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# The State and Racialization: The Case of Koreans in Japan

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*Abstract.* It is frequently acknowledged that the notion of ‘race’ is a socio-political construct that requires constant refurbishment. However, the process and consequences of racialization are less carefully explored. By examining the ideology about nationhood and colonial policies of the Japanese state in relation to Koreans, I will attempt to demonstrate why and how the Japanese state racialized its population. By so doing, I will argue that the state is deeply involved in racialization by fabricating and authorizing ‘differences’ and ‘similarities’ between the dominant and minority groups.

## Introduction

The last decade has seen a growing interest in the state within the field of sociology and political science. While the main contributors of the study have been scholars in comparative and historical sociology and researchers in the economics of development, student of race and ethnicity have gradually paid attention to the role of the state in forming racial/ethnic communities, ethnic identity, and ethnic mobilization (Barkey and Parikh 1991; Marx 1998). State policies clearly constitute one of the major determinants of immigrant adaptation and shifting identity patterns (Hein 1993; Olzak 1983; Nagel 1986). However, the study of the state’s role in race and ethnic studies is still underdeveloped, and many important questions remain to be answered.

It is frequently acknowledged that the notion of ‘race’ is a socio-political construct that requires constant refurbishment (Ferber 1998; Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Omi and Winant 1986). Therefore, ‘race’ itself is the object of investigation and should be treated as a dependent variable rather an independent variable that functions as an analytical category. However, the process and consequences of racialization are less carefully explored (Carter, Green and Halpern 1996). As one scholar put it, “What is at stake to know the impact of ‘race’ is why and how the state ‘racializes’ these minorities, what is the consequence of racialization” (Marx 1997).

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<sup>1</sup> Please do NOT cite or quote without consent of the author.

This paper will explicitly address the question: how did the Japanese state racialize its population? First, I will overview the historical transformation of the Japanese racial ideology. Then, by focusing on Japan's colonial policy toward Koreans, I will attempt to show how the Japanese state mobilized various racial signifiers to rearticulate racial boundaries. By so doing, I will argue that the state deeply involves itself in racialization by fabricating and authorizing 'differences' and 'similarities' between the dominant and minority groups.

### **Race, Ethnicity, Culture**

Myths die hard. The Japanese myth of a homogeneous country has been lingering in the deep psyche of the Japanese people for a long time. Yet there are approximately 700,000 North and South Korean nationals dwelling in Japan. The majority of them were born, raised and will end up living in Japan. Since Japan takes a legal principle of *jus sanguinis* (by parentage) in nationality attribution, people of Korean descent, together with the first generation, constitute the largest foreign community in contemporary Japan. Including naturalized Zainichi Koreans and children of Korean-Japanese intermarriage, people of North and South Korean descent are estimated to be 1% of the 120 million people of Japan (Fukuoka a).

Koreans in Japan are already in the fourth generation, and they are highly assimilated to Japanese society at the socio-cultural level. For instance, the rate of endogamy among Koreans is only 16.6 percent in 1995 (Kim 1997). The language shift to Japanese monolingualism has occurred to a considerable degree, threatening the survival of the Korean language in the community (Nin 1993). Nonetheless, Koreans in Japan remain 'aliens' on a legal level. The naturalization rate has increased in the 1990s, but there still exists great pressure against naturalization due to social sanctions within the Korean community who see such individuals as 'traitors' (Zainichi Dōhō no Seikatsu wo Kangaeru Kai 1999). Institutional discrimination against Koreans is officially justified by the Japanese state and prejudice against them prevails in Japanese society. To avoid harassment, about 90 percent of Koreans use Japanese names and hide their ethnic origin.

Despite such a current outcast status in Japanese society, Koreans were Japanese subjects and regarded as a group of people who shared the common culture and common descent with the

Japanese until the end of World War II. How does such a notion reconcile with the contemporary manifestation of racialized Japanese identity?

At first glance, the answer to the question of who is Japanese seems obvious. The Japanese law defines that a Japanese as a person who hold Japanese nationality. But the “common sense” reality of Japanese racial/ethnic notions turns out to be different: highly constructed and highly ideological. According to Sandra Wallman, “ethnicity is the recognition of significant differences between ‘them’ and ‘us.’ It is “the process by which ‘their’ difference is used to enhance the sense of ‘us’ for purposes of organization or identification” (Wallman 1979: 203-5). In the case of Japan, this is reversed. Its racial/ethnic ideology has been constructed emphasizing ‘our uniqueness’ in order to draw individuals into the nation. But the more important agenda here is how such boundaries (‘them’ and ‘us’) are created and maintained.

In arguing about Japan’s racial ideology, there are two important terms that we have to keep in mind. The first term is *jinshu* which is usually translated as race. Race, in a narrower sense, refers to human groups as distinguished by pseudo-biological or physiological characteristics. In contrast, the second term, *minzoku* -- popularized by Shiga Shigetaka in the 1880s (Michael Weiner 1997:5) -- is used as an equivalent to ‘ethnicity,’ ‘ethnos’ and ‘ethnic group’ that is defined by cultural criteria (Yasuda 1992:62). While social scientists tend to make a semantic distinction between a biologically determined *jinshu* (race) and a culturally defined *minzoku* (ethnic group), these two terms are often used interchangeably in the common Japanese discourse (Weiner 1995:441; Oblas 1995).

In Japanese, the concepts of ‘race,’ ‘ethnic group’ and ‘nation’ are virtually indistinguishable as embodied in the term, ‘*Yamato (Nihon) minzoku*’ (Japanese race), which, like the German *Volk*, not only encompasses blood relationships but also broader cultural spheres, including institutional arrangements, religion, language, and history (Weiner 1995:448; Yoshino 1992:25; Ubukata 1979). While *minzoku* had not been commonly used until the second half of the Meiji period (Weiner 1995:438), this term gradually came to incorporate elements of *jinshu* (Yun 1993:16).

The overlapping of racial and cultural criteria or identification of race and ethnicity is quite evident in the genre of so-called *Nihonjinron* (discourse about the Japanese) that is premised on assumptions of a unique character of the Japanese and on the distinctive culture of Japan. Here, *minzoku* is used as a loose synonym for many concepts such as ethnic group, race, nation, and nationality (Yoshino 1992:25). As represented by *Nihonjinron* literature, the identification of *jinsu* and *minzoku* is very much a Japanese characteristic. For the substantial majority of Japanese and the Japanese state, their conception of ethnicity is almost identical with that of race. Therefore, descent, “blood,” origins, genes and physical appearance come to be the defining characteristics of ethnicity, and in return ethnicity, which is measured by cultural criteria, creates the identification of culture and race as phenotype. The formulation, race=ethnicity=culture, is essential to the Japanese way of conceptualizing what makes one Japanese. As a principle, no one can become Japanese who is not so by “race,” and no one can perfectly acquire Japanese culture if he/she was not born with Japanese blood.

However, the equation of race, ethnicity, and culture is not the irrational conceptual confusion of race with ethnicity and of ethnicity with culture. Rather, it is a conscious effort of the Japanese state to manifest Japanese identity. Understanding this point is critical to clarify how the state or the ruling elite establishes its domination through racialization. Principally, the conflation of three variables, race, ethnicity, and culture, determines the boundaries of the Japanese. But empirically, the three variables do not carry an equal weight. For its own sake, the state consciously changes the boundaries of the Japanese by controlling the variability, depth or symbolic qualities of each of the three distinct, but related phenomena. In the case of Japan, the ascendancy of race as Japanese blood over the other two phenomena is so evident that language adoption and cultural assimilation do not qualify one as a “perfect” or “first-class” Japanese, unless one has Japanese blood. On the contrary, manipulating Japaneseness by expanding cultural spheres, the Japanese state can include a larger population as the Japanese nation and establish its rule by making them “second-class” Japanese. In other words, the state legitimizes and expands its rule over colonized people by racializing them. Such a technique of dominance is evident in the case of the Japanese empire. In the following section, I will demonstrate how the Japanese empire racialized the colonized in order to respond to situational imperatives, justify its colonial rule, and forge a sense of collectivity in the empire.

## **The Transformation of Japanese Racial Ideology and the Blurring Boundaries of the Japanese**

Today, the notion that Japan is homogeneous prevails both inside and outside of Japan.

However, this idea emerged only after World War II. Interestingly, in the prewar and war period, the Japanese were considered a mixed breed of many kinds of ethnic groups. How did such a drastic change occur? In order to understand this transformation of the racial ideology of the Japanese state, we have to go back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the late feudal times of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the official political philosophy of the feudal government was Confucianism. At that time, Japan's cultural identity was formed with reference to Chinese culture. Due to the long-term seclusion of the Edo period (1603-1867), western impact was minimal. Against the praise of Chinese thought of the time, *kokugaku* (national leaning) that emphasized indigenous Japanese culture and tradition emerged (Yoshino 1992:46-49). National learning began as a type and method of philological study associated most prominently with Koda no Azumamaro (1669-1739), Kamo Mabuchi (1697-1769), and Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). In particular, *kokugaku* scholar, Motoori, argued that there was an idealized, pure mentality and world view ascribed to the ancient Japanese which was not yet "polluted" by encounters with foreign culture and religion (Hardace 1989:16): Pure, indigenous artifacts of Japanese culture, "including the imperial institution, native aesthetic values (such as *mono no aware*), and spiritual qualities (*kotodama*) 'inherent' in the Japanese language" (Befu 1993:122). Attempting to reevaluate or rediscover the Japanese national essence, *kokugaku* scholarship tried to manifest Japanese superiority over Chinese culture.

In the mid-nineteenth century, however, Japan was forcibly opened to the world, and signed unequal treaties with Western powers (1854-1865). This, of course, was a humiliating experience for Japanese political leaders (Ikegami 1995:195). Japan entered into a frantic catch-up period in order to make the country strong by borrowing and adapting Western technology, institutions and culture. It was encapsulated in such slogans as *Datsu-A nyu-Ou* (Out of Asia, into Europe) and *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong army) (Mendl 1995:21). China was no

longer the reference point. Under this situation, Japan must define its identity by distinguishing itself from the United States and Europe. As represented by the work of Fukuzawa Yukichi, one intellectual of the time, the leading opinion sought to replace outmoded Japanese technology and institutions by advanced Western technology and institutions. The old motto, *wakon kansai* (Japanese spirit, Chinese know-how) was swept away by *wakon yōsai* (Japanese spirit, Western know-how).<sup>2</sup>

Although Japan retained a belief in Japanese superiority in spiritual aspects over the West, it denigrated Japanese culture with overwhelming admiration and respect for the West. The catch-up syndrome became the driving force behind official policy. In the middle of the zeal for the West, a traditional and conservative group of people emphasized Japanese uniqueness. This branch of scholarship gained strength in the 1880s as a reaction to what was regarded as the over-Westernization of the previous decades (Weiner 1997). The Meiji government promulgated the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) that embodied an amalgam of Confucianism and nativism in the framework of the constitutional monarchy. This Rescript on Education became the pillar of prewar Japan's ethics and morality. The purpose of the Rescript was to educate the Japanese people and turn them into "subjects" imbued with loyalty to the Emperor. In the Rescript, *kazoku kokka kan* (a view of the Japanese state as a family) was the foundation of the nation. The emperor is considered the father of the Japanese subjects. "The imperial blood may be said to run in the veins of all Japanese, who have thus become kinsmen to one another, descended from a common ancestor" (Dower 1986:222).

The ideology of *kokutai* (national polity) was also disseminated. It contends that the solidarity of the Japanese was rooted in the 'natural bonds of blood.' This conception of Japanese nationhood as a blood association excludes membership for minorities. One proponent of *kokutai ron* (national polity thesis) argued that the national integration based on blood association was a superior form of political integration than that based on social contract and interests, because only blood association could create "order (obedience), respect and love" (Oguma 1995:54). *Nihon* (Japan), a magazine, was published in 1899 with a mission to reawaken the Japanese to

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<sup>2</sup> As one example of excessive Western preference, Mori Arinori, one of the intellectual leaders and once a minister of education in the Meiji period, suggested abolishing the Japanese language and replacing it



uniquely Japanese characteristics and the feeling of national pride. Similar magazines appeared soon afterwards (Befu 1993: 124).

This self-praising ethnocentrism, however, would be shaken due to the incorporation of other ethnic groups into the Japanese empire. Colonial expansion made Japan obviously a multiethnic empire. Thirteen million Koreans and another three million Taiwanese were incorporated in 1910 (Oguma 1995:161). The *kokutai* doctrine that had an affinity with the ethnic homogeneity of the Japanese contradicted the emergence of multiethnic Japan. The discourse of political integration based on the natural bonds of blood did not seem convincing at this point. On the day of Japan's annexation of Korea (August 1910), many newspapers and magazines celebrated the annexation, and proponents who adhered to the conception of a multiethnic Japan became the mainstream of the discourse on Japan's racial ideology. There was no argument grounded in the purity of Japanese blood in major newspapers and magazines (Ibid. 104).

In opposition to the *kokutai* doctrine, scholars, former *minken* (People's Rights) proponents and Christian intellectuals presented a view of Japan as a multiethnic country and formulated *dōshoron* (common descent thesis). In order to challenge claims to the ethnic homogeneity and distinctiveness of Japan, *dōshoron* proponents argued that the Japanese and the Koreans shared a common descent and the emperor used to govern the Korean peninsula. Around the 1890s, historians who received training in the discipline of Western modern history formulated the *dōshoron* to challenge *kokutai* doctrine. For instance, Hoshino Wataru wrote a thesis that imperial people originally came from the Korean peninsula and later expanded the ruling area to the mainland Japan. In other words, he contended that "the Japanese and the Koreans are rooted to the same race and spoke the same language" and "these two countries used to be one ruling area" (Ibid. 89). In his thesis, the annexation of Korea was justified since Korea was reincorporated into the imperial ruling area, i.e. "the re-union of two long-separated brothers" (Peattie 1984:109).

Anthropologists such as Tsuboi Shōgorō, a professor at Tokyo Imperial University, also played an important role in formulating *dōshoron*. He stated in his lecture of 1905: "Many people say that

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with a European language (See Miller 1982:107-109).

Japan would win the war (Russo-Japanese War) due to its ethnic homogeneity. But this is a misunderstanding. Rather, Japan would win the war because of its ethnic complexity” and “It is really beneficial for us that Japan is multiethnic” (Oguma 1998:77). As an example of a successfully developed country, he mentioned England, considered a country of mixed breeding of the Anglo and the Saxon peoples. Linguists joined this tendency by providing evidence of linguistic similarities between the Japanese and Korean languages. The assertion by Kanazawa Shōzaburō, who coined the term *dōsorōn*, was widely disseminated and became a central academic theory of the time (Ibid. 97).

Outside academia, former *minken* advocates such as Ōkuma Shigenobu disseminated *dōsorōn*. He came to have a view that the Koreans were racially the same as the Japanese and therefore Japan should pave the way to Korea’s civilization by the rule of democratic politics (Ibid.102). Uchimura Kanzō, a prominent Christian intellectual, argued that the Japanese and the Koreans were “brothers” and preached “true reconciliation and harmony” between the two countries (Takasaki 1990:38). The multiethnic, inclusive conception of nationhood represented by *dōsorōn*, thus became a dominant ideology.

At the end of 1942 the Japanese empire had acquired “formal or informal dominion over 34-35 million people populating a vast area stretching from the Solomon Islands in the mid-Pacific to Burma’s border with India, and from the rain forests of New Guinea to the icy shores of Attu and Kiska” (Duus 1996: xii). By acquiring ruling areas beyond the boundaries of the Sinitic world, Japan encountered a serious ideological problem to legitimate its colonial expansion. The notion of *dōbun dōshu* (common culture, common race) was persuasive justification for colonial domination in the Meiji period. The Japanese shared with their neighbors in North East Asia a common writing system, common religious and philosophical traditions, and common phenotype. Especially stressing cultural commonality, Japan attempted to integrate East Asia. However, when the Japanese empire came to encompass more distant cultural worlds such as Southeast Asia, *dōbun dōshu* became no longer applicable for domination (Ibid. xxi). As a sort of resolution for this paradox, Foreign Minister Arita Hachirō, on June 29, 1940, adumbrated a revised ideological vision that emphasized closeness of geography, history, race, and economy between East Asia and Southeast. In response to Arita’s speech, a new foreign minister

Matsuoka Yōsuke presented this vision as the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” (*Dai Tōa Kyōeiken*) in the same year. In addition to cultural linkages, the concept of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere emphasized economic linkages. By presenting this hypocritical interpretation, Japan tried to create a plausible explanation for the closeness of the Sinitic sphere and Southeast Asia for its domination (Ibid. xxii).

With Japan’s defeat in World War II, however, the Japanese territories shrunk back to their size in the pre-colonial era. A similar phenomenon happened when the *kokutai* doctrine, which emphasized Japanese uniqueness, was replaced by the multiethnic conception of Japanese nationhood in the imperial expansion era. In response to the new reality, academics began to formulate a new conception of Japanese nationhood. Despite the presence of former colonial subjects such as the Koreans and Taiwanese, commentators now depicted Japan as a country consisting of a homogeneous people. The Japanese government was reluctant to integrate the Korean and other former imperial subjects into the Japanese citizenry, and took measures to exclude ethnic minority groups in mainland Japan. Here, there was no vision of Japan as a multiethnic country among Japanese intellectuals (Oguma 1995: 339). Thus *dōsoron* or multiethnic conceptions, which flourished during the colonial era and were powerful rationales for expansionism, had disappeared from academia and the public. Instead, a new emphasis on the homogeneity and pure blood of the Japanese people emerged.

“Science” also contributed to the birth of the Japanese myth of homogeneity. In the field of anthropology, Hasebe Kotondo, a prominent scholar, denied the concept of the mixed blood of the Japanese and contended that the original Japanese were of native stock. He also thoroughly rejected the relationship with Korea. Kiyono Kenji is another anthropologist who established the postwar theory that the Stone Age man discovered in Japan was the direct ancestor of the Japanese race (Ibid. 260-261, 346-347). Progressive historians soon responded to this new “scientific” anthropological evidence, and attacked the previous mythic Japanese historiography grounded in the ideology of the “Emperor’s nation.” Historians such as Nezu Masashi and Inoue Kiyoshi argued that, “prior to the emergence of the Emperor, at least more than 4,000 or 5,000 years ago from now, the Japanese people had already enjoyed a peaceful and free communal society that was thoroughly democratic” (Ibid. 350).

The emergent concept of homogeneous Japan appealed to the majority of the people who had lost confidence with the defeat of World War II (Ibid. 357). Since the independence of the Korean states reinforced the idea that the best strategy for them would be to return to their mother country, the Japanese government did not confront the reality that there were ethnic minority groups in Japan. The prevailing conception of Japanese nationhood after 1945 was thus based on Japanese blood.

So far, I have illustrated the centrality of ‘race’ in determining state membership. What is important here is that, under changed political and economic circumstances, a racial ideology is rearticulated so as to respond to situational imperatives. The common descent thesis as a Japanese racial ideology was reconstructed in accordance with Japan’s retreat from an empire, and changed into unique Japanese culture and distinctive Japanese blood only the Japanese people is entitled to have. The newly born racialized Japanese identity means exclusive nationhood depending on who has Japanese blood or not, and simultaneously categorizing subordinate populations as members of ‘inferior races’ (Weiner 1995:433). The fluctuation of discourse on Japan’s racial ideologies or the origin of the Japanese suggests that the conceptions of nationhood themselves are often shaped by the state’s interaction with the rest of the world. The essence of Japan’s ‘racialized’ nationhood was dependent upon historical forgetfulness of the past and invention of antiquity in the present, as the shift of racial ideology from a multiethnic Japanese empire to a homogeneous Japanese nation-state. In this way, the myth of the enduring purity of Japanese blood and homogeneity was established.

### **Monolithic Assimilation and Cultural Integration Policies**

It is said that the Japanese empire adopted an assimilationist approach to integrate colonized people. The creation of an empire would have to begin with the domination over the neighboring countries to the Japanese homeland – North East Asia. Affinities of race and culture between Japanese and its colonial peoples (excepting the islanders of the South Pacific) made possible the idea that the colonizer and the colonized ultimately would fuse and come to have the same

identification within the Japanese colonial territories. This concept crystallized in the doctrine of *dōka* (assimilation), which came to be the central agenda in Japanese colonial policies (Peattie 1984:96).

According to Peattie, there are at least four assumptions that drove Japan to the idea of assimilation. The easiest formulation is the *dōbun dōshu* (same culture, same race) that represents cultural and racial affinities with Sinitic areas. But more importantly, Japan's assimilation was formulated by "a strongly moralistic tone, derived from the Chinese Confucian tradition and expressed in the endlessly-repeated phrase *isshi dōjin* - 'impartiality and equal favor'" (Ibid. 97). This implies that Japanese and native populations should be treated equally, subjected to the same obligation and invested with the same rights within colonial territories under the imperial will. Third, the concept of *kazoku kokka* (family state) is central in order to create inclusionary state membership. As I already mentioned, the Japanese emperor was regarded as the head of the *Yamato minzoku* (Japanese race) and state, and this mythic linkage between the origin of the Japanese race and the imperial house could expand outward to include colonized peoples under Japanese dominion. In other words, newly included populations could become children of the imperial family or *kōmin*. Finally, there was a belief, based on semi-mythic and factual examples, that the Japanese people had an historic capacity for assimilating foreign people and ideas; for instance, the emergence of the *Yamato* race, Japan's adoption of Chinese culture in ancient times, and importation of Western technologies and institutions in the modern period (Ibid. 97).

The assimilationist approach in Japan, however, was not successful precisely because of the beliefs in Japanese racial uniqueness and superiority among Japanese administrators (Chung and Tipton 1997: 169). According to Michael Weiner, "a central motif of Japanese imperialism was the notion that Korean and other Asian peoples were somehow inferior" (Weiner 1994: 21-24). The peculiarity of the Japanese assimilationist approach might be forcing extreme acculturation (Japanization) without any promise of social and political equality. The Japanese colonial subjects suffered from this inherent contradiction.

Having little experience in colonial affairs, Japanese state officials imported European colonial thoughts and policies. There were broadly two models: one non-assimilationist approach represented by Britain and another assimilationist approach adopted by France. The characteristics of the two approaches summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Two Broad Approaches in European Colonial Models**

	Non-assimilationist	Assimilationist
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>disparity in level of civilization (Darwinist natural selection)</li> <li>racially/culturally distinct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>universal human nature (natural law / enlightenment)</li> </ul>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British colonies; Tunisia, Morocco</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>French Algeria, Haiti</li> </ul>
Legal/political arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>separate entities</li> <li>separate, special law</li> <li>local parliament (trusteeship/gradual autonomy/home rule)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extension of the metropole</li> <li>application of the same law</li> <li>representation in the central parliament</li> </ul>
Possible consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>equal rights and obligation</li> </ul>

Note: Kashiwazaki, Chikako. 1998. Nationalities and Citizenship in Japan: Stability and Change in Comparative Perspective. Unpublished dissertation: 123.

\* France moved away from the assimilationist approach in the late nineteenth century, because the ‘failure’ of the assimilationist approach became apparent due to high administrative costs and resistance by the colonized people (Betts 1975:169-172).

Although these European models provided Japanese state officials with a set of ideas for implementing colonial rule, they did not simply follow these models. Generally speaking, ‘assimilation’ enables minority groups to enjoy the same institutional privilege as the dominant group at the cost of cultural assimilation. The distinct nature of the Japanese type of assimilation is the contrivance of a Janus-faced assimilation policy. On the one hand, it forces assimilation of the colonized, and ‘Japanizes’ them on the cultural level. On the other hand, it makes a clear distinction between the first-class Japanese and the second-class by mobilizing Japaneseness, which is measured by ‘race,’ ‘ethnicity,’ and ‘culture,’ and legitimizes the hierarchy among its subjects on the socio-structural level. The logic of such a way of domination is similar to the one we call ‘Anglo-conformity,’ but the critical difference between them is that while the concept of Anglo-conformity *implicitly* mobilizes the supremacy of whiteness to hide the mechanism of ranking people, the concept of colonial Japanization *explicitly* mobilizes the supremacy of

Japaneseness to authorize the mechanism of ranking subjects.<sup>3</sup> By making a clear distinction in assimilation between the cultural level and the socio-structural level, the colonized people were stratified at the socio-structural level while they kept to cultural uniformity (Refer to Yamanaka 1993:106). Here, Gordon’s classical assimilation model works as a good reference.

**Table 2: Assimilation Model Presented by Gordon**

Process		
Acculturation	1) cultural, behavioral	change in cultural patterns to those of host society
	2) structural	large-scale entrance into cliques, club, and institutions of host society, on primary group level
Amalgamation	3) marital	large-scale intermarriage
	4) identificational	development of a sense of peoplehood based exclusively on host society
	5) attitude receptional	absence of prejudice
	6) behavior receptional	absence of discrimination
	7) civic	absence of value and power conflict

Note: Milton M. Gordon. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life: Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press: 71.

Gordon posits three hypotheses regarding assimilation process based on this model. First, cultural assimilation (acculturation) would occur first in majority-minority group relationships. Second, acculturation may not be necessarily followed by the other types of assimilation; “this

<sup>3</sup>There is variety of classification for policies regarding majority-minority relationships. Gordon (1975) presented four different types: racism (it does not give minorities political equality and citizenship), assimilation (it gives political equality at the cost of cultural assimilation), liberal pluralism (it does not accept ethnic differences in public and legal institutions, but it allows minorities to retain their ethnic diversity in the private sphere), and corporate pluralism (it gives equality but a different legal status). R.A. Schirmerhorn presented four different types of policy: assimilation, cultural pluralism, forced segregation and forced assimilation (1978:83). George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger classified into six: assimilation, pluralism, legal protection of minorities, population transfer, continued subjugation and extermination (1953:27-35). According to them, assimilation could be forced by adopting an extreme ethnocentrism that refused minorities rights. In both cases Japan’s policy is forced assimilation.



situation of ‘acculturation only’ may continue indefinitely.” Third, “if structural assimilation occurs along with or subsequent to acculturation, all the other types of assimilation will inevitably follow” (Gordon 1975). Gordon’s approach maintains that cultural assimilation might continue infinitely without giving to the next stage, amalgamation.

It is arguable that legal-institutional assimilation and cultural assimilation can be clearly separated. In reality, many issues of assimilation are on the boundaries between them, such as official language use, interracial (international) marriage, and religious convergence (Oguma 1998:648). However, conceptualizing assimilation into two different dimensions, as such, is helpful for understanding the nature of Japanese assimilation policies. Legal-institutional assimilation pursues the extension of laws and institutions of a suzerain to colonies, and is often associated with the equalization of rights and duties among its subjects to some degree. Cultural assimilation is to acculturate the colonized into the colonizer through education and to inculcate its subjects with identification with the suzerain.

Japan’s cultural assimilation policies had some distinct characteristics different from those of European countries. First, in Europe, the project of cultural assimilation ‘civilized’ the colonized population by disseminating Western culture. There was a strong conviction in the colonizers that their culture was superior to that of the colonized, and therefore it was their mission to enlighten and civilize the colonized. In Japan’s control of Korea, cultural assimilation was closely tied with the maintenance of national security from the threat of Western powers. The conception of *kazoku kokka kan* (the view of the Japanese state as a family) in which the emperor stood as the father of all the subjects in his territories promoted not only acculturation but also forced ‘spiritual’ assimilation of the colonized by demanding loyalty and allegiance to the emperor. Second, unlike European colonial powers whose rule was presupposed by visible racial differences between the colonizers and the colonized, Japan could stress racial and cultural affinity with the ruled. Some Japanese intellectuals considered that acculturation and spiritual

assimilation could eventually eliminate ethnic differences. They could believe that Koreans would be “not-quite Japanese, but capable of becoming Japanese” (Peattie 1984: 40).<sup>4</sup>

While colonial governments spoke loudly about the merger of Japanese and native populations under the slogan of *isshi dōjin* (impartiality and equal favor), such an ideal environment of Japanese colonialism was never realized within the empire. The feelings of superiority held by the Japanese colonizers were insurmountable impediments to any true merger of the two populations. Yet, as a rhetorical device, *isshi dōjin* was a quite useful concept for the colonizer due to the nebulosity of its meaning. Its nature of encompassing various interpretations was quite suitable for “disparate political purpose” (Ibid. 98). While at one extreme, this concept could embrace the most liberal thought which emphasized equal rights for all the populations within the entire empire, at another extreme, it could lead to the most oppressive measures which stressed equal obligation or even more for the colonized. Thus the vagueness of the mythic concept of *isshi dōjin*, which is central to assimilation doctrine, was interpreted by different persons in different ways, and ultimately encompassed contradictory perceptions and policies. Undoubtedly, assimilation in any colonial settings is always uni-directional to change the ‘inferior’ race (the colonized) by the ‘superior’ race (the colonizer).

From the mid-1930s to the final stage of Japanese colonialism, assimilation took the extreme form of Japanization of the colonial populations, which is termed ‘imperialization’ of subject peoples (*kōmin-ka*). This policy aimed at transforming colonial subjects thoroughly into ‘imperial subjects’ (*kōmin*) and centered on an inculcation of a sense of obligation to the Japanese Emperor. Imperialization was sanctified by social control and the human resource mobilization for the war effort in the context of the Japanese war against China. Therefore, this oppressive movement was particularly intense in Korea, which is adjacent to China. In order to instill loyalty to the Japanese Emperor, imperialization involved intense ‘spiritual’ assimilation of the colonized in which the Japanese government attempted to foster ‘voluntary’ public

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<sup>4</sup> Hannah Arendt distinguishes between “overseas” imperialism (geographically and racially separated colonial territories) and “continental” imperialism (geographically and racially more contiguous). Japanese colonial rule was distinctly more Asian in its frame of reference. It is ‘continent-oriented,’ stressing the apparent racial and cultural affinities between the Japanese and its colonial subjects (Refer to Arendt 1966: 223-224).

commitment to the wartime duties, to accelerate the diffusion of the Japanese language throughout its territories, and to abolish indigenous cultural styles (Ibid. 121). Under the slogan of ‘*naisen ittai*’ (Japan and Korea as one body), the imperialization (*kōmin-ka*) movement was implemented in almost every aspect of life in Japan and its colonies. Colonial assimilation policies towards Koreans had been vaguely defined from the very outset of Japan’s rule. Yet, imperialization policies had a very clear objective, which was never intended to extend social and political rights to the colonized.

During the wartime period, the ultra-nationalist fever in the Japanese homeland was echoed in the fanatical nature of the imperialization movement in the colonies. On October 2, 1937, Minami Jirō, Japanese Governor-General of Korea (1936-42), introduced the so-called “Oath as Subjects of the Imperial Nation” (*kōkuoku shinmin no seishi*). This Oath had two versions: one for adults, the other for children. For instance, it was a daily task in the morning for school children to recite the following statement together (Shida 1989:174):

1. We are subjects of Imperial Japan.
2. We will serve the Emperor well by uniting our spirits.
3. We will become a great, strong nation through patience and discipline.

As reflected in this Oath, the ultimate aim of imperialization was to turn the colonized peoples into true Japanese, not only in deed but also in ‘spirit.’ The imperialization movement consisted of four major programs, namely religious reform, “the national language” movement (*kokugo undō*), the name-changing campaign (*sōshi kaimei*), and the recruitment of military volunteers (*shiganhei seido*) (Chou 1996:45). The following are some details on each program.

#### 1. Religious reform: introduction of State Shintoism

The modern Japanese state was deliberately established on a foundation that unified government and religion (*saisei ittchi*) (Holtom 1943:4). In 1886 Shinto was made the state religion. Early Meiji politicians invented, as a useful device, state sponsorship of religion or State Shintoism to bond the Japanese people together as a ‘nation’ in the service of national goals. Shinto, as

adopted by the modern Japanese state, was largely an “invented tradition” in the sense of Hobsbawm’s term.<sup>5</sup> According to Gellner (1983), it is hard to create a unified national identity in a society where there is a great stress on cultural differentiation rather than homogeneity between the ruling class and the ruled class. Before the Meiji period, people were clearly stratified by castes and it is only mid-Meiji that Japan came to have a national identity (Ikegami 1995:185).

Shinto was originally very local and indigenous in Japan. Unlike the more universalistic Christianity, it did not seek to widely disseminate its practice nor did it have a religious doctrine to be disseminated. This passive nature as a religion, if it is possible to call it a religion, partly contributed to nationalism’s exploitation of Shinto. From the ruler’s perspective, the loose structure of existing Shinto institutions might also be useful to exploit. Since Shinto had a capacity to encompass “800 gods,” which means ‘many’ in Japanese, all that the government had to do was to place those gods in a hierarchy in which the Sun Goddess (*Amaterasu Ōmikami*) was crowned at the very top. In so doing, existing loose institutional ties of Shintoism all over Japan were centralized and strengthened to convey the will of the government. In other words, Shinto was introduced to create a ‘nation’ and to overcome resistance to such novelties as conscription, a national taxation system, and compulsory education by transcending regional loyalties and differences of class (Hardace 1989:59).

Japanese administrators applied Shinto to the imperialization movement in order to make Koreans loyal and obedient to the emperor. In Korea, the colonial government promoted State Shintoism, at the expense of indigenous religions. During the imperialization period, a number of Japanese shrines (*jinja*) were constructed and the colonial people were forced to worship the Sun Goddess and to participate in Shinto ceremonies. Korea had 60 major shrines in 1939 and 73

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<sup>5</sup> The distinct nature of ‘invented tradition’ is its declared continuity with the past. Such continuity is largely fictitious. Responses to novel situations take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. ‘Invented tradition’ means a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past (Hobsbawm 1983:1-2).

when the war ended, while the number of minor shrines increased from 470 to 828 during the period of 1939-42 (Chou 1996:46).

Korea's most influential religion, Christianity, provided the most significant obstacles to the introduction of the State Shintoism. Many Christian Koreans often refused to visit and to worship at the shrines. For them, God was the one true deity, and the performance of Shinto rituals directly conflicted with Christian tenets. A vigorous anti-Shinto movement came to the surface, while the pressure of the Japanese authorities became more intense.<sup>6</sup> From June 1940 onward, more than two hundred churches were closed down; seventy ministers and two thousand or so Christians were arrested; more than fifty ministers died in jail (Chou 1996: 47).

## 2. The national language movement (*kokugo undō*)

Today the subject in which children learn the Japanese language (*nihongo*) is called '*kokugo*' (the national language) at school. The term '*kokugo*' involves a patriotic nuance and a legacy of Japanese colonialism. The Japanese language was introduced to colonies not as a functional 'business language.' The introduction of the Japanese language took place as the embodiment of imperialization and Japanese virtues (Tanaka 1998:88).

The imperialization movement strongly promoted the national language movement. The Japanese language was designated officially as *kokugo* (the national language) in Japanese colonies. The national language movement played a critical role in the imperialization of Koreans. As part of the modern educational system under the imperialization movement, learning *kokugo* was closely linked to political indoctrination to inculcate loyalty to the suzerain state. The Japanese authorities considered speaking 'the national language' a prerequisite for colonial peoples' becoming true Japanese and *kokugo* was regarded as "the womb that nurtures

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<sup>6</sup> When Japan's colonial rule came to an end through the defeat in World War II, one of the actions Koreans took was to defile the sacred objects in Shinto shrines. The first thing that the Koreans did to vent their hatred toward the Japanese was to set fire to Shinto shrines. Thus Shintoism was completely eradicated in a very short time span after the war (Chou 1996:48).

patriotism” (Yamazaki 1939). The state officials regarded use of Japanese as the most important indicator of ‘successful’ assimilation (Chung and Tipton 1997: 186).

The Korean language or *Chōsen-go* was a required subject in elementary schools from 1911 to 1938. During the same period, *kokugo* was also treated as a required subject on which Koreans had to spend much more time than learning the Korean language. The status of the Korean language had been degraded under an extreme assimilation policy. The geographical propinquity and racial and linguistic affinities to Japan made Korea a target of the heaviest educational campaign (Tsurumi 1984:278). It was reflected in the fact that in 1938 Korean became an optional subject and was eventually excluded from elementary school curricula (Ibid. 49). Since Korean nationalism was also closely tied to the Korean language, the measures taken by the colonial government in Korea were much more vigorous than in any other parts of the Japanese empire. For instance, a name list was put up on classroom walls. If a student uttered a Korean word, an ‘x’ (*batsu*, meaning wrong) was marked beside his/her name on the list and he or she was given a penalty. Even at home, to the extent controls could be enforced, this was common (Shida 1989:175). The Japanese Government-General of Korea issued nameplates on which “house of the national language” was printed for families whose members were all able to speak Japanese. These Korean families had to put up the nameplate on their entrance door.

### 3. The name-changing campaign (*sōshi kaimei*)

The name-changing program (*sōshi kaimei*) began in Korea on February 11, 1940. *Sōshi kaimei* means to “create family names and change one’s given name.” This name-changing program was very much of a coercive nature and forced Koreans to change their original names into Japanese ones within six months. Its primary objective was to transform the colonial peoples into “true Japanese.” Official estimates indicate that more than 3.17 million households had new family names in the Japanese style. This number comprised 79.3 percent of the total households in Korea (*Asahi Shinbun* August 9, 2000. Refer to Chou 1996:60; Shida 1989:175). Those who refused to change their names or failed to register on time encountered overt discrimination such

as denied entrance of their children to school and advancement in higher education, and deprivation of job opportunities (Chou 1996: 60)<sup>7</sup>.

The name-changing campaign can be conceptualized from two perspectives. First, it was a legal and cultural assimilation policy in which the traditional Korean family registry was Japanese. By introducing this policy, the Korean method of retaining the maiden name of the women after marriage was relinquished and each household came to adopt a single family name, which conformed to a method of the Japanese family registry.<sup>8</sup> Second, the name-changing campaign was closely related to human resource mobilization for the war effort and made it easier to extend conscription among Koreans.

At the height of imperialization, the propaganda of ‘the emperor’s nation’ or ‘the nation of God’ was repeated, and Japanese administrators desperately needed a measurement of the degree of loyalty of Koreans. The act of changing one’s name could be considered an indication that he/she had become a loyal subject of the emperor’s nation. In other words, *sōshi kaimei* supposedly functioned as a loyalty test, as did the acquisition of the Japanese language.

It is widely known that the Korean language has relatively few surnames -- a total of 250 in 1930 for more than twenty million people (Chou 1996:54), and half of the population is a holder of one of the five representative Korean names such as Kim (Shida 1989:178). In implementing *sōshi kaimei*, Japanese authorities argued that these Korean surnames were clan names (*sei*)

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<sup>7</sup> In 2000, tape recordings were discovered of high-ranking officials of the Japanese Government-General of Korea. According to the tapes, the name-changing campaign was promoted by Koreans who favored the Japanese government. “There was a request from Koreans that they wanted to be treated the same as Japanese, and therefore they said, ‘we want to change our names into the Japanese style.’ If they think so, we think it is all right. However, there might be cases that the very end of the system, the name-changing was forced. So we were troubled.” There were more than 200 heads in local provinces, in which about 90 percent were Koreans. These Koreans were most active in the name-changing campaign. It was honorable to let their villagers change their names into the Japanese style. They considered that it was a test of loyalty for the Japanese government. The Japanese police was opposed to Koreans’ name-changing, because it made Koreans invisible and made it difficult for them to identify Koreans (*Asahi Shinbun* August 8 and 9, 2000)

<sup>8</sup> In Korea there was a law forbidding *dongseong-dongbon* marriage, i.e., marriage between members of the same clan. On July 16, 1997, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Korea ruled it was unconstitutional. Therefore, same-clan marriage is now legal in South Korea. (Fukuoka 2000:280)

rather than family names (*shi*) and therefore they must ‘create’ Japanese family names (Chou 1996: 58).

Even today there are a lot of Koreans who have Japanese family names. Though it is hardly comprehensible for the Japanese people, Koreans state that they can assume their original names or ancestral roots from their Japanese aliases. Indeed, they have really ‘created’ their names by careful consideration. Many people selected Japanese names that encoded their Korean roots and even the particular clan to which they belonged. For instance, people with the Korean surname Kim would choose Japanese surnames that incorporate the character for ‘Kim’ (meaning ‘gold’ and pronounced ‘*kane*’ in its ethnic Japanese reading): names like Kaneda, Kaneyama or Kanemoto. Likewise, some Koreans simply used Japanese readings for their own *bonkwan* (ancestral land) as their new surname. Another strategy sometimes adopted was to choose a Japanese name that included a reference to the tribal history recorded in the *chokbo*. This was a form of resistance by Koreans, though it was passive.

#### 4. The military volunteer program (*shiganhei seido*)

In 1938, the “Law concerning Army Special Volunteers” was promulgated in order to recruit Korean soldiers. This is well known as the Volunteer System (*shiganhei seido*). Any Koreans who met certain requirements could apply to become army ‘volunteers’ (Chou 1996:62). The Navy Volunteer System started in 1943 and general conscription was enforced in 1944. Although it was called “volunteer,” in reality young people were forced to apply, certain numbers of people from each village being stipulated by the Japanese authorities. Japanese authorities convinced poor young Koreans into believing that they would take care of volunteers’ families (Shida 1989:175). A man who is 79 years old told that he had become a military volunteer because he was afraid that his brother’s business was not going well and his mother would be blamed if he did not volunteer. He remembered that in his corps there were about 50 Koreans and he felt that more than half of them were unwilling volunteers (*Asahi Shinbun* August 12, 2000).



Aside from coercive recruitment, Chou argues that there were genuine volunteers who responded to imperialization. The newly discovered tapes in Japan in 2000 recorded voices of high-ranking officials of the Japanese Government-General of Korea. They demonstrated that there were young Koreans who willingly became military volunteers. One official stated that the government should not adopt general conscription of Koreans carelessly, but “If there are people who are willing, it is a good idea to open the door for them for conscription. In the beginning there were about 200 or 300 people, and then gradually the number increased... Young (Koreans) willingly volunteered at that time” (*Asahi Shinbun* August 8, 2000). Administrators called ‘volunteer’ military service ‘the blood tax,’ analogous to taxpaying, and propagated it in highly moral tones with such phrases as “the supreme glory” and “highest honor” (Chou 1996:65; *Asahi Shinbun* August 8, 2000).<sup>9</sup>

This method of “recruitment” was used not only for military conscription but also for labor to compensate for the lack of human resources in Japan, especially in industries such as textiles, coal mining, and construction (Kim 1997:115). This labor “recruitment” started in June 1938, but it soon became insufficient to overcome a serious manpower shortage (Chung and Tipton 1997: 177). As a result, it is estimated 667,000 Koreans were forcibly conscripted for labor in Japan (ibid. 187). Their continued resistance and that of their offspring became a major ethnic problem in contemporary Japan.

As these policies and campaigns show, for Japanese authorities, assimilation meant a total subjugation of their colonial subjects, and therefore cultural assimilation or Japanization was unhesitatingly promoted without granting full equality in legal status to the subjects. Legal-institutional assimilation proceeded in a gradual and selective manner for the interests of Japan. While it was undesirable for Japanese authorities to grant Koreans legal rights such as suffrage --

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<sup>9</sup> As for the name-changing campaign, one Korean woman reflected at that time and said, “I think my parents were sad (about her name-changing). But I was happy as if I were transformed myself.” She also said, “Even for not going to the Shinto shrine to worship every morning, there was no penalty. But I went every morning because I was glad to be praised” (*Asahi Shinbun* August 10, 2000).

especially when the colonial rule was unstable due to anti-colonial movements, some legal rights could be extended if they were beneficial for the Japanese state to incorporate the colonial subjects into the same legal-institutional framework enjoyed by the Japanese in the homeland.

The introduction of the Japanese-style family registration system perfectly served Japan's benefits in this sense. During the colonial period, the Japanese state exploited the family registration system in order to place its subjects both in the homeland and its colonial territories under state control. In Korea, reorganization of the existing Korean family registry started in 1909. The standardization of this legal system brought about more burdens than rights for Koreans. In addition to the function of surveillance, the Japanese-style family registry came to have another very important role. It became a device to make a clear distinction between proper Japanese and colonial subjects, even after the name-changing campaign in which Korean people were forced to change their names into Japanese ones. It used to be that the Japanese were called people in the *naichi* (inner area, namely homeland) and the Korean were called people of the *gaichi* (outer area, namely overseas territories), regardless of their actual residence. The Japanese state separated the Japanese and Korean registries, and did not allow Koreans to move their *gaichi* family registries to *naichi* registries even if they actually resided in the *naichi* (Miyata 1990:59). Far from the rhetoric of inclusion as the Emperor's children, the Japanese state still differentiated Koreans from the Japanese. Conscription was another example of legal "equalization" which was also more a burden than a right from Koreans' perspective. The general conscription system took effect in 1944 in Korea. As anticipated, there was strong anti-Japanese resistance among Koreans against general conscription, but the Japanese government suppressed their resistance with police force. In the spring of 1945, conscripted Koreans escaped one after another. One Japanese said, "the most important responsibility of the corps became watching Koreans to prevent their escape (*Asahi Shinbun* August 12, 2000).

Towards the end of World War II, however, the imposition of heavy duties on Koreans for war efforts led the Japanese government to take a step toward the equalization of rights, albeit on a limited scale. For instance, in December 1944, Koreans were allowed to transfer their family registries from the Korean to the Japanese ones by fulfilling certain conditions (Ōnuma 1980: 200). The amendment to the election law in 1945 stipulated that 23 Koreans be elected from

colonies to the Lower House, though the law was never implemented due to the defeat of Japan (Tanaka 1974).

The decade following the annexation was the period of *budan seiji* (military rule) in which oppressive and overtly militaristic measures were taken. This was reflected in the statement by Terauchi Masatake, the first Japanese Governor-General in Korea (1910-16), that “Koreans who do not obey Japan should die” (Shida 1989:136).<sup>10</sup> Anger of Koreans finally exploded in the First of March Demonstration in 1919, and people declared the independence of Korea. This large-scale resistance ended in the face of the overwhelming military power of Japan, and at least 8,000 people died and nearly 50,000 people arrested were tortured (Ibid. 146). After the demonstration, Saitō Makoto (1919-27 and 1929-31) became Governor-General and launched the initiative of *bunka seiji* (cultural rule). Under the slogans such as “*isshi dōjin*” (Japan and Korea as one body) and “*naisen yūwa*” (harmony between the Japanese and Koreans), cultural assimilation or Japanization was further emphasized in a less militaristic manner.

While Koreans enjoyed the most liberal climate throughout the colonial period (the 1920s under *bunka seiji*), Japan also experienced *Taishō* Democracy in which liberal debates had emerged (1912-1925) (Banno 1993:122). During this period, liberal Japanese intellectuals started criticizing the colonial rule of Korea. Yoshino Sakuzō (1878-1933), a representative intellectual of *Taishō* Democracy and professor of Tokyo Imperial University stated in a lecture in 1919 the minimum requests regarding the reform of the colonial rule of Korea. Those were: 1) to abolish discriminatory conditions towards Koreans; 2) to terminate the rule by military officers; 3) to relinquish assimilation policies as a colonial doctrine; and 4) to give Koreans freedom of speech (Takasaki 1990:69; Chung and Tipton 1997: 179). However, he did not deny the assimilationist approach itself. In a publication of 1921, he wrote: “Koreans became Japanese as a matter of form, but they have not yet become Japanese in essence. However, it is a moral responsibility of the *naichi* people to make them perfect Japanese in a long-term effort. Japanization, therefore, must be a fundamental imperative” (Takasaki 1990: 70). In contrast, Yanaihara Tadao (1893-

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<sup>10</sup> The position of the Japanese Governor-General of Korea was under the immediate direct control of the emperor, and was supposed to rule Korea on behalf of the emperor. This position was considered the second-most important following the position of Prime Minister. Four out of eight Japanese Governor-General of Korea later became Prime Minister of Japan (*Asahi Shinbun* August 8, 2000).

1961), professor of colonial policies, criticized the colonial rule of Korea from the non-assimilationist perspective. He made a statement in the *Economist* in 1926 that Koreans should be granted their own legislative assemblies (Ibid. 191). In any case, the liberal critiques by these intellectuals in Japan did not affect the actual colonial rule.

### **Japan: Country of Ambiguity**

So far, I have examined Japan's colonial policy to forcibly incorporate native populations into the Japanese empire. On the one hand, it forced extreme Japanization on the cultural and spiritual level and included them as second-class subjects; on the other hand, it was reluctant to promote socio-structural assimilation and excluded them on the legal-institutional level.

Yamanaka contends that this type of incorporation of people is deeply related to Japan's late entrance into international competition for political supremacy (1993:106). In the latter half of the nineteenth century when Japan entered into the international arena, warfare was literally a battlefield for international supremacy among hegemonic countries. The strength of the state was represented by its military power, and the state that obtained more territories and more resources had a greater chance for further development. However, the division of Asia and Africa had been almost settled between the U.S and European world powers. In order to obtain the limited 'free land,' Japan rapidly militarized and was actively involved in wars. The delayed entry into the world territory game became a critical disadvantage for Japan, and it constrained the tactics that Japan could deploy. Japanese imperialism was reactive and defensive, in the sense that Japan's colonial expansion on the continent was by and large undertaken to secure the nation's strategic frontiers at the flood tide of Western advance in Asia (Jansen 1968: 182). While Japan criticized western expansionism in order to restrain their further advancement to Asia, it had to justify its own expansionism in Asia.

This logical incompatibility in Japan's strategy for supremacy was significantly affected by its ambiguous position in the global racial hierarchy as well as its late entrance in international political competition. Japan was the only non-white empire when an international hierarchy had been already formed by the discourse of white supremacy founded on the firm linkage between

superior, 'higher' civilization and strong military power. In other words, Japan was stronger and more advanced than 'other Asian countries,' but it was relatively weaker than more advanced western powers that were 'racially' Occidental as opposed to Oriental. Under a strong conviction of the supremacy of the Occidental civilization over the Orient, the central agenda of western colonialism was a 'mission to civilize' the colonized. Being in the Orient, Japan was unable to use this logic of domination over the Occident.

However, Orientalism – a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said 1979:3) -- was also exploited by Japan in order to legitimate its rule over other Asian countries under the name of a 'civilizing mission' (Ishida 1998:160). What is the difference, then, between Orientalism by the Occident and Orientalism by the Orient? While the rule of the Orient by the Occident usually stresses cultural heterogeneity, the rule of the Orient by an Oriental power emphasizes cultural and racial closeness represented by the term *dōbun*, *dōshu* (common culture, common race). The Orientalism employed by Japan for the justification of its hegemony over other Asian countries was clearly distinguished from the one by Western imperialism that asserted cultural and racial heterogeneity between the ruler and the colonized. Yet, in reality, as we have already examined, Japan had a belief of superiority of its blood over other Asians. Japan, against its rhetoric of common culture and common descent, needed to restrict assimilation policy to the cultural level in order to maintain its dominance. As a result, the rhetoric of *dōbun dōshu* was gradually exploited for more coercive cultural (spiritual) assimilation policies.

The non-assimilationist or paternalistic approach makes a racial distinction within an empire, which is represented by European overseas empires. A good example is the case of British colonial policies in Africa. It was indirect rule and imperial trusteeship, which included a possibility of autonomy and independence of its colonial territories. On the contrary, the assimilationist approach or 'continental' approach asserts racial homogeneity and interests within an empire. There, the conceptual and actual 'closeness' between the suzerain state and colonies, or their affinities in phenotype, culture, geography, and history makes it possible to diffuse the constitutional rights enjoyed by the suzerain within its entire empire. "The irony and tragedy of

the Japanese case was that the colonial empire ultimately came to include the worst and most contradictory racial assumptions of both patterns” (Peattie 1984:15).

The rhetoric of *dōbun dōshu* was used not only toward the colonized but also the western powers in order to justify Japan’s rule over Asia, especially in the project of the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Dai tō-A Kyōei ken*). The hypocrisy of the *dōbun dōshu* rhetoric was: “Domination of Asians by Caucasians was colonization but domination of Asians by Asians was colonial liberation” (Duus 1996:xxxix). The logic behind *dōbun dōshu* was Janus-faced: it is an affirmation of Orientalism by asserting its superiority and legitimizing its rule under the name of ‘civilizing mission’; simultaneously, however, it is a challenge against Orientalism by asserting the ‘liberalization’ of Asia (*tō-A no kaihō*), which of course meant Japan’s colonization of Asia (Refer to Ishida 1998:162). Consequently, the Japanese empire could not formulate a coherent logic of racial relationships or a racial ideology. This led Japan, in the end, to an inconsistent colonial doctrine and policies that were unable to justify its legitimacy as an empire to itself, its subjects and the rest of the world.

Japan had been wavering between two opposing self-recognitions. While Japan considered itself part of the ‘Orient’ that had been under the threat of invasion and discrimination from the United States and European countries, it came to have a national pride as an empire following the victory over Russia, which raised Japan to the rank of a major colonial power. Japan internalized a contradiction in its assimilation policy due to the two opposing self-recognitions. Oguma defined this type of domination as “colored empire” (*yūshoku no teikoku*) (1998:661). What is important here is that the “colored” does not necessarily mean biological skin color. It signifies the notion of the ‘Orient’ linked to the prevailing discourse that the ‘Orient = colored = barbarous = inferior = the ruled’ as opposed to the ‘Occident= white = civilized = superior = the ruler.’ It is a concept neither geographical nor substantial. For instance, even Russia (white Caucasian) was once regarded as “barbarous Asia.” Regardless of actual skin color, once one is positioned in an inferior status in relation to Europe and the United States, one is considered the “colored” or the “Orient.” Labeling of the “colored” does not simply mean that it lagged behind in the entry to competition in the international territory game: it is a situation in which one’s national identity is traumatized.

People who are once positioned as the “colored” confront an ambivalence between admiration toward “white = the civilized” and resistance against “white = the ruler.” This kind of ambivalence is intensified when the “colored” state comes to possess ruling areas; because its desire to become part of what is “white” can be satisfied with the acquisition of ruling areas, the achievement of its uniqueness can be jeopardized... since a particular discourse cannot dissolve this ambivalence, commentators, in reality, wavered in the change of discourse. What I call the “colored empire” is the domination fluctuating in the face of ambivalence. It is a manner of dominating the weak, while wavering between admiration toward and resistance against hegemonic powers. In such an empire, a superiority complex and inferiority complex, recognition as an advanced country and a lagging-behind country, and a consciousness of the ruler and victim are complexly mixed. But it is consistent for the empire to exploit the ruled for its own interests and stability. In this way, the victimized consciousness sometimes works to mitigate a harsh domination, but it is more frequent that sadism toward the ruled is amplified due to the fierce flickering of its identity (Ibid. 662).

The peculiarity of the “colored empire” or what I call Orientalism by the Orient has a deep root in its two opposing self-recognitions; such ambivalence is reflected in its technique of dominance. The logic of Orientalism by the Orient lies between the logic of the strong and the logic of the weak. It grows out of a crevice of dichotomies: a conqueror of the Orient and a victim of Orientalism by the Occident, inferior as the “colored” and superior as “empire.” Therefore, when it has to confront Orientalism by the Occident, it covers its aspect as an empire (the ruler or conqueror) and disguises as if it were an oppressed minority by emphasizing its aspect as the colored. This is the logic of Japan’s technique of dominance.

## **Conclusion**

‘Race’ is a system of power. It draws on pseudo-biological differences to construct categories for populations, and is a hierarchy in which they are embedded. This paper attempts to illustrate the centrality of ‘race’ in determining the formation of nationhood. The boundaries of the

Japanese or membership of 'the nation' are politically and socially constructed and alter at different historical junctures. What we have learned from the fluctuation of Japanese racial ideologies is that conceptions of nationhood themselves are often shaped by a state's interaction with the rest of the world. The system of the imagined community divides the world between us (members of the Japanese body politic) and 'them' (non-members). Historical forgetfulness of precedence and the legitimation of an invented antiquity generate such an imagined community by symbolically or mythically linking the past and the present.

'Race' played a critical role in formulating a Japanese colonial doctrine that affected its techniques of dominance. Japanese imperialism or Japan's colonial expansion to the continent was reactive and defensive by strategically responding to the advent of Western hegemonic powers in Asia. This case study of the Japanese state demonstrates some important relationships between the state and racialization.

First, this case study shows that the state uses internal minorities to unify the nation. Koreans in Japan were sometimes included and sometimes excluded from the Japanese nation, but this minority group was constantly exploited by Japan to define Japanese nationhood and strengthen national cohesion. The alteration of Japanese racial ideologies from a common descent thesis to the uniqueness of the ethnic Japanese demonstrates that the state has two means of racializing minorities (Table 3): one is the use of inclusionary means by homogenizing its population, and the other is the use of exclusionary means by differentiating a particular group of people. In both means, internal minority groups are used to unite the nation, and racial signifiers such as phenotype, blood lineage, and culture are maximally exploited by the state for its own purposes.



**Table 3: Means of Racialization by the State**

Means	1) Homogenization	2) Differentiation
Characteristics of means	Forced inclusion of a particular group of people based on similarities	Exclusion of a particular group of people based on differences
Strategic ‘tools’ for racialization (racial signifiers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- phenotypical similarities (e.g. skin tone, color, physical features)</li> <li>- Cultural, civilizational similarities (e.g. language, religion)</li> <li>- Blood association or the same descent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- phenotypical differences (e.g. skin tone, color, physical features)</li> <li>- Cultural, civilizational differences (e.g. language, religion)</li> <li>- Blood lineage differentiation</li> </ul>
Examples	<i>Dōsorōn</i> (common descent these) to include Koreans in prewar and wartime Japan	Uniqueness of the Japanese (pure Japanese blood) described in <i>Nihonjinron</i> (discourse about the Japanese) in postwar Japan

Second, this is related to the inclusionary means of racialization -- ‘forced inclusion’ within a national collectivity is no necessary protection against racialization and discrimination. At certain historical junctures the official discourse of the Japanese state acknowledged that the Korean people belonged to the same Mongolian race or even shared the same descent with the Japanese. The state also emphasized that the Korean and the Japanese were culturally almost synonymous. As we have already seen, however, the emphasis of the propinquity of the Korean and the Japanese did not help the minority flee from oppression. Rather it was exploited as a justification for coercive assimilation in the extreme form as imperialization. By making the Korean minority invisible on the superficial level in this way, the Japanese empire tried to forge collectivity among its subjects in its territories.

Finally, the case is very suggestive of the differences between the domination by the colored and white supremacy in terms of their techniques of dominance. An intrinsic aspect of the construction of race is locating oneself within a hierarchy, and it involves not only domestic

dominant-minority relations but also its positioning in the rest of the world. How the state differentiates itself from others varies, depending on a self-perception of positionality in the international racial hierarchy. In Orientalism by the Occident or white supremacy, the techniques of dominance evolve around actual differences in skin tones that are frequently associated with the justification of cultural superiority of the lighter skin color. In this case, the process of racialization is rather straightforward, taking the form of a ‘civilizing mission.’ In contrast, due to the phenotypical similarity between the Japanese and the Koreans and the relatively inferior position of the Japanese state in the global racial hierarchy, the Japanese racism against Koreans reveals that the domination by the colored or Orientalism by the Orient is floating between the emphasis of cultural affinity and cultural differentiation as a basis for racist discourse. The peculiarity of Orientalism by the Orient thus lies in the flickering between the bipolar notions of cultural homogenization and cultural differentiation stemming from the ruler’s ambivalent racial identity. This nature of Orientalism by the Orient is evident when it is compared to Occidentalism by the Occident (white supremacy against the ruled white) represented by cases such as anti-Semitism in Europe and anti-Irish racism in Britain. Because of the supremacy of whiteness in the global racial hierarchy, here phenotypical differences can be hardly employed for the racialization of the ruled or a minority group. Instead, cultural and religious differentiation is maximally exploited by the state for forging the “we-ness” or drawing a boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them.’

Table 4 is a simplified conceptual typology of styles of domination derived from the above three implications. Each category is an ideal type and may not exactly fit reality. However, it explains the socio-political nature of race and, how ‘race’ is used for domination. I would encourage empirical studies of each case to deepen our understanding for racialization.

### **Table 3: Styles of Domination and Their Characteristics**

**Table 3: Styles of Domination and their Characteristics**

<p>The Ruled</p> <p>The Ruler</p>	<p><b>ORIENT</b></p>	<p><b>OCCIDENT</b></p>
<p><b>ORIENT</b></p> <p><b>Dominant-Minority Relation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Position in IRH:</b></li> <li>• <b>Race (phenotype):</b></li> <li>• <b>Culture:</b></li> <li>• <b>Blood lineage:</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Characteristics:</b></p> <p><b>Means of Racialization:</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p>	<p><b>ORIENTALISM by ORIENT</b></p> <p><b>Colored Empire</b></p> <p>Both the Ruler and the Ruled are ‘Inferior’ in IRH</p> <p>Similar Phenotype</p> <p>Similar Culture</p> <p>--</p> <p>Ambivalent Racial Identity of the Ruler Dilemma between Superiority &amp; Inferiority</p> <p>1) Homogenization (Forced inclusion based on similarities) 2) Differentiation (Exclusion based on the exaggeration of minor differences)</p> <p>Japan</p>	<p><b>OCCIDENTALISM by ORIENT</b></p> <p>Domination of the ‘White’ by the ‘Colored’</p> <p>The Ruler might be ‘Inferior’ than the Ruled in IRH</p> <p>Different Phenotype</p> <p>Different Culture</p> <p>--</p> <p>Ethnocentric Justification that the Ruler is ‘White’ or Ethnocentric Justification that the Ruler’s Color is Superior to ‘White’</p> <p>1) Cognitive Phenotypical Homogenization 2) Phenotypical Differentiation</p> <p>Ancient &amp; Medieval China (White Chinese vs. Dark Skin People from Persia &amp; Indonesia; Chinese Early Encounter with “Reddish Purple” European) Chinese as ‘Yellow’ (yellow as the emperor’s color)</p>

<b>OCCIDENT</b>	<b>ORIENTALISM by OCCIDENT</b>	<b>OCCIDENTALISM by OCCIDENT</b>
<b>Dominant-Minority Relation:</b>	<b>White Supremacy</b>	Domination of the ‘Inferior White’ by the ‘Superior White’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="107 245 537 280">• <b>Position in IRH:</b></li> </ul>	The Ruler is ‘Superior’ and the Ruled is ‘Inferior’ in IRH.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="107 391 537 427">• <b>Race (phenotype):</b></li> </ul>	Different Phenotype	Similar Phenotype
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="107 469 537 505">• <b>Culture:</b></li> </ul>	Different Culture	Both the Ruler and the Ruled are Superior in the IRH.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="107 547 537 583">• <b>Blood lineage:</b></li> </ul>	--	Different
<b>Characteristics:</b>	Conviction of Superiority of the Ruler Justification of the ‘Civilizing Mission’	Unlike Orientalism by the Orient, the Ruler is free from dilemmas of Ambivalent Racial Identity. However, Because of the Relatively High Position of the Ruled in the IRH, the Reaction of the Ruled Frequently Takes a Form of Minority Nationalism.
<b>Means of Racialization:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="537 839 1297 907">1) Homogenization (Inclusion by breeding or miscegenation)</li> <li data-bbox="537 907 1297 976">2) Differentiation (Exclusion based on phenotypical and cultural differences)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1297 839 2062 907">1) Differentiation (Exclusion based on the different culture)</li> <li data-bbox="1297 907 2062 976">2) Homogenization (Forced inclusion based on the phenotypical similarity)</li> </ol>
<b>Examples:</b>	USA European Expansionism in Asia Segmented assimilation, U.S. affirmative action	Domination of the Irish by the British; Domination of the Ukrainian and Belarus (former Byelorussia) by the Russian Anti-Semitism USA at the turn of the century

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