



## The Modern Cities of East Asia Arnold J. Toynbee Had Seen in 1929

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(Received 20 April, 2019; Accepted June 12, 2019)

### ABSTRACT

A. J. Toynbee published a book called *Travel to China* (1931) after traveling around the Asian continent in 1929. The book mostly focuses on Japan, China and the relationship between the two countries. Toynbee visited major cities in Japan and China by train. Most of the Japanese cities he saw were turning into modern cities in the process of spontaneous modernization mixed with its tradition. On the other hand, Chinese cities that he visited showed him various characteristics, including traditional, colonial, or semi-colonial cities.

The modern cities of Japan and China in the late 1920s were transformed into various aspects under the influence of tradition, spontaneous modernization, colonial or anti-colonial modernization. How did Toynbee look at cities in East Asia? How did he recognize the relationship between tradition, modernization and colonization while visiting this area?

Toynbee emphasizes the weight and influence of tradition especially in the development of modern cities in Japan and China. So, are modern European cities born out of their own traditions? Modern cities everywhere in the East and West were newly developed under the influence of tradition. Toynbee's attitude, which emphasizes especially its tradition in the modern cities of East Asia, seems to reflect his Orientalistic view.

**Key Words:** Arnold J. Toynbee, Coloniality, Efficiency, Imperialism, Migration, Modern city, Modernity, Tradition

## I . Toynbee's Journey to East Asia

Arnold J. Toynbee traveled round the Asian Continent for six months from July 29, 1929. His itinerary from Turkey to East Asian countries was very long. He contributed a series of travel essays to some famous magazines, and after returning home, he collected these essays to publish a travel writing titled *A Journey to China*<sup>1)</sup>, which focused especially on China, Japan and the relation between the two countries.

What was the itinerary of his journey to East Asia? The purpose of his travel was to attend the third conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations which would be held in Kyoto between October 28 and November 9 in 1929.<sup>2)</sup> But the opportunity made him start early to explore the continent further. Toynbee traveled overland through the heart of Europe and Western Asia from London to Bombay. During his journey to Bombay, he visited the old cities and regions such as Istanbul, Damascus, Angora, Baghdad and Basra. And he took a passenger ship in Bombay. His ship visited Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Hong-Kong, Shanghai, and Kobe in order. After attending the conference he again traveled round Japan, Korea, Manchu and China, and returned home by Siberian railway train.<sup>3)</sup>

Toynbee's trip depended largely on visiting major cities of Japan and China by train. Most of the Japanese cities he had visited were becoming modern cities with their strong tradition in the process of modernization. On the other hand, cities in China and Manchu showed different characteristics. For example, Beijing has slowly been formed a modern city under the influence of the Chinese tradition. Shenyang was influenced by colonization, and at the same time, was rapidly growing with Chinese immigrants from the beginning. Some cities such as Shanghai, Dalian and Port Arthur were growing modern cities as foreign settlements under the initiative of European countries and Japan from the

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1) A. J. Toynbee (1931), *A Journey to China or Things Where Are Seen* (London: Constable & Co.,).

2) The Institute of Pacific Relations established in 1925 held an international conference to discuss issues and international relations among countries around the Pacific Basin. The Ford Foundation sponsored the conference.

3) Toynbee's itinerary as follows; Hong Kong(October 10, 1929) – Shanghai(Oct. 14-16) – Kobe(October 18) – Nara(October 19, October 22-25) – Kyoto(October 26-November 9) – Nagoya(November 10) – Tokyo(November 12) – Shimonoseki(November 13) – Pusan(November 14) – Seoul(November 15) – Shenyang(November 17-18) – Harbin(November 20-21) – Dalian(November 23-25) – Beijing(November 27-December 13) – Tientsin and Weihaiwei(December 15-20) – Shanghai(December 23-25) – Nanjing(December 27) – Shanghai(December 29-January 2, 1930) – Kobe(January 5, 1930) – Nara(January 6-9) – Kyoto(January 10) – Vladivostok(January 11-12) – Moscow(January 24-25) – London(January 29).

start.

Even from today's perspective, modern cities in East Asia were transformed into diverse forms in the late 1920s under the influence of tradition, spontaneous modernization, and colonial modernization. How did Toynbee look at East Asian cities? How did he recognize tradition, modernization and colonization while visiting these cities? This paper focuses on these problems.

## **II. The tradition and modern cities of Japan**

Modern cities are representative of 'civilization'. The origin of the word 'civilisation' in both English and French is related to the word 'city'.<sup>4)</sup> Bombay, Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, where Toynbee stopped by passing through the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea, were all newly formed modern cities by the British leadership. Toynbee, however, now visits the modern Japanese cities developed by the process of self-modernization without the involvement of Britain or other Western countries. In Kobe, Toynbee missed an express train to Kyoto three times, while immigration officials carefully examined his passport, various documents and pamphlets. In addition, due to the long customs inspection of his luggage, he was unable to catch a daytime train. He hesitated whether to leave the next day after staying in Kobe one night or to take the night train until he finally got on the night train. He hesitated to use the night train because he thought he would not be able to see the city and countryside of Japan outside windows. But when he gets on the train for Kyoto, he realizes that it is nothing more than an accident.

When at last my slow train moved out of Kobe station, I no longer regretted that I was not travelling in an express by day-light. The whole country was lighted up by electricity. Kobe melted into Osaka, Osaka into Kyoto, and still the galaxy of lights stretched on without a

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4) In French and English, the word 'civilisation' came from the Latin word 'civilis'. This word is related to two words at the same time. One is 'civis' and the other is 'civitas'. The former represents public civil life participating in politics and debating. The latter is related to urban life of the city as a place that is completely different from an agricultural village. Since the word 'civilization' first appeared in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, it has been used as a term for the level of Western European countries contrary to rural areas or barbarism in other world. In short, the self-consciousness that Europe is civilization and the other world is barbarism has been shaped.

break. Was Japan one continuous city?<sup>5)</sup>

In today's view, Toynbee traveled to the area that became Mega-polis. If a Mega-polis is the symbol of modernization, the basis of its achievement is scientific explorations and pursuits of efficiency. Japanese intellectuals in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century described their modernization as the slogan of 'civilization and enlightenment'(文明開化). Toynbee realized this in Kobe. When he first stopped by a bank to exchange money, he watched a bank-clerk wrestling with a letter of credit. The clerk read the letter of credit over and over again. He reminded the clerk of "an European Assyriologist deciphering some half-effaced cuneiform inscription."<sup>6)</sup> He felt the slow, deliberate and academic attitude of the Japanese working in modern organizations and institutions was related to their newly formed tradition since the early days of modernization. A generation ago, their seniors were able to overcome their difficulties by continuously repeating and verifying the methods of Western civilization. From Toynbee's perspective, the Japanese are actually the people with nimble gestures. Otherwise, "Such fine artists, and such fine soldiers, and above all, such fine swordsmen" would not have been produced.<sup>7)</sup>

On November 23, Toynbee left Tokyo by train for Shimonoseki. He was going to take a ferry to Pusan, and then to transfer to a train bound for Manchu. He recalled the former trip from Victoria Station in London, passing Dover to the Continent. This journey, to him, seemed like Deja Vu of the travel to the European Continent. He is to start with Shimonoseki and finally enter Manchu and China. Here, Toynbee revives the efficiency of Japan again. Passengers' luggage was being sorted out securely and carried to the conveyor belt. "The smartness and speed of the steamer put the English and Belgian channel-steamers to shame."<sup>8)</sup>

During his visits to Kyoto and Tokyo, however, Toynbee realized that these modern cities were strongly ruled by Japanese tradition because they grew on its solid foundation. The strong influence on Kyoto was temples everywhere, and the city planning in Tokyo was built around the king's palace. After the king officially declared Edo as the capital of new Japan, Tokyo in 1869, this traditional city grew rapidly. Tokyo was transformed into a modern city with the royal palace at its center. Although they were established after modernization, the king's palace and Meiji Shrine completed in the 1920s, were the embodiments of the Japanese national tradition in spite of their establishment after

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5) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 173.

6) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 168.

7) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 169.

8) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 183.

modernization. The square in front of the Palace and the Yasukuni Shrine next to it, and the central administrative buildings around it, would have been seen by Toynbee as a city with modern clothing on its tradition. This is probably why Toynbee does not mention much about Japan's modernism in his description of Tokyo. Toynbee describes the weight and influence of tradition in modern Japanese cities as follows;

In Japan itself, the new Westernized life is being lived against the background of the old Japanese tradition. Even in Osaka and Nagoya, the Manchester and Birmingham of the Japanese Empire, the stone walls of the two castles rising up out of the heart of each city, remind one sharply of the existence of the Ancient World. Those immense polygonal blocks of stone, perfectly fitted, might have been laid by the Mycenaeans or by the prehistoric predecessors of the Incas. Even in Tokyo reborn after the earthquake as a cosmopolitan city of the Western world, you have only to step out of the Imperial Hotel in order to find yourself gazing at the polygonal walls of the Imperial Palace. . . . . Those palace walls survived the earthquake which laid the first modern city of Tokyo in the dust.<sup>9)</sup>

According to a recent study, the ideal that modern city planners in Japan had was the Prussian Classical Style embodied in Berlin in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the mainland, however, the ideal could not be perfectly realized because of the self-contradiction of the Japanese ruling forces. The Meiji government mainly focused on some symbolic architectural projects that could decorate the capital of the empire, and blocked the projects for the autonomous development of civil society. Although the interests of the government, bureaucrats and local influential people were carried out in the same way as they were in the urban planning, and some conflict and tension between ministries prevented the formation of a comprehensive urban plan that would encompass the entire city.<sup>10)</sup>

While traveling the Kwantung Leased Territory, Toynbee was able to see the purer modernity rather than in Japan. The pure modern city, Dalian was rapidly growing at the mouth of the Bohai Bay. Visitors cannot help but notice the conditions in which Dalian is positioned for commercial and trade rather than residential areas. The city is a key point that connects with Tientsin, Shanghai, Nagasaki and Kobe in the ocean, and was the starting point for the South Manchuria Railway. So, why did Toynbee see pure modernity in this city? After Russia laid the foundation, the city fell into the hands of Japan. There was no tradition unique to Japan. Based on the Russian foundation, the

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9) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 200-1.

10) Jinseong Jeon (2015), *Athens in Imagination: Berlin, Tokyo and Seoul*[Korean edition](Seoul), 395-6.

Japanese built a modern city with maximum efficiency.

It is only when you come to Dalian that you find modern Japan divorced from ancient Japan, like a specimen of some queer element that a man of science has isolated and precipitated by a skillful operation. The reason is, of course, that Dalian did not become Japanese until after the Japanese themselves had become Western; and at the time when these converts to Western civilization set out to make the prize of their victory over Russia into a first-class modern port the site was almost a *tabula rasa*. . . . . And in Dalian itself the Russians have left their traces - partly in the 'lay-out' of the city on the pattern of a wheel, which spokes radiating from a hub, and partly in a cluster of solidly built, comfortable-looking private houses (much sought after by Japanese residents to-day). Still, the Russian rudiments of Dalian were more or less in the Western style; and the Japanese, in building up these rudiments into an imposing modern city, have conscientiously followed Western model. In the newest residential suburbs you might fancy yourself on the outskirts of any large English or German town.<sup>11)</sup>

As the city was created by Russia and Japan from the beginning, Dalian could not be regarded as a modern city of China. Especially, the downtown landscape and the neat housing complex in the suburbs were as good as any Western European city. The city's section and road network also expressed the Japanese rulers' desire to increase efficiency. According to a recent study, Dalian was a bridgehead to seek Japan's control of Manchu. The city was the origin and destination of railroad traffic between Europe and the East Asian Continent. To take advantage of this advantage, Russia laid the foundation for a modern port city based upon its own city-plan. When Japan took control of the area after the Russo-Japanese War, circular squares and radial road-network were already constructed. Japan developed the city in earnest after publishing Dalian's overall urban-planning and several statutes for urban development in April 1905. The Japanese divided the city into three zones: military districts, Japanese residential areas and Chinese residential areas, and made efforts to expand roads, bridges, electricity and water infrastructure. In a short time, Dalian grew up as an important international trade city with extensive Manchu background.<sup>12)</sup>

But even though it was a modern city built mainly by Japan, Dalian was also a city developed within China. Toynbee admired pure modernity in the city, but at the same time looked at the Chinese element. There, of course, were many Japanese and Europeans among the urban population. Many

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11) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 201-2.

12) Jeon, *Athens in Imagination*, 410-11.

white and Japanese residents worked in the fields related to trades and commercial networks as well as city administration. However, the majority of urban residents were Chinese.

Dalian is an important port for exporting agricultural products produced on the broad Manchu plain and for importing foreign goods needed in northern China and Manchu. The cities having these advantageous location conditions are Dalian and Vladivostok. For this reason, Russia opened railroads which could run through Manchu and connect the two cities, i.e., Chinese Eastern Railway and South Manchuria Railway. Toynbee writes that most of the soybeans produced in Manchu are exported from Dalian. Indeed, he feels the power of China's inexhaustible manpower while watching the loading and unloading operations involving enormous manpower at the port of Dalian. At the loading dock, he learns that most of these workers are coming in from Shandong Province. Some human resources companies took care of them and sent them where they needed to be. From Toynbee's view, the huge workforce was in fact a target of fear in European standards. Toynbee, however, takes a different view of the abundant labor force from the standpoint of China. "The place may have seemed a paradise to these Shandongese by comparison with their over-populated, famine-ridden, war-stricken province."<sup>13)</sup>

### **III. Chinese modern cities and coloniality**

Toynbee visits the major cities of China, such as Shenyang in Manchu, Dalian and Port Arthur in the Kwantung Leased Territory, Beijing, Tientsin, Shanghai and Nanjing. First of all, Beijing can be considered a city long dominated by tradition because it had been the capital city of Yuán, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Toynbee, however, points out that Beijing's royal palace and the building of resistance are actually shorter in history than Oxford or Winchester in Britain.<sup>14)</sup> The city was a new city built by Ming Dynasty using the best civil and architectural techniques of China at the time.

The population of Beijing during the 1920s when Toynbee visited was about a million. The city was made up of the Forbidden City in which the emperor resides, the Palace City where royalty and nobility reside, and the town of the common people. Up until then, water and sewage facilities, an

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13) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 203.

14) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 214.

important measure of modern cities, were very poor.<sup>15)</sup> Even so, Toynbee was surprised at the huge scale of artificial buildings that could be erected without recourse to nature only a few centuries ago. In fact, Toynbee was surprised by the massive artificial constructions, including the Forbidden City, but he did not explain in detail the outer city in which common peoples were living under their own tradition. Not only did he have a short stay, but he lacked the expertise to track it. “Beijing is just something which human imagination and energy have done to so many square miles of the featureless, enormous North China Plain; and if just had not been done by men just here, these particular square miles would not have been distinguishable in any way from the thousands of others by which they are monotonously surrendered.”<sup>16)</sup>

Toynbee visited Shanghai twice. He first toured Shanghai city when the passenger-ship docked in Shanghai for three days. And then, after the conference, he traveled north of China and came down south to explore Shanghai and Nanjing. Toynbee’s descriptions and writing on Shanghai during his first visit are more detailed and varied than the second. As the ship slowly enters the Whangpoo River, he looks at Shanghai’s urban landscape and thinks the city to be one of the seven wonders Westerners have achieved.

The Chinese had granted ‘Nordic Man’ a mud-flat, and, in three-quarters of a century, ‘Nordic Man’ had turned it into one of the greatest ports in the world. As a piece of rhetoric this had sounded very fine; but as we steamed up the Whangpoo River, I realized that ‘Nordic Man’ would have berthed his ships just here, even if the Son of Heaven had placed at his disposal the whole coast of the Middle Kingdom from Tonkin to Korea. ‘Nordic Man’ would have made himself at home at Shanghai by sheer force of habit. The mud-bank of a tidal river, twenty miles above the mouth -it sounds uninviting, yet that is precisely the ‘location’ which ‘Nordic Man’ has always selected at home. It is the ‘location’ of London-on-Thames and Antwerp-on-Scheldt and Hamburg-on-Elbe. In the light of ‘Nordic’ history, it really seems inevitable that Shanghai should stand on the mud-banks of the Whangpoo.<sup>17)</sup>

Toynbee only marvels at Europeans’ ability to build a large city on the soil where few people lived. However, he does not pay much attention to the historical process in which the Westerners from

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15) Only 5 percent of the population in Beijing could receive water supply until the early 1930. Some brokers called water merchants(水閘) supplied the lower classes with water.

16) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 212-3.

17) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 161.



Britain, France and the United States established a colonial city nearly a century after the Opium War. He has stayed in Shanghai twice during his trip to China,<sup>18)</sup> but he does not give any details on the city landscape and its features as a modern city. He sent his luggage to home and tried to carry around simply the belongings he had used. He lost his suitcases while the worker was called in for luggage. He spent time searching for them. Only this process is described in detail on the journey.<sup>19)</sup>

The territories leased by Britain and the United State were merged into the Shanghai International Settlement, and next to it was the Shanghai French Concession developed by the French. In the 1920s, in fact, the rapid growth of Shanghai as the largest trading port in China was mainly due to the prosperity of the Shanghai International Settlement. A British woman traveler, Isabella Bird Bishop, who visited Shanghai 30 years before Toynbee's visit, saw the vibrant lively wharves and factories in the settlements of the two countries, and imagined the "presence of foreign capital and energy." The settlements of the two countries were lined with "banks, hotels, and private houses of the most approved and massive Anglo-Oriental architecture, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the Canadian-Pacific Railway Company." The wide and well-paved streets were as good as any other major city in the world.<sup>20)</sup> For her, although Shanghai has grown to be an international trading city with a population of over 200,000 due to foreign administrations and capital, the city was a big city that had absolutely Chinese characteristics. Then, what made Shanghai prosper, unlike other Chinese cities? Isabel Bishop not only emphasizes the positioning conditions as a trading port and the role of foreign capital, but also notes the rational urban administration of the British and American communities. There are somewhat 'patriotic' expressions in her travel writing.

I soon began to learn why Shanghai is called, or calls itself, 'The Model Settlement,' and to recognize the fitness of the name. The British and American settlements are governed by a Municipality elected by the ratepayers, consisting of nine gentlemen, provided by rate-payers to the general satisfaction, arranging admirably for the health, security, comfort, and even enjoyment of the large foreign community, as well as for the order and well the whole East what can be accomplished by an honest and thoroughly efficient British local administration.<sup>21)</sup>

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18) He stayed in Shanghai from December 23 to December 25, 1929, and again between December 29, 1929 and January 2 in the next year.

19) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 240-45.

20) Isabella L. Bishop (1899), *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond* (London: John Murray), 16-18.

21) Bird Bishop, *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, 19.

Toynbee did not elaborate on the landscape of Shanghai. However, his impressions of the city might not have been much different from those of Isabel Bishop more than 30 years ago. The prosperity of the International Settlement and the growth of Shanghai, the port of trade, solely thanked to the vitality of Anglo-American capitalism, and the rational administration of the city authorities. While leaving Shanghai, Toynbee feared that the rapidly changing international situation might bring dark clouds threatening the city's prosperity. That was because he was aware of Japan's desire for hegemony. During his first visit to Shanghai, Toynbee wrote, looking at the International Settlement's skyline on a slowly sliding deck of the Whangpoo River, Toynbee wrote as follows;

In 1929 the future of Shanghai is still obscure. It may become one of the greatest cities of the modern world -the focus of all the commerce and industry in the Pacific- or it may go up in flames. As our ship steamed off down the Whangpoo, I took a last look at that line of Babylonish hotels and clubs and palatial banks and custom-houses, and I realised how vast the catastrophe would be.<sup>22)</sup>

Looking at Shenyang, Toynbee was able to learn new features of modern Chinese cities. The city was the starting point of the South Manchuria Railway, and flourished as a transportation hub in Manchu. Especially the city grew rapidly after a strong military leader in Manchu, Zoulin Zhang, fixed the city as the capital of his ruling areas in the 1920s. But just the year before Toynbee's visit, the ruler died of railroad terrorism, and his death made the city's future cloudy. As Toynbee visited Shenyang on November 17-18, 1929, he must have felt keenly the chaos and anxiety that had spread throughout the city. The characteristic of the modern Chinese city he saw in Shenyang was, among other things, the wave of Chinese immigration. China and Japan have been competitively developing the city. But if only the numbers of migrants were calculated, the city was a completely Chinese city.

The Chinese city of Mukden, which was growing almost as fast as the Chinese university in the suburbs, might have been American too. it was lapping round the Japanese 'railway town' as the rising tide laps round a child's sand-castle on a flat beach. With five railways meeting there and an ever-widening agricultural hinterland, the population of Mukden might rise, in a few decades, to 'the million mark'; and the Chinese city was being modernized as well as extended. Even in the ancient walled enceinte, in the centre of the spider's web, they

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22) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 163.

had been pulling down the gates and barbicans and widening the thoroughfares.<sup>23)</sup>

Toynbee compares Chinese immigration, centered round Shenyang, with the American West pioneering. According to him, Chinese immigration is an important phenomenon in contemporary world history that is comparable to American immigration in the nineteenth century. More than half a million or a million Chinese migrated to Manchu every year. This new wave of immigration means that the living place of Chinese people, who were daunted by an invasion of imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, will be expanded again. Toynbee says as follows; “When, in due course, I visit Manchuria, I found the homeland of China’s most recent nomadic conquerors already transformed into a land predominantly Chinese. The poor Manchus, of course, had no more chance of standing up against the big and steady battalions when the West was being won by the American pioneers in the nineteenth century.”<sup>24)</sup> The massive migration not only boosted farming and agriculture in Manchuria, but also brought about the rapid growth of the existing cities such as Shenyang and Harbin.<sup>25)</sup>

After the victory of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan entered into competition with China over the exploration of Manchu. Japan’s real power, however, could not go beyond the ‘rule of line.’ Japan was only able to rule the cities along the South Manchuria Railway and near the railroad. In contrast, the migration of the Chinese was an ‘extension of face or side’.<sup>26)</sup> Toynbee looks at the expansion of cities on the vast plains, recalling the pioneering craze between Germans and Polish over the Great Plains of Eastern Europe. The competition between the two peoples in Eastern Europe turned ethnic hatred into a storm, devastating the Great Plains. He couldn’t shake off this ominous feeling when he visited Zhang Zou Lin(張作霖)’s Tomb. He expresses concern that the vast Manchua plains could turn into the plains of Armageddon.<sup>27)</sup> In fact, Japan was finding itself at a disadvantage in the immigration competition. Soon after Toynbee finished his trip to Asia, on September 18, 1931, Japan abruptly took over Shenyang under the pretext of the bombing accident of the South Manchuria Railway as a Chinese work. Toynbee was just predicting this reversal. Japan’s occupation of Shenyang was a physical violence that Japan planned to get over this disadvantage in the pioneering competition.

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23) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 192.

24) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 259.

25) At Harbin, Toynbee also received such a similar impression. At first the city was developed under the influence of the Russian people, but now gradually was Chinese. See Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 196.

26) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 261.

27) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 192-93.

#### **IV. Toynbee's Anglo-centrism and East Asian modernity**

Needless to mention Edward Said, Orientalism is the series of prejudices Westerners have toward Asia or Asians. The bias consists of a representation of barbarism, delayed modernization, mysticism, etc. Moreover, Orientalism spread distorted prejudices against the East, and at the same time it helped Westerners build their identity. It is said that the identity of Westerners is not an independent one, but rather a series of knowledge formed by the methods and processes that define 'East' as the other.

Toynbee would not have been free from his own Euro-centric attitude while exploring the modern cities of East Asia. The most controversial topic in his account of a modern city of East Asia is the relationship between tradition and modernization. Toynbee emphasizes the weight and influence of tradition in modern Japanese cities such as Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. Japan's pure modernity, therefore, is hard to find in the mainland.<sup>28)</sup> This is why he could find Japan's pure modernity in Dalian that the Japanese had built abroad. Then what about Europe? Is it possible to find a pure modernity separated from British tradition in those cities such as London, York, and Bristol? Modern cities represent new ways of seeking rationality and efficiency in response to new commercialization or industrialization that go beyond traditional economic activities on the basis of each country's tradition. Like modern British cities, modern Japanese cities have pursued rationality and efficiency on the basis of their own tradition. Even without old castles, walls and pre-modern buildings, the pure modernity shown in Dalian, a colonial city would be also influenced by Japanese tradition.

What feature did Toynbee feel when he saw the modern city of Japan? First, he was amazed at the speed of pursuing efficiency in modern cities. Before the passenger-ship entered Kobe, Japanese health inspection members were on board. They stared at each of the passengers in a sluggish manner as if they were trying to diagnose the disease of strange beasts. During the quarantine, Toynbee remembered a scene from *Gulliver's Travels*. Similarly to the way Laputans treated Gulliver, he felt as if the inspectors had contempt for passengers.<sup>29)</sup> Indeed, the Laputans in *Gulliver's Travels* tended to daydream and pay little attention to reality rather than being arrogant. Toynbee reminded them because the Japanese quarantine officers treated passengers in a similar manner to those in advanced countries.

Toynbee had a similar experience at the telegraph office in Shimonoseki. When a colleague from Melbourne sent a telegram home, a telegraph office staff pointed out that the city name was misspelled. The colleague said he were from Melbourne and could not spell incorrectly. But the staff

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28) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 200.

29) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 165.

showed a big book, *Time Atlas of the World* from his desk. Contrary to the staff's judgment, Toynbee's colleague wrote the correct name. He pointed out that the staff was wrong without proper reading.<sup>30)</sup> The staff's attitude was very arrogant, but Toynbee was surprised because of the fact that a post office generally had a map book in Japan. No local post office in Britain had such an atlas. Even if the government distributes the map-book to each post office, few staffs would use them.

Toynbee believed that there was a reason for the Japanese to have an arrogant attitude. Japan sought its strong power in the 1920s. In any case, it had become a powerful country comparable to Britain or the United States. Toynbee contemplates Japan's unique modernity that Britain does not have. The train running from Tokyo to Shimonoseki has a different view. When foreigners ask for directions, Japanese people often show them maps. They are good at reading maps. But not only Toynbee but his colleagues could not read those maps correctly. When they went to Tokyo, the guard of a building explained to Toynbee who was asking for directions. However, Toynbee and his colleagues were not familiar with the map, so they were 25 minutes behind schedule when he arrived at the destination.<sup>31)</sup> In the 1920s, Japan had already competed with England in the Indian market as well as in East Asia. Due to the export of Japanese cotton products to India, cotton areas around Manchester suffered from a deep slump.<sup>32)</sup> It was in the early 1940s that Japanese intellectuals began mentioning the "overcome and transcendence of modernity" against the European empires.<sup>33)</sup> But before that, Toynbee was able to feel the trend of such transcendence in Japanese society.

Another feature that Toynbee found in modern cities of Japan is "historization of memory." From Toynbee's perspective, the typical example is found in Port Arthur. This is the city where the colonial government and military headquarters of The Kwantung Leased Territory are located. If Dalian is a trade and economic center, Port Arthur is a political and military center. Toynbee visited the War Museum in Port Arthur. The Russo-Japanese War was the one in which the most soldiers and troops fought against each other since the Napoleonic War. More than 600,000 people on both

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30) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 166.

31) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 201.

32) India was the largest export market for British cotton products, but throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the export of British cotton goods to India quickly drop. Between 1913 and 1936, it decreased from 3 billion to 575 million yards. This comes from the development of Indian cotton industries and the rise in imports of cotton products from Japan. See G. E. Hubbard (1938), *Eastern Industrialization and its Effects on the West* (London: Oxford University Press), 340.

33) It was around 1942 when Japanese intellectuals openly mentioned the term 'transcendence of modernity.' The intellectuals in the fields of literary and philosophy began to preach the so-called transcendence of modernity, eager to win the Japanese spirit in the war against Anglo-American Empires. But its theoretical background, the confidence to overcome capitalism seems to have already been formed in the late 1920s. Toynbee felt that mood.

sides participated in the war. The Japanese seemed to commemorate all the soldiers who died in the war. After they died, a new generation became main-stream, but memories of the dead still lived in reality. According to Toynbee's writing, "in Japan it is the older generation that rules."<sup>34)</sup> Toynbee recommends that we should visit the War Museum at Port Arthur to find out the true facts of Japanese national memories. Visitors cannot but be surprised that the exhibits in the museum have reproduced all the process of the wars thoroughly. Russian and Japanese military weapons, soldiers and battle scenes are in reality. The whole Port Arthur looks like a museum. It recreates important memories of the Japanese nation in the process of modernization. But Toynbee insists that the Japanese should escape from this cycle of memory.

I wish Port Arthur could be wiped off the face of the earth and the memory of the place be erased from the minds of the Japanese. I fear that when the Manchurian question comes up for settlement (Whenever that may be) this landscape, electrically charged with the sentiment of a whole nation, may prove the most dangerous obstacle of all.<sup>35)</sup>

Next, during visiting to several cities in China, Toynbee witnessed the fact that China had suffered from an invasion of Japanese imperialism. Furthermore, not only the political and military sectors of the country but also all human and physical resources were divided into the National Party and the Communist Party, which were in turmoil. It is quite clear why the two countries reversed their relationship since the Sino-Japanese War. After all, the time difference in modernization was crucial. "The main differentia was that Japan had providently embarked upon the process of 'Westernization' two generations ago and had reaped the fruits of her initiative, while China had waited the eleventh hour and was now paying the penalty for her procrastination."<sup>36)</sup> Toynbee compares the contrasting positions of China and Japan in the case of Iberia and Scandinavia. The Scandinavian in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century led the rapid modernization, but the Iberian was not able to do.

In Chinese cities Toynbee was unable to capture a unique character of modern city which was dominated by Chinese traditions but grew independently. Dalian and Shanghai were merely expressing their colonialities, while the traditional controlled Beijing and Nanjing showed no marked trend toward modern cities amid political turmoil.<sup>37)</sup>

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34) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 204.

35) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 204.

36) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 277.

37) When he visited Nanjing, Toynbee reported from a foreigner that the city is the most inconvenient city in the world. In

In 1938, Toynbee spoke of his travel around Asia and the chaos in East Asia in a lecture at University of Nottingham. He refers to what Buddhism calls 'punitive justice.' "What broke the Chinese peace and the Japanese peace? The Chinese peace was broken by British guns, and the Japanese peace was broken by American guns." In 1840-42, Britain fought with China, took control of Guangdong province and forced an unequal treaty to China. In 1853, the United States did the same thing to Japan. Then, Japan accepted the U.S. and European weapons systems. "The militarism that is now rampant in Eastern Asia is of European and American origin."<sup>38)</sup>

As is well known, the situation in China got worse after Toynbee returned home in 1930. The situation has led to military confrontation, including the Manchu Incident, the establishment of Manchu Independent State, and the Sino-Japanese War. It is unknown how he predicted China's future at this time. His travel writings, however, let us know that he tried to look at the future of the Chinese with a hopeful outlook. The Chinese had their extraordinary advantage. There is an intellectual tradition that has accumulated over thousands of years, and excellent characters for visual understanding that combines diverse inhabitants and peoples. Especially the called 'mandarin' is commonly used by a wide variety of local people covering some nomadic nations. "Already Mandarin must be the mother tongue of a greater number of millions of human beings than any other spoken language in the world."<sup>39)</sup> In addition, the vast territory continues to expand. He places a special emphasis on the Chinese migration parade to Manchu. The expansion of the living areas should be understood in terms of a 'world' that encompasses diverse peoples, races, languages and cultures rather than a people of general meaning. In his 1938 lecture, he spoke of the expansion of Chinese living place as follows;

Less than 3,000 years ago China was not much larger than a quarter the size of Europe. A great many unpleasant things have happened to China since. The country has many times been overrun, and the Chinese people have fallen out themselves and lived through long periods of internal anarchy, but all this time, China has gone on steadily growing; the home country of her last conquerors, the Manchus, had now become four Chinese provinces, entirely populated by Chinese.<sup>40)</sup>

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his view, the city was steadily worsening. Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 246-7.

38) Arnold J. Toynbee (1938), "British Interests in the Far East"(Nottingham), 14-15.

39) Toynbee, *A Journey to China*, 270.

40) Toynbee (1938), "British Interests in the Far East", 4-5.

## V. Conclusion

So far I have had a fragmentary look at Toynbee's views on modern cities in East Asia. I'll go over some problems in his description. First, Toynbee emphasizes the weight and influence of tradition in the formation of modern cities of Japan and China. So, what about the influence and weight of tradition in modern European cities? He clearly states the difference between the West and the East after the Second World War. Where Jewish and Christian traditions spread, most of the traditions were lost. East Asia, however, shows a different picture. "In Eastern Asia down to our day, the traditional method of disposing of some new art, institution, or idea has been, not substitution, but juxtaposition. Instead of effacing the old thing and installing the new thing in its place, the East Asian peoples have always preserved what has already been there. They have always found room for things new and old side by side."<sup>41)</sup>

But it seems that this view is largely Euro-centric. In European cities, can we find pure modernity separated from tradition? As mentioned earlier, in Europe, new innovations have emerged under the weight of tradition in all areas of politics, economics, society, culture and so on. Why did Toynbee concretely feel the weight and influence of tradition in Japan and China? It is because he was not familiar with East Asian culture and traditions. I think East Asia would be less influenced than Western Europe in terms of the weight of tradition. The word 'Japanese Spirit, Western Technic' (和魂洋才) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century is considered a self-defensive slogan that stemmed from the people threatened by the power of Western Europe. Ironically, the weight of innovation has been stronger in East Asia. The efficiency that Toynbee admired in the modern Japanese city of the late 1920s reflects this.

Second, most of the modern Chinese cities seen by Toynbee did not virtually go beyond 'unfinished modernity', except Shanghai, Dalian and Port Arthur, which showed coloniality. Beijing and Nanjing were such typical examples. Toynbee could not have captured the unique modernity of these cities. But, he looks for any possibility about Shenyang. This is due to the tide of Chinese migration to Manchu. Toynbee was reminiscent of China's optimistic future, watching the rapid expansion of the Chinese living territory into three Manchurian provinces. Even in the confrontation between Japan and China, he carefully imagines the 'rule of line' and the 'extension of face.' Although he did not accurately predict the outcome of the confrontation, he could expect Manchu to be an important

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41) Arnold J. Toynbee (1958), *East to West: A Journey round the World* (London: Oxford University Press), 69.



foundation for future development in China.

Lastly, did Toynbee's journey to East Asia have an effect on *A Study of History*, which he began writing in the 1930s? I don't know the secret process of his writing, but I can guess to some extent the relation between the two. According to his memoirs, he completed collecting data for his *Study* around 1927-28, but did not start writing it. He recalls as follows;

I did not begin writing till the summer of 1930; and meanwhile, in 1929, I had taken the longest journey that I had made yet. I had travelled to China and Japan, going out overland to the head of the Gulf and thence by sea, and coming back overland via the Trans-Siberian Railway. It was after this that I found myself ready to start writing the book.<sup>42)</sup>

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues (including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancy) have been completely observed by authors.

### **Conflict of Interests**

The authors have no conflict of interests to declare.

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42) Arnold J. Toynbee (1969), *Experiences* (London: Oxford University Press), 101.

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