

**Curriculum Development on Africa and Asia for Community Colleges  
Grant Materials Submission: August 2016  
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Primary Source Analysis

*Datsu-a-ron* ("Good-Bye Asia")

Based upon the reading provided, please answer the questions below. Be sure to write in your OWN WORDS, as well as use examples from the source. Also, take into account details and specifics from outside readings, as well as class discussions.

1. Should Japan fight against Western influences? Why or why not?
2. If Japan had not modernized, what would have happened to the country?
3. Giving some examples, why is the author critical of China and Korea?
4. According to Fukuzawa, is Asia unified or divided? Why?
5. How can you translate "datsu-a"? In the context of the writing, what does it mean?
6. How is this article a reflection of the Meiji Restoration?

**Fukuzawa Yukichi (1885)**

現在、西洋人の地球規模での行動の迅速さには目を見張るものがあるが、ただこれは科学技術革命の結果である蒸気機関を利用しているにすぎず、人間精神において何か急激な進歩が起こったわけではない。したがって、西洋列強の東洋侵略に対してこれを防ごうと思えば、まずは精神的な覚悟を固めるだけで充分である。西洋人も同じ人間なのだ。とはいえ西洋に起こった科学技術革命という現実を忘れてはならない。国家の独立のためには、科学技術革命の波に進んで身を投じ、その利益だけでなく不利益までも受け入れる他はない。これは近代文明社会で生き残るための必須条件である。

Transportation has become so convenient these days that once the wind of Western civilization blows to the East, every blade of grass and every tree in the East follow what the Western wind brings. Ancient Westerners and present-day Westerners are from the same stock and are not much different from one another. The ancient ones moved slowly, but their contemporary counterparts move vivaciously at a fast pace. This is possible because present-day Westerners take advantage of the means of transportation available to them. For those of us who live in the Orient, unless we want to prevent the coming of Western civilization with a firm resolve, it is best that we cast our lot with them. If one observes carefully what is going on in today's world, one knows the futility of trying to prevent the onslaught of Western civilization. Why not float with them in the same ocean of civilization, sail the same waves, and enjoy the fruits and endeavors of civilization?

近代文明とはインフルエンザのようなものである。インフルエンザを水際で防げるだろうか。私は防げないと断言する。百害あって一利も無いインフルエンザでも、一度生じてしまえば防げないのである。それが、利益と不利益を相伴うものの、常に利益の方が多い近代文明を、どのようにして水際で防げるというのだろうか。近代文明の流入を防ごうとするのではなく、むしろその流行感染を促しつつ国民に免疫を与えるのは知識人の義務でさえある。

The movement of a civilization is like the spread of measles. Measles in Tokyo start in Nagasaki and come eastward with the spring thaw. We may hate the spread of this communicable disease, but is there any effective way of preventing it? I can prove that it is not possible. In a communicable disease, people receive only damages. In a civilization, damages may accompany benefits, but benefits always far outweigh them, and their force cannot be stopped. This being the case, there is no point in trying to prevent their spread. A wise man encourages the spread and allows our people to get used to its ways.

西洋の科学技術革命について日本人が知ったのはペリーの黒船以来であって、これによって、国民も、次第に、近代文明を受け入れるべきだという認識を持つようになった。ところが、その進歩の前に横たわっていたのが徳川幕府である。徳川幕府がある限り、近代文明を受け入れることは出来なかった。近代文明か、それとも幕府を中心とした旧体制の維持か。この二者択一が迫られた。もしここで旧体制を選んでいたら、日本の独立は危うかっただろう。なぜなら、科学技術を利用しつつ互いに激しく競いながら世界に飛び出した西洋人たちは、東洋の島国が旧体制のなかにひとり眠っていることを許すほどの余裕を持ち合わせてはいなかったからである。

The Opening to the modern Civilization of the West began in the reign of Kaei (1848—58). Our people began to discover its utility and gradually and yet actively moved toward its acceptance. However there was an old-fashioned and bloated government that stood in the way of progress. It was a problem impossible to solve. If the government were allowed to continue, the new civilization could not enter. The modern civilization and Japan's old conventions were mutually exclusive. If we were to discard our old conventions, that government also had to be abolished. We could have prevented the entry of this civilization, but it would have meant loss of our national independence. The struggles taking place in the world civilization were such that they would not allow an Eastern island nation to slumber in isolation.

ここに、日本の有志たちは、徳川幕府よりも国家の独立を重んじることを大義として、皇室の権威に依拠することで旧体制を倒し、新政府をうちたてた。かくして日本は、国家・国民規模で、西洋に生じた科学技術と近代文明を受け入れることを決めたのだった。これは全てのアジア諸国に先駆けており、つまり近代文明の受容とは、日本にとって脱アジアという意味でもあったのである。

At that point, dedicated men (*shijin*) recognized the principle of “the country is more important than the government,” relied on the dignity of the Imperial Household, and toppled the old government to establish a new one. With this, public and the private sectors alike, everyone in our country accepted the modern Western civilization. Not only were we able to cast aside Japan’s old conventions, but we also succeeded in creating a new axle toward progress in Asia. Our basic assumptions could be summarized in two words: “Good-bye Asia (*Datsu-a*).”

日本は、国土はアジアにありながら、国民精神においては西洋の近代文明を受け入れた。ところが日本の不幸として立ち現れたのは近隣諸国である。そのひとつはシナであり、もうひとつは朝鮮である。この二国の人々も日本人と同じく漢字文化圏に属し、同じ古典を共有しているのだが、もともと人種的に異なっているのか、それとも教育に差があるのか、シナ・朝鮮二国と日本との精神的隔たりはあまりにも大きい。情報がこれほど速く行き来する時代にあつて、近代文明や国際法について知りながら、それでも過去に拘り続けるシナ・朝鮮の精神は千年前と変わらない。この近代文明のパワーゲームの時代に、教育といえば儒教を言い、しかもそれは表面だけの知識であつて、現実面では科学的真理を軽んじる態度ばかりか、道徳的な退廃をももたらしており、たとえば国際的な紛争の場面でも「悪いのはお前の方だ」と開き直って恥じることもない。

Japan is located in the eastern extremities of Asia, but the spirit of her people ha[s] already moved away from the old conventions of Asia to the Western civilization. Unfortunately for Japan, there are two neighboring countries. One is called China and another Korea. These two peoples, like the Japanese people, have been nurtured by Asiatic political thoughts and mores. It may be that we are different races of people, or it may be due to the differences in our heredity or education; significant differences mark the three peoples. The Chinese and Koreans are more like each other and together they do not show as much similarity to the Japanese. These two peoples do not know how to progress either personally or as a nation. In this day and age with transportation becoming so convenient, they cannot be blind to the manifestations of Western civilization. But they say that what is seen or heard cannot influence the disposition of their minds. Their love affairs with ancient ways and old customs remain as

strong as they were centuries ago. In this new and vibrant theater of civilization when we speak of education, they only refer back to Confucianism. As for school education, they can only cite [Chinese philosopher Mencius's] precepts of humanity, righteousness, decorum, and knowledge. While professing their abhorrence to ostentation, in reality they show their ignorance of truth and principles. As for their morality, one only has to observe their unspeakable acts of cruelty and shamelessness. Yet they remain arrogant and show no sign of self-examination.

私の見るところ、このままではシナ・朝鮮が独立を維持することは不可能である。もしこの二国に改革の志士が現れて明治維新のような政治改革を達成しつつ上からの近代化を押し進めることが出来れば話は別だが、そうでなければ亡国と国土の分割・分断が待っていることに一点の疑いもない。なぜならインフレーションのような近代文明の波に洗われながら、それを避けようと一室に閉じこもって空気の流れを絶てていけば、結局は窒息してしまう他はないからである。

In my view, these two countries cannot survive as independent nations with the onslaught of Western civilization to the East. Their concerned citizens might yet find a way to engage in a massive reform, on the scale of our Meiji Restoration, and they could change their governments and bring about a renewal of spirit among their peoples. If that could happen they would indeed be fortunate. However, it is more likely that would never happen, and within a few short years they will be wiped out from the world with their lands divided among the civilized nations. Why is this so?

『春秋左氏伝』の「輔車唇齒」とは隣国同志が助け合うことを言うが、現在のシナ・朝鮮は日本にとって何の助けにもならないばかりか、この三国が地理的に近い故に欧米人から同一視されかねない危険性をも持っている。すなわちシナ・朝鮮が独裁体制であれば日本もそうかと疑われ、向こうが儒教の国であればこちらも陰陽五行の国かと疑われ、国際法や国際的マナーなど踏みにじって恥じぬ国であればそれを咎める日本も同じ穴の貉かと邪推され、朝鮮で政治犯への弾圧が行われていけば日本もまたそのような国かと疑われ、等々、例を挙げていけばきりがない。これを例えれば、一つの村の村人全員が無法で残忍でトチ狂っておれば、たとえ一人がまともでそれを咎めていたとしても、村の外からはどっちもどっちに見えるということだ。

実際、アジア外交を評する場面ではこのような見方も散見され、日本にとって一大不幸だと言わざるを得ない。

Simply at a time when the spread of civilization and enlightenment (*bunmei kaika*) has a force akin to that of measles, China and Korea violate the natural law of its spread. They forcibly try to avoid it by shutting off air from their rooms. Without air, they suffocate to death. It is said that neighbors must extend helping hands to one another because their relations are inseparable. Today's China and Korea have not done a thing for Japan. From the perspectives of civilized Westerners, they may see what is happening in China and Korea and judge Japan accordingly, because of the three countries' geographical proximity. The governments of China and Korea still retain their autocratic manners and do not abide by the rule of law. Westerners may consider Japan likewise a lawless society. Natives of China and Korea are deep in their hocus pocus of nonscientific behavior. Western scholars may think that Japan still remains a country dedicated to the *yin* and *yang* and five elements. Chinese are mean-spirited and shameless, and the chivalry of the Japanese people is lost to the Westerners. Koreans punish their convicts in an atrocious manner, and that is imputed to the Japanese as heartless people. There are many more examples I can cite. It is not different from the case of a righteous man living in a neighborhood of a town known for foolishness, lawlessness, atrocity, and heartlessness. His action is so rare that it is always buried under the ugliness of his neighbors' activities. When these incidents are multiplied, that can affect our normal conduct of diplomatic affairs. How unfortunate it is for Japan.

もはや、この二国が国際的な常識を身につけることを期待してはならない。「東アジア共同体」の一員としてその繁栄に与ってくれるなどという幻想は捨てるべきである。日本は、むしろ大陸や半島との関係を絶ち、先進国と共に進まなければならない。ただ隣国だからという理由だけで特別な感情を持って接してはならないのだ。この二国に対しても、国際的な常識に従い、国際法に則って接すればよい。悪友の悪事を見逃す者は、共に悪名を逃れ得ない。私は気持ちにおいては「東アジア」の悪友と絶交するものである。

What must we do today? We do not have time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors so that we can work together toward the development of Asia. It is better for us to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with civilized nations of the West. As for the way of

dealing with China and Korea, no special treatment is necessary just because they happen to be our neighbors. We simply follow the manner of the Westerners in knowing how to treat them. Any person who cherishes a bad friend cannot escape his bad notoriety. We simply erase from our minds our bad friends in Asia.

Sources:

- (English translation) David Lu, ed., Japan: A Documentary History (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 351-353
- (Japanese text) <http://koreasparkling.wordpress.com/datsu-a-ron/%E2%80%9Ccan-argument-for-leaving-asia%E2%80%9D-or-%E2%80%9Cdatsu-a-ron%E2%80%9D-translation-attempt-part-2/>