

NANSHIN-RON: ITS TURNING POINT IN WORLD WAR I

HAJIME SHIMIZU

I

PENETRATION into the Pacific region south of Japan (*Nan'yō*) was a frequent topic among Japanese from 1870 to 1940.¹ The various ideas that were discussed over those seventy years have been loosely classified into what is known as the *nanshin-ron*, or views on southward advance, the series of calls for a doctrine that the South Seas were vital not just to Japanese economic development but to its very existence as a nation. The three major periods of *nanshin-ron* influence are the 1880s, during Japan's Meiji era (1878–1912), when it was still building a new government; the 1910s, i.e., the World War I decade; and the 1930s, the decade that marks the prelude to and beginning of World War II.

The interpretations and nuances of Meiji *nanshin-ron* were as different as its protagonists. These diverse ideas differed from that group of ideas advocating closer political and cultural ties with Korea and China—the so-called pan-Asianist view—but were rather close to the government's announced foreign policy of international relations that would bring solidarity with all countries. Therefore, Meiji *nanshin-ron* can be seen as a variation of the foreign policy advocacy of the idea that Japan should distance itself from Asia (*datsu-a*), and of the idea that it should work in concert with the European powers and the United States. Meiji *nanshin-ron* was a set of views that considered that the state had to have strong foundations that were built through prosperity in international trade, that the establishment of free trade was a long-term goal of the state, and that sea power was a major means of achieving that goal. The main substance of *nanshin-ron* at that time was a call for international trade and economic advance into the Pacific islands, Australia, and subsequently into North and South America, what we know of today as the Pacific Rim. It should be clearly pointed out that although Meiji *nanshin-ron* was not completely devoid of expansionist ideas, it was directed mainly toward peaceful economic advance into the Pacific region, not territorial gain through aggression.²

The third-period (the 1930s) *nanshin-ron*, during the era of "Shōwa militarism," differed vastly from its Meiji version for it appeared for the first time as national policy in the military and naval strategy of southern advance. The "anti-Washington

¹ Survey of the development and transformation of *nanshin-ron* in modern Japan can be found in [19] [33].

² On the Meiji *nanshin-ron*, see [12].

group” within the navy promoted *nanshin-ron* during this period, denouncing both the Washington and London naval treaties and insisting on the reinstatement of Japanese autonomy on the high seas. To replace the naval treaties which sought to give Japan a lower number of capital ships than the United States or Great Britain, the anti-Washington group wanted an “East-Asian Monroe Doctrine” and a doctrine of simultaneous thrust outward in both northern and southern directions. This same group was also instrumental in getting the “fundamentals of national policy” (*Kokusaku no kijun*) put in force on August 7, 1936 [4, p. 219]. Meanwhile a similar group in the army advocated alliance with Germany after the European phase of World War II began in September 1939. *Nanshin-ron* at this time sought to ensure the supply of strategic materials to Japan, to prevent the creation of an Anglo-American block in Southeast Asia, and to take advantage of Nazi blitzkrieg in Europe [25, pp. 114–15]. This strategy first surfaced at the time of the “French Indochina problem” and when the second Konoe cabinet announced full acceptance of the army plan on July 26, 1940, it proclaimed its “general principles of national policy” (*Kihon kokusaku yōkō*), in which the construction of a “new order in Greater East Asia” became the goal of the Japanese foreign policy of monopolistic rule over Southeast Asia under a guise of “Asia for the Asians.”

It is noteworthy that *nanshin-ron* in the Shōwa era (1926–) was subsumed under the concept of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, for the co-prosperity idea sought to subordinate the South Seas region to policies oriented toward continental China. This amalgamation signaled the end of policy that considered the South Seas an independent region separate from the continent. The combination of the two notions led to viewing the South Seas as a mere southern extension of continental China. The geographical objective had now been changed to the outer South Seas region which takes in present Southeast Asia. Shōwa *nanshin-ron* reveals the strong Japanese desire for territorial control over the area. The “general principles of national policy” and the “general principles for dealing with the political situation in line with developments in the world situation” (*Sekai jōsei no suii ni tomonau jikyoku shori yōkō*) (July 22, 1940) clearly evince the idea of confrontation with the Western powers and the strong desire to build a sphere of Japanese self-sufficiency, moreover these documents are quite weak in regard to any ideas of emancipating the Southeast Asian colonies and ensuring their independence.

Why did the Shōwa *nanshin-ron* differ so much from its Meiji counterpart? Answering that requires a careful examination of the developments in *nanshin-ron* of the 1910s, the World-War-I decade. World-War-I or Taishō *nanshin-ron* (Taishō era: 1912–26), evolved out of the ideas current in Japan during the post-Russo-Japanese War period, which were stimulated by the victory and the many issues and arguments that war and foreign incursion created.³ The Taishō *nanshin-ron* advocates were prolific, writing a large number of volumes, but with

³ Main works for analysis in this essay have been [2] [6] [7] [8] [11] [15] [16] [17] [22] [24] [28] [29] [30] [31].

content and mode of expression that is, by and large, stereotyped. Many of these writings appear to be copied wholesale⁴ indicating that their authors were far from thinkers of the first rank. Many were businessmen, merchants, government officials, newsmen, service veterans. They stand in obvious contrast to the Meiji *nanshin-ron* advocates, men of outstanding intellect like Shigetaka Shiga, Ukichi Taguchi, Takeaki Enomoto, Jūgō Sugiura, and Teifū Sukanuma. But lack of participation by great thinkers does not necessarily weaken an ideology, quite often its very mediocrity strengthens its effect. Taishō *nanshin-ron*'s untiring spate of publications and stereotyped slogans exerted considerable influence on the emergence in Japan of a South Seas "fever," an unmistakable "mood for southern advance." This *nanshin-ron*'s uniformity allows its writings to be lumped together, the character of its thought structure easily generalized. World War I created the background that made *nanshin-ron* more obviously expansionist and "Asianist." The thrust of its discussions had changed, concerned less with the Southwest Pacific and more with Southeast Asia. Taishō *nanshin-ron* is thus closer to its successor of the Greater East Asian War period than it is to its Meiji antecedent.

II

How, why, and thorough what thought-channels did Meiji *nanshin-ron*, based upon free trade with the Southwest Pacific region, devolve into Taishō *nanshin-ron* and then into a Shōwa version that worked for the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere?

The Taishō *nanshin-ron* is an inseparable part of the concepts on national defense and the economy in the context of post-Russo-Japanese War domestic conditions and international relations. Japan confronted several often contradictory tasks: restoring finances, reconstructing the economy, and rebuilding and developing national defense. That predicament formed the backdrop for discussions on the future development of the country.

Japan's biggest task at the time was reconstructing its finances and economy. During the Russo-Japanese War financial planning had relied heavily on foreign loans, and the panic on the New York stock market in October 1907 threw subsequent fiscal policy into extreme difficulty. Japan's budget for fiscal 1911 rose excessively. Included in that budget were the postwar operation fees for constructing railroads and embankments, expenses for naval armament and battle-ships to counteract U.S. naval advances, and expenses for developing Korea after having taken over that country in the previous August. The expenses for warships and armament did not contribute directly to production, worse, the need to import many of the construction materials caused an excess in imports. That also increased the interest on foreign loans. The revolution that unexpectedly broke out in China in October caused a sharp drop in exports to that country. All

⁴ For example, the statements of M. Inoue [7, pp. 107-09] are the translations from literary to colloquial style of Nakai [15, pp. 149-52], whose writing was published half a year earlier.

these factors placed pressure on the balance of payments and caused a big outflow in foreign currency.

Despite the economic and financial difficulties both the army and the navy from the standpoint of national defense, strengthened their demands on the national coffers and further strained national finances. The navy wanted to increase armaments so that it could respond to the U.S. "big ships, big guns" policy. The army demanded the activation of two new divisions to defend the new territories and sphere of influence acquired through the Russo-Japanese War and to set up a more elaborate network of national self-defense. However, those demands brought about a serious economic dilemma, a heavy burden that Japan took on with the new territories in Korea, Manchuria, and continental China and its resultant sphere of influence.

Reflecting the dilemma between national defense and economy, was the Japanese mentality which was split between strong anxieties about real power, and the belief that Japan had already arrived as first-class power and was on a level with the Great Powers [23, p. 202]. By stating itself in positive desires, this pessimism inspired Japanese foreign expansion. *Nanshin-ron* interest during this period shifted to an insistence on Japanese advance into Southeast Asia and the islands of the southwest Pacific, particularly the Malay Peninsula, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines.

In the economic and fiscal complexities surrounding the politics of national defense in the early 1910s, the *hokushin* (northern advance) versus *nanshin* (southern advance) controversy peaked during the "Taishō Seihen" (political changes of 1913), a controversy that caused great problems for the government, especially in the army's request for activating two divisions to strengthen Japan's commitment in China. The heat of argument between the *hokushin* and *nanshin* advocates inspired the journal *Taiyō* [The sun] to publish its November 1913 issue under the special theme "Nanshin ka, hokushin ka [Should we advance to the South or to the North?]." Proponents of the *nanshin-ron* opposed the thrust of the *hokushin-ron* and the army's request for two additional divisions.⁵ Some were opposed to southern advance because it meant expanding the navy. Many *nanshin-ron* supporters considered the financial and economic difficulties of the time to be of paramount importance; and, because limited finances prevented northern advance, which would also mean activating two army divisions, they insisted that the nation's most urgent tasks were strengthening its fiscal situation and building up investment for economic development. They strongly opposed territorial ambitions and power politics, concluding that the best policy for Japan was peaceful economic advance into the South Seas. Thus, the *nanshin-ron* still had much in common at this stage with the Meiji *nanshin-ron* in an insistence on free trade and peaceful economic pursuit.

The outbreak of world war in August 1914 created the situation that transformed *nanshin-ron*. The war curtailed trade between the Western countries and the South-east Asian markets and the first thing Japan did was to move in and fill the vacuum

⁵ For example [5] [13] [34]. For their discussions, see [21].

by selling food, textiles, and other sundry items. Another opportunity was afforded under the guise of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. This allowed Japan to enter the war against Germany, and by October 12, 1914 seize the German Pacific island possessions of the Marianas, Marshalls, the East and West Carolines to establish an effective bridgehead in the South Seas. The two events gave a new angle to the *Taishō nanshin-ron*. They made for it the basic principle of southward advance in which Southeast Asia became the most important objective. Japan now set its bases for southward advance via the central Pacific islands and Taiwan, which created, for the first time, the ideas of advance into Southeast Asia, including the Dutch East Indies.

It was around this time, much in advance of the West that Japanese began to use the term *Tōnan Ajia* (Southeast Asia) to indicate the region as it is today. The state geography text for elementary education published in February 1919 contains a chapter entitled "Southeast Asia," which treats insular and peninsular Southeast Asia as one [9, pp. 73–75]. That was a big change from previous texts which treated peninsular Southeast Asia as part of Asia and insular Southeast Asia as part of Oceania, as was the usage in the West. From then on, the Ministry of Education made Southeast Asia the common term in geography texts.

In Europe and America, "Southeast Asia" was first used with the 1943 establishment of the Allied Forces' Southeast Asia Command in Colombo, Ceylon, the headquarters that directed the war against Japanese-occupied areas of Southeast Asia. The term circulated freely then and took root after the war. A look through the subject catalog at the British Museum shows the term "Southeastern Asia" to be in general currency during nineteenth century, but this refers to a broader area than does the Southeast Asia of today. Even then only a few examples of that term can be found. No examples were seen of this usage in twentieth century documents and until World War II, the region was known by a wide range of names or under terms for much wider areas: monsoon Asia, the East Indies, further India, tropical Asia, East Asia, and the Far East.⁶ Even the first draft of the plan for setting up the Southeast Asia command called it the East Asia command.⁷ This also shows that the term *Tōnan Ajia* of the post-World-War-I geography texts was not a translation from a foreign language but an original Japanese term. It was customary in those texts to underline foreign place names that were written both in *katakana* (one of the two written forms of the Japanese syllabary, or alphabet) and *kanji* (Chinese characters). But a foot note explains that the term Southeast Asia is used for geographical convenience and thus only the word *Ajia* (written in *katakana*, while southeast was written in *kanji*) was underlined. The text also states that the term should be considered separate from place names such as Central Asia, North America, or South America (fully underlined) [10, p. 743], indicating that the term was not as common as were Central Asia, North and South America. The fact that the Japanese textbooks

⁶ Based upon my research on [18] [3] [1].

⁷ Public Record Office, CO 968/11/8, "The Organization of Command in East Asia: Memorandum by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence," [W.P. (43) 253] (June 21, 1943).

used the term Southeast Asia and devoted a chapter to explaining the region proves that the term was original to post-World-War-I Japan.⁸ The description in the 1919 textbook is only about 440 words long, a curt examination of resources of trade with Japan that stands in stark contrast to previous discourses on regional topography, climate, natural features, customs and industries. The short article about rice in Indochina, rubber in Malaya, sugar in Java, petroleum in Sumatra and Borneo, and manila hemp in the Philippines concludes: "A gradually increasing number of Japanese are going to Malaya and ships of our country have recently begun scheduled service to Malayan destinations. That means that our trade with that area is also increasing" [9, p. 75]. The description clearly indicates growth in economic relations with Southeast Asia after World War I and provides some clue as to how the concept was formed of Southeast Asia as regional market and resource supplier to Japan.

III

As Japan used World War I to good advantage to begin acquiring rights and interests in the South Seas, it also began aiming to economically and politically advance into Southeast Asia, which was sure to provoke a confrontation with the Western powers that still ruled the region. These new objectives revealed the Japanese mental ambiguities of latent anxiety about the country's role in the world coupled with pride in their belief that the victory in the Russo-Japanese War had made the nation a first-class power. *Nanshin-ron* during and after World War I was ideologically stronger than its Meiji and "Taishō Seihen" editions. That ideological strength is something that cannot be considered apart from the Japanese psychological defense mechanisms rooted in anxiety. *Nanshin-ron* now not only insisted that Japan's southern advance was inevitable and proper, but that expansionism and pan-Asianism were its rightful goals.

The first and important feature of Taishō *nanshin-ron* thought structure was that it considered foreign advance in a southern direction one of several choices available. Japanese believed that moves into the South Seas had been chosen through a simple process of elimination, that Japan had basically available to its choices of advance in any direction, east, west, south, north, but that the current international situation made advance to the south easiest, the direction of least resistance. Japanese were barred from the United States, first, by California's "Anti-Japanese Land Act" of 1913 and from Australia by a "white Australian policy" strictly enforced since 1901 [6, pp. 4-5]. South America was thought to be too far away; that emigrants who had gone there were living in misery [8, pp. 23-25]. It is also noteworthy that protagonists of southern advance had already by this time accepted northern advance into Korea and continental China as faits accomplis. Possession of Korea and retention of southern Manchuria in Japan's sphere of influence were almost taken as given. *Nanshin-ron* advocates rapidly came to regard continental Asia as a logical extension of the Japanese

⁸ This point is discussed in detail in [20].

Empire, not as a foreign region ripe and ready for plucking but one that had not yet been picked [6, pp. 6-7].

Since the advance to the south had been chosen by a negative process of elimination, the *nanshin-ron* had to be used to assert its propriety and inevitability. This was done, generally, by asserting the closeness of Japan's connections with the South Seas from (1) geographical, (2) historical, and (3) cultural and ethnological points of view. At the same time, the perspective also had a rather ideological taint, emphasizing Japanese moves into the Western Pacific during sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by buccaneers (*wakō*), vermilion-seal ships (*shuinsen*), and settlements of Japanese in Southeast Asia, and by exploiting legends such as those that claimed the people of Minahasa in the Celebes were descendants of Japanese.⁹ Another major feature of *nanshin-ron* during this period was its attempt to portray the South Seas as paradisiacal, in order to sweep away accumulated negative images of intense heat and savagery [2, p. 198].

An additional theory was used to promote the inevitability and propriety of southern advance. *Nanshin-ron* supporters (especially Meiji supporters) had defined the South Seas as an area neither Eastern nor Western [32, p. 50] but the Asianists now considered it part of the East, part of Asia. The change in the way the elementary school geography texts treated the South Seas area is clear evidence for their view. Because the absorption of Korea and acquisition of rights and interests in South Manchuria made Japanese think that the East was under Japanese control, they also tended to make the South Seas Eastern and include it in the sphere of influence. Some even asserted that Japan should advance into the area east of the Malay peninsula and bring that into its sphere of influence [8, p. 27]. That contention was supported by the possession of South Pacific islands which brought the zone into Japan's sphere of influence. Placing the South Seas region within the eastern sphere, an area where Japanese thought they should be encouraged to move freely, limited the southern and northern advance to the same sphere and eliminated the dispute between the two ideologies [8, p. 32].

Taishō *nanshin-ron's* second aspect is its set of confused attitudes: a much broader concept of Eastern, indicating the level of Japanese confidence at the time, and the lingering doubts and anxieties as to whether Japan had really attained first-class status. In his preface to *Kokumin kaigai hatten saku* [National overseas development policy], Kakichi Uchida, chief civil administrator for Taiwan, said "The empire has now attained first-class status. It is, however, questionable whether that status carries any real power with it. That [lack of power] is a point about which we cannot be too optimistic" [29, p. 1]. Travel books to the South Seas reflect similar Japanese attitudes in their explanations of first- and second-class cabins, the way passengers are treated, and the way hotels in Southeast Asia treat Japanese. Some idea of this mentality comes through in a story from one of these books about a Japanese guest at a deluxe hotel in Surabaya, Indonesia, whom the staff had mistakenly thought to be Chinese. The

⁹ Ōno and Satō [17] is only exception, which does not extract this legend.

guest insisted that the Ching-dynasty queue, or pig-tail, for Chinese be revived so that they could be distinguished from Japanese [11, pp. 108–9].

The double image many Japanese had of people living in the Southeast Asian region, European, Chinese, and Southeast Asians, further reflects this complex of attitudes. On the one side of the coin, Europeans and Americans were invaders holding sway over Asia; Chinese were dirty, cunning, untrustworthy, and inferior to Japanese; Southeast Asians were uncivilized, barbarous, and lazy. The reverse was the side of positive images: Europeans and Americans unequalled in their richness of resources, character and knowledge; colonial founding fathers, like Stanford Raffles and James Brook, objects of hero-worship [15, p. 82]. Chinese economic success in Southeast Asia was also admired, their diligence and thrift regarded as positive national traits [17, pp. 59–60]. There was also honest amazement that the upper-classes of Southeast Asia were far more refined than the Japanese [28, p. 635].

These positive and negative attitudes were the straightforward feelings of citizens who thought of themselves as members of a newly arrived first-class power. Thus, a major question for the *nanshin-ron* advocates was what the relationship of Japan, a first-class power, should be with the other people already there as it advances into the South Seas.

A third feature of the Taishō *nanshin-ron* was that to its advocates, the southward advance of a first-class power meant (1) systematic advance (2) as capitalists. Advance in this fashion would go a long way to erase the view held by others that Japanese coming into the region were either shiftless, petty merchants or emigrant prostitutes and other “abandoned people.” It was the dream of *nanshin-ron* advocates that Japanese lay down roots in the South Seas as entrepreneurs, taking the same course that Europeans and Americans had [28, p. 647]. Doing that would require consistent policies and the establishment of organizations in Southeast Asia unified in direction by their headquarters in Japan. These moves took specific form in the setting up in Japan of a trade and investment policy, a South Seas steamship service policy, and an export association. Also necessary were information organizations and human resources training centers for promoting Southeast Asian economic development in Japan, as well as Japanese elementary schools, Japanese-language newspapers, and a regional Japanese chamber of commerce in Southeast Asia. These organizations were indispensable to unity and cooperation and to cultivating a sense of belonging and distinct consciousness among subjects of the Japanese Empire. Newspapers and elementary schools were expected to be particularly instrumental in nurturing nationalistic patriotism [15, pp. 48–49].

One of the major reasons for this insistence on systematization and organization was the belief that the success of the Chinese in Southeast Asia was attributable to the unions, mutual aid groups, social-help associations, and guilds and clubs that united members from the same provinces and the same clans. Japanese thus considered it necessary to devise their own versions of these organizations so that they could make a systematic advance into Southeast Asia that was in no way inferior to what the Chinese had done. Achieving those ends would be

greatly facilitated through the use of the concepts of state and nation that the Chinese seemed to lack. The assumption that it was necessary for Japanese to have the support of national organizations in their southward advance backs up the statement that "the Chinese are strongly organized in the social sense, but not in the national sense. Japan's strength in unified national power will make it easy for us to compete with the Chinese" [17, p. 62]. The ideal Japanese for southward advance was the Imperial subject who strongly believed in the Japanese national concept [7, p. 111].

But with the death of the Emperor Meiji in 1912, *nanshin-ron* supporters lost the living icon through which imperial subjects worshipped the national concept. The existence of such a symbol was vital to the Taishō *nanshin-ron*. It created in the person of the Emperor Meiji a national concept that was indispensable to *nanshin-ron*'s systematic advance. Its loss meant that the theory's supporters had to go back into the past to retrieve and make the object of veneration the "national policy" (*kokuze*) that had been laid down in the Imperial edicts and written oath of the restoration. These documents expressed the wishes of the Emperor Meiji, proclaiming that Japanese should have the spirit of enterprise, that they should open their country to foreign intercourse, and that the race should expand outwards. *Nanshin-ron* theorists thus sought to make the "national policy" the object of divine veneration [31, p. 2], a divinization that was later expanded to include the ideas of *hakkō ichiu* (the eight corners of the world under one roof, the entire world as one family), that had arisen out of the main principles of the mythological nation founded by the Emperor Jimmu. A further addition to divine policy was that of racial expansionism based on the ideas of the "Imperial Way Doctrine" (*kōdōshugi*), which was very similar to *nanshin-ron* during the period of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of the 1940s [15, pp. 244-46].

IV

Nanshin-ron took on expansionist tendencies, as expressed in the slogan "the entire world as one family," that were logical because expansionist ideas had become more widely accepted and were no longer limited to southward advance. Taishō *nanshin-ron* became part of the discussions that called for advance to north, south, east, and west, and its advocates became especially aware of the theory's complementarity and coexistence with the *hokushin-ron* [22, p. 30]. Thus, "south" was no longer the only appropriate direction of advance. The dichotomy that had existed between *nan-shu hokushin-ron* (hold fast in the south, advance in the north) and *hoku-shu nanshin-ron* (hold fast in the north, advance in the south) logically disappeared for all practical purposes. This led to an inevitable loss of the ideological and political coloring that was intrinsic to *nanshin-ron* as long as it had remained the antithesis of the *hokushin-ron*.

One of the remarkable results of this transformation is that people were no longer as strict in their attitude toward attaining a sound economy as they had once been, and it was the drive for a sound economy that had restrained the *nanshin-ron* advocates. As mentioned earlier, *nanshin-ron* during the Taishō

TABLE I
 PRODUCTION, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, AND FINANCIAL CONDITION IN THE 1910S
 (Million yen)

Production Manufacturing Industry (Current Prices)	Balance of Payments				Financial Condition			
	Current Transactions			Specie Held Abroad	Revenue (Settlement)	Expenditure (Settlement)	Balance	
	Credit	Debit	Balance					
1911	2,263	656	760	-104	-106	657	585	72
1912	2,484	768	876	-108	-17	687	594	93
1913	2,720	890	986	-96	32	722	574	148
1914	2,553	841	851	-10	-34	735	648	87
1915	2,880	1,044	813	231	167	709	583	126
1916	4,279	1,703	1,068	635	108	813	591	222
1917	6,359	2,420	1,146	974	157	1,085	735	350
1918	8,873	3,093	2,242	851	492	1,479	1,017	462
1919	11,159	3,335	2,938	397	208	1,809	1,172	637
1920	9,579	3,094	3,137	-43	-281	2,001	1,360	641

Sources: K. Ohkawa; M. Shinohara; and M. Umemura; ed., *Chōki keizai tōkei* [Estimates of long-term economic statistics of Japan since 1868], 14 vols. (Tokyo: Toyokeizai-shinpōsha, 1966-), Vol. 7, *Zaisei shishutsu* [Government expenditure], ed. K. Emi and Y. Shionoya (1966), pp. 147-48; Vol. 10, *Kōkōgyō* [Mining and manufacturing], ed. M. Shinohara (1972), pp. 142-43; and Vol. 14, *Bōeki to kokusai shūshi* [Foreign trade and balance of payments], ed. I. Yamazawa and Y. Yamamoto (1979), pp. 224-25.

Seihen, when arguments of northward advance versus southward advance had reached their peak, was informed by the call for either strong national defense or a rich country, but not both. This *nanshin-ron* emphasized that after the Russo-Japanese War economic and fiscal reconstruction must receive precedence over everything else. *Hokushin-ron* implementation would require large expenditures for national defense, and lack of funds was its greatest obstacle. However, when the *nanshin-ron* changed after World War I into an ideology of Japanese-racial expansionism, it also reduced its advocates' awareness of the contradictions between building a militarily strong country and building a strong economy. That changed the former policy to one that promoted "a strong to a rich country," and concomitantly eliminated all the negative considerations about military and naval expenditure as a heavy burden on the economy [31, pp. 250-51]. Having used World War I to good advantage to increase domestic economic prosperity, rapidly develop international trade, thus improving the balance of payments, and create a better fiscal picture furnished the foundations that made possible these new attitudes, even if only temporary. Table I shows that Japanese manufactures quadrupled in value from the prewar to the 1915-1919 period. Record-breaking increases were also seen in the favorable change in balance of payments and level of foreign currency held overseas. In finances, prosperity greatly increased annual revenue and improved the debit and credit balance. It should

be noted, however, that the weakening awareness of financial restrictions on national defense at this time, coupled with the post-World-War-I reactive depression of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the early 1930s, seriously affected later events, especially the catastrophes of the early Shōwa period leading to the military campaigns in Manchuria, China, and the Pacific. Not just Japanese jingoists but pacifists, too, had a very shallow understanding of the implications of military expenditures in the early Shōwa (the 1920s and 1930s) period before the "Greater East Asian War." If the origin for this permissive attitude toward military and naval outlays lies in the Taishō *nanshin-ron*, then the importance of its ideological transformation cannot be stressed too much, for they who permit the military money with which to wage war must share the responsibility for paving the road to war because without vast amounts of military funds, modern warfare cannot be waged.

Losing its tone of ideological and political confrontation with *hokushin-ron*, *nanshin-ron* became strongly infused with the Asiatic ideology that used to be the former's hallmark. The Asiatic theme, i.e., Japan's mission as self-professed leader of the Orient in liberating Asians, or members of the same race who share a similar culture and use similar writing systems, pervaded every aspect of the Taishō *nanshin-ron*. To the *nanshin-ron* advocates, Japan's duty was to lead those living under uncivilized conditions, as it had done in China, liberate Asia from Western colonial control and promote Asian development [28, p. 653]. Japan's reasons for taking on this duty were to be found in the common cultural and racial bonds of Japanese and Southeast Asian peoples and Japan's status as an advanced country [7, p. 18]. The Taishō *nanshin-ron* advocates considered that Japan and Southeast Asia were sitting on the same line, it was just that Japan was modernized and Southeast Asia was underdeveloped, and it was the responsibility of an advanced country to bring light to the less advanced.

It is noteworthy that these two aspects effectively infused moral principles into the ideology of expansionism that the Japanese called Imperialism and the Greater Japan Policy (*Dai-Nipponshugi*). These concepts also served to self-justify the distinction Japanese made between their expansionism and imperialism and that of the West. Propriety and morality in Japanese expansionism was declared under pretentious slogans of "moral imperialism" and "righteous path of greater Japan," and Europe and America were branded the "white clique" as Japan sought to deny their advance into Southeast Asia [28, p. 36].

Despite its spirit of confrontation with Europe and America, and its insistence on the morality of Japanese imperialism and the injustices of Europe and American imperialism, the Taishō *nanshin-ron* refrained from encouraging actual advance into Southeast Asia. Although it made liberation and the development of Southeast Asia its great cause, Taishō *nanshin-ron* stressed trade and industrial development for Japan's sake more than for the sake of the people living in the region. The only things that Japan really tried to do on behalf of the political liberation of Southeast Asia were trying to understand its nationalism and giving passive support to independence from its western masters. Japanese considered it wise to avoid competition and friction with Europe and America as much as possible.

Yasoroku Soejima, a supporter of Taishō *nanshin-ron* demonstrates well the huge gap between Japan's exaggerated sense of mission, its ideology of expansionism, and its pitiable expression of concrete advance when he prescribes in his introduction to *Teikoku nanshin saku* [Imperial policy for southward advance] Japan's mission as leader and peacekeeper of the Orient: "I have in mind a great ideal. I hope that the people of Japan in their true power shall bring about expansion and development and, at the same time, that they lead and awaken the other peoples of the Orient. With them, we can contribute to a new future civilization" [22, pp. 29–30]. But his main text does a complete about face; it discusses only that which is in the Japanese interest: "The main reason I am concerned about India and the South Seas area is their rich resources. An important topic from now on will be how Japan is going to take advantage of those resources" [22, p. 43]. The book fails to make any mention of liberating Southeast Asia for its own sake.

That the *nanshin-ron* would make profiteering the main element of Japanese southward advance was inevitable. Japanese interest in Southeast Asia lay only in exploiting rich resources. Interestingly Japanese called those resources Heaven's blessings (*tenkei*) or Heaven's riches (*tenpu*), *ten*, the word for Heaven implying that the resources were given equally to all people under Heaven. But these words also had the meaning "unowned land with no one on it," "underdeveloped," or "land which the owner hopes someone else will come to develop" and as such expressed the self-deceiving belief and hope that Southeast Asia was a free land without owners and open to anybody. Needless to say, this kind of notion of Southeast Asia was used to justify advances into Southeast Asia as a Japanese prerogative [31, pp. 49–50].

This gap between an expansionist, Asianist ideology and the benefits of exploiting Southeast Asia was the fourth feature of Taishō *nanshin-ron*. This gap arose out of a psychological defense mechanism based on Japanese doubts about the nation's real power. Expressions such as moral imperialism, genuine Greater Japan policy, righteous way, and leader of the Orient are the pained hopes of a country forced to compete with Europe and America and trying to become a first-class nation despite a lack of adequate power.

V

As pointed out in Section I, most Taishō *nanshin-ron* supporters were second- or third-rate thinkers, they wrote a lot but almost everything they did was hackneyed. Those who constantly copy from others will hardly develop into original thinkers. The ideologue whom many were copying from, the one who strongly influenced the transformation, concepts and the very expressions used in Taishō *nanshin-ron* is Sohō Tokutomi, whose reign over modern Japanese thought continued from his period as mid-Meiji democrat to his term as early Shōwa nationalist. The unrefined Taishō *nanshin-ron* "thinkers" were to a great extent imitators of the theories, concepts, and expressions developed in his two best selling books, *Jimu ikkagen* [My views of current affairs] (1913) and *Taishō no seinen to teikoku no*

zento [Taishō youth and the empire's future] (1916). Tokutomi must have also given his imprimatur to all of his imitators, for almost everything published on the Taishō *nanshin-ron* was put out by Min'yū-sha, a publishing house under Tokutomi's supervision. He moreover often wrote the customary introductory calligraphy, or *daiji*, as appreciation and support shown by distinguished persons, for many books brought out by other publishing houses.

Tokutomi's major influence on Taishō *nanshin-ron* is that he showed all previous theories of *hoku-shu nanshin-ron* (hold fast in the north, advance in the south) to be worthless. He took the ideas of southern advance and combined them with the theory of expansion in all directions to make the *nanshin-ron* an adjunct of *hokushin-ron* policies. He wrote "My views of current affairs" from a perspective that negated *nanshin-ron* at the time during the Taishō Seihen of dispute between the advocates of southern and northern advance. By negating *nanshin-ron* he was not simply advocating *hokushin-ron*; he was providing a new view the originality of which lay in its ability to emasculate the dispute itself by using its main assumption of a policy of a strong and expansionist Japan, to point out the meaninglessness of *nanshin-ron/hokushin-ron* confrontation. Tokutomi concludes, "Those who today support *nanshin-ron* also, generally, support *hoku-shu-ron* (the theory of standing pat in the north). But as I understand *hoku-shu-ron*, it is a nice-looking theory, but one that rejects the northward drive." [26, p. 299] For Tokutomi, a policy of *nanshin-ron* that would exclude *hokushin-ron* was out of the question, yet he did not reject outright the exclusive southward move in relation to Japan's problems of the moment such as national development, territorial expansion, and improving national wealth. Tokutomi advocated a simultaneous southern and northern advance (*nanboku heishin-ron*), but not as a *hokushin* or *nanshin* alternative: "It would be shameful for us today to argue about whether we should go to the north or to the south. Those feeling of shame are what make me support both *nanshin-ron* and *hokushin-ron*." [26, p. 300] Tokutomi continued to actively advocate *nanshin-ron* as long as it was part of *nanboku heishin-ron*. Another point worth of note is his advocacy of close cultural ties and good relations with the people of the South Seas. "For Japanese, going to the South Seas is like going to pay respect to one's distant relatives and ancestors." [26, p. 297]

Through his insistence that *nanboku heishin-ron* equaled expansionism, Tokutomi derived his most important concept of "moral imperialism." To Tokutomi, "moral imperialism" was Japanese imperialism carried out under a sort of Asian Monroe Doctrine in which the matters of Asia would be managed by Asians [27, p. 374]. In the name of a kind of racial self-determinism, Tokutomi praised his own brand of expansionism and imperialism for its morality [27, p. 360]. His ideas were a splendid combination of Asianism and imperialism as a developed policy form for distancing Japan from Asia (*datsu-a*), an explanation which said that Asianism was morality and imperialism was the distancing. Asianism and the policy of removing Japan from Asia developed out of and diverged from basic early Meiji ideas on how to deal with the Western powers, and then were intentionally united again in the 1910s to conform to contemporary developments. Moral

imperialism, however, was an inevitable contradiction in terms, for according to Tokutomi those who managed Asia had to be the Asians living in the most developed and modernized country, i.e., the Japanese [27, p. 374].

Another important idea in Tokutomi's moral imperialism that was connected with the Taishō *nanshin-ron* was that Japan should begin its attempts at foreign development based on a unique ideology of "national family" that placed the Imperial Household at its center. "The maintenance of a family system does not mean to be born and die in the same land. It means building a national concept based on the "family rank" and the "family lineage". Only foreign advance based on the family lineage system of this kind can attain steady, sound national expansion" [27, p. 546]. But foreign advance based on the family lineage system must not be attempted helter-skelter, it should be made only after careful preparation. The first step in that preparation was thorough organization and systematization of the Japanese Empire. Thus, Tokutomi used the "national organism" viewpoint to show that "the Japanese Empire management of international affairs can be consciously put into practice only when the nation itself is united and ruled in an orderly, systematic way" [27, p. 596]. As mentioned earlier, the central features of Taishō *nanshin-ron* were Tokutomi's interpretations that (1) *nanshin-ron* was the ideology supplementing *nanboku heishin-ron* and *hokushin-ron*, (2) "moral imperialism" was the justification for Japanese expansionism, (3) the imperial subject was to organize and systematize foreign advance as a national concept. The extent of Tokutomi's influence on the Taishō *nanshin-ron* is also shown in its widespread use of many of his favorite buzz words national policy (*kokuze*), mission (*shimei*), divine vocation or divine calling (*tenshoku*), and white clique (*hakubatsu*).

VI

The Taishō *nanshin-ron* contained within it all the conceptual seeds that would sprout into the Shōwa *nanshin-ron*, and it was the tool for developing the new *nanshin-ron* supporters of the early Shōwa period who would lead the country into the Greater East Asian War. When the islands in the South Seas were seized from Germany at the beginning of World War I, Yoshimasa Nakahara, later known as "king of the South Seas," Shingo Ishikawa, Kan'e Chūdō, Tatehiko Konishi (chairman of the early 1940s' South Sea Economics Research Institute) and other young officers formed a group of *nanshin-ron* supporters in the navy. All were strongly influenced by the Taishō *nanshin-ron*, but all went through the so-called Washington Treaty years behaving prudently and showing forbearance despite their resentment at the way Japan had been treated in the treaty. During the 1930s, mainly through the committee for studying South Seas policy (Tai-Nan'yō hōsaku kenkyū iinkai), the group rapidly gained power among hard-liners calling for a tough stand against Great Britain and the United States [4, p. 216].

Attention should also be given to the fact that the fear among the European and American colonial powers of a Japanese advance into Southeast Asia as

inspired by the Taishō *nanshin-ron* was already apparent during World War I. In British North Borneo, one example of a plum that almost everyone knew the Japanese were waiting to pick, suspicion of Japan's motives ran high and vigilance, especially among the employees of the British North Borneo Company, was honed to a keen edge. The telegrams going secretly back and forth between Jesselton, North Borneo, and London, reported on rumors that Japanese steamers regularly calling at Jesselton were engaging in espionage, and that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was broken off.¹⁰ Most Britons there believed that the real motives of Japanese advance into North Borneo were political and territorial gain, not business. A telegram dated October 7, 1917 to the governor-general in Jesselton from the North Borneo Chamber of Commerce in Sandakan says, "My Committee is inclined to think that the recent influx of Japanese capital into the country has had its origin in political rather than in industrial motives, and they think it highly desirable that Government should keep this aspect of the subject well in view. . . ."¹¹

Even if the interpretation was based on imaginary fears and a misconception of facts, it was an interpretation maintained until the outbreak of World War II.

Certainly, one of the several reasons that Japan allied itself with Nazi Germany in 1936 was, as the negotiators emphasized in their discussions with Hitler, that it wanted to keep the South Pacific islands of the Marianas, Marshalls, the East and West Carolines that it had seized from Germany in October 1914. Since that alliance was greatly decisive to the subsequent events that led to war in 1941 against Great Britain and the United States, the capture of the South Seas Islands during World War I may then be seen, as a factor, albeit remote, in the collapse of the "Great Japanese Empire" [14, pp. 12–16]. Taishō *nanshin-ron* during the World War I decade was thus the important turning point for the entire development of Japan's policy for southward advance.

Lacking a clear-cut plan, a firm theoretical foundation, Shōwa *nanshin-ron* found its expression from the autumn of 1940 on in ad-hoc expedients for southward advance. Japan began its drive into northern French Indochina on September 22, 1940, broke off negotiations with the Netherlands on June 11, 1941, headed into southern Indochina on July 28, and launched the Pacific War on December 8. That day, on which fighter-planes left their carriers for Pearl Harbor, was the day on which *nanshin-ron*—originally a romantic ideal of reaching out to an unknown world and a policy of peaceful, commercial advance by free trade standard-bearers—was reduced to ashes.

¹⁰ Public Record Office, CO 874/873, Jesselton to the British North Borneo Company, London (February 21, 1917).

¹¹ Public Record Office, CO 874/873, the North Borneo Chamber of Commerce, Sandakan to Jesselton (October 7, 1917).

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