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COLONIALISM AND ETHNIC NATIONALISM IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF YANAIHARA TADAO (1893–1961)

史 Kevin M. Doak

Yanaihara Tadao 矢内原忠雄 was an unusual man. A pacifist Christian in wartime Japan, a liberal intellectual in a jingoistic age, and an “Asian minded man” who supported nationalism, he was also a very complex man. Perhaps because of the unusual quality of Yanaihara’s thought and personality, or perhaps because liberalism has lost some of its luster in explicating the complex dynamics of political life in interwar Japan, Yanaihara clearly has not received the attention he deserves in the English literature. Those few authors who have paid substantial attention to Yanaihara have often simply presented a hagiography of him as a Christian pacifist, or emphasized his powerful, but limited, critique of Japanese imperialism.¹ But, until recently, Yanaihara has remained an often cited, but rarely discussed, figure in twentieth-century Japanese intellectual history.

The most important critic who has recently propelled Yanaihara to the forefront of scholarly attention is Asada Kyōji 浅田喬二 (b.1931) who has presented a systematic analysis of Yanaihara, his mentor Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稲造 (1862–1933) and his rivals, Izumi Tetsu 泉哲 (1873–1943) and Hosokawa Karoku 細川嘉六 (1888–1962). Asada has harsh words for earlier critics like Yanai Katsumi 楊井克巳 (1903–) who merely praised Yanaihara, even while failing to grasp how Yanaihara’s colonial theory underemphasizes the “problem of the ethnic nation, which is the most important issue in colonial studies.”² By this, Asada means that Yanaihara’s emphasis on the socio-economic aspects of colonization (‘substantive colonization’) downplayed the political needs for immediate ethnic national independence in the colonies in favor of a gradual approach to de-colonization.³ Yanaihara’s rejection of a state-centered approach and his turn instead toward the role of the ethnic nation in his writings on colonization and ethnic nationalism have contributed both to praise for him as an international pacifist and to his vilification by Marxists and others who find his downplaying of the capitalist

¹ Examples of the former include Fujita Wakao, “Yanaihara Tadao: disciple of Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō,” in *Pacifism in Japan: the Christian and socialist tradition*, ed. Nobuya Bamba and John F. Howes (New York: University of British Columbia Press, 1978), pp.199–219; Ubukata Naokichi, “Profile of an Asian minded man 1: Tadao Yanaihara—his colonial studies and religious faith,” in *The Developing Economies* (March 1966): 90–105. Examples of the latter include Mitani Taichirō, “Kokusai kankyō no hendō to Nihon no chishikijin” [Japanese intellectuals and the changing international environment], in *Taishō demokurashii ron* [Essays on Taisho democracy] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1974), pp.230–74; an English version is available as “Changes in Japan’s international position and the response of Japanese intellectuals: trends in Japanese studies of Japan’s foreign relations, 1931–1941,” transl. by G. Cameron Hurst in *Pearl Harbor as history: Japanese-American relations 1931–1941*, ed. Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp.575–94. Mark Peattie’s brief treatment of Yanaihara in “A liberal critique of Japanese colonialism: Yanaihara Tadao, 1924–1937,” in *The Japanese colonial empire 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp.114–18, is also in this tradition, as is Asada Kyōji’s “Yanaihara Tadao no shokuminron” [Yanaihara Tadao’s /OVER

/colonial theories], chapter 4 in Asada, *Nihon shokuminchi kenkyū shiron* [On the history of research on Japanese colonies] (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1990), pp.315–518.

² Asada Kyōji, “Yanaihara Tadao no shokuminron,” pp.320–1.

³ Michael Schneider has made an impressive case for translating Yanaihara’s “substantive” colonization (*jissbitsuteki shokuminchika* 実質的植民地化) as “defacto” colonization. See Schneider, “The future of the Japanese colonial empire, 1914–1931” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1996), pp.139–40. To discuss Schneider’s reasons would be to digress too far; suffice it to say that this “substantive” or “defacto” colonization emphasized economic and cultural factors, recognized the importance of migrations of people that tended to transform regions into multi-ethnic groups and contrasted with “formal” colonization (*keisbikiteki shokuminchika* 形式的植民地化) that approach the problem from a state-centered perspective. See also Murakami Katsuhiko, “Yanaihara Tadao ni okeru shokuminron to shokumin seisaku” [Colonial theory and colonial planning in Yanaihara Tadao], in Ōe Shinobu et al., ed., *Iwanami kōzokindai Nihon to shokuminchi: tōgō to shibai no ronri* [Iwanami Lectures: Modern Japan and the colonies, vol.4: The logic of integration and control] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), pp.205–37, at 210–19.

⁴ Murakami Katsuhiko, “Yanaihara Tadao ni okeru shokuminron to shokumin seisaku,” pp.231–3.

⁵ Germaine A. Hoston, “The state, modernity, and the fate of liberalism in prewar Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 51.2 (May 1992): 287–316, at 289.

⁶ Hoston, “The state, modernity, and the fate of liberalism in prewar Japan,” p.305.

state a crucial oversight in his work. And even when, at the end of his life, Yanaihara seemed to find the postwar Japanese state more attractive than ethnic nationalism, the rift between liberals who praised him and Marxists who condemned him (by the 1950s they had discovered ethnic nationalism as an anti-imperialist force) only widened.

Asada is certainly right to suggest that the problem of the ‘ethnic nation’ (*minzoku* 民族) rests at the center of Yanaihara’s thought about colonialism and liberalism. Even more recently, Murakami Katsuhiko 村上勝彦 (b.1942) has drawn on Asada’s suggestion in offering a more nuanced reading of Yanaihara’s colonial theory in which Murakami also suggests that the problem of the ethnic nation holds the key to appreciating the contemporary significance of Yanaihara’s work.⁴ A better understanding of the role of the ethnic nation in Yanaihara’s thought should help re-situate him within the contours of some of the most significant debates of the interwar period and provide further insight into the legacies of Japanese colonization in East Asia today. It should also help clarify what is ‘unusual’ about Yanaihara and what is not. Consequently, in this essay, I will focus on Yanaihara’s formation and use of a concept of the ‘ethnic nation’ as a cardinal feature of his liberalism, and attempt to show that such a focus on the ethnic nation was neither a carryover from traditional Japanese or Asian thought, nor completely inconsistent with the principles of early twentieth-century liberal thought, either in Japan or elsewhere.

Yanaihara was an unusual man, but he was not unique. He drew from a tradition of political thought that has often been described as ‘liberalism’. Theories of political liberalism have often emphasized the individual as the key agent of political action, and this is certainly the case with ‘Taisho liberalism’ which, until recently, has often been misrepresented as a struggle of individualism (*kojinshugi* 個人主義; *jinkakushugi* 人格主義) against the great collectivity of the state. Yet, as Germaine Hoston has convincingly demonstrated, Taisho liberals were more influenced by a tradition of collectivist liberalism than by the individual liberalism of J. S. Mill and Adam Smith. “Japanese liberals,” she notes, “tended to espouse the liberalism of ‘progressive’ English liberals such as T. H. Green, J. A. Hobson, and L. T. Hobhouse.”⁵ As I note below, Hobson’s influence was particularly strong on Yanaihara, providing him with a sense of national community that nevertheless allowed for a rigorous critique of Japanese imperialism in Asia. Like many other liberals in the West, Yanaihara felt that the nation could serve as a healthy foundation for a communitarian-based critique of imperialism. Whether it would do so rested, in the end, on how well liberals could maintain a distinction between the state itself and a more populist ideal of the nation that would serve as the anchor for their progressive views of the future. In this context, Hoston’s belief that Taisho liberals suffered from “a traditional conception of the Japanese collectivity that drew no clear conceptual distinction between the nation and the state”⁶ may be somewhat misleading. Although this may have been true of some Marxists such as Sano Manabu 佐野学 (1892–1953), a distinction between nation and state remained

at the core of Japanese social science even during the war years.⁷ Liberals in interwar Japan like Abe Jirō 阿部次郎 (1883–1959), Ōyama Ikuo 大山郁夫 (1880–1955) and Yanaihara all wrote on the distinction between a concept of the ethnic nation (*minzoku*) and the state (*kokka* 国家), and in favor of the ethnic nation. What is most remarkable about Yanaihara is not his understanding of the state and nation as separate entities, but the timing and context of his arguments. Later than most liberals, Yanaihara proposed theories on the ethnic nation in the 1930s, when even many Marxists had already followed Sano Manabu in equating nation and state under heavy statist pressures to do so. And, somewhat surprisingly, Yanaihara's ethnic-national theories were devised from within the state's own institutions. Yanaihara himself was, after all, a state bureaucrat, a professor at Tokyo Imperial University until 1937 when criticism of his views as unbecoming a state servant forced his resignation from the faculty.

Yanaihara as a Taisho liberal

Rather than attempt to provide a comprehensive theory of liberalism that would establish whether Yanaihara's theories on nation and colonialism were 'pure' liberalism, I will instead attempt to establish guilt by association. The questions I will pose are simply these: did Yanaihara look like a liberal? Did he walk like a liberal? And finally, most importantly, did he talk like a liberal?

Did Yanaihara 'look' like a liberal? That is to say, did Yanaihara's social and class background place him in a framework where one would expect to find liberals? Here I want to stress two characteristics of Yanaihara's social background that support his liberalism: his religious outlook and his class background.

Yanaihara was born the fourth son of a physician in Ehime prefecture in 1893. From early on, it seemed Yanaihara would follow his father in the medical profession, and he enrolled at a prestigious middle school in Kobe. Even at this early stage, one can discern the beginnings of Christian influence on Yanaihara. The principal of his middle school had studied at the Sapporo Agricultural College with the Christians Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 (1861–1930) and Nitobe Inazō and taught the importance of moral precepts such as prudence and self-control at his own school where the young Yanaihara was a staunch defender of the school's principles.⁸ In 1910, Yanaihara followed the precedent of other students from his Kobe middle school and enrolled in the First Higher School in Tokyo, whose principal at the time was Nitobe Inazō. In 1911, only one year after Japan had annexed Korea, Yanaihara joined Uchimura Kanzō's Bible-study class where he was exposed to the English missionary F. A. McKenzie's book, *The Tragedy of Corea*. As Naokichi Ubukata concludes, through such experiences "Yanaihara united his Christian faith with his feelings of affection for colonized peoples and maintained this unity throughout his life."⁹

⁷ Thomas Havens noted the distinction between nation and state in his essay "Frontiers of Japanese social history during WWII," *Shakai kagaku tōkyū* 18 (March 1973): 538–82. In Havens's analysis, the terms are '*kokumin*' (nation) and '*kokka*' (state); while there is no mention of '*minzoku*', it is significant to note that Yanaihara also recognized '*kokumin*' as 'nation' and '*kokka*' as 'state'. Hence, I generally have glossed '*minzoku*' as 'ethnic nation'.

⁸ Fujita, "Yanaihara Tadao: disciple of Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō," p.200.

⁹ Ubukata, "Tadao Yanaihara—his colonial studies and religious faith," p.90.

¹⁰ See Pierre Manent, *An intellectual history of liberalism*, transl. Rebecca Balinski (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). In his foreword, Jerrold Seigel raises the same criticism of Manent's view of Christianity, noting that Manent's history of liberalism overlooks the role of Luther and the Protestant liberal tradition.

¹¹ Bernard Semmel, *The liberal ideal and the demons of empire: theories of imperialism from Adam Smith to Lenin* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p.52.

¹² Sharon Nolte, *Liberalism in modern Japan: Ishibashi Tanzan and his teachers, 1905–1960* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1987), p.5.

¹³ Semmel, *Liberal ideal and the demons of empire*, p.50. Emphasis added.

Yanaihara's Christian faith put him at odds with the prewar Japanese state, whether conceived as a secular state or as a Shintoist one. Yet, this fact alone does not account for the close relationship between his Christianity and liberalism. Although Pierre Manent recently has tried to depict the history of liberalism as one of opposition to the Church,¹⁰ his view may draw too narrowly on the French historical experience. More appropriate to Yanaihara's Christianity are the views of the Irish sociological historian W. E. H. Lecky who, like Yanaihara himself, drew much of his thought from the works of H. T. Buckle. As Bernard Semmel explains, Lecky believed there were "theological consequences" to political economics, the most important of which was that "political economy, with its proof of the virtues of free trade, would contribute powerfully to the final achievement of the Christian goal of universal peace."¹¹ In short, Yanaihara, like Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō, found no contradiction between political liberalism and the Christian faith. Far from contradiction, both liberalism and Christianity suggested new opportunities for individual, social and national re-shaping that offered hope for alleviating some of the harshest consequences of Japan's industrialization.

Yanaihara's religious identity was closely interwoven with his self-consciously middle-class social position. He was clearly a member of the urban, new professional and managerial middle class that Sharon Nolte has identified as "the social basis of Taisho liberalism."¹² Such middle-class liberals in prewar Japan could easily have located themselves within the traditional Japanese debate over the relative merits of *bun* 文 (bureaucracy) versus *bu* 武 (the military). But they need not take recourse to tradition to make their point. In fact, I would argue that their liberalism made it all the more important that they find newer, more progressive sources for the virtues of civilian life. And for these virtues, they often turned (again) to Buckle. As Semmel has put it, Buckle concluded his *History of Civilization in England* by pointing out that:

nations were under the control of either the military classes (as in Russia or Turkey) or the intellectual classes (as in Great Britain or France) ... [yet] even in Britain the military classes continued to possess considerable influence. *The conflict, then, was intranational as well as international.* The result, however, was sure. ... It was the ceaseless march of intellectual progress, which made the triumph of the pacific spirit over militarism a certainty.¹³

I have cited this passage at length because it highlights a number of important points about Yanaihara's liberalism. First, middle-class liberals like Yanaihara could turn to progressive movements and their leaders in the West, rather than traditional Japanese culture, to lend greater legitimacy to their own position *vis-à-vis* the military in Japan. Second, the very assumptions that underlay such an analysis of society suggested that the definition of the nation itself was caught up in debate and division: as Semmel put it, "the conflict was intranational." Buckle surely meant nothing more than the need for a greater civilian role in national affairs. But the seeds of contestation between liberal, middle-class intellectuals and the militarists would later sprout into

a fascinating (and troubling) debate over the national community as either an ethnic nation (*minzoku*) or the state (*kokka*), with many liberals like Yanaihara emphasizing the ethnic nation as a precondition to global peace.

Did Yanaihara ‘walk’ like a liberal in Japan? Here, I will briefly mention the similarity between some of his ideas and those of Yoshino Sakuzō 吉野作造 (1878–1933), Kawai Eijirō 河合栄治郎 (1891–1944), Nanbara Shigeru 南原繁 (1889–1974), and those recognized liberals associated with such groups as the *Tōyō keizai shinpō* 東洋經濟新報 (Oriental Economic News) group. Like these other liberals, Yanaihara supported such goals as universal suffrage, curtailing the growth of the military, freedom of speech, and economic liberalization. Every indication is that his close personal friends and associates were also political liberals. I have already mentioned that he was forced to resign from his university post for his views that the state found offensive.

Further consideration of whether Yanaihara ‘walked’ a life of liberalism should properly await the end of this essay; for now, I would like to note that certain aspects of his thought were not completely compatible with the *●* *Oriental Economic News* group and other more orthodox liberal groups in Japan. Whereas these more orthodox liberals shaped their political theories in the context of the modern state, Yanaihara also drew from Marxist and other non-liberal sources in his theories on nationalism. Given the complexity of these theories on nationalism, I will spend most of the rest of this essay on the last question: did Yanaihara ‘talk’ like a liberal? For the final answer in evaluating the political value of Yanaihara’s thought rests on how his theories on the ethnic nation could be construed as a progressive, liberal concept.

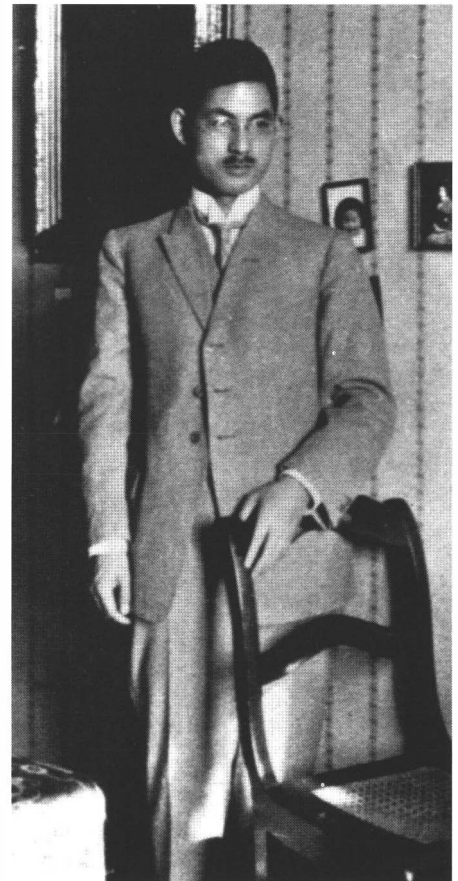
Imperialism, Colonialism and the Problem of Nation

To understand Yanaihara’s concepts of nation and nationalism, it is essential to begin with his theories on imperialism and colonization, since his understanding of the nation as a progressive concept developed out of his colonial studies. In March 1920, only a few years after he graduated from Tokyo Imperial University, Yanaihara returned to his Alma Mater to take up Nitobe Inazō’s Chair in Colonial Policy. In October that year, he went abroad to study colonial policy in Great Britain, Germany and the United States and while overseas laid the foundations for his internationalist approach to the problem of nationalism. When he returned to Japan early in February 1923, his first wife Nishinaga Aiko 西永愛子 was on her death bed, and she in fact passed away on February 26, less than three weeks after Yanaihara had come home. Later that year Yanaihara was promoted to full professor, and in 1924 he married Horii Keiko 堀恵子.

Yanaihara spent the next several years studying the problem of

Figure 1

Yanaihara in his Berlin lodgings, 1922
(Source: Yanai Katsumi, et al., eds, *Yanaihara Tadao zenshū* [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965], vol.28, frontispiece)



¹⁴ Ubukata, "Tadao Yanaihara—his colonial studies and religious faith," p.96.

¹⁵ George W. F. Hallgarten, "The fate of imperialism in this century," in *The Developing Economies* 4.1 (March 1966): 37–54, at 38.

¹⁶ David G. Goodman and Masanori Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese mind: the history and uses of a cultural stereotype* (New York: Free Press, 1995), pp.93–4.

¹⁷ Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance capital: a study of the latest phase of capitalist development*, transl. Morris Watnick and Sam Gordon, with an introduction by Tom Bottomore (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p.366.

colonialism, travelling to Taiwan, Sakhalin and Hokkaido. The Institute for Pacific Relations (IPR) was founded in Hawaii in 1925, and Yanaihara was an early member of the Institute, having joined at the invitation of his mentor Nitobe Inazō. Several research trips to the South Pacific Islands in the early 1930s were followed by his *A Study of South Sea Islands* (1935), a work commissioned by the IPR. By the 1930s, his interests in colonialism had spread beyond a concern with Korea to include China, Manchuria and the South Pacific.¹⁴ Yanaihara visited Manchuria soon after the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and, on his return to Japan, he condemned the Japanese government's policy on Manchuria in his university lectures, which drew from John A. Hobson and Rudolf Hilferding's studies on imperialism.

Given the central role of the nation in Hobson and Hilferding's economic theories, some attention to their key points may be helpful in understanding how Yanaihara approached nationalism from economic studies of the effects of imperialism and colonization. Hobson, a British social critic, was one of the earliest social theorists to offer a full-scale economic criticism of imperialism. He recognized some positive aspects of imperialism, such as the necessary export of capital from the home country to less developed areas. But he was "also one of the first to question the beneficial results of this development for the affected territories which had to refund the loans they were forced to contract at often ruinous conditions, without corresponding advantages for them or their population."¹⁵ Hobson was also a notorious anti-Semite who identified the enemy of the nation, the finance capitalists, with the Jews. Such anti-Semitism did not seem to influence Yanaihara, who saw the 'Jewish ethnic nation' in analogous fashion to the Japanese ethnic nation, and in fact he made many speeches praising the 'Jewish ethnic nation' and their legitimate right to their own state.¹⁶ Instead, what Yanaihara took from Hobson was his theory that the state could be held hostage by a social subgroup whose finance-capital would lead the nation down a ruinous road towards imperialism.

Hobson's theory of financial imperialism found most explicit theoretical development in Rudolf Hilferding's 1910 *Finance Capital*. Hilferding's work was praised by Otto Bauer, another important Austro-Marxist who maintained the legitimacy of ethnic national identity in the Marxist struggle and whose theories on the ethnic nation were often cited by Yanaihara. Hilferding's theory of imperialism provided a close economic analysis of how, with the eventual rise of monopoly pricing and stagnant domestic demand, the laws of supply and demand in capitalist economies eventually required economic expansion to maintain high rates of profit. Thus far, Hilferding's theories diverge little from classic Marxist theory. But his Austro-Marxist colors shine through more clearly when he describes the proletariat's response. "The proletariat avoids the bourgeois dilemma—protectionism or free trade—with a solution of its own; neither protectionism nor free trade, but socialism, the organization of production, the conscious control of the economy not by and for the benefit of capitalist magnates but by and for society as a whole."¹⁷ As

Hilferding describes it, the struggle is economic for political ends: that is, the proletariat is locked into a struggle with the capitalist class for control of the state, and the ultimate victory is not the withering away of the state, but the transformation of “the dictatorship of the magnates of capital” into “the dictatorship of the proletariat.”¹⁸ Hilferding’s theories “were used by Lenin [who] ... tried to show that finance capitalism and imperialism were practically one and the same thing.”¹⁹ Hence, Lenin too would be tempted by the idea of using ethnic nationalist movements in developing countries as a means of attacking imperialism, and thus overthrowing capitalism.

It should be clear that Yanaihara was attracted to Hilferding and the Austro-Marxists for their economic analysis that offered the ethnic nation as a valid position from which to attack a state held hostage by élites. Yanaihara, however, was not a Marxist, and he made eclectic use of Hilferding’s economic theories to argue that Japanese colonial policy in Manchuria was *incompatible with capitalism*, precisely the opposite conclusion that Hilferding drew.²⁰ Like Hilferding, Yanaihara concluded that Japanese colonization was merely increasing Taiwanese nationalist sentiment against the Japanese, and like Hilferding he welcomed that nationalism as the authentic voice of the oppressed people.²¹ But Yanaihara read Hilferding as suggesting that colonization was ‘irrational’, and he maintained, unlike Hilferding, that capitalism could be saved through a rational response to the problem of ethnic nationalist movements. It was, perhaps more than any economic aspect of the ‘finance-capital theorists’, their recognition of the validity of the ethnic nation as a site of resistance that was to have a lasting impact on Yanaihara’s thoughts on nationalism and imperialism.

Economic and political considerations converged in Yanaihara’s critique of Japanese colonization in Manchuria. If he derived from Hilferding the lesson that economic colonization was ‘irrational’, he also concluded from his study of Hobson, and such non-Marxist theoreticians of nationalism as Bernard Joseph and Herbert Adams Gibbons, that the greatest threat to Japanese national interests lay not in competition with the other Great Powers, as advocates for Japanese colonization like Uchida Ryōhei 内田良平 (1874–1937) and Rōyama Masamichi 蠟山政道 (1895–1980) had long maintained. Yanaihara was more concerned that “the threat to Japan’s interests in Manchuria arose not from the economic competition of the powers but rather from the political opposition of the Chinese, which was in itself an expression of Chinese nationalism.”²² Of course, this acceptance of the homogeneous character of a “Chinese nationalism” required that Yanaihara dismiss the possibility that the Manchurian people had their own traditions and culture, distinct from the Chinese, that ought to be expressed in their own nationalism. That is, Yanaihara’s conservative opponents could easily point out that his critique of Japanese colonization in Manchuria merely set one nationalism (‘Chinese’ nationalism) against another (‘Manchu’ nationalism). The key point here is that Yanaihara’s liberal approach to ethnic nationalism emphasized the historical conditions of the formation of an ethnic nation and rejected

¹⁸ Hilferding, *Finance capital*, p.370.

¹⁹ Hallgarten, “The fate of imperialism in this century,” p.38.

²⁰ Iida Kanae argues that the influence of Hilferding and Hobson must be relativized by the influence of other non-Marxist economists such as Adam Smith on Yanaihara’s theories on imperialism. See Iida, “Yanaihara Tadao to Nihon teikokushugi kenkyū” [Yanaihara Tadao and research on Japanese imperialism], in *Mita gakkai zasshi* (Apr. 1982): 35–51, at 38–9. Michael Schneider accepts the influence of Hobson, but also argues for the influence of Richard Cobden on Yanaihara’s thought. “Future of the Japanese colonial empire,” pp.19–26.

²¹ Yanaihara Tadao, *Teikokushugika no Taiwan* [Taiwan under imperialism], reprinted in Yanai Katsumi et al., eds, *Yanaihara Tadao zenshū* [The complete works of Yanaihara Tadao] (hereafter *YTz*), 29 vols (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963–65): 2, pp.177–472, at 327; see also pp.371–88.

²² Mitani, “Changes in Japan’s international position,” p.582.

²³ Yanaihara Tadao, *Manshū mondai* [The Manchurian problem], reprinted in *YTz*, vol.2, p.487; cited by Mitani, “Changes in Japan’s international position,” p.583.

the notion that the ethnic nation was rooted in a natural or primordial sense of kinship that transcended historical and social conditions. Manchurian nationalism was illegitimate because Yanaihara knew it was really an expression of Japanese imperialism, and Japanese imperialism was illegitimate because it placed the interests of Japanese finance-capital above the national interests of both the Chinese and the Japanese people. As Yanaihara concluded, “without the unification of China, Japan will not prosper, and as long as there is anti-Japanese sentiment in China, there will be no good fortune for Japan.”²³

Yanaihara on Nation and State

²⁴ On the problem of these forced conversions (*tenkō*), see Patricia G. Steinhoff, *Tenkō: ideology and societal integration in prewar Japan* (New York: Garland, 1991).

²⁵ A conservative group of ethnic nationalists, the Japan Romantic School, provides a contrasting example to Yanaihara’s liberal ethnic nationalism. Writing at the same time as Yanaihara (the mid-1930s), leading romantics like Yasuda Yojūrō 保田与重郎 (1910–81) began in a similar vein, with a view of the ethnic nation as opposed to the modern state, but ended up collapsing the distinction and supporting the wartime Japanese nation-state. See my *Dreams of difference: the Japan Romantic School and the crisis of modernity* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1994).

²⁶ Herbert Adams Gibbons, *Nationalism and internationalism* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1930), pp.31, 32.

As noted above, Yanaihara was not unique among liberals in embracing ethnic nationalism as a critique of the state. But he stands out especially for the timing of his views. When he presented his major works on ethnic nationalism and the state, the pressures of censorship and intellectual constraints on speech under wartime control were already well underway. From 1931, and especially after the two famous ‘conversions’ by the Marxists Sano Manabu and Nabeyama Sadachika 鍋山貞親 (1901–79) in 1933, Marxists and leftists were increasingly apostatizing from class-based social analyses and progressive positions to support for the state in the notorious phenomenon of ‘*tenkō*’ 転向.²⁴ This rediscovery of the ethnic nation (*minzoku*) reached a height in the mid-1930s, and generally served to provide a cultural foundation for the state.²⁵

In this context, Yanaihara’s views are rather surprising, and his analysis of the relationship between the ethnic nation and the state, as the foundation of his critique of Japanese colonization, deserves further attention. One of Yanaihara’s first sustained attempts at a theory of nationalism was his 1932 essay, “Nationalism and Internationalism.” Perhaps it was coincidental that the title of the essay (“Kokuminshugi to kokusaishugi” 国民主義と国際主義) seems a literal translation of Herbert Adams Gibbons’s book *Nationalism and Internationalism* that was published in 1930, only two years earlier. But it was no mere coincidence. Gibbons does not appear in Yanaihara’s text or endnotes (although his name does appear in Yanaihara’s 1934 essay, “Peace and the Ethnic Nation”). But already one can see the influence of Gibbons’s ideas on the way Yanaihara grasped the relationship between nationalism and internationalism. Gibbons had argued that “the early idea of the word nation was simply the ethnic group” and that “it was natural that democratic principles should first be declared and insisted upon by peoples who had long enjoyed national unity.”²⁶ In essence, Gibbons’s work provided theoretical justification for an interpretation of nationalism that positioned ethnic identity, national autonomy, and international peace along the same political axis.

If there is coincidence in the titles of Yanaihara's and Gibbons's work, there is more direct evidence in this essay of the influence of Marxists, especially Bauer and Karl Kautsky.²⁷ Yanaihara opened the essay by describing the debate between Kautsky, who believed that peace was being maintained by the international cartels that formed as a means of cooperation among imperialist states, and Lenin who rejected that view, maintaining instead that the national character of finance capital would inevitably lead to the collapse of imperialism before any formation of a supra-imperialism could occur on a global level. Whether Yanaihara had grasped the essential difference between Kautsky and Lenin on the question of nationalism, here he saw both Marxists as emphasizing the covert nationalism of the much ballyhooed 'internationalism' of the 1920s, and he remained convinced that the most pressing issue in the aftermath of the Great War was that of nationalism and imperialism, particularly the construction of "small countries" in central and eastern Europe on the basis of the Wilsonian doctrine of "the principle of self-determination of peoples [read: ethnic nations]" (*minzoku jiketsu shugi* 民族自決主義). Yanaihara rejected the idea that "capital has no borders" and argued instead that "capital also has an aspect to it that is inseparable from nationality. To the degree that capital exists in close proximity to the state, it moves with the protection of the state, under the direction of the state, and along with the state."²⁸ The problem, however, was that labor is not as fluid as 'impersonal capital'. Most people stay in their own county, even when the job market shifts overseas. Hence, the economic significance of nationalism lies in trying to establish a balance between labor and capital within a country in order to meet the domestic needs of a population as best as possible. Yanaihara was deeply concerned that a combination of the domestic nature of labor and the free flight of capital would destroy the national economy.²⁹

Given the ability of the state to project national interests abroad as well as to direct capital in a direction destructive for the nation, Yanaihara realized that some further clarification of the relationship between nationalism, the nation, and the state was necessary. He drew from C. J. H. Hayes to define nationalism (*kokuminshugi*) as "a composite of the ethnic nation (*minzoku*), the ethnic nation-state (*minzoku kokka* 民族国家), and ethnic national patriotism (*minzokuteki aikokushin* 民族的愛國心). "Nationalism (*kokuminshugi*)," he pointed out, "is founded on an identical ethnic nation (*dōitsu minzoku* 同一民族), but this does not necessarily mean having the same citizenship (*kokuseki* 国籍)."³⁰ To draw such fine distinctions required a more precise sense of what the nation is and, citing the Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer, he proposed his earliest definition of the nation in the following terms:

The ethnic nation (*minzoku*) is a community of fate, or an organization for cooperative livelihood, based on a community of blood and a community of culture. To the extent that it is a community of blood, it appears to be a natural category, but a community of blood is not *ipso facto* an ethnic nation, nor is it an absolutely necessary condition of the ethnic nation. ... As a

²⁷ On Kautsky see Leszek Kolakowski, *Main currents of marxism: its rise, growth and dissolution*, transl. P. S. Fall, vol.2, *The golden age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 31–60. On Kautsky and Japanese marxism see Germain A. Hoston, *Marxism and the crisis of development in prewar Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), and Peter Duus and Irwin Scheiner, "Socialism, liberalism, and marxism, 1901–1931," in Duus, ed., *The Cambridge history of Japan*, vol.6: *The twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 654–710.

²⁸ Yanaihara, "Kokuminshugi to kokushishugi" [Nationalism and internationalism], *YTz*, vol.18, pp.27–41, at 29.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.29.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.30. The precise definitions of these terms are all highly contested, and many of the pages that follow are devoted to this issue. But it may be helpful to have Yanaihara's original Japanese terms here, when reading this statement.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., pp.30–31.

community of fate, the ethnic nation is thus a product of history. This means it is a social category, and not a natural category. ... In this sense, ... the ethnic nation that lies at the center of the movement we identify today as ethnic nationalism cannot be completely understood by these general stipulations. It presupposes a specific historical stage, and it is impossible to understand the meaning of the modern ethnic nation (*kindaiteki minzoku* 近代的民族) without placing it in this context. That is to say, the ethnic nation of early modern times (*kinsei ni okeru minzoku* 近世における民族), cannot be understood as a community of fate that has reached the stage of capitalist production and exists in a developmental state that is often accompanied by the forms of the state.³¹

There are a number of points worth stressing in this early attempt at defining the ethnic nation. First, Yanaihara adopted a modernist position that the ethnic nation is a product of history rather than nature, and therefore the ethnic nation was always created in line with the demands of its particular age. But he also holds firm to the Austro-Marxist belief that the ethnic nation, a composite of blood and culture, was the foundation for all authentic forms of national identity and for the institution of the modern state as well.

The relationship between the ethnic nation and the state was an essential part of this approach, for it was only by grasping the dynamics of the complex historical relationship between the ethnic nation and state that the true political significance of nationalism, especially in colonized areas, could be understood. Again, let us turn to Yanaihara's own words:

As I argued above, the ethnic nation is a community of fate based on a community of blood and a community of culture, but mainly a community of culture. That concept does not necessarily include statist elements. State sovereignty is not an element of the ethnic nation. [Bernard] Joseph is particularly emphatic on this point. That the essence of the ethnic nation lies in culture and not the state is, I believe, generally not a mistaken view, but one cannot understand actual ethnic nationalism and the ethnic nationalist movement without seeing it in relation to the state. The entire significance of ethnic nationalism (*minzokushugi* 民族主義) can only be understood as a movement for the formation or preservation of the ethnic nation-state (*minzoku kokka*). A clear understanding of this point allows us to call this movement nationalism (*kokuminshugi*). That is, when we speak of nationalism (*kokuminshugi*) we mean ethnic nationstate-ism (*minzoku kokkashugi* 民族国家主義).³²

Such an argument, posed in the early 1930s, was, of course, dangerously close to the arguments of fascists and national socialists. Yanaihara knew the dangers involved and tried hard to distance himself from the nationalist views of the extreme right.

He explicitly rejected the National-Socialism of P. Lüng, arguing that Lüng's concept of the ethnic nation (*Volk*) as a natural category was unacceptable as it was fundamentally a racist one:

Figure 2

Yanaihara as professor at Tokyo Imperial University (Source: Yanai Katsumi, et al., eds, Yanaihara Tadao zenshū [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964, vol.16, frontispiece])



The ethnic nation (*minzoku*) is never formed from one race (*shuzoku* 種族). The social structure of the ethnic nation is formed only with the fusion of many races. That is, the contact and combining of many races forms an ethnic nation. In this way, the ethnic nation itself is a historical product established in the developmental process of human history, and thus the special character and the limits of the ethnic nation are also historically determined.³³

³³ Ibid., p.35.

³⁴ Ibid., p.39.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Yanaihara, "Minzoku to heiwa" [Peace and the ethnic nation], *YTz*, vol.18, pp.42–72, at 43–4.

³⁷ Yanaihara opens the section of his essay, "Minzoku no honshitsu" [The nature of the ethnic nation] with the question "Minzoku to wa nanizo ya?" [What is the ethnic nation?], the exact wording of Masaki Masato's "Minzoku to wa nanizo ya?" in *Shigaku* (Jan. 1921): 148–55, and closely paralleling Ernest Renan's famous essay, "Qu'est-ce que l'unité nationale?" Yanaihara was clearly familiar with Renan's essay, probably through Bernard Joseph's *Nationality: its nature and problems* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1929), and both Yanaihara and Masaki quote William McDougall's *The group mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920) as one of their sources for understanding the meaning of the ethnic nation.

Yanaihara insisted that nationalism and internationalism both be accepted as historical facts, and that neither could be elevated to an absolute position over the other. He concluded (in a manner reminiscent of Buckle) that National Socialists like Lüng who spoke of nationalism as an absolute, natural category, divorced from the reality of international culture and international economics, often simply wished to mobilize nationalism in the support of militarist policies that shifted resources from the interests of the nation and national welfare to those of a narrow circle in the military.

Instead, Yanaihara offered the beginnings of his own characteristic position that both nationalism and internationalism were interrelated, and he insisted that both were often intertwined in everyday human life. True internationalism means that "one's own nation (*kokumin* 国民) can only exist in relation to other nations, that the interests and culture of each nation can only be maintained through a mutual respect for the other nation's interests and culture."³⁴ Moreover, in language that seems to foreshadow more recent celebrations of 'alterity', he chastised fellow liberals for overlooking how the nation is a precondition for the individual:

Those who recognize the dignity of the individual, must recognize the dignity of the Other in the same way that they recognize their own dignity. In the interconnectedness of Self and Other, the dignity of the Self as well as the dignity of the Other is given greater support and development.³⁵

But note the ultimate conflation of individual and nation in the passage above. Yanaihara, like Francis Fukuyama in his premature eulogy to History, approached the problem of individualism and nationalism from the question of dignity and honor, and the conclusion he drew, especially as he looked out over the colonized nations of East Asia, was that individual dignity is premised on national dignity, and national dignity means independence as an ethnic people as well as within the borders of a secure state.

Yanaihara's reflections on the problem of nationalism increasingly made it clear that the concept of ethnicity was the critical element in constructions of national identity. The problem of nationalism had been largely misunderstood, he argued, due to "an imprecise usage of terms like 'nation' (*kokumin*) and 'ethnic nation' (*minzoku*) and the fact that current movements that are considered ethnic nationalism (*minzokushugi*) comprise both ethnic and statist elements."³⁶ "What is an ethnic nation (*minzoku*)?" Yanaihara asked, echoing both Ernest Renan and Masaki Masato 間崎万里 (1888–?).³⁷ Like Renan, Yanaihara believed that racial purity was a fiction. But unlike Renan, Yanaihara sought to demonstrate that ethnic identity was the foundation for the modern sense of nation.

³⁸ Yanaihara, "Minzoku to heiwa," p.44.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.44–5.

⁴⁰ Yanaihara's glosses are highly suggestive and some might be included here: *dokuritsu kokka* 独立国家 (state); *kokumin* (Staatsvolk); *kokuseki* (citizenship). Yanaihara also translates nationality as *kokuminsei* 国民性 when referring to the people who constitute a state (in "the English usage") and as *minzoku* or *minzokusei* 民族性 when referring to the concept of nation or nationality in a more purely theoretical sense, as in the passage from Joseph cited below. More to the point, he never confuses *minzoku* with 'race', for which he uses either *shuzoku* or, more often, *jinsbu* 人種.

⁴¹ Yanaihara, "Minzoku to heiwa," p.45.

⁴² G. M. Stratton, *Social psychology of international conduct* (1929) p.69; cited by Yanaihara, "Minzoku to heiwa," p.45.

⁴³ Joseph, *Nationality: its nature and problems*, pp.308–9, cited by Yanaihara, "Minzoku to heiwa," p.47. I have consulted Joseph's original text and am struck by how accurately Yanaihara translated the passage.

From the outset, Yanaihara rejected the usage of ethnic nationality (*minzoku*) in such overreaching descriptions as "the Asian ethnic nation" or "the Latin ethnic nation," as promoted by rightist theorists like Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛 (1871–1902) and Uchida Ryōhei. Such (mis)applications of the term simply ignored the nationalist realities in East Asia and merely glossed over nationality in favor of what appeared as simply a quasi-racial worldview. Only "convenience" could account for the description by outsiders of the people in Micronesia as an "ethnic nation" (*minzoku*), since they were still "uncivilized" and "far from escaping their natural state of being."³⁸ And even those peoples in Asia who had left the state of nature and formed their own ethnic nations did not always have the same relationship between their ethnic status and their own state. Both the Koreans and the Japanese were "ethnic nations," Yanaihara noted, but the Koreans were Japanese nationals (*Nibon kokumin* 日本国民), thus reminding us once again that "the ethnic nation (*minzoku*) and the state (*kokka*) are not the same thing."³⁹

Yanaihara made it explicit that, while *minzoku* should not be equated with the state, nor should it be considered as an equivalent of 'race'. Drawing from contemporary Western theories on nationalism, he focussed on the ambivalent usage of 'nation' and 'nationality' and in doing so supplied glosses in English and German that highlight his interpretation of *minzoku* as 'nation' and not as 'race'.⁴⁰ The German writer H. Schnee, he noted, maintained that Germans understand the 'Nation' as a group of people bound together by race, language and customs, with no relation to the state's borders, while the French and English tend to use the word 'nation' to mean the people who constitute a state.⁴¹ Yet, even among the English writers the conceptual distinction between nation and state remained, as revealed by G. M. Stratton's argument that "the 'Nation' was a relatively large group of people actually organized as an independent state (*dokuritsu kokka*)."⁴² In the end, Yanaihara sided more with the English view, albeit with a greater consciousness that nation and state were theoretically distinct, and he cited this lengthy passage from Joseph as one of the best definitions of ethnic nationality (*minzoku*):

Nationality (*minzoku*) as a quality is the subjective corporate sentiment permanently present in and giving a sense of distinctive unity to the majority of the members of a particular civilized section of humanity, which at the same time objectively constitutes a distinct group by virtue of possessing certain collective attributes peculiar to it such as homeland, language, religion, history, culture or traditions. Nationality (*minzoku*) as a concrete designation denotes a group possessed of the quality of nationality (*minzokusei*) as so defined.⁴³

Comparing Yanaihara's choice of words with Joseph's suggests that, if anything, Yanaihara was even more precise with his language. It would make more sense to suggest that 'the ethnic nation' (*minzoku*) denotes a group possessed of 'ethnic nationality' (*minzokusei*), and at any rate, Yanaihara did not consider the distinction between the ethnic nation and ethnic nationality to be a substantive one. The important point, Yanaihara stressed, was to grasp

the problem of the ethnic nation as that of a subjective perception of group identity that was not merely a natural extension of biological factors (although it might include elements of these).

The political value of nation as a subjective perception of group identity feeling lay in its potential as a counterweight to the spread of imperialism. Yanaihara rejected the interpretation of ethnic nationalism offered by A. Salz (and interestingly enough, that of many commentators on interwar Japan) that modern imperialism was a natural outgrowth of ethnic nationalism.⁴⁴ Instead, Yanaihara argued that “ethnic nationalism insists on one ethnic nation in each state and one state for each ethnic nation (*ichi minzoku ichi kokka, ichi kokka ichi minzoku* 一民族—国家, 一国家—民族), whereas imperialism insists on the domination of other ethnic nations: the two are completely different in nature.”⁴⁵ Of course, Yanaihara recognized that in some cases imperialism was indeed a projection of power abroad by an ethnic nation-state. The political lessons of ethnic nationalism were ultimately ambivalent ones. Like Stalin, who also proposed using ethnic nationalist movements as a tool to defeat capitalist imperialism, Yanaihara believed that ethnic nationalism was a morally and politically neutral phenomenon: what determined whether ethnic nationalism would yield progressive or reactionary results was simply the ‘guiding spirit’ behind such movements.⁴⁶

Given Yanaihara’s belief that the people constituted the nation and that the fate of ethnic nationalism was largely determined by the spirit of the people who supported it, he could not remain content to address only the intellectuals and academics who read his essays in scholarly journals. He made many public speeches, but his tour throughout central and western Japan in late August to early September 1937 was a particularly important

⁴⁴ Yanaihara’s citation from A. Salz, *Das Wesen des Imperialismus* (1931) can be found in “Minzoku to heiwa,” p.57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.69.

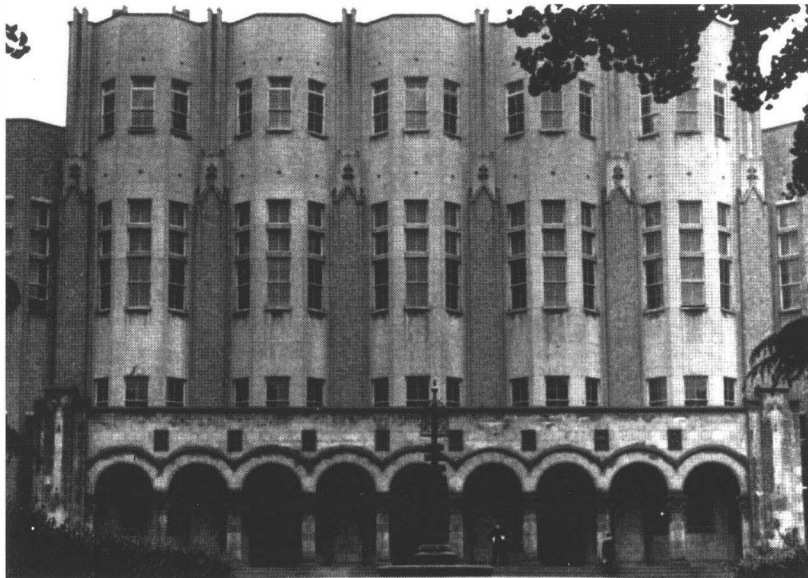


Figure 3

Main entrance, Tokyo Imperial University Library (Source: Kodama Kōta, ed., Zusetsu Nihon bunkashi taikei, vol.12: Taishō Shōwa jidai [Tokyo: Shogakukan, Inc., 1958], p.166, no.356)

⁴⁷ On the Japanese state's reaction to those who sought to challenge it from a position of ethnic nationalism, see my "Nationalism as dialectics: ethnicity, moralism, and the state in early twentieth-century Japan," in James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo, eds, *Rude awakenings. Zen, the Kyoto School and the question of nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), pp.174–96.

⁴⁸ Yanaihara, "Minzoku to kokka," *Yŷz* vol.18, pp.273–354, at 278–9. Emphasis added.

⁴⁹ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: the quest for understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) p.94.

⁵⁰ Yanaihara, "Minzoku to kokka," p.279.

one, as he emphasized in his talks that ethnic nationalism was not always supportive of the state, that the state should be held to high, moral ideals, and that nationalism was ultimately compatible with pacificism. Police surveillance of Yanaihara increased in the weeks following his speaking tour, and within months criticism that Yanaihara was a pacifist and unfit for his position at Tokyo Imperial University resulted in his forced resignation from the university.

What had Yanaihara said? The content of his remarks had changed little from his initial writings on the problem of ethnic nationalism five years earlier. But Yanaihara had chosen to address a large public audience in more easily understood language just when the Japanese state was becoming increasingly concerned with protecting the national polity (*kokutai* 国体) from those who sought to change the nation.⁴⁷ The lectures he gave for the East Chikuma Educational Association of Nagano prefecture, from August 31 to September 2, 1937, are particularly revealing. Entitled "The Ethnic Nation and the State," the lectures stressed in clear language the differences between the two, and between the ethnic nation and such other collective identities as race, language and religious groups, and the political nation (*kokumin*).

Yanaihara began with an explanation of how race and ethnic nation are different, an important point since even today *minzoku* is so often translated as 'race' in English and since Yanaihara's explanation shows a remarkably sophisticated grasp of what nationalism is:

Race (*jinsbu*) is a classification based on the physical characteristics of human beings. But the ethnic nation (*minzoku*) is not such a concept. When we speak of the ethnic nation, we are thinking in a manner far removed from such concerns as the color of skin or the shape of a nose. *The word 'minzoku' is a translation of the Western word 'Nation'*, but this word 'Nation' has its roots in the Latin word *Natio*, and the word '*Natio*' means 'to come into life' or 'to be born'. At first, this word '*Natio*' was used to mean the classification of humanity by physical characteristics, that is, race. It signified where you were born. But gradually in time the range of usage of this word *Nation*, *that is, minzoku*, changed, and now race and nation are not the same concept.⁴⁸

It is interesting to note that, in more recent years, Walker Connor has noted the same etymology of 'nation' in the Latin verb *nasci*, 'to be born'.⁴⁹ And like Connor, Yanaihara tried to clarify the difference between the ethnic nation and race by suggesting how the two concepts overlap in actual historical cases. With unusual courage for his time, Yanaihara addressed the specific case of Japan, debunking the official ideology of a monoracial Japanese people with its origins in the Yamato race, arguing instead that "the racial composition of the Sun-Goddess Race is complex: some people claim it is a Malay lineage, and others insist it is a Mongol lineage, but it is probably a combination of both the Malay and Mongol peoples. The Japanese ethnic nation as it exists today also has admixtures of blood from Han Chinese and Koreans."⁵⁰ Yanaihara had not completely discarded racial categories, but he was not willing to accept the idea of racial purity as a meaningful concept in discussing the political realities of national life.

As the block citation above reveals, Yanaihara considered '*minzoku*' to be a direct translation of the English word 'nation'. But it is clear, especially in light of Connor's work on 'ethnonationalism', that this concept of the nation is fundamentally an ethnic one. The need for an 'ethnic' modification of this concept of nation is supported by Yanaihara's discussion of the difference between '*minzoku*' and '*kokumin*' as translations of nation:

Next, the concept of '*kokumin*' is also one that frequently is confused with the ethnic-nation (*minzoku*) although it means something else. '*Kokumin*' means the people who constitute the state (*kokka*). This is a concept related to the ethnic-nation (*minzoku*), but is not at all identical to it. The Kokusai Renmei 国際連盟 is called 'The League of Nations' in English. In reality it is a league of states, but after the World War the belief that a state's foundation lies in the nation (*kokumin*) was quite popular, and they selected the word 'nation' in a conscious effort to avoid the word 'state'. At any rate, it is not a league of ethnic-nations. Thus, the word 'nation' is used both in the sense of ethnic-nations (*minzoku*), and in the sense of the people who constitute the state, that is, the nation (*kokumin*). In some cases, it is also used to mean the state. Even in Japan there are instances when the ethnic-nation and the nation are used interchangeably. But the ethnic-nation and the nation are not the same.⁵¹

Yanaihara further emphasized the difference between the ethnic-nation (*minzoku*) and the nation (*kokumin*) by pointing to the example of the German ethnic-nation which is divided into several states: the German state, the Austrian state, and the Swiss state. In all these cases, the German ethnic-nation is spread out over several states and the people within those states are of German, Austrian or Swiss nationality. Yanaihara noted that while there is such a thing as a Swiss nationality, there is no Swiss ethnic nation.⁵²

Having once again stressed the separate natures of the ethnic-nation and the state, Yanaihara turned to the problem of how the state relates to the ethnic-nation. A state required territory, people and sovereignty, Yanaihara admitted, but none of these characteristics were free from complications. He demonstrated the unsettled nature of territory using the daring example of Manchuria, pointing out that while Manchuria at the time was the territory of the state of Manchukuo, Japan governed that territory under a lease agreement as if the land were its own.⁵³ In addition, a state must have 'people' (*jinmin* 人民), but the 'people' should not be equated with the ethnic-nation, the core of the state, since the people as the subject of different states can be both broader than the ethnic-nation (as in the case of Imperial Japan) and narrower than all members of the ethnic-nation (as in the case of Weimar Germany).⁵⁴ And on the issue of sovereignty of the state, Yanaihara rejected a pluralistic view of the state as one interest group among many, arguing instead that the state represented a social totality (although not the only social totality) possessed of formal organization. "An organized social totality is what we mean by the state," Yanaihara concluded. "Its organization is carried out through sovereignty, that is, the authority of the state."⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid., pp.279–80.

⁵² Ibid., pp.280–81.

⁵³ Ibid., p.304.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.305.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.309.

⁵⁶ Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, p.98.

⁵⁷ Yanaihara, "Minzoku to kokka," p.315.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.324.

This is a remarkable argument, not only for its clear distinction between nation and state, but for its courageous attack on the official position in wartime Japan that there was no difference between the ethnic-nation and the state. Yanaihara was walking a delicate line, especially given the increasing pressure within Japan to equate the nation and the state. As Walker Connor has noted, "it is difficult to pinpoint the origin of the tendency to equate nationalism with loyalty to the state ... [but] it indubitably followed and flowed from the tendency to equate state and nation. It also unquestionably received a strong impetus from the great body of literature occasioned by the growth of militant nationalism in German and Japan during the 1930s and early 1940s."⁵⁶ Yanaihara argued that the rise of the state was neither the result of conquest of other ethnic nations, nor of social contract. Instead, he maintained that states arise when an ethnic nation develops from a community of blood-ties to an ethnic nation that is based on considerations of land use, and the state is their instrument for negotiating land use. In the end, he concluded that, between "the formation of the ethnic nation or the formation of the state, it is the formation of the ethnic nation that is more fundamental. The state is the ethnic nation's organization."⁵⁷

Having demonstrated that the ethnic nation was the foundation of the state and that the state was the ethnic-nation's formal organization that carries power and authority, Yanaihara then turned to the purpose of the state. The "ideals of the state" was both a theme of Yanaihara's public lectures in Nagano and the title of an essay that he published in *Chūō kōron* 中央公論 in September 1937. Yanaihara rejected both the theory that the state was

exploitative by nature (Marxism) and the theory that the state was moral by nature (Hegelianism). He pointed out that Hegelian moral theories inevitably fail to demonstrate what the content of morality is. For Yanaihara, morality was a social, not a natural, phenomenon and had to be guarded carefully. The content of morality that the state should uphold was implicit in Yanaihara's belief that the state should organize society around the goals of social justice, by which he meant the ability of all citizens, weak and strong, young and old, to prosper and develop their own talents.⁵⁸ But domestic social justice was as connected to justice abroad as nationalism was intertwined with internationalism. To be considered truly moral, the state also must be committed to what Yanaihara called 'international justice' (*kokusai seigi* 国際正義):

International justice may be thought of in the same way as social justice. That is, international justice is best captured in the principle of

Figure 4

Yanaihara in his office at Tokyo Imperial University, December 1937, shortly before he was forced to resign his post (Source: Yanai Katsumi, et al., eds, Yanaihara Tadao zenshū [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963], vol.4, frontispiece)



allowing another country to exist while existing in one's own country, or existing in one's own country while allowing another country to exist. The opposite is the attitude of destroying or sacrificing another country for the interests or existence of oneself.⁵⁹

Yanaihara's belief that international justice was not only compatible with nationalism but necessitated by national consciousness was based on his belief that national society and international society were a mutually-defining dyadic pair. One could only live in peace at home when peace prevailed abroad, or in more recent parlance, justice was defined as 'live and let live'. Whatever one may think of the pragmatic possibilities of this concept of justice, there was no mistaking that 'live and let live' was not very compatible with the actual Japanese state's imperialism in East Asia at the time. Equally disturbing to the increasingly 'moral' Japanese state was Yanaihara's argument that the state was not moral by nature, but only by effect, and its moral effects had to be measured individually, both at home and abroad.

By Way of Conclusion: the Challenges of Nationalism

Within a month after publicly offering these reflections on ethnic nationalism and the ideal state, Yanaihara came under heavy attack. Led by Keio University professor Minoda Muneki 蓑田胸喜 (1894–1946), his critics decried him for being a pacifist, an enemy of the Imperial House, and an anticolonialist. Guilty of at least two of the three charges (whether his ethnic nationalism made him an enemy of the Imperial House is at least worthy of debate), Yanaihara was forced to resign his chair at Tokyo Imperial University. Subsequently, his books were banned and his publisher arrested.

For the duration of the war, Yanaihara turned to missionary activities and published his own Christian newsletter, *Kashin* 嘉信 (The Good News), as an outlet for his irrepressible energies. After the war and the destruction of the Japanese empire, Yanaihara gradually came to conclude that the postwar state was closer to his ideal pacifist state and, indeed, the postwar years did witness the liberation of many ethnic nation-states from among Japan's former colonial territories. Yanaihara, for his part, returned to Tokyo University, becoming president of the university in 1951 and retiring in 1957 but, significantly, not before touring Okinawa which at the time was still a 'colony' of the United States. He translated Hobson's *Imperialism* while Japan was under Allied occupation, and he continued publishing and lecturing on ethnic-nationalist independence movements as active forces supporting world peace.⁶⁰ Ethnic nationalism, and the collectivist liberalism of Hobson, remained close to Yanaihara's intellectual activities for much of the rest of his life.

From the early 1950s, Yanaihara began to apply his theories on ethnic nationalism, originally developed as a tool for the understanding of Japanese colonialism in East Asia, in a fascinating way to post-imperial Japan. In his

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.325.

⁶⁰ Yanaihara returned to the problem of ethnic nationalism as early as 1949 when he published an article "Minzoku no dokuritsu to sekai no heiwa" [Ethnic national independence and world peace], in the *Dōmei Jihō* (August) and gave a lecture at Hiroshima Women's University on the same topic a few months later. His translation of Hobson's *Imperialism* was published by Iwanami Shoten from 1951 to 1952, and he continued publishing on ethnic nationalism in such journals as *Sekai* and *Chūō kōron* throughout the postwar period until shortly before his death in 1961.

⁶¹ *YTz*, vol.18, pp.403–4.

⁶² Yanaihara, “Sōsetsu” [An overview], in *Gendai Nihon sbōshi* [A brief history of contemporary Japan], reprinted in *YTz*, vol.18, p.402.

⁶³ *YTz*, vol.18, pp.403–4, 427, 445.

⁶⁴ Yanaihara, “Minzoku to heiwa” [Peace and the ethnic nation], *Chūō kōron* (Jan. 1954); reprinted in *YTz*, vol.20, pp.309–22, at 309–10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.312.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.311.

extensive introduction to *A Brief History of Contemporary Japan* (1952), he presented a synoptic overview of Japanese history that centered on the rise and development of the Japanese people as an ethnic nation (*minzoku*). Consistent with the liberal ethnic nationalism that he had espoused during the 1930s, he maintained that the Japanese were formed into an ethnic nation by the force of history and shared experiences, rather than by strictly racial factors. He specifically drew from Ōkuma Shigenobu 大熊重信 (1838–1922), in whom Yanaihara found a vision of Japan as a peaceful nation that was subsequently derailed by the Russo-Japanese War and Japan’s failed experiment with imperialism.⁶¹ Postwar Japan, Yanaihara felt, had an opportunity to return to Ōkuma’s vision of Japan as a peaceful, populist nation. Yanaihara cited from Ōkuma’s *Kaikoku gojūnenshi* 開国五十年史 (Fifty Years of New Japan) to argue that Japan’s incorporation of the best of Western culture not only preserved her national independence in the years after Commodore Perry’s arrival in 1853, but that in fact “the combination of this receptive attitude of curiosity and openness toward foreign culture with this positivist, progressive spirit that all the good in foreign cultures could be absorbed and made one’s own defined the Japanese ethnic-nation.”⁶² Ōkuma’s history was important to Yanaihara, both because he saw Ōkuma as a spokesman for an Anglo-American-style liberalism that competed with a German-inspired statism in modern Japan and because Anglo-American influence in the early 1950s signified the progressivism Yanaihara associated with American influence in postwar Japan.⁶³

In 1954 Yanaihara reflected on his wartime book *Peace and the Ethnic Nation* in an essay with the same title published in *Chūō kōron*. In spite of the changes in postwar Japan, Yanaihara held steadfastly to his earlier view that ethnic nationalism and peace were deeply interconnected.⁶⁴ But in this article, he outlined how ethnic nationalism would serve the interests of peace in the postwar world. Yanaihara argued that peace in the postwar world could not be secured through some unlikely world state or world federation, but only through “building a democratic state that makes internationalism and international peace a matter of national policy.”⁶⁵ Japan should follow neither the Soviet camp nor the American camp, but hew its own distinctive path of contributing to global peace without rearming. A truly democratic postwar Japan meant pursuing an autonomous path toward peaceful coexistence, in spite of American pressures to rearm in light of the Cold War. Such pacifist views were not peculiar to Yanaihara during the mid-1950s; what was unusual was his conclusion that “to be democratically united both internationally and domestically is what we may call a characteristic of ethnic nationalism.”⁶⁶

A few years later, Yanaihara offered his last formal assessment of the value of ethnic nationalism in contributing towards global peace. In a 1957 essay entitled “The Ethnic Nation and the World,” Yanaihara contrasted the Third World’s position with that of the United States and the Soviet Union, arguing that what united the nations of the Third World was a commitment to ethnic

nationality, not an imperialism based on either capitalism or class.⁶⁷ Yanaihara found such ethnic-nationalist movements in Northern Africa, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, but not specifically in Japan. Instead, his short essay merely ended by raising the question of where Japan would stand in the changing world of capitalist imperialism, Soviet imperialism and Third World ethnic nationalism. While Yanaihara did not assert that Japan was a member of the Third World, he pleaded that Japan must somehow find a means of establishing itself as a peaceful nation against the Cold War partitioning of the international community into rival camps.⁶⁸

But in his lengthy introduction to *A Brief History of Postwar Japan*, published in 1958, reference to the 'ethnic-nation' (*minzoku*) had all but disappeared, its place taken by 'the democratic people' (*minshu* 民主) and the 'political nation' (*kokumin*). Yanaihara noted that some people would draw a parallel between Manchukuo and Occupied Japan as nations that had "experienced rule by a different ethnic nation," but he concluded the comparison was flawed since "in general, the American management of Japan was carried out with good intentions, and succeeded in earning the trust of the Japanese political nation."⁶⁹ The problem facing Japan in the late 1950s was still the completion of 'democratization' (*minshuka* 民主化), a process exacerbated by the impact of the Korean War on Japan. The U.S. Occupation had put into place the basic foundations of a democratic, peaceful nation (*kokumin*), and Yanaihara concluded that the task at hand was the need to protect this fragile democracy from communists who would attempt to play on Japanese nationalist sentiments to turn Japan away from democracy. It is hard to evaluate precisely the significance of Yanaihara's turn from ethnic nationalism at this late point in his career, but it may have stemmed from his concern that ethnic nationalism was become politicized by extremists on both ends of the political spectrum: communists who found in ethnic nationalism a mechanism for anti-Americanism, and conservatives who saw in that same doctrine an expression of resentment against the American occupation of Japan. For whatever reason, Yanaihara seems to have concluded late in his life that ethnic nationalism was no longer the best means of ensuring a peaceful, liberal, democratic, nationalist temper in postwar Japan.

Throughout his life, Yanaihara looked, walked and talked like a liberal. But his brand of liberalism stressed that community and nation could be constructed as idealized places from which to criticize the excesses of the modern Japanese state, without having to resort to a conservative view of traditional culture or racial identity as the basis for that critique. There was nothing natural, or naturalized, about Yanaihara's concept of the nation. Yanaihara drew explicitly from Western theorists to emphasize the point: even the ethnic nation, the assumed framework for the most powerful seductions of tradition and culture, was always understood to be as artificial a construct as the modern state. Yet, for Yanaihara, unlike most conservatives and many Marxists, the artificiality and foreignness of the 'ethnic nation' itself

⁶⁷ Yanaihara, "Sekai to minzoku" [Ethnic nations and the world], *Sekai* (Jan. 1957); reprinted in *YTz*, vol.20, pp.499–503, at 499.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.503. The term Yanaihara uses here for 'nation' is *kokumin*.

⁶⁹ Yanaihara, "Sōsetsu" [An overview], in *Sengo Nihon shōshi* [A brief history of postwar Japan], reprinted in *YTz*, vol.18, pp.455–517, at 481.

did not compromise the effectiveness of ethnic nationalism as a valid force for liberal change. Like all nationalists, he may have underestimated the degree of political oppression and conformism that takes place within collectivized communities, but towards the end of his life he seems to have sensed these problems and the limitations of ethnic nationalism as a tool of liberal democracy. Whatever limitations Yanaihara may have found in ethnic nationalism late in his career, his most significant contribution to the study of cultures and nations was defined by his earlier and better-known work. By emphasizing the contingent nature of even such putatively natural identities as the ethnic nation as factors in a liberal reform of the nation, Yanaihara made a significant contribution to our understanding of the possibilities and limitations of nationalism and ethnicity in liberal democratic societies.

As we come to the close of the twentieth century, from Bosnia to Belfast and from Korea to Kurdistan, ethnic nationalism is on the rise again. Japan is no longer able to avoid entanglement in international political affairs, making the problems posed by ethnic nationalism and the ways it has been understood in Japan all the more important. And with signs of resurgent nationalism appearing in Japan as well, it seems that a better grasp of the approaches leading Japanese political theorists have made towards nationalism, particularly within the liberal tradition, is incumbent on us all. Liberals often have stressed that the national community is a social contract centered around the state, an 'imagined community' created by people for human needs and not a natural expression of blood and soil. Such a view of the state as artificial has often seemed more congruent with the liberalism of Montesquieu or Locke than with the claims of the organic theories of ethnic nationalism. But as Yanaihara's work suggests, liberals need not take ethnic nationalists' claims of natural identities based on primordial traditions at face value. Rather, as Yanaihara's writings reveal, ethnic nationalism was (and is) a very modern problem, even as it attempts to project itself backwards, beyond its very recent origins to the murky beginnings of time.

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