How the Japanese Press Viewed America's Entry into the Asia-Pacific World

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Precisely 100 years ago, the United States fought "a splendid little war"[1] against Spain over Cuba. As a result, she joined the club of imperialist nations by annexing Hawaii and by acquiring Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. The acquisition of those overseas territories not only transformed the American Republic into an empire, but also it made the United States a most powerful country among the nations of the Asia-Pacific region.

In the following year, 1899 and again in 1900, the U.S. government responded to an East Asian crisis which had been approaching since the end of the Sino-Japanese War. China seemed to be in chronic turmoil, facing a serious threat from both home and abroad. Due to the internal chaos triggered by the Boxers' uprising and also due to the unreasonable demands made by avaricious European powers, the dissolution of the already enfeebled Ch'ing Empire appeared very imminent. It seemed to the Americans that the fabled China market was on the verge of closing forever exactly at the time when the United States was ready to exploit it. Not wishing to be too late, Secretary of State John Hay twice issued the now famous Open Door Notes, first, in September of 1899 and, then, in July of 1900, in order to put a stop to "the scramble for concessions" and thus avoid the division of the Chinese Empire.

In addition, Washington despatched troops to the Philippines to suppress native rebels who had risen up for independence against the Spaniards first, but were now fighting tooth and nail against American control. The U.S. government also sent the American contingent to China in cooperation with other powers in order to quell the Boxers and keep them from running amok. Those military actions symbolized not only that the United States had become a full-fledged member of the imperialist club, but they also meant that the U.S. would soon be inevitably drawn into the whirlpool of East Asian power politics, irrespective of whether she wanted or not.

Much work has been done to locate the roots of American expansionism at the end of the nineteenth century.[2] To put it differently, mountains of studies have examined the causes of American imperialism at the turn of the century. The limit of space precludes the writer from detailing a long list of historical literature of the Spanish-American War and the aftermath here. At the risk of oversimplification, however, it can be said that in the historiography of American expansionism, there are two different schools of thought in the United States which addressed themselves to that important historical question.

One group of historians discovered the causes of American expansionism at home, while the other found them primarily abroad. While looking for the roots of American expansionism at home, scholars, such as William A. Williams, Walter LaFeber, Thomas McCormick, and others, acknowledged economic factor as having played a dominant role in pushing the United States into becoming an expansionist nation overseas.[3] Others, such as Richard Hofstadter and Robert Dallek, stressed non-economic and non-rational factors as the ones at work behind American expansionism.[4] They emphasized factors such as the people's psychology, domestic politics, and national security considerations.

Historians belonging to the other group, on the other hand, discovered the causes of American imperialism, not in the United States, but abroad. Two notable examples are Ernest May and Akira Iriye. May emphasized the influence of the European ideas and thoughts floating across the Atlantic Ocean at the turn of the nineteenth century.[5] Iriye elucidated the interaction between Japanese and American expansionism by stressing the effect of Japanese imperialism upon the United States from the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth.[6]

In contrast with the existing volume of the work which examined the causes of the Spanish-American War, it is curious to note that few studies explain how and to what extent the Spanish-American War affected the Asia-Pacific world. Little work has been done about how foreign people viewed and made sense out of the Spanish-American War and the ensuing world events. Historians have not thoroughly examined the extent to which the perceptions of foreign observers changed at the turn of the nineteenth century. As a result, little is known about what new insights foreign observers gained from those historical events. Moreover, there are fewer studies that elucidate the extent to which foreign observers influenced their own governments as to the course of action they were soon to take. In light of a need to fill the gap existing in the historiography of American expansionism, therefore, there seems to be a need for a study that will explicate the impact of America's rise to a Pacific power based upon the perceptions of other peoples. This paper intends to answer that need.

The study deals with how Japanese journalists watched and analyzed the world events—the events that helped push the United States to the status of a Pacific power. To be more specific, this study examines the editorials of Japanese daily newspapers and analyzes the perceptions of their editors, covering four years from January of 1898 to December of 1901. The problems to be dealt with are the

following. First, how the Japanese press made sense out of the world events taking place at the turn of the century; second, how the Japanese journalists looked at the Spanish-American War and the rise of America as a Pacific power, what it meant to them, and what historical lessons they drew from it; and third, what impact America's thrust into the Asia-Pacific world made on the Japanese perceptions; and fourth and last, what specific proposals those opinion leaders made to the Japanese government and their reading public. The study will attempt to answer those questions by analyzing the articles of Japanese national daily newspapers. They are: the *Osaka Asahi shinbun,* the *Osaka Mainichi shinbun,* the *Chugai shogyo shinpo*, the *Miyako shinbun*, and others. The present writer believes that those daily newspapers reasonably represent the whole Japanese press and that they reflected the views of opinion leaders active in Meiji-Japan. In sum, this is a study of Japanese perceptions about American expansionism at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Now a brief explanation may be necessary with regard to the reasons why this study covers the four years mentioned above. The first and most obvious reason is that it was precisely that period during which the United States thrust herself into the Asia-Pacific world. The second reason is that it was the period which coincided with the time of great historical transformation. Great changes were beginning to be discernible in the structure of world politics during those years—the changes, such as the transfer of hegemony from Britain to the United States and the shift of the locus of world politics taking place from Europe to Asia and Africa. The Spanish-American War of 1898, the Boer War of 1899-1902, and the Boxers' uprisings of 1898-1900 symbolize those historical changes. The third and last reason is that the time length of four years is both long and short enough a period to research. It seeks to illustrate the extent to which the people living one hundred years ago were prepared to welcome the dawn of the new century. It is hoped that

some historical lessons may be gleaned from this study, because the present writer finds a striking parallel between today and the turn of the nineteenth century.

Now, the first question concerns the Japanese perception of the world in which they lived. Namely, what did the Japanese think the trends of the world were? In which direction did they think the world was moving? And what the world would be like in the next century in their view?

The *Osaka Asahi,* which enjoyed the largest readership in Japan at that time,[7] stressed the fact that people's perceptions of time and distance had drastically changed and that the world was moving toward globalization and unification. The newspaper emphasized material progress having been made by the progress in science. It argued that the application of steam and electricity to the transportation and communication systems (telephones and telegrams) helped shorten the distance throughout the globe. The *Osaka Mainichi* agreed. It was the *Osaka Mainichi*'s observation that electric power, ship-building, railroad, and machine industries had progressed most. It added that the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 had changed the power relationship in the Orient and that major powers began spending a lot of money to expand armaments, particularly, to build navies, which resulted in giving the world economy an impetus to grow.[8]

The Japanese journalists carefully watched the world events and tried to make sense out of them. The *Osaka Mainichi*, a daily newspaper which represented the views of Osaka businessmen,[9] analyzed the then recent world developments. Citing professor Matsuzaki Kuranosuke's lecture entitled "The So-Called Three Major World Empires and the Purpose of Fighting a War," the O*saka Mainichi* stated that the world was rapidly moving toward a closed world based on economic nationalism which, in the Professor's view, was the basic cause of the war. He

argued that the world had changed so much that it had little semblance of yesterday's world once created on the principle of economic liberalism after the Battle of Waterloo. In addition to erecting high tariff walls at home, the three major world empires or Russia, the United States, and Britain were busy establishing the zone of national self-sufficiency in their own spheres. What the law professor specifically referred to were the activities of Russia in China, those of the United States in Central and South America, and those of Britain in the Orient and Africa. It is interesting to note that the United States seemed to be no exception as far as the Professor's analysis of the world empires was concerned.[10]

The Japanese newspapermen attentively watched European nations gambling in the Orient. The *Osaka Asahi* argued that the direction in which the twentieth-century world would move would be determined largely by the way the two major problems were to be settled. The two problems were the Boer War in South Africa and the Boxers' uprising in China. The paper also stated that the central arena of power politics was moving gradually from Europe to Asia and Africa.[11] The *Miyako*, which was ranked as the fourth largest newspaper in the nation in 1901,[12] predicted that it would be Japan and the United States who would turn out to be making great profit out of that great European gamble and that, as a result, much European wealth would be transferred to Japan and the United States. The paper advised its readers that Japan should stay out of that gamble and that she should not waste any of her national treasure by possessing territories on the (Asian) Continent which, in the paper's view, would do more harm than good. Instead, the *Miyako* counseled, Japan should become a great supplier in the Orient, taking full advantage of the war demands coming from the Europeans.[13]

The Japanese journalists were also quick to detect the power shift taking place throughout the world. They perceived precisely that the locus of power was

moving gradually from Europe to the United States. The *Osaka Mainichi*, for instance, declared that the center of world finance had been moving and moving very fast from London to New York since the end of the nineteenth century. The *Miyako* echoed the *Osaka Mainichi*. The paper reported that a great amount of stocks and bonds had changed hands from the British to the Americans, because Britain faced serious predicaments both at home and abroad. It argued that Britain was under pressure to give up its position of world money supplier to the United States. The *Miyako* even foresaw that the United States would become Japan's future source of money.[14] The *Osaka Mainichi* described the shift as a great phenomenon that deserved special mention in the history of world economy.[15]

The *Osaka Mainichi* added that the heart of the world trade was also leaving the Atlantic coast for the Pacific coast. The same newspaper went on to state that the age of Pacific trade had dawned and that it would be in the Orient, especially, in China where Britain and the United States would compete fiercely for a larger share in the twentieth century.[16]

Indeed, finance and trade were not the only sectors where the Japanese saw the power shift occurring. They pointed out that it was in the manufacturing sector, especially, in iron and steel industries where nations competed fiercely and, as a result, where a most spectacular transition of power was taking place. The *Osaka Mainichi* editorialized that "a little neglect may breed great mischief," drawing its readers' attention to the fact that the United States and Germany had not only caught up with Britain but also surpassed the nation in the field of iron and steel industries.[17] The same newspaper reported that Britain was obliged to place an order with American companies for iron and steel in order to build railroads in Egypt, Uganda, and Australia.[18] The *Osaka Mainichi* argued that Britain was no match for the United States as far as the electric power industry was concerned. To

cap it all, the same paper reported that the Europeans feared and hated the United States most and that they characterized America's industrial invasion of Europe as "the American peril," "the Yankee injury," and even as "an eyesore."[19]

Judging from what the Japanese editors penned, it seems fair to say that they knew exactly in which direction the wind was blowing as far as the world trend at the turn of the century was concerned.

The second question pertains to the Japanese perceptions of the Spanish-American War and the aftermath of American overseas expansion? To be more specific, what did the Japanese feel caused the War? What did they make out the nature of the War to be, and finally, how did they accept the consequence of the War?

The *Osaka Mainichi* pointed out the people's dissatisfaction hovering all over the United States.[20] It stated that a great many Americans who had suffered from the depression since 1893 were looking for an upheaval, political, social, and economic, hoping that it would help improve their lot. According to the *Osaka Mainichi*, those pent-up feelings constituted the basic background against which the Americans were to fight the Spanish-American War. Once the War broke out, the *Osaka Mainichi* found the cause of the War in the chivalrous spirit of the American people who sympathized the Cuban rebels fighting for independence. The newspaper characterized the War as "a clash between the *Edokko* (Tokyoites) spirit of the Americans, on one hand, and the unyielding spirit of the Spaniards, on the other."[21]

The *Chugai shogyo shinpo* demurred, however. The newspaper, so-called the Japanese version of the *Wall Street Journal,* suspected that there was some ulterior motive hidden behind America's speech and behavior. The same paper argued that

it was clear that the United States was conspiring to acquire Cuba by seizing whatever chance to realize the plan.[22] The *Osaka Asahi* concurred with the views of the *Chugai shyogyo shinpo*. It took America's behavior as a case in point which demonstrated that a strong nation forcibly got what it wanted from the weak. The paper insisted that the U.S. intervention in Cuban affairs aimed to force Spain to sell Cuba to the United States by making Spain realize that it was hopeless to win a war both militarily and economically against the United States. It added that the ultimate purpose of the United States was to make outrageous profits out of the purchase of that island.[23] The *Osaka Asahi* called its readers' attention to the fact that the Cuban problem and the problem in the Far East were the world's two great problems then. It asserted that the Americans wanted to fight a war with Spain after securing diplomatic support from the British over the issue of Cuba and the revision of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty in exchange for the American support of the British in Africa and the Far East.[24]

It was on April 25, 1898 when the U.S. government finally declared war against Spain and President William McKinley summoned a volunteer army of 125,000 men to fight. The Japanese newspapers expressed their concerns all at once over the possible war damages which Japanese trade might incur. They warned that the Japanese should not remain idle spectators of the War, and instead urged their readers to think of ways and means in which to fish in troubled waters.[25]

The *Miyako* was more specific, using the logic of realpolitik. It editorialized that Japan should "take full advantage of the Spanish-American War." Japan's observance of neutrality in the War purported to indirectly assist the United States with the expectation that some day in the future the Japanese might be able to utilize the political capital now being invested in the United States. The paper warned that Japan should never side with the old crumbling empire, even though

justice was found on Spain's side. It added that the Japanese should never be swayed by their emotion of justice and should not let it cloud their grand design to assume the hegemony of the Orient.[26]

While watching the War in progress, the Japanese press unanimously took a severe view of the War itself. The *Osaka Asahi*, for instance, reported that Spain was so weak and so spineless that the War appeared "something like child's play."[27] The *Miyako,* likewise, ranked the Spanish-American War very low. It dismissed the War as "the most lackluster and valueless." With no single battle worthy of mention, it was too much exaggeration to call the Spanish-American War a war, the paper complained. The *Miyako* attributed that cause to Spain's unpreparedness and spinelessness. Drawing an important lesson from the War, the newspaper admonished the Japanese readers against sparing any pains at any moment to prepare a war.[28]

The *Osaka Asahi* understood clearly that America.'s acquisition of new colonies both in the Atlantic and in the Pacific made the United States an empire and a Pacific power as well. It stated that the United States ushered in a new epoch in her history now that she had plunged herself into the whirlpool of struggles among major powers. It added that the time of isolation had passed when the United States had enjoyed the "'spring' of the Earthly Paradise in the New World."[29] As a result, America's new presence in the Pacific made the Japanese feel sensitive about the United States. In return, the Americans became equally anxious about whatever action the Japanese took. With the rapid progress made in electric power and shipbuilding industries, for instance, the ships were able to cross the Pacific Ocean (4,300 miles) in less than half a month.[30] It meant that the Japanese battleships were able to reach Hawaii in two weeks well before the American counterparts could get there. In fact, it took the American navy three months to start defending the islands

by moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific. That fact alone made the Americans increasingly nervous about the Japanese. For security reason and others, the Americans came to feel it urgently necessary to construct an isthmian canal quickly before something irrevocable would happen to their country.[31] In other words, America's entry into the Pacific world made the United States and Japan become increasingly conscious of one another and eventually confront each other.

Consequently, the two nations became keenly aware of the importance of the Pacific Ocean. The *Osaka Asahi* and the *Miyako*, for example, emphasized that the Pacific Ocean held the key to the future of international relations. They predicted that the Pacific Ocean would become "the second Mediterranean Sea" and that whoever controlled it would be in a position to decide the future course of the world. The papers foresaw that power struggles would soon commence over the control of that Ocean. Once struggles began, according to the papers, the struggles would be global in scale and extemely fierce now that Japan and the United States joined the imperialist club. The *Miyako* urged the Japanese to leave no stone unturned to expand opportunities around the Pacific Ocean rather than remain idle onlookers.[32]

The third question concerns the following problems. In Japanese journalists' view, what consequence did the Spanish-American War bring to the United States and what legacy did the War leave with the American people? In other words, what challenges did the Japanese people think the new situation presented to the American people? How and to what extent, in Japanese eyes, did the United States meet those challenges as a Pacific power?

The Japanese newspapers reported that the American people hotly debated the issue of imperialism reaching its climax during the presidential campaign of 1900.

According to the reports, the Americans were divided into two groups. One group, headed by Henry Cabot Lodge, called themselves imperialists advocating territorial expansion, while another, led by William Jennings Bryan, were anti-imperialists opposing the annexation of overseas territories.[33] The *Osaka Mainichi* reported that American historians also found themselves sharply divided over the problem of the annexation of the Philippines at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association.[34]

With regard to America's decision to colonize the whole archipelago of the Philippines, the *Osaka Asahi* asserted that the economic and constitutional factors were largely at work behind that decision. The paper analyzed how and why the Americans came to the conclusion that the U.S. constitution did not apply to the archipelago. According to the paper, if Statehood be granted to the Philippines, that meant that the U.S. constitution applied to the islands equally and unconditionally. It followed that no different scale of custom duties could be legally applied to the goods entering the United States from the Philippines, irrespective of the origin of the goods. It was because the U.S. constitution stipulated that "all Duties, Imposts and Excises should be uniform throughout the United States."[35]

There was a catch here, according to the *Osaka Asahi*. One article of the peace treaty to be concluded between the United States and Spain stipulated that Spain agree to turn over the Philippines to the United States so long as the United States agreed to allow the Spanish ships and goods to enter the Philippine ports under the same condition where the American ships and goods entered the Philippines. That condition, by the way, would be effective for ten years from the day of the ratification of the peace treaty. That meant that Spanish goods would be legally able to enter the U.S. market duty-free, if the Philippines be granted Statehood and if Spanish goods be first shipped to the Philippines. It followed that Spain could export her goods freely to the United States without worrying about any custom

duties imposed upon them. It further meant that Japanese goods, for example, could be technically exported to the United States "duty free," if handled by the Spaniards. All of these meant, in the final analysis, that the peace treaty would end up destroying the whole structure of the protective tariff policy of the U.S. government.[36]

Historians as well as contemporary Americans explained the reason for the U.S. government denying the Philippines Statehood on such grounds as power politics, paternalism, and racism. But there is another reason which seems to the present author to be more than plausible. The United States denied the Philippines Statehood and became an empire, even by paying the high price of abandoning the time-honored tradition of republicanism. That decision was made, being based on the grounds of economics and constitutionality.

The Japanese press reported in detail the unfolding events in Philippine Islands, but failed to fully appreciate the historical importance of the independence movement of the Philippines. Instead, they showed a little condescension toward the people of the Philippines fighting now for genuine independence against the Americans. The *Osaka Mainichi,* for instance, believed that it was not very realistic for the Philippine rebels to keep fighting to the bitter end until they finally won independence. Maintaining independence in the dog-eat-dog competitive world was no easy task for the Filipinos, because the paper believed that more power and talent than they possessed then would be required. Instead, the paper advised that it would be more sensible for the Philippines to stop shedding "unnecessary blood" and accept American protection and guidance, at least, for the moment, as long as the United States promised to grant them independence soon or later. The paper, therefore, urged the Japanese government to volunteer to act as "a friendly mediator" between the Americans and the Philippine rebels in order to restore peace and order in the archipelago.[37]

On the other hand, an *Oskaka Mainichi* correspondent, who observed changes taking place in the United States after the Spanish-American War, reported from Chicago that the American people became increasingly proud, confident, and adventurous.[38] With increased pride and confidence gained from the War, the American people seized the opportunity to meet those new challenges on two fronts; one, at home and the other, abroad.

The McKinley administration presented the following domestic programs which it wanted to carry out without delay. They were the programs of (1) building a navy, (2) developing international communication networks, and (3) promoting a shipping industry by subsidizing merchant marines, i.e., the Hanna-Payne bill of 1899 and the Fry bill of 1900.[39] The foreign policy programs also needed the administration's prompt action. They were the projects of (1) building an isthmian canal in Central America, possibly in Nicaragua, (2) governing newly acquired overseas territories, and (3) changing the trade policy from protection to free trade, that is, the vigorous enforcement of the Open Door in China and the conclusion of reciprocity treaties with European countries.[40] Indeed, it was precisely those six programs by which the U.S. government attempted to meet new challenges. It was those six programs which, in Japanese eyes, most concretely symbolized America's rise as a Pacific power.

Space precludes the author from detailing every program mentioned above. To make a point, it may be sufficient to deal briefly with only two programs, that is, the programs of constructing an isthmian canal and of laying trans-Pacific submarine cables.

(Canal)

While fighting battles at two different theaters of war, the Americans perhaps

most keenly felt it necessary to construct an isthmian canal connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific, and wanted, moreover, to have it under their sole control. The *Osaka Asahi* interpreted America's ambition to monopolize an isthmian canal as an expression of American imperialism. The United States regarded an isthmian canal as an absolute necessity to protect the newly acquired territories scattered all over the Pacific Ocean. Conversely speaking, the United States needed to protect Hawaii in the West as well as Puerto Rico in the East in order to assure the security of an isthmian canal. It looked like the British keeping the security of the Suez Canal in order to protect Gibraltar and India.

Moreover, an isthmian canal would enable the United States and European countries to reach the Orient much faster, because it would, for instance, shorten the distances between New York and Yokohama by more than 1,200 miles.[41] It took them longer to get to East Asia, because the American ships were forced to circle around the southern tip of South America, while the European ships had either to circle around the Cape of Good Hope or pass through the Suez Canal in order to reach the Orient Therefore, the paper stressed the importance of the project of constructing an isthmian canal, not only because it would greatly affect world trade, but also because it would have great bearings on the future of Japan.[42] The *Miyako* also argued that Pacific islands, now isolated and sprinkled throughout the Ocean, would exert a great influence over international relations after an isthmian canal was completed.[43]

(Submarine Cables)

The Japanese press used much space in reporting America's efforts to develop international communication networks across the Pacific. The *Miyako,* for instance, disclosed that the U.S. forces occupied Wake Island, 2,325 miles west of Hawaii, a little after the United States annexed Hawaii on July 7, 1898. The paper suspected that the purpose of the U.S. occupation was to construct not only a

coaling station but also a relay station for the trans-Pacific cables connecting San Francisco and Australia via Hawaii.[44] As if proving the correctness of the *Miyako*'s surmise, the *Chugai shyogyo shinpo* reported that Commercial Pacific Cable Company (*Taiheiyo-boeki-densen-kaisha*), a new American telegraph company which had been organized in New York, planned to lay a trans-Pacific submarine cable of 8,500 miles connecting San Francisco and the Philippines via Hawaii (2,200 miles between San Francisco and Honolulu, and 6,300 miles between Honolulu and Manila).[45] The *Osaka Mainichi* also revealed that another company, Pacific Commerce Submarine Cable Company (*Taiheiyo-tsusho-kaiteidenshin-kaisha*) had already obtained presidential approval of its plan to lay a trans-Pacific submarine cable directly connecting San Francisco and Manila. The newspaper added that even a rumor about the company's project had produced a tangible effect. Western Union, its rival company, who had charged 50 cents a word for a telegram sent to the Orient via Europe, now lowered the charges as much as 50 percent in order to retain its clients.[46] The O*saka Mainichi* reminded the Japanese readers that submarine cables had much to do with military expansion and that submarine cables were absolutely necessary for national security reasons as well. It warned that Japan, a leading country in East Asia surrounded by the sea in all directions, should never depend on foreign telegraph companies for gathering information at the time of both peace and war.[47] The paper strongly urged the Japanese government to lay submarine cables without delay which connected Nagasaki and North China via Inch'on.[48] It was neither surprise nor wonder that the Japanese journalists displayed much interest in America's initiative in developing international communication networks after the Spanish-American War.

The fourth and last question concerns the Japanese perceptions of the United States. To be more specific, how did the Japanese newspapermen view the United States at the turn of the nineteenth century and how did they react to those

American initiatives taken to remain a Pacific power? Lastly, what lessons did the Japanese draw from the Spanish-American War and America's rise to a Pacific power? And what policy proposals did they make?

Impressed with America's economic prowess, the Japanese journalists looked at the United States with a sense of almost reverent awe. The *Chugai shogyo shinpo*, which specialized in reporting economic news, marveled at fast and great progress the United States had made in the development of her commerce and industry. The newspaper stated that even Germany's great economic progress looked pale before America's economic performance.[49] The *Osaka Mainichi* stressed that no nation in the world could really match the United States as far as the degree of economic self-sufficiency was concerned.[50] It had a very optimistic view toward the future of the American economy. The newspaper reported that the value of America's exports during 1898 totaled one and a quarter billion dollars, quoting the trade surplus of 617 million dollars. It added that the United States had loaned several million dollars to Europe, while paying back its foreign debts of 700 million dollars during the same year.[51] The *Osaka Mainichi* quoted 1.7 billion yen ($850 million) as the amount of U.S. specie reserve, which amounted to approximately 27 times as much as Japan's 64 million yen ($32 million).[52] America's economic performance brought her an increase in the export of five million dollars a day for one single year, the *Chugai shogyo shinpo* reported.[53] To drive home the point, the *Osaka Mainichi* stressed that the economic center had moved from London to New York and that New York had become the world financial center.[54]

In light of the sharp contrast between the outstanding record of the U.S. economy and the meager record of the Japanese economy, it came home to the Japanese that their country was so behind Europe and America and that so much work had to be done to catch up with the West. Japan exported to the United States

such goods as raw silk, tea, fancy mats, ceramics, and silk fabrics, while importing from America such goods as cotton, iron and steel, and machinery.[55] With Japan's trade record showing chronic deficits against the United States, the *Osaka Mainichi* expressed grave concern over her specie reserve having been reduced to as low as 60 million yen (30 million dollars). Realizing that those Japanese commodities exported to the United States were not good enough to help tip the trade balance into Japan's favor, the *Chugai shogyo shinpo* joined the *Osaka Mainichi* in urging the Japanese to rack their brains to produce something attractive that would create and stimulate American demand.[56] By using a metaphor, the *Chugai shogyo shinpo* characterized the state of Japan's commerce and industry as "a big-headed skinny dwarf called *Fukusuke*," while it portrayed the economy of Europe and America as "a potbellied god called *Hotei*."

How, then, did the Japanese take their trade balance from the red and put it in the black?

They concluded that the promotion of Japan's commerce and industry held the key to that question.[57] On the basis of that assumption, they became all the more committed to industrialization. But the problem was how they would go about industrializing their country and industrializing it fast, which according to the *Osaka Mainichi*, was still in a germinal stage.[58]

Impressed with the enormity of America's productive capacity and the abundance in financial capital, the Japanese came to take the view that Japan should import both new technology and capital mainly from the United States so as to speed up industrialization, expand abroad, and compete with the West.[59] The *Chugai shogyo shinpo* attributed America's great economic performance largely to the ingeniousness and hard work of the American people. The Japanese envied American labor saving machines such as telephones, telegraphs, copying and

printing machines, steam engines, and electric machines, etc. The economic journal even foresaw that the time would surely come when Japan would have to meet the United States as her formidable competitor in the China market on which the health of Japanese commerce and industry so much depended.[60] With regard to the future of China, the former Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi was quoted as saying that Japan should act as "a faithful broker" standing between the West and the East.[61]

The Japanese newspapers began to constantly urge their government to take necessary measures to promote industrialization—the measure, for instance, that would make their country open and attractive enough to potential foreign investors. It is no accident by any means that the Japanese government adopted the gold standard system in 1897 and in three years later, in 1900, it established the Industrial Bank of Japan as the central organ for mainly handling the business of importing foreign capital.[62] It is equally interesting to note here that the concept of "*Beishi nichino*" which meant "American money and Japanese brains." began to take root in Japan as a method in which to survive in a cutthroat competitive world. In other words, it meant that the Japanese gradually came to accept Japan's status in the world as a dependent imperialist prone to compete with its very helper. It was an image of Japan like a pupil prone to rebel against his teacher. No doubt such an image of Japan did not help her very much in international relations. Japan looked, in foreigners' eyes, as if she was "robbing Peter to pay Paul," benefitting herself at the expense of the Americans and the Asian neighbors.

Needless to say, some Japanese people sincerely and earnestly sought to cultivate friendship and cooperation with the Americans as their partner, but, at the same time, others began to look at the United States, at least potentially, as their formidable competitor in China and elsewhere. In other words, there existed two competing forces at work in late-Meiji Japan: one was the force promoting

collaboration and friendship with the Americans, while the other was the force harboring suspicion and antagonism against the United States. It is true that one could find those two competing elements in U.S.-Japan relations throughout the history of that relationship. And it seems equally true that the elements seeking help and friendship from the Americans were dominant and vocal in late-Meiji Japan, while the elements of distrust and antagonism were still dormant and less vocal. But it can be safely stated that a pattern of U.S.-Japan relationship in which Japan depended on the United States, while at the same time, competing with the same country, began to take shape and surface gradually when the Japanese came to feel the American presence close enough to their homeland after America entered the Asia-Pacific world. If that is true, perhaps that is one of the important historical legacies which the Spanish-American War bequeathed to both the Japanese and the American peoples living across the Pacific Ocean.

Footnote

1. John Hay called the Spanish-American War of 1898 "a splendid little war." Hay to Theodore Roosevelt, July 27, 1898 in William Roscoe Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), II, 337.
2. Recent literature which concisely treats the historiography of American expansionism at the turn of the nineteenth century is Edward P. Crapol, "Coming to Terms with Empire: The Historiography of Late-Nineteenth Century American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History,* 16 (1992), 573-97. Also see, Joseph A. Fry, "From Open Door to World Systems: Economic Interpretations of Late Nineteenth Century American Foreign Relations," *Pacific Historical Review*, 65 (May 1996), 277-303; Patrick Wolfe, "History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory, from Marx to Postcolonialism," *American Historical Review*, 102 (April 1997), 388-402; Takahashi Akira, "Sekai teikoku eno michi (A Road to World Empire)," in Shimizu Tomohisa, Takahashi Akira,

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