs. Beliefs arise from a solidification of individual ethical judgments about good and evil. These judgments spring from conscience. Conscience activates the moral sentiments of deep inner happiness and bitter remorse, innately teaching individuals to distinguish good and evil. A value system is a set of ideas formulated and polished by moral feelings that well up from conscience. The value system is the product of conscience.

Value systems have been revised and refined over the history of individuals, nations and even humanity itself. Although individual value systems are distinctive and reflect the history of an individual human being, an ethnic group or a nation, conscience which gives rise to value systems is a universal function of every human being. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that there is a basis of a universal value system for all humankind.

Just as no human being can exist without a value system, a nation without a value system is impossible. This is because just as there cannot be a human being who has no conscience, there cannot be any nation in which conscience does not operate. If, in the case of an individual, that person's identity is formed by the combination of conscience that produces instinctive moral sentiments and a value system as a set of ideas, then in the case of a people, this combination forms their national identity. The identity is closely connected with historical memory. That is the reason that collectively erasing the historical memory of a people from its children is counted as one form of genocide.

As can be understood in the case of the Jewish people who experienced the dangers of genocide from Nazi Germany, the desire to preserve one's own value system, one's own ethnic and religious history and identity, is fierce. That is because that desire is directly connected, through the workings of conscience, with the imperative instinct for survival as the human species. In the *Analects*, Confucius in ancient China cited adequate armaments, adequate food, and trust in good governance by the ruler as being key to governance, and when asked which of them could be dispensed with, he said, first, "get rid

of armaments”; then, since human beings die anyway, he sternly stated, “even if I starve to death, trust alone I do not give up.” For Confucius, trust is the faith that a people have in the benevolent and responsible rule of its ruler, commissioned by Heaven. What is the Heaven’s rule trusted by the people which the ruler cannot betray? In today’s terms, this is nothing but the value system.

2. Values-based Diplomacy

In the rhetoric of Japan’s diplomacy and national security in the postwar era, other than pacifism, no particular value-system-related issue ever arose. It is only recently that Japan started to strongly assert human rights, democracy and rule of law in the international arena. In the last century, Japan’s diplomacy was silent on values. This is a strange phenomenon in the world. A nation that does not talk about its values in its diplomacy is rare; it would almost seem as if Japan had no beliefs as a nation. Two reasons are conceivable for this reticence.

The first was Japan’s experience of the age in which it made the leap into international politics in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the heyday of imperialism, after 300 years of isolated peace under Tokugawa Shogunate. The Japanese at that time immediately lost trust in the justice of international society. In Berlin, the Iwakura Mission to Europe was instructed by Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor, that the key to international politics was might not law. And, indeed, the young Meiji government was plagued by unequal treaties imposed by Western imperial powers and racial discrimination. Moreover, what shocked Japan, which had with difficulty managed to seize the wave of industrialization, was that many Asian empires and kingdoms with long sustaining civilizations were conquered, colonized or half-colonized by European Imperial powers. Even China and India were no exception. Japan made its debut in international society at a time when law and ethics had most regressed, at least from the Asian perspective. For the leaders of the Meiji government, Westphalian-style European power politics—the ruthless competition of absolute sovereign states that had thrown off the shackles of the Catholic Church—must have reminded them of the Meiji revolution period when the Tokugawa regime had dissolved and fiefdoms were suddenly thrown into a civil war, or of the ruthless Muromachi Sengoku civil war period when the rule of jungle prevailed in the cruel power struggle.

The European countries, however, were quickly reaching ethical maturity in international relations. In comparison with the old Asian civilizations, the Germanic European powers like Great Britain (Anglo-Saxon), France (Franks), and Germany (Franks) that advocated global hegemony in the nineteenth century were, in fact, late to mature as civilizations. For a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire, they had been shut off within a bleak religious society, learning Latin and Christian doctrine from Catholic priests. Compared, needless to say, to the civilizations of India and China, which for thousands of years had consistently been held in high esteem in human history, or the dazzling Islamic civilization that began in the seventh century, or the civilizations of Japan and the Korean peninsula that started to flower all at once since the sixth century under the influence of the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties of China, or even the Ottoman Turks, who continued to put pressure on Europe for six hundred years, the spiritual history of the Germanic Europeans was late to bloom.

Their spiritual leap arose out of the religious reformation and the Renaissance. The term “Enlightenment” that Europeans often use means a rolling back of the darkness and an opening up to the light. At that time, the Europeans did indeed roll back the darkness. From this period until Europe achieved worldwide hegemony was a mere four hundred years. Europe’s greatest contributions to humankind were (a) developing science and technology on the basis of the natural science that Newton and others nurtured, as well as preparing and achieving the Industrial Revolution; (b) devising democratic

political institutions based on Enlightenment thought as represented by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau; (c) establishing the idea of international law that traces itself back to Hugo Grotius; and it would probably be fair to add (d) the worldwide free trade system that the United States fully instituted in the second half of the twentieth century.

Conversely, they also made mistakes. The destruction of the civilizations of Central and South America and the slave-like hard labor imposed on the indigenous people at silver mines that took place at the beginning of the Age of Exploration; the African slave trade and mono-cultured plantations using slave labor; their colonial rule of countries in Asia and Africa during the period of imperialism; racial prejudice; the two world wars that were fought in the twentieth century at the loss of tens of millions of lives—these are blots on human history. The centuries that followed the establishment of European absolute monarchies set free from the dominance of the Catholic Church were a period in which Germanic Europe made great leaps in world history, but it was also a period in which they committed great mistakes in their relations with the other civilizations.

Human beings, however, continue to seek ethical perfection based on conscience. They are endowed with feelings of remorse flowing out of conscience. Mistakes are always corrected in the long run. Human beings always continue to mature ethically as a whole, as a species. Slavery was largely abolished in the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century, war was renounced, racial discrimination eliminated, and Asian and African colonies all became independent. Political ideas like basic human rights, democracy, peace, and peoples' self-determination became the international political mainstream in the latter half of the twentieth century. At the root of these ideas is the unshakeable belief in human dignity on a global scale that transcends race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion.

The values called universal values today had limits when they were contained in the Western nations. In fact, many Western democracies in the nineteenth century and the former half of the twentieth century were also great colonial empires. Racism disguised as pseudo-science was rampant there. In the latter half of the last century, colonialism and racism were put to an end.

It was not soon after decolonization, however, that many Asian and African nations turned into democracies. They had to modernize their nations, and sometimes they needed a strong-handed government, say communist regime or military government. Dictatorship was chosen often by a founder of a newly independent nation and upheld due to outside pressure from the East or West camp in the bipolar world of the Cold War. Many of the nations however chose democracy around the end of the Cold War. Poland and other Eastern European nations came back to the West after the Cold War. In East Asia, the Philippines was the first to proudly claim democracy. And Korea, Taiwan and other Southeast Asian nations followed.

The twentieth century was the century of awakening for all Asians and Africans. What we now call universal values have become truly universal only since they eventually transcended race, ethnicity, nationality and religion in the latter half of the twentieth century. In this respect, humans will remember and honor forever names like Mahatma Gandhi, Father Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela and others who fought tirelessly for the universal values to become truly universal. They were the true heroes of the twentieth century.

The reason why Japan took the wrong path in the former half of the last century was that it could not wait and follow the ethical maturity of the Eurocentric international society. Japan did not grasp the newly emerging mainstream paradigm of global liberalism led by the United States who had just started to assert the new thinking to replace European imperialism. Like Germany, Italy, Russia, and other late-developing modern states, it believed simply that the age of ruthless power struggle and rule of

jungle in which only power counts would continue deep into the twentieth century. It is easy for a bullied child to become a bully because his/her faith in social justice has been injured. In the Second World War, communist Russia joined the allied countries because of Hitler's attack on them, but Japan, Germany, and Italy were defeated and their ambitions crushed.

Twenty-first century Japan must become a country that believes in the universal values and makes the case not for power alone but for justice in international society. And it must become a rule maker that promotes international society's ethical maturity. Japan today must have the resolve to assume leadership and weighty responsibility in the international community of defining and achieving justice on a global scale based on conscience.

The second reason why Japan was so silent on values in its diplomatic rhetoric was the loss of faith in human and national morality that arose from the emotional wounds inflicted by Japan's self-intoxication with militarism before and during the war. In less than four years of the total war, three million Japanese out of a population of more than seventy million lost their lives. A lost war is a man-made disaster. Ho Chi Minh, who led a guerrilla war for Vietnamese independence, sacrificed the same three million of his fellow countrymen but won independence from France and the United States and unified the homeland. Although their land was utterly devastated, the hearts of the Vietnam people were by no means broken. After the Japanese had awakened from their fervid infatuation with the "glorious" militarism, however, they were unable to fathom why they had had to mobilize the entire nation and fight an all-out, impossible and desperate war against the United States. And their hearts were deeply scarred.

After the war, the prewar national value system that the Japanese people had believed to be the supreme good and for which many of them had sworn to sacrifice their lives instantly collapsed. Their senses stunned and blank, not only did they distrust an out-of-control military, a wariness and fear of the state itself that could mobilize the whole nation physically and emotionally flared up. At the basis of the collective known as a state, there are fundamental ethics that the conscience gives rise to. When these were all disavowed, the conscience of the Japanese people was itself profoundly traumatized. Having lost trust in their state and in their nation, the Japanese were reduced to individuals. The vitality of those who are freed from the group to which they belong and reduced to self-reliant individuals would seem to be strong at first glance. But human beings are social animals, and if they are cut off completely from the group, their ability to survive is conversely weakened. A society built by such people lacks cohesion, and is ultimately weak and fragile.

The greatest wound that the political leaders of militarist Japan left on postwar Japan was the one inflicted on the Japanese people's conscience. Those who sought good at the cost of their own lives ended up with evil. That experience was deadly painful. A traumatized conscience made the Japanese intensely hesitant to trust their state or their government again, or they disavowed them completely. With their conscience having an open wound, they immersed themselves in their private lives and tended to withdraw from or even repudiate state affairs of national security. There were probably also some who lost faith in humanity itself, who nihilistically denied and sneered at morality and ethics. Thus, the bonds of trust that bound the state and its people were wounded to their very foundations in postwar Japan. Cowering at its roots was a deep distrust of the state and even of humanity.

As this mentality spread, every time the government tried afresh to speak about ethics and value systems of the nation, it was perceived as once again attempting to rally loyalty to the state and provoked fierce emotions against the government. Out of these emotions arose such overreactions as the complete denial of armed forces, a flight from state affairs or even rejection of involvement in any affairs related to national security, and the total rejection of prewar Japanese history. These phenomena seem to be

particularly characteristic of the generation born at the beginning of the postwar period, but they also seem to cover more broadly the entire second half of the twentieth century.

But modern citizens must govern themselves. This is the starting point of modern democracy. Democracy does not function in the nihilistic way of postwar Japan. It is not enough just to criticize the government. If people do not participate in politics and share responsibility for the results, they are not true “citizens.” If people just criticize the government and only protest vociferously against whatever the government proposes, true democracy never materializes. They are not being true citizens. In a democratic state, a government is both an object of criticism and simultaneously something that people create for themselves by participating in its policy-making through elections and open debates. No matter how far modernization and urbanization advance, no matter how deeply individualism becomes entrenched, as long as there is a democratic state, its citizens are not only private persons but also responsible members of the body politic. That was true of ancient Greece, and it is true of modern Japan. Citizens are the nation, and the nation is its citizens. The Japanese view of postwar citizenship has a tendency to overemphasize the aspect of citizen as one who resists against the government. A true citizen is the one who has the responsibility for managing the affairs of state through political participation.

In Japan, a citizen tends to be recognized also as someone detached from, or even opposed to, feelings of patriotism and national pride. This Japanese view of citizenship is unique in the world. Out of it grows a lack of interest in the basic problems of state affairs such as diplomacy, military affairs, finance, etc. Hasn't the result been drifting alliances, a dwindling defense capacity, and state finances close to bankruptcy?

I am afraid that posterity in Japan will lump together those of us born in the second half of the twentieth century and criticize, calling us an “irresponsible generation.”

Japanese living in the twenty-first century must heal the nation's wounded conscience and restore trust in the state or the government among Japanese people. And, at the same time that we unsparingly criticize the government, we must revive a sense of responsibility and the desire to create our own country through political participation. We must produce a true democracy where the active civil society watches and controls the government through political participation. If we have the determination to do that, it will be possible to imbue Japan's diplomatic policy with the values.

Young Japanese who shoulder the responsibility for the twenty-first century do not have the raw wounds in their hearts that the postwar generations of the Japanese do. They do not know the war. They do not know the days of racism or colonialism. The coming generation growing up is one that will be capable of looking unflinchingly at Japan's prewar history in light of the universal values that they have cherished since their births and, at the same time, uniting postwar Japan with its prewar past through coherent intellectual efforts so as to give birth to a new identity of Japan. A generation is emerging that will gradually be able to make the case for the Japanese value system that reflects their own conscience. And that value system is not one that is unique only to Japan, but one that is based on the universal values. It is no longer acceptable, as far as Japanese diplomacy is concerned, to shrink from debates about the value system that Japan ought to have.

3. Japan's Value System and the Universal Value System

A value system reflects the history of a nation and its people and is unique. What gives rise to a value system, however, is conscience, which is universal. Humanity must therefore share certain core values that are universal. The Japanese value system, too, undoubtedly contains values that are shared by humanity as a whole. Searching for the universal elements in the Japanese value system is important in many

senses.

First, as was discussed in the previous section, it is important to create a Japanese identity for the twenty-first century that is both new and cohesive. The year 1945 split the history of Japan into prewar Japan and postwar Japan. We have to discover the common elements of the values that run through both the Japan that was reborn during the course of the half century since the war's end and the Japan that has a long history dating back to ancient times. It should be reminded that Ancient Japan was reclaimed by the modern Meiji government when it had to recreate Japan's modern identity. Many modern nations created their own modern identity as a nation dating back as far as possible into its ancient and legendary history. Japan was not an exception.

Second, it is important in the sense that the Japanese experience could show to many countries of Asia and Africa, who are afraid that their traditional value systems could be in conflict with a Western-centered value system, that they do share with Westerners some core elements of human values and that there can be a universal value system common to the human race. This is also the mission of Japan, which suffered the pains of modernization and westernization one hundred years earlier than many other Asian and African countries that gained independence after the Second World War. The success and distress that Japan experienced in the process of modernization and westernization can be both a guide and an aspiration for countries like many of those in Asia and Africa that are still going through the modernization process on their own.

Third, it is also important in preparing for a post-modern "East Asian regionalism" or a "common historical narrative of the East Asian cultural sphere" that outgrows the phase of nationalism in Asia. In Asia, unlike post-modern Europe, many countries are modernizing and becoming modern nation-states; they are entering a period of ardent nationalism and, in some cases, that of ethnocentricity. But when this phase passes and Asia approaches the "end of history," then a peaceful regionalism will surely emerge, such as can be seen in the European Union, as well as the establishment of a strategic framework for a pan-Pacific regionalism, built on the underlying universal values of freedom and democracy. That framework will include the United States and Canada as well as Pacific countries in South America. A new identity as "East Asians" or "Pacific Asians" or even "Indo-Pacific Asians" based on a universal value system is likely to be installed at its core.

What, then, will a Japanese value system be? And what will the universal part of it be? As elements of universal values that Japan has fostered, I would cite love of humanity (or in Western terms, respect for human dignity) and the rule of law dating back to ancient times as well as democracy introduced in Japan after the modern time. And, from the perspective of the importance of commerce, I would also mention a market economy and free trade.

In the pre-modern period, from ancient times, the Japanese people valued primitive human feelings of love and compassion for others. And the Japanese instinctively feared wrath of Heaven for wrongdoings. This was called "Divine Providence." These were the core of Japanese morality that their conscience constantly dictated. The Japanese moral system was later refined and polished by the arrival of Mahayana Buddhism and Confucianism from the continent.

First, let us consider Japanese Buddhism. After Buddhism was introduced into Japan at the time of Shotoku Taishi of Asuka period in the sixth century, high priests like Kukai and Saicho emerged in the Heian period (794-1185); later, in the Kamakura period (1185-1333), priests of new thinking appeared who tried to encounter Buddha directly by themselves and they made great strides spiritually. They left great temples and physically immersed themselves among the ordinary people to save them spiritually. The Pure Land School of Honen and Shinran, who wanted to save the souls of poor, illiterate people,

spread widely, and the exalted religious fervor of Nichiren still retains its ardor among its followers today. The Zen school of Dougen, who tried to follow the spiritual awakening of Shakyamuni through meditation, became a school that is representative of Japanese Buddhism abroad. The spiritual awakening of Japanese in the Kamakura period was comparable to the religious reformation among Germanic Europeans, who discarded the complex doctrines of Catholicism and tried to arrive at God through the Bible alone.

Next, there is Japanese Confucianism. It achieved its own unique development without a heavy civilian bureaucracy based on an imperial state examination system, such as the one China, Korea, and Vietnam had. Japanese Confucians did not show much appetite for abstract, grandiose ethical and theoretical systems such as the Zhu Xi school of the neo-Confucianism. Although Confucianism was introduced at an early date, it did not spread in Japan until after Tokugawa Ieyasu, who established Tokugawa Shogunate, promoted it. Ito Jinsai, an Edo townsman in the early years of the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), began a school of Confucianism that gave importance to understanding the meaning of its ancient original texts, and this school, Kogigaku, began to be well known. And Yomeigaku, another school of neo-Confucianism based on the teachings of Wang Yangming that emphasized the inseparability of knowledge and practice, was prized among the samurai-warrior class. Confucians produced a number of outstanding thinkers including Arai Hakuseki, Ogyu Sorai, and Yoshida Shoin. From the perspective of thought and philosophy rather than scholarship, the crystal-like serene words of Yoshida Shoin who was scooping up his own conscience with his bare hands have the power to strike deep into people's hearts even today.

The pre-modern spiritual history of Japan as cultivated by Confucianism and Buddhism contains many universal elements.

The first of these universal elements of values in Japanese thought is love of humanity; this could just as well be called respect for human dignity. Japanese has the expression, "*hito no nasake*"; this refers to the basic human feeling of loving and caring for others. This is needed to live together with others and is a moral sentiment that Japanese people have valued. Buddhism teaches that this moral feeling of love and compassion, "*nasake*", extends far and wide to all the living things. Buddha teaches mercy or compassion and prayed for the happiness of all the living things. People in Japan learned through the teachings of Buddha to save all the people everywhere, without exception. This is love of humanity stemming from the wisdom of Buddha. For that very reason, some priests emerged in the past who dedicated themselves, putting everything at risk to save the masses even at the cost of their own lives.

Confucianism, too, teaches love of humanity and that "*nasake*" should extend from the individual to the family, from the family to one's fellow countrymen, and from one's country to the whole humanity. This boundless love for humanity is called "*jin*" in Japanese or "*ren*" in Chinese. Confucius himself said that "*jin*" was love. Confucians value sincerity and compassion. At the basis of the teachings of both Buddhism and Confucianism is the awakening of conscience. From there flows out love. And love can be exalted to love of humanity.

Naturally, from the perspective of love for humanity, every individual life is equal. When a human is not treated as a human, the feelings that erupt from conscience change into anger. Even Ito Jinsai says that anger arises from "*jin*", love and compassion for others, when justice is trampled on. Righteous indignation is accompanied by action. European Enlightenment thinkers, unlike traditional Oriental thinkers, see power as inherently malign and sometimes even evil. They value the concept of resistance. Actions stemming from righteous anger against the abuse of power is called "protecting human dignity." When this anger is asserted against an unjust authority, the idea of basic human rights emerges.

The second element of universal values in Japanese thought is the rule of law. As was stated in the introductory section, a group of people has the objective of ensuring their survival as individuals, as a group, and as a species. This is a god-given function that is written into our DNA. Power is not absolute. It is not an end; it is a means to ensure survival, a means to make the people happy. There is a supreme objective beyond power that power serves. That objective is a moral existence, what is called, as we said at the beginning, the general will of the people (Rousseau) or the will of Heaven that manifests itself through the will of the people (Mencius).

In Japan, the *Golden Light Sutra*, which was popularized during the reign of the Emperor Shomu in the eighth century, preaches that disaster will befall an unjust king as Buddha's punishment; the idea of founding a nation based upon the law of Buddha, and thus protecting the nation in peace spread along with Buddhist teachings. This marks the beginning of the rule of law in Japan and is a key event in the history of Japanese political thought. In his late work *The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury*, Kukai taught that the objective of establishing a state is by no means for the sake of the monarch or his ministers, but to save all the people. In the Kamakura period, Nichiren Shonin criticized the Kamakura Shogunate, then a samurai government, through Buddhist teachings and preached the need to secure peace throughout the country by establishing the true teachings of Buddha. Even in the Muromachi Warring period, there was reverence for a being that transcended human power, "Divine Providence." With the Confucianism that permeated Japan beginning in the Tokugawa period, the Confucian idea of "Heaven" was even more ethically refined. In interpreting the term "Heaven", the political thought of Mencius was particularly important. Mencius assumed that Heaven orders the ruler, who is its representative on earth, to do its will and implement benevolent rule. Moreover, the ruler's success or failure as an agent of Heaven to implement heaven's rule, according to Mencius, would appear from the response of the people who are being ruled; a tyrannical ruler whose people revolt against him would lose the mandate of Heaven and return to being a lowly man, he stated, and for that reason he could be destroyed. This way of thinking closely resembles the political thought of the European Enlightenment. The essence of politics is no different between the East and the West.

In addition to the above, there is one more new universal political value that Japan introduced in the Meiji period (1868-1912): democracy. What is important about democracy is not just the concept. Rather, it is the specific procedures and systems that are important. If power is an organ by which the general will of the people is carried out, who verifies the general will of the people who are being governed? Or, as Mencius would say, if it can be known through the people whether power is fulfilling the requirement to realize good governance commissioned by Heaven, how do we systematically and procedurally guarantee this?

This is only possible through a democratic system. A democratic system is a series of institutions: in the first place there must be a human rights charter which guarantees freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly; then there must be systems such as a legislative assembly, a political multi-party system, free elections and universal suffrage to ensure the people's control of the government and their participation in its policymaking; and finally there must be an independent judiciary that can protect people's rights independently from the arbitrariness of the executive branch. If even one piece of these is missing, democracy does not function. To have regarded the essence of power as essentially malign or even evil and to have come up with a system for controlling it based on the lessons of the classics of Greece and Rome—this was Europe's great contribution to human history of political thought. Japan opened its national parliament in 1890, the first one in a sovereign state in Asia. And more than hundred years have passed since then. Now parliamentary democracy is spreading all

over Asia.

Since the establishment of the Imperial Diet in 1890, Japan has had the longest history of democracy in Asia. The traditions of love for humanity (respect for dignity of human beings) and the rule of law have been part of the Japanese political thought since its ancient times. But an institutional and procedural approach to guarantee human dignity and rule of law by controlling power did not exist in Japan in a clear way until it encountered modern European political thought. Since the modern period, a democratic system has been a new universal value that Japan has completely mastered.

Today, when the issue of value systems is taken up in the international community, it is not the ideas of love for humanity (respect for the dignity of human being) and the rule of law themselves that are put into question. Many Asian and African traditions have somehow the same values and thinking. Instead, the focus is given to whether or not an institutional and procedural system of democracy can be introduced as an effective means to protect these values and to control the government. In particular, in the countries newly emerged from developmental dictatorships or the former communist states, implementing democracy has been an ongoing process of trial and error. Democracy does not thrive when it is imposed from outside. In particular, countries that had once been subject to European colonial rule have strong feelings of repulsion when advanced industrialized countries overstep the limits of sovereignty and meddle in their domestic affairs, even in the name of protecting human rights. But when the members of a nation from within those sovereign limits genuinely aspire to realize the dignity of the human beings and the rule of law, the introduction of the democratic system will become inevitable. In fact, as stated above, many of the Asian and African nations that became independent in the second half of the twentieth century have turned to democracy one after the other, such as the countries of ASEAN.

Finally, although the time may still not be ripe to speak about it as a part of the Japanese value system, I would like to add market economy and free trade. Commerce is an activity that has been carried out since ancient times. The activity of exchanging mutually necessary commodities based on an agreement and at a fair price has been indispensable for the survival of the human race. Modern human beings, however, have committed many mistakes by trying to monopolize highly profitable businesses or just shutting out others from competition, be it the operations of the East India Company or the administration of colonies or the bloc economies after the Great Depression. Ultimately, the latter led to a world war, in which the “have-not-countries” fought with the “haves.” The US-led free-trade system finally took root after the war ended. Japan was and is poor in natural resources. After the war, Japan achieved economic recovery and expansion under the free trade system as the just reward for the hard work of its people primarily in the area of manufacturing. Japan is now going to join the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) to form a Pan-Pacific free trade framework together with the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Treaty. The Japanese understand that unless it undergoes the pains of opening its economy to the world and implementing structural reforms, there is no future for its economy.

Author’s Note: The original article was written in Japanese in 2011. In translating the text into English in 2015, some parts proved obsolete and inadequate, and modifications were made taking into consideration the changes that took place after 2011, in particular, the evolution of the world economic situation. The views expressed here are those that the author published as lecturer of Waseda University in 2011, and are not in any way those of any organization to which the author belongs.

1 *The Works of Mencius*, Book 7, Part 2, Chapter 14.1, Tsin Sin (Chin Hsin) “The Exhausting of All the Mental Constitution,” trans. James Legge, online at <http://nothingistic.org/library/mencius/mencius54.html>.

- 2 *The Analects of Confucius*, Book 12.7, Yan Yuan, online at [http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects_of_Confucius_\(Eno-2015\).pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects_of_Confucius_(Eno-2015).pdf).
- 3 *The Works of Mencius*, Book 6, Part 2, Chapter 15.5, Kao Tsz (Gaozi), online at <http://nothingistic.org/library/mencius/mencius48.html>.
- 4 *Ibid.*, Book 7, Part 2, Chapter 28, online at <http://nothingistic.org/library/mencius/mencius55.html>.
- 5 *The Art of War* 3.2, online at <http://www.sonshi.com/original-the-art-of-war-translation-not-giles.html>
- 6 *Ibid.*, 3.3.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 3.22 [5].

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