A TRANSLATION OF DATSU-A RON: DECODING A PREWAR JAPANESE NATIONALISTIC THEORY

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts (MA)
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Abstract

Fukuzawa Yukichi’s Datsu-A Ron is a relic of Japan’s modern nationalism. Since its’ publication in the year of 1885, arguably, it had been branded as the very seed that led Japan onto the war path in the Pacific War. Yet, this rather short and dense pre-war Japanese nationalistic theory contains complex layers that may easily complicate its readers’ comprehensions. The purpose of this thesis is to decode the key words that were used in this theory and dissect the layers of this theory’s intentions to the general public for a clear and objective understanding.
Acknowledgements

This translation project of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s Datsu-A Ron had been an interesting challenge. I cannot have arrived to this point of achievement without the constant support and encouragement from those who were always there for me when I needed them.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my family – my parents, Jerry and Dominica, and my brother, Dylan. At my down times, you were always there for me. There are no better family members like you all.

I must also thank my mentors, Professor Ken Kawashima and Professor Rick Guisso. You two have been great teachers and friends to me since my undergraduate years. Both of you are not only knowledgeable but wise! Without the close guidance and critiques from you two, this thesis could never have come so far.

Last but not least, I must thank Mr. Jon Roberts and Ms. Annjeanette Chan for being two valuable true friends and supportive schoolmates to me. Thank you both for editing my thesis. Also, thank you two for being such supportive friends when I faced troubles in life. I wish you both all the best in the pursuit of a successful future in your lives.

The listed names do not represent the complete list of people I would like to thank. Nonetheless, I truly hope that all my friends and supportive schoolmates can feel this sincere thankfulness from the bottom of my heart. Thank you all very much!
Author’s Words

Being a grandson of a Chinese war captive and force labour during the Japanese invasions in World War II, I have been exposed to stories, pictures, and physical evidences of gruesome incidents of the war history since childhood. Yet, the other half of my childhood conflicts with the said upbringing of mine – my godparents are a pair of gentle, loving, and traditional Japanese couple.

Due to the oppositional nature of my emotional relations to the two cultures and nations, I began to question the truth to the origins of the war.

Consequently, I came to realize that in order to understand the truth, I must understand the elements that produce the truth of things. Under this principle, I began to investigate the theory that led Japan onto the war path – Fukazawa Yukichi’s Datsu-A Ron: a Meiji national political theory; a powerful, yet tragic double-edged blade that scared both Japan, China, and other nations eternally.
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福澤諭吉
(1835 - 1901)
Prologue

Whenever a discussion is sparked on the topic of the Pacific War (1939-1945) (which was a continuation of the Second Sino-Japanese War that began in 1937), people tend to gravitate towards the micro-aspects of the discussion of each battle, examining the graphic and gruesome incidents of particular events that occurred during the war period. These events, or perhaps, the particular pages of the war time history forever possess a type of charm – an aura that attracts people and transforms them into these stories’ captivated audiences. It is also common that the audiences of these incidents engage in another refined level of discussions solely due to the debatable and mysterious truth that seems to hide under the fame of these incidents.

For example, some common topics of discussion regarding the Pacific War era would be the nature and the projects of Unit 731 (Nana-san-ichi butai; 731 部隊), the Nanking Massacre (Nankin daigyakusatsu; 南京大虐殺), the Contest to Kill 100 People Using a Sword (hyakunin-giri kyoso; 百人斬り競争), the War Guild and Responsibility of the Showa Emperor (Showa Tenno no senso sekinin; 昭和天皇の戦争責任) etc. These are all interesting and controversial cases that have been examined repeatedly by scholars throughout the postwar era. The intention and the scope of this paper are, however, established on a macro-level.

Rather than focusing on the detailed documentary examinations of a single historical even, this paper attempts to venture into the examining of the original artifact
that led Japan onto the war path – Fukuzawa Yukichi’s (福沢諭吉) Datsu-A Ron¹ (脫亞論), or in translation, “Goodbye, Asia”.

Often, when historians analyze a historical event, they adapt an approach which allows them to look back into history from his or her present chronological point. In other words, the works of these scholars easily extracts and creates an individual time sphere for their readers to understand a chapter of history – tracing the origins of events from their results. Applying this concept in an example, when scholars examine the origin of the Pacific War, they generally do so by beginning their examinations from the summer of 1945 when the Imperial Japanese Empire was defeated and tried by the Allied Powers.

This essay’s approach, however, intends to retract the readers’ mindsets to the time when the war was yet to happen – allowing the readers to situate themselves as a part of the chapter of the war history. Under this theoretical approach, an understanding of the evolution of this chapter in the Pacific War’s history will be further elucidated through viewing the situation from a different subjectivity – in this case, from the subjectivity of one living in Japan before the war even began. Hence, the conditions for war for Japan maybe understood with reasons in a cause and effect relation.

¹ Datsu-A Ron is a Japanese nationalistic theory, composed by Japanese political thinker, Fukuzawa Yukichi. It was first published in the Japanese newspaper Jiji Shimpo on March 16, 1885
Introduction

In order to examine the origins of the Pacific War in the East, one must first understand the zeitgeist of the pre-war years in terms of the socio-political conditions domestically in Japan, as well as internationally. Because of the necessity to examine Japan in a global context, it is necessary to contemplate the binary relations between East and West — binary relations which seem to persist even into the present.

When the masks of these two general world divisions are removed, one then, shall review the text of Datsu-A Ron and attempt to synchronize and reveal East-West concept with the understanding of Datsu-A as an audience of Fukuzawa. Then, in preparation for the readers’ further understanding of the purpose and the execution method of Datsu-A Ron, the paper shall decode the key vocabularies that are used by Fukuzawa, after the introduction of the theory.

Part. I

The East and the West in the Eyes of the West

Before the paper can begin to examine Datsu-A Ron (a prewar Japanese nationalistic theory that I think is suitable to be described as Japan’s Orientalism to its Western neighboring countries), one must first examine the general international political conditions that existed during Fukuzawa’s lifetime.
As mentioned, the world, even today, is believed to be divided into two general East-West regions or divisions. However, one must not simply accept this binary relation as a given, but rather must question the epistemological presumptions which underlie the concept. It is essential for anyone and everyone to understand the true ideas that concealed within this harmlessly and passively portrayed concept.

The discourse of East and West is an interesting phenomenon. The existence of this binary is more than a necessity to define the two regions in geographical or geopolitical terms, but rather the creation – not the natural existence – of East and West are, according to Edward Said’s book, Orientalism, a project that was deliberately invented to “express the strength of the West and the Orient’s (East) weakness – as seen by the West. Such strength and such weakness are as intrinsic to Orientalism as they are to any view that divides the world into large general divisions, entities that coexist in a state of tension produced by what is believed to be racial difference.”

Said continues to elucidate his idea by explaining that “the Orient for Europe was until the nineteenth century a domain with a continuous history of unchallenged Western dominance. This is patently true for the British experience in India, the Portuguese experience in the East Indies, China, and Japan, and the French experiences in various regions of the Orient.” Moreover, he also states that the idea of “Orient” is “man made”

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3 Ibid., 73.
4 Ibid., 32
and it is “based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience.”

What this really suggests is that, Orient is a creation of the European subjectivity.

Said clearly points out that “Orientalism” is a deliberate convention. In other words, it is a set of produced and strategically organized “knowledge” based on their – colonists’ – experiences in their colonies to justify, as well as, to fortify the Western colonial supremacy in their expeditions to, or, in the East. In short, Orientalism is a deliberate, biased, crafted ideological weapon that fused the Western capitalistic colonial powers, or in Said’s term, Western capitalistic “machines” to “feed into the East – human, material, material wealth, knowledge…then converted [those listed items] into more power [for the purpose of these imperial empires’ rejuvenation and developments].”

Wang Hui, a Chinese political scholar and sociologist, also agrees and explains that “[t]he idea of Asia is not an Asian invention but a European one. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the European social sciences (historical linguistics, modern geography, philosophy of rights, theories of state and race, historiography, political economy) developed quickly, along with natural sciences. Together they created a new world map. The ideas of Europe and Asia were integrated into the concept of world history. Charles de Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Hegel, and Marx, among others, constructed the idea of Asia in contrast with Europe and incorporated Asia in a teleological vision of history…”

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6 Ibid., 32.
7 Ibid., 44.
8 Wang, Hui. --“A New Way to See World History: An Asia that isn’t the East”
   – Global Policy Forum [Online]
According to Wang’s statement, Asia is an ideological construct designed by the Europeans. In other words, the relativity between East and West arose when the West (Europeans) decided to cast on an identity for the East (non-Europeans). In the very same process, the identity of the West furthermore strengthened due to its reflective positions cast back onto itself by the East – something that the West deliberately designed and constructed.

The concept of the East, more than its natural history, vocabularies, cultures, racial demographics, or of anything or any matter that were classified as exotic by the West, were being included into the European colonialists’ project of Orientalism to strengthen their national power in the international context. First, they created a backward image for their colonies in the Eastern side of the world, then with advanced military technology as well as a new economical model – Capitalism – the West invented backward images which it projected onto the East.

In short, the East was made to appear weak in a game that the West brought along, and through military might forced to play; the East had no choice in the matter. In addition, this new game that appeared in Asia circa Meiji period – the struggle for modernization and civilization – was formulated under the rules of the West. It must be stressed that in spite of how the East was classified by the West, they were not naturally or inertly weak or backward: the East was “weak” and “backward” only because they were positioned as such vis-à-vis the West by the West, which fetish military strength, economic power, modern technology, etc. In truth, one may exchange the word “modern” with “Western” for a clearer understanding.
Part. II

A Brief History of Datsu-A Ron

With the explanation of general worldly divisions, in other words, East-West relationship established, the paper would now commence on the introduction of Datsu-A Ron.

To begin the comprehension of the theory, one must comprehend its name. It is logical to, first, attempt to understand it in a literal approach.

“Datsu” (退出), this Japanese word holds the meaning of, to exit, to get out, or, to depart. “A” (亞), is the abbreviated term for “Asia” in Japanese language. Finally, “Ron” (論) possesses the meaning of theory, or, hypothesis. Decoding the complete term in a literal approach, Datsu-A Ron, thus means “the theory of getting out of Asia” or “the theory of departing from Asia.”

The essential concept of this prewar Japanese nationalistic theory was to promote the disconnection of Japan from Asia, and the Japanese people from Asian cultural or ethnical ties.

The intentions of these aims was to display to the West and Japan itself that Japan was different and better than other “weak links” (in Fukuzawa’s and Western terms) in
Asia. Then, with this aim successfully achieved, Japan would be able to proclaim its right to “assist”\(^9\) (enjo; 援助) the vitalization of a newer and stronger Asia.

Datsu-A Ron is a Japanese national-political theory composed and promoted by Meiji political thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi. This nationalistic political theory first appeared in Fukuzawa’s *Jiji Shimpo*\(^{10}\) in the year 1885, March 16\(^{th}\). Its purpose was to mobilize the Japanese nation to rise up and sever its connections with Asia (at the time which the Qing China was viewed as the “big brother” in Asia). By learning, imitating, and behaving like the West, Japan intended to strip away its share of “backwardness” or “uncivilized image,” which the West had cast over all of Asia.

Ever since the appearance of the Black Ships\(^{11}\) (*Kurofune*; 黒船) – a US naval fleet under the command of commodore Mathew C. Perry – in Tokyo Bay (Port of Edo) in the summer of 1853, the world was never the same to Japan. Japan was then, touched by the fear of invasion under the dawn of colonization that was led by the expansion of capitalism from the West. The self inflicted policy in Japan at that period, *sakoku* (鎖国) – the locking down of a country from the out side world – had to be dissolved immediately. The nearly three-hundred years of Japan’s calmed national serenity bowed down to Western imperialism under the menace of their advanced military power. As much as the world was never the same to Japan, Japan itself was never the same from that time on.

\(^{9}\) Habu, Nagaho. “Ajia no yukue Nihon no yukue”, 30.
\(^{10}\) *Jiji Shimpo* (時事新報, "Current Events"); A Japanese newspaper found by Fukuzawa Yukichi in 1882
\(^{11}\) The Black Ships (*kurofune*) refers to the US naval fleet constituted of four gunboats: *Mississippi*, *Plymouth*, *Saratoga*, and *Susquehanna*, that arrived on July 14, 1853 at Tokyo Bay in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, under the command of Commodore Matthew Perry.
Undisputedly, foreign faces, commodities, religions, and cultures from different parts of the world had made their contacts long before the Perry’s arrival to Japan; however, the significant difference between the Black Ships appearance in the port of Edo and the other foreign empires’ contacts with Japan lied within the matter of domination of that entering country, the reactions of Japan – its people and its governing power, and also, the political situation of Japan at that particular period.

The Americans entered Japan with bold intensions – to establish free trade and settlements for the US in the Far East. These intensions were secured by their well equipped military power. Refusal from the Japanese government to open port for the stated demands would have meant a war that the Tokugawa Japanese could not have possibly won.

To dissect this situation in plain words, the American declared its invasion to Japan and Japan surrendered to the US for the first time in history. Also, in brief, American’s national agenda was to expand its national power within the international context. One of Japan’s national agendas at that time, sakoku, was obstructing the US’s progression. Japan’s agreement to open its ports with the signing of the Convention of Kanagawa (Nichibei Washin Joyaku; 日米和親条約) or Kanagawa Treaty (Kanagawa Joyaku; 神奈川条約) was a landmark that signified the recognition of the US’s undisputable power and expansion of its national subjectivity in Japan. This also meant that Japan was, at the time, seemingly yet another victim of the ever growing presence of Western colonialism.
Like some chemical reactions occur in a scientific experiment, alarmed and touched by the threat of being consumed by the powers from the other side of the world, Japan changed.

First, Japan had to change itself from within. Following a toe-to-toe series of violent events that included both physical and ideological rebellions within the islands of Japan, the last feudal government in Japan – Tokugawa Bakufu\(^\text{12}\) (德川幕府) – was overthrown. The new era, Meiji, was born after the blood painted execution of Meiji Restoration\(^\text{13}\) (Meiji Ishin; 明治維新). Yet, witnessing the continuously weakening, perhaps even, decaying of its neighbouring countries under Western imperial threats – namely the Qing China and the Chosen (in Korean pronunciation: Joseon) Korea, Japan was far from the safe haven where it could rest it guard from the process of national advancement. The second phase of the metamorphosis of Japan had begun: to change others by changing its skin. Japan began to envision a repositioned national subjectivity within its Asian geographic binding. Yet, in order to succeed, this project required a key element – the rejecting and rethinking of an existing national image in both national and international context.

Datsu-A was then composed by Fukuzawa as a beacon, a tool, an ideological weapon to launch Japan onto the second stage of national progression: Datsu-A Nyu-O (脫亜入欧) – to depart itself [Japan] from Asia and emerge with the Europeans.

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\(^{12}\) Tokugawa Bakufu (德川幕府) was a feudal regime that ruled Japan from year 1603 - 1868

\(^{13}\) Meiji Restoration (明治維新; Meiji Ishin) (1866 – 1868) was a period of revolution in Japanese history. With the successful executions of a series of rebellions, Tokugawa Bakufu’s reign in Japan was terminated. The new era of Meiji was created on the 23\(^{\text{rd}}\) of October, 1868.
Part. III - A

A Translation of the Datsu-A Ron

The Complete Text of Datsu-A Ron;

脱亜論¹⁴（全文）

(1) 世界交通の道、便にして、西洋文明の風、東に漸し、至る所、草も気も此風に靡かざるはなし。(2) 蓋し西洋の人物、古今に大に異なるに非ずと雖とも、其挙動の古に遲鈍にして今に活発なるは、唯交通の利器を利用して勢に乗するが故のみ。(3) 故に方今当用に國するもの、為に謀るに、此文明の東漸の勢に激して之を防ぎ得る可きの覺悟あれば則ち可なりと雖とも、苟も世界中の現状を視察して事実に不可 ならんを知らん者は、世と推し移りて共に文明の海に浮沈し、共に文明の波を掲げて共に文明の苦楽を與にするの外ある可らざるなり。(4) 文明は猶麻疹の流行の如し。 (5) 目下東京の麻疹は西國長崎の地方より東漸して、春暖と共に次第に蔓延する者の如し。 (6) 此時に當り此流行病の害を恶て此れを防がんとするも、果して其手段ある可きや。(7) 我輩断して其術なきを證す。有害一遍の流行病にても尚且其勢には激す可らず。(8) 況や利害相伴ふて常に利益多き文明に於てをや。(9) 當に之を防がざるのみならず、力めて其蔓延を助け、國民をして早く其氣風に浴せしむるは智者の事なる可し。(10) 西洋近時の文明が我日本に入りたるは嘉永の開國を発端として、國民漸く其採る可きを知り、漸

¹⁴ Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16th, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
次に活発の気風を催ししれども、進歩の道に横はるに古風老大の政府なるものありて、之を如何ともす可らず。(11) 政府を保存せん歎、文明は決して入る可らず。(12) 如何となれば近時の文明は日本の舊套と兩立す可らずして、舊套を脱すれば同時に政府も亦廢滅す可ければなり。(13) 然ば則ち文明を防て其侵入を止めん歎、日本国は獨立す可らず。(14) 如何となれば世界文明の喧嘩繁劇は東洋孤島の獨睡を許さずればなり。(15) 是に於てか我日本の土人は国を重しとし政府を軽しとするの大義に基き、又幸に帝室の神聖尊厳に依頼して、断して舊政府を倒して新政府を立て、國中朝野の別なく一切萬事西洋近時の文明を採り、獨り日本の舊套を脱したるのみならず、亞細亜全洲の中に在て新に一機軸を出し、主義とする所は唯脱亜の二字にあるのみなり。

(16) 我日本の國土は亞細亜の東邊に在りと雖ども、其國民の精神は既に亞細亜の固陋を脱して西洋の文明に移りたり。(17) 然るに愛に不幸なるは近隣に國あり、一を支那と云い、一を朝鮮と云ふ。(18) 此二國の人民も古來亞細亜流の政教風俗に養はるゝこと、我日本國に異ならずと雖ども、其人種の由来を殊にするか、但しは同様の政教風俗中に居ながらも遺傳教育の旨に同じからざる所のものある歎、日支韓三國三國相對し、支と韓と相似るの状は支韓の日に於けるよりも近くして、此二國の者共は一身に就き又一國に關して改進の道を知らず。(19)交通至便の世の中に文明の事物を聞見せざるに非ざれども耳目之聞見は以て心を動かすに足らずして、其古風舊慣に変々するの情は百千年的古に異ならず、此文
明日新の活劇場に教育の事を論ずれば儒教主義と云ひ、學校の教旨は仁義禮智と
称し、一より十に至るまで外見の虚飾のみを事として、其實際に於ては真理原
則の知見なくのみか、道德さえ地を拂ふて残刻不廉恥を極め、尚傲然として自省
の念なき者の如し。(20) 我輩を以て此二國を視れば今の大明東漸の風潮に際し、
逝も其倣立を維持するの道ある可らず。(21) 幸にして前の國中に志士の出現して、
先づ国事開進の手始めとして、大に其政府を改革すること我維新の如き大労を
企て、先づ政治を改めて共に人心を一新するが如き活動あらば格別ならとも、若
しも然ざるに於ては、今より數年を出まずして亡國と為り、其國土は世界文
明諸國の分割に歸す可きこと一點の疑あることなし。(22) 如何となれば麻疹に等
し文明開化の流行に遭ひながら、支韓両國は其傳染の天然に背き、無理に之
を避けんとして一室内に閉居し、空気の流通を絶て窒塞するものならばなり。 
(23) 輔車唇齒とは隣國相助くるの喩れとれも、今の支那朝鮮は我日本のために
一毫の援助と為ざるのみならず、西洋文明人の眼を以てすれば、三國の地利相
接するが為に、時に或は之を同一視し、支韓を評する者を以て我日本に命ず
るの意味なきに非ず。(24) 例へば支那朝鮮の政府が古風の専制にして法律の持む
可きものあらざれば、西洋の人は日本も亦無法律の國かと疑ひ、支那朝鮮の士
人が感渇深くして科學の何ものたるを知らざれば、西洋の学者は日本も亦陰陽五
行の國かと畏り、支那人が卑屈にして恥を知らざれば、日本人の義侠也之がた
ために掩はれ、朝鮮國に人を刑するの惨酷なるあれば、日本人も亦共に無情なるか
と推量せるとも如き、是等の事例を計れば、枚挙に遅あらず。(25) 之を喩へば
比隣軒を逆べる一村一町内の者共が、愚にして無法にして然も残忍無情なると
きは、稀に其町村内の一家人が正當の人事に注意するも、他の醜に掩 はれて湮没するものに異ならず。(26) 其影響の事實に現はれて、間接に我外交上の故障を成すことは實に少々ならず、我日本國的一大不幸と云ふ可し。(27) 左れば、今日の謀を為すに、我國は隣國の開明を待て共に亞細亜を興すの猶豫ある可らず、寧ろその伍を脱して西洋の文明國と進退を共にし、其枝那朝鮮に接するの法も隣國なるが故に為て特別の會議に及ばず、正に西洋人が之に接するの風に從て處分する可きのみ。(28) 惡友を親しむ者は共に悪友を免かる可らず。我は心に於て亞細亜東方の悪友を謝絶するものなり。

(29)『時事新報』1885（明治18）年3月16日
Part. III - B

Translation

(1) The path for the worldly transportations had become convenient. The wind of the Western civilization has blown to the East; even the grasses must sway to the current of this wind when it arrives.

(2) The Westerners were never much different from what they are at the present as compared to their past. The ancient ones acted slowly, yet they now became swiftly to their actions only due to their utilization of the transportation advancements.

(3) Unless we want to prevent the coming of this Western civilization with a firm resolve, it is best that we cast our lot with them. If one observes carefully what is happening in the present world, one should realize the futility of preventing the onslaught of Western civilization. Why shall we not float with them (the West) in the same ocean of civilization, sail the same waves, and enjoy the fruits and endeavours of civilization?

(4) Civilization is like the rapidly spreading of measles.

(5) The measles in Tokyo began and came from Nagasaki in the western realm of Japan. It (the pandemic) extends and spreads out like the warmth of spring thaw.
(6) We may loathe the affects from the infectious disease, yet is there any effective approach to prevent it?

(7) I can prove with solidity that there is no such way. People can only witness and embrace the forceful wrath of the disease in a pandemic.

(8) Yet, for the case of civilization, damages arrive accompanied with benefits; and often benefits count far more than lost.

(9) Since it is impossible to prevent such cause (the coming of this Western civilization), it is only wise to indulge our strength into the assisting of the spread so that our people may bath in this force as soon as possible.

(10) Recent Western civilization entered our Japan from the beginning of the reign of Kaei (1848-1854). Our people gradually discovered and adapted to the advantages and thrived. However, the old-fashioned government stood in the way of progress. It was a dire conundrum that could not be solved.

(11) As long as the government continues to preserve (the old-fashioned mindset), civilization cannot enter.

(12) Modern civilization and Japan’s old conventions stand in two extremes. If we were to depart from our old believes and approaches, it is in the same time (that we have) to abolish our government.

(13) On the other hand, shall we obstruct this invasion of civilization, Japan shall loose its independence.
(14) It is in no possible ways that the struggle of the world civilization would permit this lonely island of the East slumbers in isolation.

(15) My noble Japanese country men, it is our principle to recognize the need of the country over the weight of the government. Through the reliance of the Imperial Household’s dignity, we shall overthrow the old government and establish a new one. Everyone in the country shall completely adopt the modern Western civilization. (It is from doing so) Not only that Japan may strip away its old self, it will create a new axle in the entire continent of Asia, and this is where the essential ideology of the mere two words of “Datsu-A” – depart from Asia – lies.

(16) My country – Japan, is located in the eastern border of Asia. Yet the spirit of the Japanese people has already departed from the ugliness of the Asian milieu and shifted toward to the Western civilization.

(17) However, it is unfortunate for us (Japan) that there are neighbouring countries. One is called Shina (China). The other one is named Chosen (Korea).

(18) From ancient times, no difference from us Japanese, these two people (Chinese and Korean) have been nurtured by Asiatic politics, religions, and traditions. However, maybe it is due to the differences in racial origins (even though we share the same Asiatic teachings), there are differences in heredity and education. Comparing the three countries – Japan, China, and Korea – there are more similarities between China and Korea. Together, China and the Korea are
more different than similar to us. No matter in an individual context or as a nation, the people of these two countries do not know the way to progress.

(19) In the world that transportation and traffic had become so convenient, they (the Chinese and the Koreans) have no excuses to be blinded from the recognizing of civilization. However, even they can see *it (*the signs of the progression of civilization) or hear *it, they lack the will to act. Their stubbornly love affairs with the ancient mentality and outdated customs have never changed in hundreds and thousands of years. When this new and effervescent theater discuss upon the topic of education, they (the Chinese and Korean) only trace back to Confucianism. In terms of education in schools, they can only refer to benevolence, integrity, decorum, and wisdom. On the surface, they counterfeit the intactness of things. In truth, they neglect righteous principles.

Similar to any arrogant being who knows not of self-examinations, they have depleted morality to the extreme of shamelessness.

(20) In my opinion, it is impossible that these two countries (China and Korea) can remain nationally independent under this violent wind of civilization eastward.

(21) If they are fortunate to have noble heroes to stand up, they should first begin with the improvements of their national matters. Like the massive scale of our Meiji Restoration, they should engage in activities to modify and reform their governments so that the hearts of their people maybe renewed. If they depart from such approach, it is most likely that their empires will fall within few years
from now. It is without any doubts that their lands will be carved up by the civilized nations from around the world.

(22) The spread of civilization and enlightenment are like the infectious force of measles. China and Korea defied the natural law of its spread. Hiding in a room knowing that they cannot hide from the matter, they attempt to cut off the air circulation by shutting sealed the area.

(23) Similar to the relations between our lips and teeth (that they exist in an inseparable relationship), neighboring countries shall assist each other. Currently, China and Korea have not even offer a single drip of assistance to my Japan.

Viewing from the eyes of the Westerners, they must be judging and viewing us as how they do to China because of the geographical proximity.

(24) For example, rule of law cannot be sustained (in those places) when the governments of China and Korea remain in their old-fashioned despotism. Westerners may suspect that Japan is an equally lawless nation. Both the Chinese and Korean people are so entangled into their superstitious beliefs and know nothing about science. Western scholars may also think that Japan too is a country devoted to the Yin Yang and the Five Elements.

The Chinese are shameless people who do not understand humbleness and humility, even the chivalric compassions of the Japanese people are overwhelmingly shrouded by them.
Koreans are extremely atrocious when punishing their own people; Japanese people would too be speculated (by the Westerners) as such (brutal people). There are countless things similar to the listed ones.

(25) In metaphor, it is no different than that a man’s righteous deeds would be shrouded by the ugliness of his neighbors’ actions when he is the rare one who lives in a village or a town that is known for their (the villagers’) foolishness and cruelty.

(26) These negative impacts (from the observation of the said analogies) on reality have indirectly conjured problems to our diplomatic affairs. It is a great misfortune for my Japan.

(27) That is why shall we think for the Japan today, we (the Japanese people) do not have the luxury of time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighboring countries – China and Korea – to work together toward the development of Asia.

It is our best strategy to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with the civilized nations of the West. As for our approach to the treating of China and Korea, there shall be no special treatment just because they are our neighboring countries. Simply adapt the ways of the Westerners is sufficed.

(28) Those who cherish bad friends cannot escape the fate of being branded as a bad person. My heart and determination lie in the refusal of bad friends.

(29) Jiji Shimpo, March 16th, 1885
Part III – C

Key Phrases and Vocabularies in Datsu-A Ron

Before one can correctly comprehend Fukuzawa’s Datsu-A Ron, it is necessary to understand the language he used; one must fully understand the key vocabularies that he used to describe the situations of Japan in both national and international context as well as the hidden meaning that particular names concealed.

According to Cambridge English Dictionary, the word “vocabulary” possesses the meaning of, “all the words which exist in a particular language or subject.” Vocabularies, in other words, dictions, are constructed particles in human’s everyday life languages. The primary purpose of vocabularies is to linguistically structuralize concepts and ideas – concepts and ideas that are fashionable in communication related to humans’ daily activities at a particular era.

Earlier, the paper uncovered the relationship between East and West by examining Said and Wang’s analogies. In addition, the meanings of “weak” and “backward” were also unfolded within the discourse of Orientalism. It is now logical to begin the mission to the understanding of the key vocabularies that are being used in Datsu-A.

As stated, it is necessary to decode the key words that were used in Datsu-A Ron at the time of the highest stage of capitalistic imperialism (because this particular period of discussion was exactly when the West and East began to, both naturally and forcefully,

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overlap, exchange, and inter-translate for the first time in history). For example, one may already raise the questions: “what are ‘East’ and ‘West’, or perhaps, what are ‘strength’ and ‘weakness’ to Fukuzawa’s eyes when he composed Datsu-A?”

When one is able to address these questions, or able to match these vocabularies with the correct, or to be precise, appropriate definitions, one then, can venture into the grounds beyond – examining, and, decoding the details and the layers of Datsu-A Ron. One then may ask: “Why did Fukuzawa promote Datsu-A (“A” implying Asia), but not Datsu-O (“O” signifying Europe) when it was the European Imperialists that Japan feared?” In addition, one shall build on this question by asking oneself: “What was so ‘weak’, in Fukuzawa’s language, about China and Korea, or perhaps, in what ways were they (China and Korea) so ‘weak’ or ‘backward’ that Japan had to ‘depart’ from when China, ‘or more accurately Shina (支那)’ was, according to Stefan Tanaka, ‘the centre of toyo’ and the origin of the East that ‘was even older than the beginnings of Europe”16?

In order to unlock the mystery, or the method of execution of Fukuzawa's theory, the paper will now address these keys questions so that a course with a correct direction would be set.

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Western Civilization

西洋文明

In the beginning of his theory, Fukuzawa places extensive emphases on the set of words, “Western civilization”. Recapturing the earlier explained idea of the West, the West since the late 18th century signified modernity, power, new flourishing style of economy, and undisputable military strength in the international context due to the expansion of their global colonial projects. One may clearly understand that Fukuzawa agreed and adapted to this concept – West equals power. This power is, as stated by Fukuzawa, an inescapable force – much like the wild wind in nature – that was traveling to the East. In plain words, this statement of his was really suggesting that the forceful power of the West, in other words, the “wind of civilization”\(^\text{17}\), will inevitably arrive to the East.

In addition, the “civilization” that Fukuzawa speaks of was not just a general term, but a noun that carried the images of the essence of different types of Western advancements since the Industrial Revolution (when new means of energy – steam power – was discovered, new model of economy – capitalism – was flourishing, new agendas – expansion of an empire by incorporating new resources under any means; ie. Invading a foreign land and making that new acquired land and all belongings of that land the invaders’ property – were blueprinted.) In other words, in Datsu-A Ron, Fukuzawa was conveying the idea to the Japanese people that the powerful force of the West will inevitably arrive to the East and it will invade and devour Japan as if it is their property.

\(^{17}\) Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16th, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
Transportation

交通

Transportation was another term that Fukuzawa focused on heavily. Shall one review the world’s history, one may notice that transportation had always been, and will always be, a crucial element in the representation and execution of a nation’s strength.

The Romans and the ancient Egyptians were able to expand their empires throughout Europe and Africa because of their utilization of chariots in trades and battles. The Mongols, being one of the world’s most prominent nomadic races, had their superb riding skills, great supply of horses, and highly flexible garrison establishment techniques. The Spanish had their large and powerful naval fleet. In the modern days, the Russians had their world famous railway system. Resume to the understanding of Fukuzawa’s emphases on the word “transportation” in his theory, it is only logical that one compare Japan’s transportation system with the West during the high tide of colonialism.

While the majority of the Japanese people before the Meiji Restoration were still ignorant about the Industrial Revolution in Europe, Commodore Mathew Perry led his steam-powered naval fleet into the heart of Tokyo Bay in the year of 1853. Needless to say, in the year of 1885, when Datsu-A Ron was published, the “transportation” that Fukuzawa speaks of – Western empires power over transportation – was highly developed and flourishing across Europe. The world was, in other words, more closely
linked. This implies, in the same time, that the West had the power and possession to touch the East, but the East did not have the same level of ability to reach the West.

In metaphor, it is then, fair to apply David Pollack’s suggestion that Japan was the “frog [at] the bottom of its well, who would define its world almost exclusively in terms of its walls: the sky and the world outside the well, the shape of the water in which it lived, its notions of security and danger, the proper dimensions and proportions of things, would all be most meaningfully expressed in terms of ‘walls.’”

Shina, Chosen, Toyo

支那, 朝鮮, 東洋

China was undoubtedly the representative for the East due to many heavy influences to its neighbouring countries through history. These influences include a wide range of elements from style of politics, tribal rituals, cultural traditions, ancient philosophies and arts, religious believes and practices, to its geopolitical coverage and connections with its foreign neighbouring kingdoms. Fukuzawa too admitted that Japan itself was “nurtured by ancient Asiatic teachings” – Asiatic teachings that were heavily influenced by Chinese’s evolution as a nation or as a race. Yet, with China, or rather, Shina being so vulnerable to the Western imperial power (both in military and economy), it is fair to understand that China, in this sense, represented “weakness”, “old-fashioned”, and “backwardness” within the context of Western capitalistic colonialism. As Stefan Tanaka describes China during the late Qing rule: “the bricks that were used to construct

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19 Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16th, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
China were now seen differently; they were crooked, decaying, and even, tumbling down."^{20}

Shina’s wall was “tumbling down” for a very specific reason. As explained, the East (with China being not just one of the members, but arguably the historical leader of the East) was not weak in its nature. It was weak because it was made to be weak in a transitional stage of the world. This transitional stage was precisely pointing at the dawn of internationalization which was powered by capitalistic colonialism. Thus, “the bricks that were used to construct China were now seen differently.”^{21}

If one were to imagine different regions, kingdoms, or continents as economic markets, Shina was largely operating a market in the style that they always had. This market – Shina, before the colonialists’ invasions, remained generally untouched and unchanged. In other words, it was a passive and closed market that circulated or, recycled, the same varieties of items: Shina was stalling in a globalizing world. Furthermore, what fundamentally constitutes Shina – its economical and societal model, as well as political system – would remain saturated if the country remains unchanged in this transitional stage.

The West, during their expansions of imperialism in Asia was, on the other hand, not only successful in entering this, to them, new market in the East – Shina. The West was also successful in bringing “different perspectives, [and]… probable future”^{22} to the East. To understand this statement at an opposite angle, if Shina, during the transitional

^{20} Tanaka, Stefan. “Japan’s Orient”, 32.
^{21} Ibid., 32.
^{22} Ibid., 33.
stage of the world, represented backwardness, weakness, an old world and a saturated market, the West would be representing that of advancements, progressions, a new era, and rooms for developments.

Therefore, in attempt to understand the concealed image of Chosen during the peak of colonialism, allow this portion of the essay to relate its image to the explained idea of Shina’s. Korea, or to be exact, Chosen, being a historical brother nation to Shina under a tributary relation also operated under similar style of governance, politics, and economy. It is not surprising that the West would, too, regard Chosen or any empires that existed in similar style and relations to Shina as “weak” and “backward”. This cluster of East Asian empires (Shina, Chosen, and also, Nippon) ultimately formulated the image of a Toyo that bared the image of backwardness to the eyes of the West.

Moreover, since the concept of Toyo has entered to the paper, in order to understand the international political and social conditions at the time of Fukuzawa, one must dissect the meaning of Toyo. To be able to do so, the paper will now, once again, recall the relations and relativity of the East-West dichotomy.

Toyo (東洋) in the literal translation means: the oceans or seas in the East; the East side of the ocean. In a geographical sense, what lie in the east of an ocean are, of course, foreign lands of that term’s user’s position. Ocean, under this comprehension, implies a natural geographical divider – splitting a large portion of a map into two general divisions. Conclusively, Toyo also means “the Eastern World”.

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Reasonably, if there is a Toyo, there must be a Seiyo (西洋) – the West side of an ocean; the Western World. Familiar enough, this concept can be understood through the earlier explained East-West relations with a refined touch within the image of the East.

Toyo, “as a geocultural entity” in Tanaka’s understanding, “is essentially a twentieth-century Japanese concept. In its earliest form, it was most likely used by Chinese merchants to refer the body of water around Java (the water to the west along the Indian coast being called seiyo, or western seas.) The meaning in Japan began to change with growing awareness of Europe…by the mid-nineteenth century…toyo refer[ed] to Eastern values [that] provided the conceptual arena in which to make claims for an area as well as a cultural typology that encompassed and located both Shina and other Asian entities.”

Gradually, “just as the Orient provided the past for the creation of a Western history, toyo became the authority and precedence for a Japanese history that explained issues such as political development, social ideals, military and cultural expansion, and cultural values. Thus, even as … historians were extracting from the past to determine Japan’s origins and relation to Asia, they were also constructing toyo.”

Under this concept, Toyo is, in other words, a refined area of definition of and for Japan within the concept of the East.

Tanaka further explains that the concept of “toyo gained weight” when “Western Orientalists …debate Japan’s beginning in relation to Asia… like the stages of progress, the typologies of this dualism, though based on an assumption of conflict as opposed to intellectual growth, were rendered transparent by historical facts that supported it. In the

23 Tanaka, Stefan. “Japan’s Orient”, 4 - 5.
24 Ibid., 69.
end, rather than accounting for alterity, the Japanese established their own totality."

Hence the refined difference between Tohojin (東方人) – the Eastern people: the people from the boarder of Middle East eastward until Japan; and Toyojin (東洋人) – the Eastern people in Asia: Japanese.

Japan, under this concept, both intentionally and situationally became the refined and unique Eastern people of the East. In other words, with the further construction of toyo established, “encompass[ing]” the “territorial constructions of nation-states [and] a broader geocultural notion of territoriality”26, the “creation of difference”27 for Japan was since begun and developed for the utilization of a designed utility – Japan’s nation state making.

With the definition and purpose of toyo unfolded, one may, once again, re-examine the meaning and the importance of the deliberate usage of Shina in Fukuzawa’s Datsu-A Ron.

In order to clearly decode the essence of the name “Shina” as the representation for China in Meiji Japan’s context, it is best for this section of the thesis to incorporate and explain “Shina” through Tanaka’s voice.

“Shina is the Japanese appellation for China most commonly used during the first half of the twentieth century. After World War II the name for China reverted to Chugoku (Middle Kingdom), a common name from before the Meiji Restoration

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26 Ibid., 4.
27 Ibid., 105-114.
(1868). Throughout much of Japan’s modern period various groups used Shina to emphasize difference: nativist (kokugaku) scholars, for example, used Shina to separate Japan from the barbarian/civilized or outer/inner implication of the term Chugoku; early-twentieth-century Chinese revolutionaries used it to distinguish themselves from the Manchus of the Ching dynasty (1644-1912); and in early-twentieth-century Japan, Shina emerged as a word to signified China as a troubled place mired in its past, in contrast to Japan, a modern Asian nation.”

In an advanced practical approach of examination to the usage of “Shina” in Fukuzawa’s theory, it maybe useful to understand the four reasons raised by Enoki Kazuo, professor emeritus of Oriental history at the University of Tokyo and director of the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library) in Tokyo.

Enoki states that “(1) Chugoku is a name used by Chinese for their own nation; foreigners don’t use it, and Japanese, too, are foreigners. (2) The term Shina has historical roots in Japan extending far beyond the Meiji Restoration. The term probably entered Japan in the early ninth century in the sutras that Kobo Taishi (Kukai) brought back from China, sutras that Arai Hakuseki in turn used to select the characters for Shina in reporting that Westerners called China Chiina. Shina became popular during the Meiji period (1868-1912) as a name with a broader meaning than Shinkoku, the name used for the Ching Empire (1644-1912). (3) The name Chukoku implies centrality. It represents a cultural chauvinistic attitude that China is the center of the world, is older, and is more civilized than

28 Tanaka, Stefan. “Japan’s Orient”, 3-4
other cultures. That the West does not call China the Middle Kingdom indicates the inappropriateness of that name in the twentieth century. (4) Because Japan uses Chinese ideographs and itself developed from Chinese culture, a distinction between Chugoku and Shina must be made.**29**

For the reasons explained, is it not obvious that Fukuzawa deliberately chose the word “Shina” to appropriate the voice and motifs of Datsu-A?

**Denying the Bad Friends from the East**

**東方の悪友を謝絶**

In Datsu-A Ron, “bad friends from the East” unquestionably addresses to Shina and Chosen. Shina and Chosen represents old fashioned political structures, military systems, and economical models. In truth, Fukuzawa’s desire to deny, or refuse, the connection with these “bad friends” really means the desire to disconnect with all the listed old fashioned believes and styles that would fashionably lead Japan to become a prey in a modernizing, or to be precise, Westernizing world.

Interestingly enough, Japan being one of the members of the Orient understood completely that it could never cease being a member of the East due to its long historical ties with Asia. For example, one may find some substantial evidences since the time of Queen Himiko**30** (卑弥呼) to the “Tang Dynasty when Japan designated officials to travel

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29 Enoki, Kazuo. “Toyo bunko no rokujunen”, 319-324
30 Queen Himiko (卑弥呼) was the ruler of Yamataikoku (ancient Japan) in the 3rd century. She and her kingdom’s history were also recorded in the Chinese classical text.
to China for nineteen times”\textsuperscript{31} to learn about Chinese politics, military tactics, religion and rituals, philosophies and arts. Furthermore, it is also intriguing that Fukuzawa was addressing these “bad friends” of Japan – Shina and Chosen, the “bad friends of the East” when China and Korea are geographically located to the West of Japan. Under this concept, even if Japan was to disconnect with these “bad friends, was it not logical for Japan to address these “bad friends” as the “bad friends from the West” in stead of the “bad friends from the East”?

Examining this statement, “denying the Bad Friends from the East” Fukuzawa was clearly excluding Japan in the category of the East. He attempted to create differences by emphasizing some undisputable doubts such as “difference in racial origins” and “heredity and education”\textsuperscript{32}.

By these statements, Fukuzawa’s denial or refusal to the “Bad friends from the East”, in truth, implies his will in denying Japan’s historical originality. By doing so, Japan attempted to create a fresh start for its nation, while selectively preserve some absorbed knowledge – such as “Confucianism”\textsuperscript{33} – (Tanaka, 1995; P.115) from the historical past from Asia.

\textsuperscript{32} Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16\textsuperscript{th}, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
\textsuperscript{33} Tanaka, Stefan. “Japan’s Orient”, 115.
Measles

麻疹

In his theory, Fukuzawa compared the rapid expansion of Western Civilization to the spread of measles in Nagasaki at the time. Measles, according to Oxford English Dictionary, is “an infectious disease...tending to occur in epidemics that chiefly affect children.”

Fukuzawa’s metaphor was brilliantly selected. Measles is a virus, a half life parasite that cannot thrive without a parasitic target. In a colonial analogy, measles too needs to invade and establish its colony. Then, with its colony established, the virus will merge and feed from that colony and repeat the process for expansion.

This particular virus, measles, could be airborne and it was incurable at the time of Meiji. Japan, in this metaphor, was no different than a child in an epidemic – vulnerable to the rapidly spreading virus. The epidemic was the expansion of colonialism. The virus was Western civilization or modernization. The child was Japan.

Without any cure to fight the disease or the vaccine to prevent the spread, Japan chose to become a part of the virus. As Fukuzawa states: “since it is impossible to prevent such cause (the coming of this Western civilization), it is only wise to indulge our

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<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00304105?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=measles&first=1&max_to_show=10>
strength in to the assisting of the spread so that our people may bath in this force as soon as possible.”

Fukuzawa, in other words, urged Japan to fight a poison with a poison. However, in order to do so, Japan must first become the poison itself. The path for Japan to becoming an imperialist itself was in this sense, inescapable because at the time when colonialism was spreading in a global scale, there were only two classes of countries: the invader, or the invaded.

Part. III - D

The Mysteries within Fukuzawa’s Words

Russian philosopher and literary critic, Bakhtin, states that “we're taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as concrete opinion, insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life.” Therefore, languages, in truth, contain numerous loop holes in the layers of comprehension. When conveying an idea to a crowd of audience, there are techniques that a speaker may utilize to his or her advantage in his or her argument(s).

In the case of Fukuzawa, the complete text of Datsu-A Ron revolves around the concepts, images, and icons of old and new, strength and weakness, predator and prey.

35 Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16th, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
The message that the theory reiterates was simply the need of change for Japan in a transforming world. On one level, Datsu-A Ron seems very clear, simple and direct; however, on a more subtle level, Fukuzawa’s style of expressing his subjectivity was extremely complicated and strategic.

Fukuzawa never explained why he chose China and Korea in his comparisons in empires. Yet from the decoding sections of this essay, one may finally discover that China and Korea/Shina and Chosen, at Fukuzawa’s time represented the obsolete concepts and images in a world that a whole new realm of technologies and philosophies were discovered and developed. Shina and Chosen, as previously stated, upheld the definition of “weakness” in a dominating Western colonialism, even though they were never so before the invasion of the West. Conclusively, the selections of the two names for China and Korea – Shina and Chosen –, served a specific utility for the Western colonial project.

More importantly, these two countries (Shina and Chosen), to Japan, were inextricably linked due to their long geographical and historical ties, cultural connections, and similarities in governing styles. The deliberate utilizations of the two names – Shina and Chosen, serve the perfect functions of differentiating Japan from the two said countries in Japan’s nation-state making project.

In his text, Fukuzawa, in certain portion of the theory, assumed his readers’ understanding as to the truth and origin of these mentioned matters; in some other portions, he omitted an explanation of the definitions of these vocabularies so that his audiences’ mind paths would be conquered by his tone and ideas. Ultimately, for
example, China and Korea, in a half factually supported condition, became the scapegoats for Japan’s threat of imperial invasions. In the same time, Fukuzawa created a division within the Asian continent by “denying the bad friends from the East” which further fortified the “differences” between Japan, China, and Korea. For these reasons, in order for anyone to truly and fully understand Datsu-A Ron, it is indeed foundational to decode the meaning of the highlighted vocabularies and phrase.

Part. IV

The Three Faces of a National Subjectivity

With the key vocabularies and phrases decoded, one may now attempt to understand the nature of Datsu-A Ron.

Kingdoms from the ancient times share one great commonality: the possession of national treasures that represent the power and identity of that nation. Ancient China had her sword and imperial seal. England had the three national jewels: the mirror, the sword, and the shield. Japan has its sword – Kusanagi (草薙), the mirror – Yata no kagami (八咫鏡), and the jewel – Yasakani no magatama (八咫瓊曲玉).

Aside from these jewels’ relations with the mythical tales that tell the origins of their nations, they are significant political symbols that conceal the power of the nation’s existence and continuation. In other words, national treasures are symbols of national subjectivities.
In the English concept, the mirror is important to her country because it is an artifact of self reminder. It reflects and redefines her will, power, strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, her identity. The shield, more than that of an object to defend a nation from harm and challenges, it is a relic that represents a nations untrammeled status and an unyielding determination. Finally, the sword; it is the symbol of force and power to her expansion into the lands beyond her boundaries.

More than a mere national political theory, Datsu-A is a national subjectivity to Japan. It, too, functions like the threes national treasures.

On one level, it is like the mirror. It reminds, reinforces, and redefines Japan’s identity to her own people. Evidences to this claim could be seen throughout the text of Datsu-A Ron where Fukuzawa repeatedly places heavy emphases on short phrases like “my Japan”, “our people”, “they [Chinese and Korean]”, and “we, Japanese”. These are simple but clear statements of few words that proclaimed and magnified Japan’s uniqueness in racial and geographical matters.

On the second level, Datsu-A Ron is as powerful as the shield. Beyond setting Japan’s standing ground, it demonstrates to all challengers that Japan’s unyielding determination in departing from the “Asian corruptions of weaknesses”. For example, in his opening statement to the second section of the published theory (verse 16), he states “…the spirit of the Japanese people has already departed from …Asian milieu and shifted toward to the Western civilization”\(^{37}\). This is a direct and clear statement that explains

\(^{37}\) Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16\(^{th}\), “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
the standpoint Fukuzawa’s Japan (which is to be faithfully believed by the Japanese people in a national scale) to both his own Japanese race and the world.

Furthermore, Fukuzawa’s famous ending statement in his Datsu-A Ron: “[t]hose who cherish bad friends cannot escape the fate of being branded as a bad person. My heart and determination lie in the refusal of bad friends”\(^{38}\); once again, this is a solid affirmation of Japan’s national subjectivity as an unbreakable shield that supports its standing ground against foreign nations.

Finally, Datsu-A is as sharp as the sword. It became a weapon to strike her “bad friends” – China and Korea. Needless to explain in detail, Datsu-A Ron is an ideological weapon that directly challenges and diminishes the power, status, and historical origins of China and Korea.

National subjectivity is and has to be the jewels of a nation in realistic form. It has to serve the three functions explained. If not, the country cannot survive. Datsu-A is a national subjectivity. In the same time, it is the jewels for Japan at the period.

**Part. V**

**The Wrath of National Subjectivity**

Ever since the dawn of the European prosperity and the rise of the European imperialism (where I would pinpoint this after the Enlightenment Period in Europe,

\(^{38}\) Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16\(^{th}\), “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
especially after England’s Industrial Revolution), these countries – the “West” – have been viewed and believed to be the leaders of the world.

They are viewed as such were not only because of their subjective portrayals of being the leaders but also their undisputable power in economic, technological, and of course, military terms. These are also the reasons why I stated that the rise of European Imperialism was more pronounced, as seen in the East, after the English Industrial Revolution.

These leaps were the foundations of their statuses on the international stage. Types of advancements were the gears that supported their national identities on the national level. Finally, their abilities to open and win wars were the backbones that sustained their national identities on the global level. In other words, these nations must possess the ability to protect and expand their subjectivities. Nonetheless, for these nations to obtain the opportunity to expand, the very first prerequisite – for them to furthermore carry on with any national progresses – was to establish their own subjectivity.

For the reasons explained, the West, with the blossoming of capitalistic colonialism from the 18th century on, was successful in displaying their untrammeled national statuses, at least, to the East. Therefore, slowly, the essence of West evolved. The concept of “the West” did not only represent the cultures and faces for the Europeans, but also, the images for progress, modernity, and power; by extension, the definition of “good”.
After all, this is a world that operates under the unchanged nature of the *survival of the fittest*. Both the Japanese and the Chinese always had similar concept of (in Chinese language) *ruo rou qiang shi*, or (in Japanese language) *Jakunik kyoshoku* (弱肉強食), which means that the weak will be devoured by the strong. The Western Imperialists realized these concepts and acted accordingly. As a result, they gained the power to expand. In other words, it was simply because they were stronger than the East, they got to roll the dice.

This very idea can be proven by looking into the late Qing history in China. During the mid to late eighteen hundreds (after the Opium War), the French and the British fought numerous battles on Chinese territories. The one thing that they were fighting over each other for was the “right to protect”\(^{39}\), if not in truth, “colonize”\(^{40}\) a particular part of China. The Russian, the Spanish, and the Portuguese also opened war with each other, in China, for the very same disputes. The Qing Chinese were helpless. At times, the Chinese even had to pay for those invaders’ costs on invading their own lands. Moreover, the Chinese territories that were being “protected”\(^{41}\) by the foreigners, were to be transformed into a part of the greater empire of that colonizer. This implies that foreign ideologies, cultural practices, or in other words, the subjectivities of that conqueror, became the core governance for that particular conquered Chinese territory.

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\(^{40}\) Ibid.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 50.
Observing from this chapter of history, one should understand that national subjectivity is a product of deliberate construction. Often, it is used for the solidification as well as the expansion of a nation’s power and identity.

During this period the Western imperialist nations built up their subjectivities – national progress and advancements (i.e. drawing an outline for the people’s ideal country). Then, this project of national subjectivity building will stretch this “outline” to a bigger scale – casting its subjectivity onto its outer boundary (i.e. the intention to possess another area that belongs to some other nation or of no one’s). Finally, through the utilization or exercise of its national subjectivity on that newly gained land (property), a nation’s power would expand and strengthen (i.e. waging and winning war in order to obtain that land. Then, applying its laws and regulations, cultures and ideologies onto this newly gained alien land so that the possession of this land can be fully realized; hence its empire is truly expanded and strengthened).

As one should notice, all these processes require the appreciation of a national subjectivity. This deliberate construction of a national subjectivity is important because it is the core to the making of a clear agenda for a country. Also, it acts as the seed to a nation’s expansion project.

On the contrary, however, the East, with China being the center, or perhaps, big brother, was perceived as weak and backward during the period when European colonialism was sweeping eastward. With feudalism and a high sense of arrogance
remained as the political model for China, Japan, and Korea, they were blinded by their ignorance on a worldly perspective. It was not until these nations were soon to be, or even, already being carved up by the Western powers, they realized that something had to change. Japan, was the first among the three East Asian countries that responded to this “sense of necessity”\(^{42}\) (hitṣuyosei; 必要性).

(Note: Though emperor Guangxu in China attempted to restructure the late Qing polity and military system, he was unsuccessful because of the obstructions posted by Empress Dowager Cixi).

Part. VI

The Planting of the Seed of Change

Certainly, realizing the threat of the invasion and responding to the situation accordingly is a necessity to a nation’s existence. Yet this process is like an untouched seed to the shaping and changing of a nation, ready to be grown into however it is intended to be grown. Japan was one of the East Asian countries that were given this uncultivated seed. Once the old national subjectivity of Japan – Sakoku – was melted down, Japan began cultivating its new and stronger one so that the nation would be able to exist in an increasingly hostile global atmosphere.

As explained, the West traveled to Asia from the opposite side of the world to fulfill and demonstrate their ambitions – the progression of their national subjectivities. Japan’s national agenda at the time was an obstruction to the West. Subsequently, the differences in national subjectivities would lead to clashes and conflicts. Under the concept of social Darwinism, the weaker shall falter before the stronger force. Japan in 1854, bowed down to the US when Perry returned after his first arrival a year ago. Sakoku, a passive and hermitic national subjectivity fell under the aggressions of the West.

Alerted to the clear threat of being devoured by the West and in addition, witnessed the horrific fate of the Chinese at that time – being carved up by the Europeans – the Japanese struggled for change. Knowing that if they had to alter this situation, they first had to cure the “internal sickness”\textsuperscript{43} and that revolution was “foundational”\textsuperscript{44}.

Years later, with the successfully carrying out of the Meiji Restoration, a new era was created. However, the very threat that drove Japan onto the road of revolution remained. Therefore, they could not rest after their domestic revolution; they had to push on with “progress,” as they now struggle for the survival as a nation on a global scale. This was the time and situation for the dawn of Datsu-A.

As Robert Eskildsen states in his essay, Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan, “partly as a means of

\textsuperscript{43} Togawa, Jun. “Kanzen seiha bakumatsu ishin : kono issatsu de rekishi ni tsuyoku naru!”, 9.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.,10
survival and partly to gain the benefits of Western civilization, Japan must accept the corrosive influence of the West, and it must escape solidarity with the rest of East Asia.”

Three decades passed after the first Black Ships incident (1853), on the 16th of March, 1885, on his newspaper, Jiji Shimpo (founded in 1883), Fukuzawa Yukichi declared his subjectivity on Japan’s long march for existence:

“…our immediate policy, therefore, should be to lose no time in waiting for the enlightenment of our neighboring countries [Korea and China] in order to join them in developing Asia, but rather to depart from their ranks and cast our lot with the civilized countries of the West […] We should deal with them exactly as the Westerners do… ... Those who are intimate with bad friends [China and Korea] are also regarded as bad; therefore my will and determination lie in the refusal of bad friends.”

By this statement, which was later utilized by Japanese nationalists that led Japan onto the war path, Japan had confirmed its subjectivity and national agenda for the making of a modern state. To be precise, Japan began to catch up with the political, societal, and military fashion that was dominating the world.

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46 Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16th, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
Part. VII - A

Going to the Matrices: Phase One – the Mirror

In everyday life, people look into a mirror for one reason: to self examine; to confirm our appearances and then take according action to repair a flaw(s). Decoding the theory – Datsu-A Ron, Japan, first, had to recognize her position both internally and externally. Hence, Datsu-A Ron was a mirror to Japan.

On the external, Fukuzawa realizes that it was inevitable to escape the “onslaught of Western Civilization” and that it was “in no possible ways that the struggle of the world civilization would permit this lonely island of the East slumbers in isolation.”

By doing so, he admits to the reality of the worldly situation at that time – capitalism, colonialism, and Western technologies offer “new perspectives” and a “probable future”.

By extend, he admits that change was necessary for Japan’s survival in the new world.

Furthermore, he also admits to Japan’s identity “problem” (not that it was problematic in nature, but problematic, as Fukuzawa pointed out, because it was not situational etiquette to the survival of a nation) – that it was long “nurtured by Asiatic politics, religions, and traditions… and [t]hrough the reliance of the Imperial Household’s dignity, [they] shall overthrow the old government and establish a new...

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47 Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16th, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
48 Tanaka, Stefan. “Japan’s Orient”, 33.
49 Ibid.
Part. VII - B

Going to the Matrices: Phase Two – the Shield

More than a mirror, Datsu-A Ron was Japan’s shield. Fukuzawa repeatedly draws his readers’ attentions to his unyielding determination in achieving civilization. In his theory, he rhetorically asks “[w]hy shall we (Japanese people) not float with them (the West) in the same ocean of civilization, sail the same waves, and enjoy the fruits and endeavours of civilization…” when we (Japan) cannot avoid the “onslaught of Western civilization”\textsuperscript{50}? It was a statement of unyielding will.

Moreover, though it maybe difficult to prove, “difference in racial originality”\textsuperscript{51} that Fukuzawa speaks of was a standpoint that Datsu-A shelters and supports. By stating this, Fukuzawa not only emphasized to his fellow Japanese people that they are a race unique to Asia; he also announced to the Western world that Japan was not and could not be regarded as one of the Asian nations. Joining the West and “leaving the ranks of

\textsuperscript{50} Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16\textsuperscript{th}, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
Asian nations” was too another subjectivity that Datsu-A Ron stood behind. Again, Fukuzawa was making a statement to both his Japanese people and the West that they (the Japanese people) held a different national will and believe as compared to Shina and Chosen. Fukuzawa was pronouncing to the Western world that Japan would become a party member of national advancements and progressions.

In his autobiography, Fukuzawa states: “the purpose of my entire work has not only been to gather young men together and give them the benefit of foreign books but to open this ‘closed’ country of ours and bring it wholly into the light of Western civilization. For only thus may Japan become strong in the arts of both war and peace and take place in the forefront of the progress of the world.”

Understanding from his own words of subjectivity, can one not see that Datsu-A Ron was, in this sense, a shield will that proclaimed Japan’s national subjectivity?

Part. VII - C

Going to the Matrices: Phase Three – the Sword

Finally, to some degree like the German Nazi’s regime on racial superiority – master race (das Herrenvolk), the Japanese redefined their racial position in Asia by

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classifying the Chinese as “backward”, “uncivilized”, and “bad friends”. In other words, Japan was “creating differences”\textsuperscript{53}, as how Stefan Tanaka describes the circumstance.

In addition, by comparing the differences in racial origins between Japan to China and Korea, Fukuzawa confirmed the Japanese identity and position. Consequently, the brother-like nations to China, such as Korea (or even smaller Asian countries), would be listed in the same category, if not worst. Then, years later, the Japanese compared their technological advancements and military achievements to the Europeans, bringing its worldly status closer to the West. For example, the famous victory gained from the 1904 to 1905 Russo-Japanese War\textsuperscript{54} (Nichi-Ro Senso; 日露戦争) was the perfect monument that the Japanese presented to both the world and itself, proclaiming that the Japanese were unlike the rest of Asia.

Under the Meiji banners of a “rich nation, strong army” (Fukoku kyohei; 富国強兵) as well as the “promotion and expansion of civilization/enlightenment” (Bunmeikaika; 文明開化), Meiji Japan furthermore isolated itself from the general “backward”, devolving, or perhaps, unfashionable Asia.

Once again: “[i]t is our [Japan] best strategy to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with the civilized nations of the West. As for our approach to the treating of China and Korea, there shall be no special treatment just because they are our neighboring countries. Simply adapt the ways of the Westerners is sufficed.”\textsuperscript{55} By this

\textsuperscript{53} Tanaka, Stefan. “Japan’s Orient”, 105.
\textsuperscript{54} Russo-Japanese War (February 1904 - September 1905) was a clash of rival imperial ambitions of the Russian Empire and Japanese Empire over Manchuria and Korea.
\textsuperscript{55} Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16\textsuperscript{th}, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
statement, Japan swung its national subjectivity as a sword to bring down Shina and Chosen historical status in Asia. In addition, this statement also affirms Japan’s determination in national expansion in China and Korea’s territory.

In order to escape from the attacks of the racists Western nations, Japan chose to turn itself into a racist. As mentioned, subjectivity is and has to be fashionable with the currents of the world’s. Japan, in Fukuzawa’s mind, had to become a racist nation to the East of itself because of the situational condition.

Part. VIII

What Datsu-A did to Japan: A New Position for a New Japan

Acknowledging the concept of Datsu-A, Japan had declared its will in stripping away its old self and ready to be metamorphosed into a new nation state.

Nevertheless, though Japan had to “deal with them [China and Korea] exactly as the Westerners do”, it could not and was not becoming one of the West. Certainly, Japan was already in progress of isolating itself from the “backward” image of Asia. However, it could never strip away its identity of being an Asian member because of its Asiatic heritage, history, and cultural originality.

Japan actually became something more than a mimetic European Imperialist. In other words, instead of suggesting that Japan was to transform itself into one of the
European Imperialistic nations, it became a new breed. It transformed itself into a seed of Euro-Asiatic imperial power. In other words, by accepting as well as promoting “Western science, Eastern ethics”, Japan constructed itself as a hybrid nation. Under this concept, the idea of Datsu-A Nyu-O Ron (脱亜入欧論) does not suggest that Japan were to put on a Western skin or to install Western bones to completely replace its body. Rather, in a metaphorical tone, if the general “non West” is classified as the East, or the Orient, Japan was of both the East and the West. It was the one and unique power that was established in the middle point of the two extremes.

Furthermore, shall one observe closely at Fukuzawa’s statement, Japan’s intention was never to “assist”\(^56\) (enjo; 援助), or in depth, colonize the rest of Asia on the West’s behalf. Rather, according to one of the speeches on national defense from former Japanese Prime minister Yamagata Aritomo (山縣有朋), “[T]he way to the nation’s independence and security lay in defining and defending its ‘line of sovereignty’ and ‘line of interest’…if within that line, ‘another power should act in such a way as to bring disadvantages to us (Japan), we (the Japanese) must be willing to eject such a power resolutely, even by using force if necessary.”\(^57\)

Comparing Yamagata’s statement with Fukuzawa’s Datsu-A Ron in a parallel structure, Yamagata did not declare Japan’s refusal to exclusively Asia. What Yamagata proclaimed was that Japan would, by any means, secure its “interest” for national

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\(^57\) Iriye, Akira. “Japan and the Wider World: From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present”, 11.
independence”. Japan, in this aspect, had no intention to enter Europe (Nyu-O) nor to depart from Asia (Datsu-A).

In addition, when one truly understand that the two words, “Shina” and “Chosen”, that Fukuzawa focuses on in Datsu-A Ron cannot be directly referred or related to these two names’ geographical natures but the abstract representations of them – weakness and backwardness in the context Western Civilization – one would completely understand that Japan’s subjectivity since Meiji, or perhaps, the Bakumatsu (late Tokugawa Bakufu’s reign) period, was not to depart from any specific countries, or to enter some specific regions. In truth, Japan had always been striving for the disconnection of weakness that may be fashionable but powerful enough to cease its national existence by attracting threats of invasions.

Also, Japan, according to Fukuzawa, by declaring that his country had “to lose no time in waiting for the enlightenment of our [Japan’s] neighboring countries” and “should deal with them exactly as the Westerners do”, he had given Japan a new subjective agenda.

By far, the Japanese national goal from the late 19th century, from the spark of the Meiji Restoration, was to preserve and promote the essence of the “Yamato Damashi”\(^\text{58}\)
(大和魂) and “Nippon Seishin” (日本精神). Can one not see that these essences are
the core of the Japanese national subjectivities?

In the Bakumatsu period, Japanese revolutionists composed great political
theories in effort to cure the “internal qualms” (Naiyuu; 内憂) and cease the “external
sickness” (Gaikan; 外患). These theories such as Sonno Ron (尊皇論), Joi Ron (攘夷論), Mito Gaku (水戸学), were all studies or theories deliberately designed to
promote, pronounce, and preserve the safe continuation of the Japanese existence.
In other words, these were some of the studies or theories that the revolutionists believed
and acted accordingly to safe guard the Japanese identity they chose to construct and
preserve.

Judging from this angle, one should realize that Fukuzawa’s Datsu-A Ron, really,
served the very same function as those political theories mentioned. Applying these
events – the composing and promoting of political theories at certain periods – onto the
abstract level of thinking, they were actually, processes of the construction of

59 Habu, Nagaho. “Ajia no yukue Nihon no yukue”, 30
61 Ibid.
62 Sonno Ron (尊皇論) was a Japanese nationalistic theory that promoted the reliance and realization of the
power and status of the Japanese Emperor. This theory first appeared in the late Tokugawa Bakufu period.
63 Joi Ron (攘夷論) was another Japanese nationalistic theory that appeared in the late Tokugawa Bakufu
period. Since Perry’s first arrival to Japan in the year 1853, Japanese nativist scholars and nationalists
clearly realized the threat of Japan’s national existence caused by the foreigners. In effort to reduce this
threat, a group of Japanese nationalists promoted the idea of “expelling the barbarians” form the lands of
Japan.
64 Mito Gaku (水戸学) refers to a school of Japanese historical and Shinto study. Early Mito Gaku
scholarship focused on historiography and scholarly work. By the end of the eighteenth century, Mito
Gaku concentrated in addressing the social and political issues in late Tokugawa Japan. Mito Gaku was, in
many ways, the seed to the creating of Sonno Ron and Joi Ron.
subjectivities. To be exact, they are national subjectivities that designed to fashionably assist the continuation of the Japanese nation.

**Part. IX**

**The Faces of Datsu-A**

In his essay, *Reclaiming Asia from the West: Rethinking Global History*, Wang also analyzed Fukuzawa’s viewpoint as such:

“Fukuzawa's view of Asia was that it could be considered as culturally homogenous, as a Confucian space; he aimed to break with Confucianism by transforming Japan into a nation-state. Japan's self-consciousness as a nation-state was to be achieved through separation from Asia and reproduction, within Asia, of the dichotomy civilized/barbarian, western/eastern… [H]e (Fukuzawa) argued that Japan should not only depart from its own past identity, but also reshape an axis in the whole of Asia. In reality, its route as a nation-state was not departure from Asia and joining Europe. But rather entering Asia and confronting Europe.”

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What Wang Hui is suggesting to his readers is that Japan was in its progress to tear down its Western established Asian position and Asiatic identity.

As explained earlier, strength and weakness are fashionable to the transition of the environment. In other words, strength and weakness can never be represented in a constant and unchanged representation. Under the critical condition of colonialism spreading in Asia, the first stage for Japan to fully enter its national progress was to secure its survival as a nation by becoming a part of the colonial power and learn, in other words, absorb, the essence of the fashionable strength – the natural form of Western civilization and colonialism and the executions of them – at that particular world stage.

When Japan’s national survival is secured, it may, then, further develop and foster its national strength with its own unique subjectivit(ies) and style. Gradually, with Japan’s national strength fortified, the new image of Japan may arise. Finally, when a new Japan, or in Fukuzawa’s term “new axle”\(^{66}\) is formed, Japan would in the same time, render a new image for Asia and, consequently, crumble the Western constructed image for Asia.

In short, by breaking the Western constructed images or concepts of Asia, in other words, Western subjectivities, Japan can reconstruct the Japanese version of Asian identity through its own subjectivity. By doing so, in addition, the older version of East-West relative model must also to be reconsidered.

\(^{66}\) Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16\(^{th}\), “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
Therefore, Datsu-A Nyu-O Ron, combing Said’s, Tanaka’s, and Wang’s translations, on one advanced level, really is Datsu-Jaku Nyu-Kyo Ron (脫弱入強論) for Japan during the high tide of colonialism: Departing from weaknesses and entering to strength and power. Then, when Japan acquired enough power to surpass the need of “independence”67, the truth face of Datsu-A Nyu-O would be revealed and be able to translated as Datsu-O Nyu-A: Existing Europe and installing Asia.

Furthermore, Datsu-A, being a national subjectivity it was to Japan, it was something more. Published in a new paper that was addressed to the general audience of the public, Datsu-A Ron was a national propaganda. As Gary Campion explains, one maybe able to identify items of propaganda when they are “[W]ritten for a general audience” or of “small items of news printed in newspaper”68.

In his book, Constructing Subjectivities, modern Japanese scholar, Noboru Tomonari claims, “[t]he narration of memory, or telling of life histories, is usually considered from the point of view of the significance of the account for the individual…the act of narration can significantly transform one’s mind-set.”69

When this national subjectivity – Datsu-A Ron –, and in the same time, propaganda became popular after the government of Japan distributed the autobiography

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67 Fukuzawa, Yukichi. 1885, March 16th, “Datsu-A Ron”, Jiji Shimpo
of Fukuzawa Yukichi to the nation-wide public, Datsu-A Ron transformed to a tool of hypnotism.

Understanding this concept in a psychological approach, Datsu-A is also like a ritual or religious chant script. It does not, even, necessarily have to convince the people, but it is a tool for the people’s faith to be parasite on. Much like a bandwagon for a business or of a slogan for a political campaign, their main functions are not to solely convince the believers but to reinforce the idea that the person or a party wish to channel. As a result, the people would buy into the theory. For example, during WW I, both the German army and the British Army distribute badges with the holy crucifix printed on them to their soldiers. On each badges, though the two sides manufactured their own, there was the same message printed: “God is on our side.”

Shall one recall the context of Datsu-A Ron, one would quickly notice the propaganda tone of the theory and realize this, yet another face of this national subjectivity.

**Conclusion**

Datsu-A Ron has been dissected into different layers and had been examined with evidences that it serves multiple functions and purposes in a parallel structure.
From the examined surface layers of the theory: the historical background of Japan prior and during the time when Datsu-A Ron was composed, to the worldly condition at the time of capitalistic colonialism thrived in Asia, one should have learned that Japan had to enroll itself in becoming an imperialistic predator. In other words, at least to Fukuzawa, if Japan did not blend in with the West, it too would be devoured by the force of the West like China and Korea at the time. Therefore, comprehending the essences of the key vocabularies used in the theory, to strive for national progress by absorbing the knowledge and technologies of the West was justly necessary. However, the side affects of learning from the Western Imperialist created the origin of War in Asia during the WWII era.

In addition, the paper has also shown to its readers that Datsu-A Ron was a national subjectivity that was also utilized as a propaganda tool to facilitate its function.

Most importantly, one may also realize that it is not Asia that Japan wished to depart from but the new face of “weakness” under a rapidly dominating Western capitalistic fashion. By extend, it is not the Europeans that the Japanese wanted to become or to emerge, but the new face of power, strength, and progression that Japan intended to join.

What detail tactics Japan utilized to the treating of China, Korea, and other nations in Asia during the war is yet another area of examination. The essay, in conclusion, is not to justify any war guilt or responsibility that Japan may be responsible
of. Instead, it serves the primary function of identifying the need, or in other words “necessity”\textsuperscript{70} of war for Japan during the complicated time of world transition. The essay may not be able to identify if Datsu-A Ron was the seed to the origin of War in Asia during the late eighteen hundreds to 1945. In truth, this essay is just another organized knowledge about one single topic in a large chapter of history offered to the public. It is the audiences’ responsibility to continue the exploration of truth in things.

\textsuperscript{70} Habu, Nagaho. “Ajia no yukue Nihon no yukue”, 28.
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Pre modern Korea

Queen Himiko

Russo-Japanese War

Rich nation, Strong army

The East

The Contest to Kill 100 People Using a Sword

The War Guild and Responsibility of the Showa Emperor

The locking down of a country

The Eastern World

The Eastern people

The people from the East

The Weak will be devoured By the Strong

The Promotion and Expansion of Civilization/Enlightenment

The Great Spirit of Japanese Race

The Theory of Embracing the Emperor

The Theory of Expelling the Barbarians

Tokugawa Bakufu

To depart Japan from Asia and emerge with the Europeans

Transportation

Western Civilization

Chosen; 朝鮮

Himiko; 卑弥呼

Nichi-Ro Senso; 日露戦争

Fukoku Kyohei; 富国強兵

Toho; 東方

Hyakunin-giri Kyoso; 百人斬り競争

Showa Tenno no Senso Sekinin; 昭和天皇の戦争責任

Sakoku; 鎖国

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Sonno Ron; 尊皇論

Joi Ron; 攘夷論

Tokugawa Bakufu; 徳川幕府

Datsu-A Nyu-O; 脫亜入欧

Kotsu; 交通

Seiyo Bunmei; 西洋文明
Yamagata Aritomo

Yamagata Aritomo; 山縣有朋
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