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## REVIEWS

## BOOK REVIEW

Selçuk Esenbel

Sinan Levent, *Japon Turancılığı (Japanese Turanism)*.  
Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayinlari, 2016. 200 pp. Paperback.  
ISBN: 9789753333368

Sinan Levent's book on Japanese Turanism was published in Turkish from Tarih Vakfı (History Foundation) Yurt Yayinlari in 2016. Based upon his Ph.D. in the Asia-Pacific Studies Institute of Waseda University, the work is part of new research on the interesting topic of Japanese Turanism that was a less-known aspect of pre-war Japan's Pan-Asianist intellectual and ideological currents that dominated Japanese thought during the 1930s and 40s. As the author states in the English abstract of the book, Turanism, a political and intellectual movement that originated in Hungary and influenced the art of nationalist Turkish intellectual thought during the early twentieth century, argued that the Ural-Altai language speakers covering central Eurasia including Finns, Hungarians, Estonians, Central Asian Turkic peoples, Mongols, Koreans, Manchus, and the Japanese shared common racial and cultural origins. Typical of the grand theories of global and transnational ethno-racial imaginary claims such as Germanism, or, Pan-Slavism, Turanism in Hungary represented the Hungarian search for common links through language and common cultural roots for alternative global alliances against the current Slavic (i.e. Russian) domination. In Turkey, Turanism was interpreted more in the line of Pan-Turkism with less emphasis on the multinational range of the Hungarian vision. However, as Levent's work shows the links between Russia Muslim Turkic intellectuals and the newly founded Republic of Turkey also fertilized the ground for the emergence of Turanism in Turkey during the same era.

The book is based upon Japanese archival materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Gaimusho*), pre-war newspapers such as Asahi and Yomiuri and most significantly the personal papers and archival material of Imaoka Juichiro (1888-1973) a contractual researcher of the Ministry. Imaoka, though

not a regular diplomat, appears to have played a leading role in advocating Turanism as a geo-political romantic vision for the destiny of the Japanese empire in North Asia and Central Eurasia against Russia and China as well as Britain and France. A German language specialist, Imaoka became a Hungarian expert during his sojourn in Hungary together with the Hungarian Turanist Barathosi Balogh (1888-1973) who had visited Japan three times in 1905, 1914, 1921. Imaoka had served as his guide and interpreter and the two formed a life-long relationship of cooperation for the cause of incorporating the Japanese public into the Turan cause. The third individual in the Japanese Turanist movement was Alimcan Tagan (1892-1973), a Bashkirt from the Volga region in Russia, who came to Japan together with Abdulhay Kurbanali (Kurbangaliev) after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. As the author notes, three personalities from different countries converged along the common cause of Turanism in Japan. This was a transnational team envisioning themselves in a transnational movement. The book narrates their close relations with Japanese radical nationalists and Pan-Asianists such as the *Kokuryukai* (The Black Dragons) and the *Genyosha* (The Black Ocean Society). The civilian and military authorities of the 1920s, though not extremely interested in the Turanist agenda, still allowed the three activists to establish the first *Tsuran minzoku Domei* in Tokyo. At the outset of the 1930s the second Turanic association Nippon Tsuran Kyokai was established in Tokyo, but this time under the Pan-Asianist foreign policy and internationalism that surfaced with Japan's search for an alternative global order in Asia under Japanese leadership after Japan's relations with the West radically worsened as a result of the 1931 Manchurian Invasion.

The book provides a substantial introduction that describes the Imaoka Jutarō collection, the primary original sources of the study, and introduces the major personalities of Japanese Turanism as well as the Turan or Ural-Altaic Peoples Map that was prepared in 1933 by Kitagawa Shikazo, the theoretician of the Tunguzid theory, arguing for the common roots of Tunguz language speakers including Manchus, Koreans, and the Japanese. We understand that Kitagawa's Tunguzid theory now frames the Japanese approach to Turanism. Section one discusses the brief history of the idea of Turan, originally from medieval Persian literature referring to the nomad peoples of Central Asia, and the modern history of Turanism as a transnational cultural-linguistic-

racial imaginary in Hungary and the Pan-Turkist version in the Turkish world. The author briefly discusses also the work of Shiratori Kurakichi, the famous founder of Toyo-shi, or Oriental History in the Department of History in Tokyo Imperial University during the early twentieth century and his Turan oriented historical thesis. Shiratori was the first Japanese historian paying attention to the history of the North Asian nomad peoples such as the Mongols and the Turks arguing that the Japanese had ancient roots in that world rather than the Chinese of East Asia. In this respect Shiratori could be considered as the pioneer of Mongolian and Turkic studies in the Japanese academy.

The Second Section discusses the impact of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Japan and its influence over Japanese Turanism that takes on a distinct anti-Bolshevik turn. The section discusses the Japanese empire's arduous entry into the civil war that ensued in Russia after the Revolution as part of the Allied intervention of Britain, the United States, and France on the side of the White forces against the Communists. Sinan Levent posits the Japanese Siberian Intervention that led to Japan's occupation of the Amur Region east of Lake Baikal between 1918-1922 to be the longest among the other powers as an outcome of the Japanese Imperial Army and young diplomats of the Gaimushō's strong advocacy of Japan's need to advance its hegemony on the Asian mainland as connected to the birth of Japanese Turanism, or rather an opportunity for Imaoka and the small group of actors to establish their presence in Japan. The arrival of Kurbanali and Alimcan Tagan, the establishment of the Tatar refugee community in Japanese occupied territories of China as well as in the home islands (a history that is commonly narrated as part of Japan's Islam Policy or *Kaikyo Seisaku* strategy), is argued to have Turanist coloring as well.

Section Three narrates the history of Japanese Turanism between 1905-1931 through the articles and activities primarily of Imaoka, Barathosi, and Tagan the connection to Dai Ajia Kyokai (Greater Asia Association), the journal *Daido* and the founding of the second Japanese Turan Society, Nihon Tsuran Kyotkai, in 1932.

Section Four exposes the incorporation of Turanism into the ideology of Pan Asianism-Greater Asianist ideology as the author prefers to use the term during the 1930s. The discussion of the so-called Tunguzid theory of Kitagawa

Shikazo, the writer of the famous Turan Map mentioned above, argued the Ural-Altay language speakers of North Asia shared common historic origins. The study reveals General Hayashi Senjuro, who was a major military figure of the Pan-Asianist era and the head of the *Dai Nippon Kaikyo Kyokai* (Greater Japan Islamic League) founded in 1938, also became the head of the new Japan Turan Society as well even though the Turan ideal did not incorporate religion specifically. For this reviewer, this fact reveals the political ideological frame of the Japanese Pan-Asianist perspective dominant among the civilian and military authorities to be typical of twentieth century ideological discourse that manipulates religious identity, linguistic theory, culture, and racial-ethnic identity into geo-political packages that serve world power strategy.

The last Section Five of the book discusses the links between Muharrem Feyzi Togay, a Turkish national of Crimean origins, who was a journalist specializing in reporting on the international situation in the Far East for the major newspaper *Cumhuriyet* (Republic), that was known to reflect the government's views in many matters. Based on Japanese diplomatic telegrams from the Embassy in Turkey to Tokyo, the author shows the close relations between the military attache Kanda Masatane, in the Ankara embassy and Togay, who appears to have written his articles in the paper, using detailed information that was provided from the embassy. Togay generally expressed a pro-Japanese line in discussing the problems between Japan and China. While this section is limited in the case of Togay's relations with the Japanese Embassy, Office of Strategic Services<sup>1</sup> reports have provided lengthy information on Japanese Asianist support of the Turanist movement in Turkey. The role of Kanda in this affair is also worth noting for he is thought to have been instrumental in recruiting Abdurresid Ibrahim for the cause of Japan's Islam Policy that had surfaced, at the time, as a new Asianist gaze toward the Muslims of Asia and the world. The book's episode suggests the topic deserves future investigation. The section ends with a brief discussion of Japan's failed policy in 1933 to instate the exiled Ottoman Prince Abdul Kerim Efendi on the throne of East Turkestan as another puppet regime favorable to Japan, just like the former last emperor of the Qing dynasty Pu Yi, who was instated as the Emperor of Manchukuo, the puppet regime of

Japan that was established in 1932, one year prior.

The book concludes with the interpretation that the Japanese Turanist movement became part of the larger Pan-Asianist currents in Japan, but did not take root, due to incompatibility with the Greater Asianist perspective that placed importance on forming alliances in China and South East Asia, which were irrelevant to the Turanist geo-cultural vision in Central Eurasia Ural-Altay peoples. Levent concludes that Japanese Turanism remained a 'minority ideology'.

The book stands out as an original work on an interesting topic that enlarges our understanding of pre-war Japan's Asianist intellectual discourse and activism, and invites further research of Japan's activities in Central Eurasia and Turkey. The work is also an excellent example of this reviewer's methodological argument that shifting the geo-linguistic frame of Japan's modern history globalizes the existing historiographic understanding of Modern Japan's history. The author has already published articles in English and a Japanese publication on Japan's Eurasian policies on the topic, but the Turkish version appears to be a more substantially detailed account of the original study. The Imaoka articles and materials stand out in the work. The book's strength relies on the sections about Turanism, Imaoka's articles, and the *Dai Ajia Shugi* journals. The section on Muharrem Feyzi Togay is interesting as an episode.

However, the final section on the exiled Ottoman Prince Abdul Kerim Efendi's Japan affair appears to be too short and its connections to Japanese Turanism somehow not convincing. After all, the whole Ottoman Prince project was argued for the Japanese claim to be the 'savior' of Muslims, though the Turanist geo-political agenda might have been in the mind of the plotters. At any rate, we still do not have sufficient information about this enigmatic affair that ended in a tragedy of the Prince's demise in New York after a few years. For this reviewer, however, the study did explain finally why reports on the Abdul Kerim Affair or other episodes related to the Tatar Turkic community in the Gaimusho archives were frequently written by Imaoka. In addition to primary sources such as the Gaimusho documents or Imaoka papers, the author has made use of the available Japanese secondary sources such as that of Inaba Sachiko and Hama Yukiko on the topic. A minor criticism would be that the author would have benefited from the significant

<sup>1</sup> The American intelligence agency that was founded during the Second World War.

studies in English of James William Morley on the Siberian expedition titled *The Japanese Trust into Siberia, 1918*, published in 1957, and *Stephan Tanaka, Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History, 1995* on Shiratori Kurakichi's views. There are a few technical matters – that we as Japan specialists face always: Ichiro Honno should be called Ichiro Motono. But these are minor matters. In sum, the book on Japanese Turanism is a significant work that can be recommended for those who are interested in Japan's Pan-Asianism and connections to Central Eurasian geography. The book brought back personal memories of living in Japan during the early 1960s when sometimes elderly Japanese gentlemen would exclaim that we are brothers from the same origins when they discovered that this reviewer was Turkish and not American (back then all foreigners were by default thought to be Americans). Their exclamation was always a surprise for someone who came from Istanbul and could not figure out just how we were related to the Japanese so far away.

## BOOK REVIEW

Can Öçalan

Hook, Glenn D. and Gavan McCormack. *Japan's Contested Constitution*.  
London: Routledge, 2001. 212 pp. Hardcover.  
ISBN: 9780415240994

Glenn D. Hook and Gavan McCormack's book, *Japan's Contested Constitution* extensively analyzes the Japanese Constitution and the legislations of the government between 1947 and 2000. It is a reaction to the January 2000 Constitutional Research Councils, set up by Japan's national bicameral legislature known as the Diet, to consider, debate and recommend a possible amendment to the constitution. Since constitutions reflect the times of their conception, a potential amendment would mean re-shaping and re-adjusting Japan's identity and political nature. What the book aims to prove is that a gap exists between the constitution and actual practice. It is divided into four essential parts; the first three cover three key points, each of which is a particular subject featured in the Japanese constitution: symbolic emperor, popular sovereignty, state pacifism and national security. The fourth and last part list the four amendment proposals by four different groups.

What makes the Japanese constitution unique is the outlawing of war itself as well as banning the maintenance of forces. Its pacifist, or as the book calls it, antimilitarist tone largely comes from its Article 9 that disables the use of military forces for solving disputes and prevents any act of war mongering. Thus, instead of an establishment of a self-sufficient and fully sovereign military system, Japan's security relies partly on the United States (US) forces. Despite a few relaxations, Japan's defense continues to remain, until today, dependent on exterior military help.

The subject of the first part is the symbolic emperor system. During the American occupation, the Allied Staff favored the continuation of basic institutions, such as the office of the Emperor in Japan, in contrast to their demand of total disintegration in Germany. Hook and McCormack label it as "continuity rather than rupture". The Supreme Commander of the Allied

Powers (SCAP) believed that the belligerency and militarism in Japan was caused by the previous constitution, the Meiji Constitution of 1889, which was claimed to have had flaws that needed certain modifications and removals. The reforms also included the extraction of religious holiness from the Emperor. However, instead of a complete removal of imperial rank, the occupying body partly allowed the Emperor's powers to facilitate the implementation of the upcoming rigid changes. In conclusion, the American administration made several alterations to the existing system instead of completely removing it. In order to affect a smooth revision, the Emperor was tasked to order the change. Thus, his rank and authority were used by the SCAP to prevent a public revolt.

The book remains skeptical towards the legislative practices after the promulgation of the 1947 constitution. The main argument of the book is that the Japanese government has strayed away from its principles, including their treatment of the status of the Emperor. Hence the book is titled as *Japan's Contested Constitution*. The book explains that from 1947 onward, several attempts had been made by the Japanese politicians to bring back the old values based on traditions and modify the current ones. For instance, the symbolic function of the Emperor was reinforced, his cultural and religious role grew stronger and his influence on social life was reconsolidated over several years. Several actions of the Japanese government had also aimed to put the Emperor at the center of politics again. For example, in 1947, the Imperial Household Law was passed. This law freed the Emperor from the burden of taxation. It also gave him the right to vote and immunity from provisions of civil and criminal law. As imperial succession was only given to the male heirs, this was a direct contrast to the Article 24 of the Japanese Constitution, which states the essential equality of the sexes. Another accurate example is *Daijosai* (religious ritual) in 1989 on which the government spent 20 million dollars using public funds for the ritual. Critical thinkers such as Hook and McCormack interpret it as a breach of Article 20, which states that the Japanese government cannot intervene in religious matters. Indeed, they argue that the symbolic Emperor gained so many privileges and so much respect that he became a *genshu* (sovereign in traditional sense), but they also point out that in spite of the recent increase of the Emperor's influence on traditional matters, the idea of making him the head of state lacks public

backing. Additionally, the book states that during the funeral of Hirohito in 1989, there was no noticeable public mourning and Japanese life continued as usual. This proved that it could be very difficult to put the Emperor back into the center of the political structure.

The subject of the second part is the question of popular sovereignty. The 1947 constitution gave sovereignty and basic human rights to the citizens as well as removing the priorities of the elites that were close to the Emperor before the occupation. The Diet became the highest and only organ which could pass and create laws. However, the book claims that, the traditions and norms of the past Meiji Constitution later came to the surface again. Unlike the American values of freedom and equality, Japanese traditions valued loyalty and basic duties of the citizens. In pre-war Japan, traditions favoring imperial rule coupled with a huge bureaucratic force to obey the Emperor's orders. Hook and McCormack argue that the inheritance of the past values as well as the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) dominance from 1955 to 1993 gave little space for public unions and separation of powers to develop. These values were partially adopted. The authors argue that the roots of the LDP and its bureaucratic structure were ingrained so strongly in the political system that the influence of the public became lesser than that intended by the Americans. The ruling elite consisted of the strongly regulated police force and the bureaucrats. Then came the imperial institutions and the politicians. Big businesses had as much influence as the politicians, while public opinion was positioned at the end (bureaucrats 37%, politicians 22%, business 15% and, public opinion 7%).

Hook and McCormack also point out discrimination as a major problem. During the preparation of the 1947 draft, the clause of all people (*issai no shizenjin*) was changed to "all Japanese citizens" (*subete no kokumin*). The book gives the opinions of lead constitutional scholars and historians who have analyzed this issue before, such as Koseki Shoichi and John Dower, who argued that this rendition led to a weakening of non-discrimination within the social system as non-Japanese citizens were left out of bounds. According to Koseki, this affected the Korean residents the most since they had been subjected to discrimination in employment.

The book treats the issue of Okinawa in a separate manner due to the differing perception between central government and the local authority of

Okinawa prefecture towards the constitutional amendment. During WW2, Okinawa suffered intense battles between US and Japanese soldiers. For this reason, it is noted that the respect of the Okinawan people for the 1947 Japanese Constitution and their commitment to Article 9 is much stronger than any other prefecture in Japan.

Hook and McCormack point at the Okinawan problem by giving the example of a situation that happened in late 1990s. The 1998 Okinawan land incident proved that the will of the foreign government was more important than the will of the local residents. In order to construct a helicopter base, the national government ignored the property rights of the local Okinawan landlords with special legislations passed in 1997 and 1999. Central government authority put pressure on the governor, and as a result the governor had to step down from his refusal of the construction of a US helicopter base. But this meant that the Article 95 of the constitution was neglected. This article was a law applicable to a particular region, and it could only be passed with the consent of a majority of voters of the local public entity concerned. What the writers wanted to highlight was that the decentralization concept and the rights of property that were provided by the 1947 Constitution thus could not make the intended progress due to financial issues. Local communities were still connected to the central government in terms of finances and the current system benefits greatly to the central side.

The subject of the third part is Japanese national security. The authors claim that the gap between practice and reality has become much wider due to various constitutional interpretations. For years, the Japanese approach to national security remained unchanged despite several modifications. Japanese Defense Agency did nothing other than initiating the increase of defense expenses. The umbrella of the US already gave enough safety for the Japanese land, as its nuclear defense was forged with the cooperation of the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty.

The book explains that although Japan had sufficiently adapted to the bipolar international system of Cold War period, the end of the Cold War pushed Japan into a new dimension, which promoted the necessity of composing new approaches for its political structure. Public opinion cherished the retainment of Article 9, together with accepting the constitutionality of the SDF (Self-Defense Forces). For those who sought concessions thought

adaptations to the new international order was the most significant factor among several which proved that change was necessary.

Even though Article 9 of the Japanese constitution prevented Japan from using the SDF for overseas deployment, Japan could revoke this by using the Article 51 of the UN (United Nations) charter of 1945, which mentions sovereign powers' right of collective self-defense, and could deploy the SDF after the end of the Gulf War in April 1991. However, its role was limited to logistical support rather than combat.

The book comments that despite the fact that Japan cannot easily change the Article 9 and its self-defense rights, it can still try to gain advantages and benefits from the SDF such as sending them on peace keeping missions under the umbrella of the UN. The Peace Keeping Operations law that was passed in 1992, gave Japan the possibility of sending its SDF force abroad. This force's mission is to provide basic needs and assist countries in conflict. Japan sent SDF forces to countries like Mozambique, Golan Heights and Rwanda.

As the Cold War ended, the question arose regarding what would be the new foreign strategy outlook of Japan. The constitution being unamended for a long time together with the changing conditions in the global order have hastened the debates regarding constitutional amendment.

The book gives the example of the neonationalist groups whose main agenda is to make Japan a 'normal' state again by establishing full sovereignty and autonomy. Since Article 9 blocks Japan from forming an army, the conservatives want to revise Article 9 and remove the constraints that are imposed by this article. Furthermore, according to pro-revisionists, the Security Treaty with America ties Japan to America greatly, thus it needs to be abolished or revised. They believe that if Japan revises Article 9, this will empower the country's autonomy and independence.

However, the idea of a constitutional revision is not necessarily a conservative one only. The leftist bloc also has intentions to revise the constitution and to resolve the contemporary problems, not through altering the existing articles in a reverse fashion, but to reinforce and clarify it further by supplementary legislation.

The subject of the last part of the book is the analysis of the four proposals for the amendment of the Japanese constitution. The book is especially helpful in the sense that it provides a copy of all these proposals, so that the

reader can examine them. The authors point out that two of the four are pro-revisionist and the other two favor supplementary laws.

The first one is the Yomiuri proposal published by the Yomiuri newspaper. As one of the highest circulating newspapers in the world, Yomiuri's view is pro-revisionist. For many years, it has played a big part on the pro-revision campaign and has been playing a central role on revision debates. In their 1994 proposal, they envisioned Japan as a great international player which regained full sovereignty, and in the meantime retained the principles of popular sovereignty and human rights. Hook and McCormack identify the Yomiuri proposal as realistic, defense-oriented and barely pacifistic.

The second proposal is by the Sekai journal, which addressed the same problem mentioned by the Yomiuri newspaper. Published by Iwanami Publishing Company as a monthly journal, Sekai's view can be described as pro-pacifist. According to Hook and McCormack, Sekai's proposal can be defined as idealistic, having utopian tendencies, uncritical of the socialist bloc, as well as having several setbacks in answering the question of Japan's Cold War Defense and how to deal with the constitution in the new era.

The third proposal is the Asahi proposal, which, like the Yomiuri, is a newspaper group that has large amounts of readers in Japan. Like Sekai, its plan was to supplement the constitution's vague points and address Japan's new duty as an international peacekeeper. Asahi proposal shares similarities with the Yomiuri one regarding the international role of Japan and is also similar to the Sekai Proposal.

The last proposal was drafted by the former secretary general of the LDP Ichiro Ozawa, who played a central role in interest politics. He addressed several theoretical and ideological topics. Hook and McCormack describe him as different and rare, based on his coherent and future-oriented style. According to Ozawa, only focusing on economic development made Japan an unnatural state, blocking its path to a greater responsibility and influence as well as from achieving full sovereignty.

What is evident in these four proposals is the aim to readjust Japan and the constitution into the circumstances of the new millennium. As the status quo that has been in effect for five decades became outdated, these media groups and think tanks tried to solve this problem either through supplementary legislation or by a complete overhaul of the constitution. Although they had

differing views, the issues and values that they were discussing were the same: internationalism, pacifism, idealism, democracy and openness. Two of them favored a 'normal' Japan which becomes a great power, and the other two envisioned Japan to become a 'civilian' power. The difference is how they portray their national identity. The book reminds the reader that this distinction had been discussed way earlier in the Meiji period. In fact, compared to the authoritarian, statist model, there had also been a democratic, people centered vision that was planned and expressed in the 1880s, before the promulgation of the Meiji constitution. In the 1920s, it resurfaced with prominent supporters such as Ishibashi Tanzan and Ozaki Yukio. They failed, but their ideas became reality 20 years later. The book states that this is the impasse that had been going on for years in Japan, and asks if Japan should adopt a more realistic approach or stick to the constitution?

Hook and McCormack also state the problems of these four proposals. The revisionists aim to change Article 9 to make the SDF legitimate implies that it is currently illegitimate. Then, they ask what the specific difference between a force with aggressive potential and a defensive one is. As for the Asahi and Sekai proposals, they in fact tend to revise the current conditions through new interpretations just like the revisionists did for fifty years. Leaving the popular sovereignty parts of the constitution might be less radical, however, exchanging SDF with a Territorial Guard would require a lot of interpretations and adjustments to the current practice.

Hook and McCormack also believe that the problem is political and not constitutional. They say that even if the constitution were to be changed, there would be no guarantee that the politicians would strictly adhere to it and give the present gap between reality and practice as a perfect support for their argument. The book states that although the principles of the constitution were weakened, it still harbors its force in Japanese politics. What is important for the writers is the question of what the Japanese citizens say about the revision, since they think that it is up to the Japanese people to decide whether they should revise or reinterpret their constitution.

Overall, the book gives a perfect overview of the Japanese constitution, its origins and the recent political developments throughout the years. It is very informative in the sense that it accurately sheds light on many contemporary issues and is a useful tool to understand the Japanese political system.