

Japonesia, Organic Geopolitics and the South

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This paper gives an introduction to the discourse and debate surrounding the concept of '*Japonesia*', a term coined by the author Shimao Toshio in 1961. The discourse of *Japonesia* began as a way of understanding Japanese cultural identity in terms of its links with the islands of the Western Pacific, rather than in more conventional terms as an extension of continental Asia. During the 1970s, the concept came to be associated with political and geo-political discourse. In particular, the debate over the so-called North-South problem, Okinawan reversion to Japanese control, and the re-establishment of regional autonomy shaped the usage of the term.

A number of systems of academic knowledge influenced the development of Japonesia as a concept. Disciplines like politics, folklore, history, ethnography, geography and geopolitics, as well as contemporary literary discourse all had a part to play. In this paper, I will focus on the history of the geopolitical understanding of Japan as a Pacific nation, and the ways in which this relates to conceptions of *Japonesia* in the 1960s-70s. The concept of *Japonesia* is geopolitical in the most literal sense: it highlights the power relations present in geographical conceptions of Japan by presenting an alternative geography of the nation. It deals with the vectors of power that exist within the culture of a geographical region. Japonesia is not, however, geopolitical in the conventional disciplinary sense. Japonesia is not about geographical knowledge as a form of power: rather, the emphasis is on the geography of difference, plurality and lines of escape.

Resisting classification into either fiction or non-fiction, most of *Japanesian* discourse is both personal and collective. It is a description of an alternative geopolitics, hidden, buried or unconscious. It is a discourse in the subjunctive.

On the cover of my copy of *The Age of Uncertainty*, J.K. Galbraith stands in his very 1970s suit against a backdrop of medieval Europe. Beneath his outstretched arms lies a chessboard. Beneath the chessboard lies the subtitle: 'A history of economic ideas and their consequences'. The symbolism is hard to miss. What Galbraith presents us with is a grand view of the world: a view that, although far from comforting, is also far from uncertain.

Galbraith's narrative, while apparently just too Red for some American conservatives to

stomach at the time,¹ seems to me to resemble a kind of almanac of the good old days of cultural Modernity. It is a History of ideas (or an idea of History) in which all the main characters are dead white men. I was born too late to see the television series. Reading the book for the first time in high school in Australia in the 1990s, it was difficult not to be envious of the kind of Olympian viewpoint that Galbraith the Harvard Professor seemed to possess.

This paper is partly an investigation of the allure of just such a viewpoint. At the same time however, I hope to work with some of the problems that Galbraith's *Uncertainty* posed for me: to translate them into a context that is significantly different, yet not unrelated. It is a speculative attempt. Translation is always an uncertain pursuit.

1. INTRODUCTION

'The South', like those most malignant of geopolitical terms 'The East' and 'The West', is something more than a direction and less than a location. It is a proper name that refers not to a specific 'place' so much as an idea, an image or a quality. In the context of Japanese modernism, the 'South' is something of an anomaly. Whereas the imaginary categories of 'The East' (Orient, *Toyo*) and 'The West' (Occident, *Seiyo*) refer to an international or global context, 'The South' (*Nanyo*, *Nanpo* etc.) is inextricably linked to a national and regional geography. As the editor of the *Kojien* dictionary, the linguist Shinmura Izuru wrote in 1942, 'The connections of the Japanese race run North-South'.² That is not to say that conceptions of the South have not had their part to play in Japanese international affairs. Indeed, as I argue in this paper, the dividing line between the domestic and the international South is not as clear as it is often made to appear. At the time Shinmura wrote, a significant part of what is now the 'international' South was under Japanese imperial control. Ten years later, Okinawa (the 'domestic' South) was controlled by America. One of the most interesting ideas that emerged from this uncertainty over the frontiers of the South was 'Japanesia'.

The name 'Japanesia' refers initially to the idea of Japan as a 'nesia': that is, a cluster or group of islands similar to Micronesia, Polynesia or Melanesia.³ In its original sense, it denotes a re-mapping of Japanese cultural space in terms not of the continental North, but of the oceanic South. Japanesia is a discourse of roots and frontiers. It takes place in the divisions between history and culture, fiction and non-fiction, politics and social mythology. It is interesting for our purposes because it presents a re-working of national and international geopolitics within the context of a regional discourse: in particular, the debate surrounding the position of Okinawa within the political, cultural and historical framework of the Japanese nation.

The body of this paper gives a brief introduction to some of the most prominent writing related to the concept of Japanesia. Before doing so however, it is necessary to sketch the outline of two discursive and disciplinary genres in which this writing participates. The first is the discourse of the Southern Islands (*Nanto-ron*); the second is that generally referred to as Geopolitics or Geopolitik (*Chisei-gaku*).⁴

1.1 THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS

In the context of Japanese pre-modern history, the term ‘Southern Islands’ (*Nanto*) refers to those islands south of Japan: that is, Okinawa and Amami. When these islands were annexed by Japan in 1872, and incorporated – politically, economically, culturally – into the national community, the relation changed from an international to a regional one: *Nanto* became the South of Japan.

The term ‘*Nanto*’ or ‘Southern Islands’ functions as a proper name, representing Okinawa and Amami. Yet it is also a relative expression: the name ‘Southern Islands’ implies a particular geographical perspective. Okinawa and Amami are only ‘Southern Islands’ when seen from the North, in other words, from ‘mainland’ Japan. In other words, the ‘Southern Islands’ are Okinawa and Amami seen in terms of their relationship with the Japanese mainland. In this sense, *Nanto* is a highly political expression.

During the 20th Century, much of the discourse on the Southern Islands has been associated with the notion that, although superficially different, Okinawa shares the same racial ‘roots’ or ‘ancestral’ culture as that of mainland Japan. This idea first gained significant support in Japan during the first part of the century, through the work of the Okinawa-born linguist Iha (Ipha) Fuyu (1876-1947).⁵ According to Iha’s thesis, not only does Okinawa share the same linguistic (thus cultural and racial) roots as mainland Japan: it has actually preserved them better. In his 1926 essay, ‘Dawn on the “Southern Islands”’ for example, Iha argues that in Okinawa ‘one finds residuals of ancient Japanese culture. (...) The Southern Islands are a gift for researchers: they are, so to speak, a *natural museum*, where time is displayed in terms of space’ (1975:2:98).⁶ Iha’s suggestion of the role of the Southern Islands as a sort of museum of ancient Japan was developed and popularised by such prominent mainland academics as Shinmura Izuru (1876-1967) in linguistics, Yanagida Kunio (1875-1962) and Origuchi Shinobu (1887-1953) in folklore.⁷

It is necessary to note that such a characterisation is also highly political. First, it portrays the Southern Islands area as the passive object of (mainland) investigation and knowledge. Second, it subjugates the identity of the Southern Islands to just one part of a single historical experience, centred elsewhere: Okinawa becomes one stage in the organic growth of a (notably Hegelian) nation state. Third, within this structure, the Southern Islands are characterised as a kind of national archetype: Japan’s buried past.

As we shall see later, these three aspects of the Southern Islands discourse reappear in the discourse of Japanesia, particularly as it is interpreted and developed by the folklore historian Tanikawa Ken'ichi (1921-). Before going further however, it is necessary to mention some international aspects of the issue.

1.2 GEOPOLITICS AND THE SOUTHERN ADVANCE

Japanese academia in general pays a stunning lack of attention to links between the writing on Japan's Southern Islands (*Nanto-ron*) and the pre-War discourse of Southern Advance (*Nanshin-ron*). In the simplest terms, Southern Advance was one of the Geopolitical frameworks supporting Japanese intervention in Micronesia, Australasia and the Western Pacific region, from the end of the 19th Century through the first half of the 20th. It has been defined as an ideological discourse 'arguing the inevitable necessity of the connection between Japan and the ocean to the South' irrespective of the actual movement of migrants and trade (Yano 1975:48). Writers like the economist Taguchi Ukichi (1855-1905) and politician Takegoshi Yosaburo (1865-1950) had been arguing, with some support, for Japanese colonies in the South Pacific since the end of the 19th Century, however Southern Advance gained its greatest popularity during the pre-WWII period, when it merged with the geopolitics of The New Asian Order and the notorious Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

In Japan, as elsewhere, 'geopolitics' involves the creation of political maps of geographical space. It links politics and geography in a strategic, deterministic and teleological framework. Geopolitics, as a tool of state, works as a performative discourse: it tends to bring about the situation it describes. As one writer notes, geopolitics in general 'enframes a great variety of dramas, conflicts and dynamics within a grand strategic perspective, offering an Olympian viewpoint (...) Furthermore, while unavoidably textual, it nevertheless promotes a spatial way of thinking that arranges different actors, elements and locations simultaneously on a global chessboard' (Ó Tuathail 1998b:1).⁸ In 1942, Japan's foremost pre-War practitioner of Geopolitics, Komaki Saneshige (1898-1990) described his mission in a similar way. 'Now we face the task of giving the Japanese people a view of Japan spread out over both Asia and Europe: a view of the world from the height of the heavens (*takamanohara*)' (1942:64).⁹ It would be naïve to suggest that we can isolate Japan's imperial geopolitics as a discourse from the military action that it encourages, responds to and mythologises. Yet, precisely because of this mythologising function, it is necessary to understand imperial geopolitics not only in terms of actions, but also in terms of the rhetoric it uses: and the vista – the 'Olympian viewpoint' – that it presents.

In Japan, as in Germany, it was always the role of geopolitics as a dynamic, performative discourse that distinguished it from the static theories and descriptions given by Political

Geography.¹⁰ The term ‘geopolitics’ comes from the ‘Geopolitik’ of the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén (1864-1922). Kjellén first used the term in 1899, in a series of lectures at the Gothenburg University, based roughly on the Political Geography (*Politische Geographie*) of the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904). In Japan, it was Omoto Nobuyuki (1879-1962) who first translated Geopolitik into Japanese as *Chiseigaku*, the term that is in most common use today. In a 1925 essay entitled ‘The Meaning of Racial Conflict: a Geopolitical study’, and another three years later called ‘The Concept of Geopolitics’, Omoto introduces the work of Ratzel, Kjellén and Haushofer. In the latter, he concludes that Geopolitics (Geopolitik) is indispensable to good government because it allows the practitioner to ‘measure, to a certain degree, the destiny of a nation or society’ and create policies accordingly (1928:98). Up until the late 1930s, most work in Japanese *Chiseigaku* consisted of the translation of the work of Euro-American academics and military strategists, principally Ratzel, Kjellén, the English geographer Halford Mackinder (1861-1947), the American admiral Alfred Mahan (1840-1914) and the German general and academic Karl Haushofer (1869-1946).

It is conventional to consider the development of Japanese pre-War geopolitics in terms of three separate ‘schools’ or movements.¹¹ Firstly, there was the group of Euro-centric geographers devoted to the continued introduction of German Geopolitik to Japan. In opposition to these was the so-called Kyoto School of geopolitics, under the leadership of the Kyoto Imperial University professor Komaki Saneshige (see above), who promoted the idea of a geopolitics based on a uniquely Japanese historical perspective.¹² Thirdly, there was the Japanese Society for Geopolitics established in November 1941, the activities of which centred on a highly nationalistic geopolitical mapping of the empire. The theories of all three ‘schools’ however continued to be informed by German geopolitics throughout the early 1940s.¹³ Kjellén and Haushofer, and their theories of the nation as an ‘organic state’ were particularly influential.¹⁴ The concept of the organic state itself had been debated from the start of the century, in connection with the rise of Social Darwinism.¹⁵ Despite some criticism, Japanese reception of Haushofer’s (now notorious) theories of living-space (*Lebensraum*) and Autarky was generally enthusiastic. Haushofer himself wrote no less than eight books on Japan between 1913 and 1941, beginning with *Dai Nihon: Greater Japan’s Military Power, World Role and Future*.¹⁶ No less than three translations of Haushofer’s *Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean (Geopolitik des pazifischen Ozeans, 1925)* were made before the end of the War. In what is still the most detailed study of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere available in English, Yung-Huan Jo describes the ‘six cardinal principles’ of Japan’s Pre-War geopolitics as ① Pan-regionalism, ② Lebensraum (living-space), ③ Autarky (self-sufficiency), ④ the organic state and dynamic boundary structure, ⑤ military security, ⑥ the superiority of sea-power over land-power (1964:13). All of these principles except perhaps the very first are stressed in Haushofer’s writing.

Japanese imperial geopolitics was deeply influenced by the fact that Japanese imperialism itself developed relatively late in history. It was only at the end of the 19th Century that Japan finally launched herself into modernity as an international player. Due to this late development, Japanese colonial/expansionist discourse arose within a global environment already dominated by the large 'Western' colonial powers. As Halford Mackinder would have said, the age of colonial expansion against 'negligible resistance' was over: most of the world, as Japan saw it, was already under direct or indirect European control. Japanese expansion was thus initially limited to those regions geographically and, it was supposed, culturally closest, namely the Ryukyus (annexed in 1872 and incorporated as Okinawa Prefecture in 1879), Taiwan, southern Sakhalin and the Korean peninsular (annexed in 1895, 1905 and 1910 respectively).

Japanese imperialism arose in the context not only of Euro-American geopolitical hegemony, but also in an intellectual environment where 'Western civilisation' was assumed to have more or less universal application. This was a convenient ideological base for European colonialism, which could always be justified by appealing to the need to 'civilise the natives'. It was not so convenient, however, for Japan. Around the turn of the 20th Century in particular, efforts were made to proclaim the 'Western-ness'=universality of Japanese culture, but in general, Japanese imperialism was centred around the conflicting aims of the diffusion of a specific 'Japanese' culture (language, religion etc.) on the one hand, and a 'civilising'/modernising='Westernisation' on the other. It is in this context that the historian Oguma Eiji characterises pre-War Japan as a 'coloured empire'. The stance taken by Japanese geopolitical and cultural discourse fluctuates between a pro-Asian resistance to the racial discrimination of the 'West', and consciousness of Japan's position as a European-style 'civilising' power in her own right (1998:661-7). This stance is particularly marked in relation to the islands of Micronesia that Japan secured as a trust territory after World War One.¹⁷ It is also mirrored however in the proximity between Japan's geopolitics of 'Southern Advance', and writing on the earliest addition to her southern empire, Okinawa.

These two genres are usually considered entirely separately: geopolitics and the Southern Advance are seen to belong the 'international', while discourse on the Southern Islands is classed within the realm of regional and national space. The defining line between international and domestic characterisations of the South is, however, not as clear as has generally been assumed. In both cases, the South is an object of appropriation: cultural, economic and strategic. As Oguma Eiji has shown, the 1870s annexation of Okinawa and its political, economic and cultural incorporation into the modern Japanese nation was motivated not only by domestic economic and political incentives but also by the perceived need to secure a 'strategic base' against the encroachment of European and American colonial powers.¹⁸ There are also discursive and

circumstantial links of the kind that Murai Osamu has shown between imperial politics and the regional discourse of the folklore specialist Yanagida Kunio, mentioned above.¹⁹ Furthermore, it is necessary to bear in mind the situation of Okinawa itself as a frontier and *heterotopia*: its earlier position as a part of the Japanese empire, the years under American military control and the problematic reversion to Japan. Perhaps most significant however are the epistemological links between the national and the international ‘South’: images of fertility and exoticism, and narratives of appropriation.

It is with these issues in mind that I would now like to look in detail at the birth and development of the idea of Japanesia.

2. JAPANESIA

The word ‘Japanesia’ is the creation of the author Shimao Toshio (1917-1986). It first appeared in print at the end of 1961, in an essay for the Heibonsha *World Culture* series entitled ‘The Roots of Japanesia’.²⁰

When we look back in the direction of the ocean, we realise that the islands of Japan, although they lie close by the coast of the Eurasian continent on one side, also merge south into the islands of the immense Pacific archipelago. (...) Try adjusting your atlas to show Japan’s position, not in relation to the continent, but to the islands of the Pacific. The three petalled arcs of Japanesia will emerge clearly from the map. (1982:16:192).

As I mentioned in the Introduction, the term ‘Japanesia’ refers to the idea of re-mapping Japan as a Pacific archipelago: not as a severed edge of the Eurasian continent, but as a chain of islands stretching out into the ocean southern ocean. Shimao’s writing of the 1960s clearly plays on this distinction between Eurasian and Pacific contexts: continent and ocean, North and South, land and sea.

Our Japan is often considered in terms of its separation from continental Asia, but there is another way of seeing it. Together with Polynesia, Micronesia and Indonesia, it is also one of a number of island groups in the Pacific Ocean. When we become more conscious of this facet of our Japan, its *Japanesian* aspect will be assured (‘Island Dreams and Reality’ (1962), 1982:16:231).

The geography of Japanesia consists in the division of the (present) Japanese territory into three latitudinal zones or 'Arcs' (the 'three petalled arcs' mentioned in 'The Roots of Japanesia' quoted above).

- ① The Chishima (Kuril) Arc, stretching from the Kuril islands in the north to Hokkaido;
- ② The Honshu Arc, encompassing Honshu, Shikoku and most of Kyushu;
- ③ The Ryukyu Arc, covering the southern islands from Amami through Okinawa to the Yaeyama group east of Taiwan.²¹

Importantly, these divisions are portrayed not only as geographical but cultural and racial as well. By positioning the culturally, politically and economically dominant Honshu Arc as but one of three island groups in the Japanesia chain, Shimao was able to highlight the alternative cultural experiences of the Ainu and Emishi (Ezo) races in the north, and the Okinawan islanders in the south. Interestingly, Shimao positioned himself simultaneously within all three Arcs: his blood was 'probably mostly Ainu', he had spent his youth in Kobe, Tokyo, Nagasaki and Fukuoka, and he lived the second half of his life in Amami.²² With its presentation of a national identity that was quite deliberately centred neither on the Imperial family, nor on the dominant Yamato culture, 'Japanesia' also provided a useful starting-point for those who argued for a break with the imperial Yamato tradition altogether. This is a point I will return to.

In the only detailed analysis of the Japanesia discourse available in English, Philip Gabriel argues that Japanesia should be read as 'proto-postmodern' (1999:3).²³ While Gabriel's argument is somewhat superficial, it is true that the Japanesia discourse plays on some of the hottest issues in Japanese modernity: both before 1945 and after. The historical development of the 'Japanesia' discourse through the 1960s and '70s also traces the shape of political and cultural uncertainty, associated most clearly with the issue of Okinawan reversion, but also in terms of distinctions between regional, national and international cultural space.

Shimao's Japanesia discourse is also about the discovery of diversity within what had become a closed and, for many, claustrophobic cultural identity. As one writer notes, never in history has the Japanese nation been more acutely conscious of its own borders than in the post-War period (Hanada 1997:39). From a colonial power with dynamic frontiers, Japan was transformed into a single nation with solid, static geographical limits. This metamorphosis from empire to nation-state was made all the more sudden and acute by the introduction, on the 29th of January 1946, of the notorious 30° line. From this time on, all of present-day Japan south of latitude thirty degrees was politically severed from Japan, and came under the control of the American military: this included the Prefecture of Okinawa, as well as the southern part of Kagoshima Prefecture. Okinawa remained separate from Japan for more than a quarter of a century.²⁴ The geopolitics that had, just three years previously, predicted the expansion of Japanese living-space to incorporate all of South-East Asia, if not Oceania as well, was now sealed

off and silenced well north of the Ryukyu Islands.

By re-mapping Japan as a de-centred pattern of islands rather than an enclosed nation-state, Shimao's writing placed emphasis on the cultural, racial and historical diversity to be found at what are usually seen as the 'outskirts' or 'frontiers' of the nation. It is this idea of the 'discovery of diversity within' that has become the dominant – and also most problematic – context for the use of the word 'Japanesia' today.

More interestingly however, Japanesia is also a discourse of escape from identity. Shimao constantly hints at an 'opening-up' or 'liberation' of Japanese culture to Southern (Pacific) influences. The key to this 'liberation', he claims, lie in the culture of the southern Ryukyu Arc: the 'Roots of Japanesia'. Shimao's language is both nation and international: he calls upon both the *Nanto-ron* (the discourse of the Southern Islands), and pre-War geopolitical characterisation of the 'South' as a place of fertility and abundance. When the Japanesian aspect of Japan is realised, Shimao writes, 'the Ryukyu Arc will no longer be a simply superfluous appendage. Its importance as a ligament connecting us to the archipelago to the south – its subtropical exoticism – will transform into a renewed cultural fertility and wealth within Japan (1982:16:231).

Japanesia's dual character as a discourse of frontiers and roots is linked to these two opposing movements: escape and re-discovery.

Shimao Toshio's Japanesia discourse is not 'non-fiction' in the conventional sense. Straddling the modes of fantasy and autobiography, it is anything but a political manifesto. Yet it would be naïve to call the discourse apolitical: it is better characterised as the Okinawan writer Arakawa Akira did in 1978, as a political *kikkake*: a starting point.²⁵ Japanesia is a mechanism for the interrogation of a range of geopolitical issues: regional, national and international. At this point, I would like to briefly introduce three discursive fields connected to the development of the concept of Japanesia. The first is the narrative of Shimao's life. The second and third roughly concern the usage of the term Japanesia in mainland Japan and Okinawa respectively.

2.1 A FIRST APPROACH

In his 1990 outline of Japanesia discourse, the Okinawan writer Okamoto Keitoku reflected that 'it is unlikely that Shimao himself had in mind any systematic logic of Japanesia. Rather than working from concrete facts towards an abstract theory, he at all times maintained the stance of a writer, working only with the concrete. This stance is visible in the development of the Japanesia debate: not in terms of a logical totality, but in terms of acute and individual motifs at each stage of its history. Each motif works in its own, individual and concrete way, to shape some part of Shimao's thought. These motifs lie scattered throughout the discourse of Japanesia.' Each reader brings his or her own motifs to the text, and reconstructs Japanesia in terms of them (1990:170-1). Okamoto's unquestioned equation of literary production with 'acute and individual'

(rather than political or collective) motifs, repeated by numerous other writers on the subject, seems somewhat naïve.²⁶ It is however of the nature of modern literary discourse to be associated with allegories of personal experience: Japanesia is no exception. The narrative of Shimao's life, made almost mythical through innumerable autobiographical works, has become an allegory for the experience of Japanesia as a cultural space.²⁷

Shimao was born in the village of Soma, in North-Eastern Honshu. His father's work as a silk exporter took the family to Yokohama, rural Hyogo and then Kobe. In 1937 Shimao moved to Nagasaki to attend the Commercial High School, and entered Kyushu University three years later. After graduating in 1943 he was conscripted into the Imperial Navy. At the age of 27, Shimao was placed in charge of a squadron of *shinyo* suicide boats stationed on the shore of Kakeroma Island, in the Amami archipelago south of Kyushu. The job of the *shinyo* boats was to protect the islands from American invasion by the simple means of launching a squad of motor-boats loaded with 250kg of explosives each, and ploughing them, driver and all, into any approaching American vessel. As in the case of the famous pilots of the Kamikaze, an explosive death was the certain outcome of any attack. From the end of 1944, Shimao's squadron of 180 men were placed on alert three times, but against all expectations the final order to attack never came. Instead, on the fifteenth of August 1945, the voice of the Emperor crackled through the military radios proclaiming Japan's surrender and the end of the Pacific War.

It was on Kakeroma Island that Shimao met his future wife and subject of numerous books, Miho. Miho was the Tokyo educated daughter of a village elder, and a teacher at the local school. Shimao was the gentle lieutenant sent to protect the islands from invasion. The couple spent some years in Kobe and Tokyo before moving back to the Amami Islands in 1955.²⁸ In 1958 Shimao became Chief Librarian at the Amami branch of the Kagoshima Public Library, a position that he effectively held until the mid-1970s. It was here that he wrote most of his essays on Japanesia.

Cast within the context of the *Nanto-ron*: the discourse of 'Southern Islands' mentioned in the Introduction, the narrative of Shimao's life is often portrayed (not least by Shimao and Miho themselves) as an allegorical enactment of the mythical meeting of Yamato and Islander, North and South: 'the unassuming love between a virgin of the ancient islands and an envoy of the Yamato emperor' (Ogura 1998:170). 'For Miho, Shimao was a demiurge from over the seas; for Shimao, Miho was a fairy of the Southern Islands' (Ogawa 1995:34). As the music critic Higashi Takuma points out, Shimao initially characterises the Japanese South from the point of view of an 'outsider' from the North: one who 'goes to meet', not one who is met. This stance overlaps with Shimao's wartime role as the 'protector' of (what was then) the frontiers of the nation: the masculine representative of 'mainland' civilisation. 'Shimao could never quite free himself from the dichotomy of Yamato Japan as male=culture opposed to Amami and Okinawa as

female=nature. Isn't "Japanesia" just a return of the idea of a multi-racial, multicultural "Japanese Empire"?' (1998:201-5).

Higashi raises a vital question of agency and representation in geopolitical discourse. It has been indicated by several writers in recent years that much modern Japanese writing on Okinawa adopts the same rhetorical stance as 19th Century European and American writing on Asia. This '*Nanto* Orientalism', it is argued, characteristically paints Okinawa as exotic, feminine and under-civilised: just waiting for the edifying embrace of the cultured (masculine) imperialist from the mainland.²⁹ The merging of South and East, North and West accomplishes little here but reproduce the binary geopolitical opposition of 'victim' and 'aggressor', yet it does work to highlight the international nature of *Nanto* discourse. Personally, I would argue that Japanese writing on the Southern Islands has more in common with European writing on Africa and the South Pacific than it does with Orientalism. Whichever the case, the Japanesia discourse undeniably participates to some extent in this exoticism.

2.2 ARCHITYPES

One of the great uncertainties about the Japanesia discourse is the fact that it has been interpreted and developed by a number of writers in a number of very different ways: some of them mutually contradictory. Two movements however rate special mention here. The first is the absorption of Japanesia into the concept of archetypal identity or archetypal Japan (*gen-nihon*). The second is the association of Japanesia with the Okinawa Anti-Reversion and Independence debates.

On mainland Japan, the term found its greatest popularity as the label for an archetypal cultural space. 'Japanesia' was inclusive. It comprehended all of the present Japanese territory, from the Kuril Islands north of Hokkaido down to the newly reclaimed islands of Okinawa in a single picture. It presented Japanese political territory in terms of a figurative geography: a myriad of island 'cells' which, rather than being the 'Empire of a Million Islands' of the pre-war geopolitics, was rather a single, all-inclusive organic entity.

On mainland Japan from the middle of the 1970s, the popularity of 'Japanesia' as a synonym for pre-historic Japan (or pre-Japan) grew to overshadow most other facets present in earlier writings on the subject.³⁰ The cultural 'roots' that were uncovered in the name of Japanesia were, of necessity, common to the whole archipelago, stretching more than 3000km from the Kuril islands in the north to the newly re-claimed islands of Okinawa to the south. 'Japanesia' was often doubled with the image of the Jomon race, inhabitants of much of Japan during prehistoric times. 'Japanesia' was the Japan of today, but the same time it was also totally Other. The integration of a European appellation (Japan, pronounced *Ya'pon*) into the word implied a break with the received national image implied by '*Nihon*' or '*Nippon*'. 'Japanesia' was

the 'intrinsic' Japan: a buried or subconscious archetypal community.³¹ Japanesia represented both an escape and a re-discovery.

The term 'Japanesia' provided a convenient way in which to incorporate the unique cultural and historical experience of Okinawa into a multi-layered national identity. Within this framework of buried collectivity, Okinawa was portrayed as that area most 'connected' to the underlying or unconscious archetype. In this sense, as Murai Osamu argues, the discourse of Japanesia drew directly on the tradition of the *Nanto-ron*. Although professing to re-evaluate Japanese culture from the perspective of the Ryukyu Arc, much of the Japanesia discourse does little more than recreate Okinawa as a more 'fundamental' – more primitive – and more exotic version of the Japanese mainland.³²

The following is a commentary from Tanikawa Ken'ichi's *Our Okinawa* series, published in March 1970, two years before Okinawan reversion to Japanese rule. Apart from the gross racism and triteness of the writing, it is an example of the mix of exoticism and self-referential curiosity that distinguishes post-War Southern Island discourse.

When I travelled in Okinawa, I felt as if a sharp stone had passed before my eyes: I was able to perceive my own existence with a new clarity. Why? Perhaps Okinawa had shown me the desire for universality or totality that I held within me. (...) Perhaps, the reason why we possess a special interest in Okinawa is that, through our dealings with it, we are able to recover our own totality and completeness. Yet this recovery is not like the spiritual conversion that European intellectuals underwent on Africa's primitive ground. Okinawa has a refined culture of its own, and is far from a stagnant or retarded society. On the other hand, it is also different from the discovery the universality of human nature that a Japanese traveller may make in European society for example. *More than anything, Okinawa is a part of Japan.* (...) In other words, as the discovery of totality in Okinawa indicates, *Okinawa preserves the archetype of Japan even better than does Japan herself. In Okinawa, one knows one is Japanese: one is conscious of the experience of identification with oneself*(1970:233, italics added).³³

In 'What is Japanesia', an essay published three month before (on New Years Day 1970), Tanikawa talks of Japanesia as a concept enabling the 'relativisation' of Japanese identity. 'We must find some way to rupture nationalism from within our nation. How is this possible? - By converting our homogeneous, uniform conception of Japanese history into a heterogeneous historical space: Japanesia' (Shimao 1977:62).³⁴

In his commentary on the *Our Okinawa* series, Uemura Tadao points out that Tanikawa's

‘critique’ of Japanese national identity is at most only critique on an abstract ‘meta-level’. It would be a mistake to take the idea of Japaneseness literally: to do so would be to suggest a multi-cultural, multi-racial Japan. ‘Identity’ would be dissolved into a number of semi-independent regions and cultural groups (2002:29). This ‘regionalisation’ is a far cry from the ‘relativisation’ of Japanese identity that Tanikawa advocates. It is however, not unrelated to the development of Japaneseness discourse in Okinawa in the early 1970s.

2.3 THE OKINAWAN CONTEXT

For much of the last 400 years, Okinawa has been a contested zone: culturally, politically and strategically. In the modern era particularly, Okinawa’s annexation and assimilation into the Japanese empire, its 26-year occupation by American military forces and the subsequent reversion to Japan, distinguish it as the object of regional and international geopolitical discourse. As Matthew Allen writes, ‘Okinawa’s boundaries have been wrapped in embrace of empire since the late 19th Century’ (2002:5). 1972, the year that control of Okinawa reverted to Japan, was also the year of the third quadrennial UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) in San Diego.³⁵ Although largely ignored today, the coincidence of the two events at the time was seen as symbolic of the overlap between Japan’s own North-South problem and the global situation.³⁶ It is necessary to see the development of the Japaneseness discourse in the ‘Southern Islands’ from this regional and international viewpoint.

From the 1970s, such prominent Okinawan writers as Arakawa Akira, Okamoto Keitoku, Kawamura Shin’ichi, and later Takara Ben and Nakazato Isao all contributed to, and were influenced by Shimao Toshio’s work. Arakawa Akira recalls, rather fondly: ‘for us, Shimao was not only an ideological mentor, he was a brother who would open his heart to us, and protect us’ (1998:207). In 1978, a new magazine was even founded on the topic, called *The Ryukyu Arc*. The concept of ‘Japaneseness’ itself has given rise to terms like ‘Okinesia’ and ‘Ryukyunesia’.³⁷ ‘The notably non-political and non-circumstantial nature of the early Japaneseness discourse’ – argues Okamoto Keitoku – ‘inevitably gave way to a more political and situated understanding under the simultaneous influence of the Okinawa Reversion on the one hand, and the nation-wide push for the reinstatement of regional autonomy on the other.’ (1990:7).

In a 1998 essay, Nakazato Isao lists three major ‘motifs’ shaping the development of the Japaneseness discourse (221-2):

1. To reveal the individuality of the Ryukyu Arc, and so revise the history of its relationship with Japan.
2. To place the islands of Amami and Okinawa within a single field of vision (the Ryukyu Arc).
3. To use the Ryukyu Arc so created as a frame of reference from which to re-construct a *Japaneseness* image of the nation and national history.

‘The nation’, in the sense in which it is used here, refers to more to a political necessity than an ideological structure. Nakazato goes on to argue that ‘the idea of “nesia” surmounts the artificial limits of the nation, and disperses centralised nationalism’ (1998:227). The necessity of nationhood was however seen quite differently by those involved in the independence and anti-Reversion movements of the 1960s and 70s.³⁸ Thirty years after the political reversion was effected, in an environment where uncertainty over the position of the ‘Ryukyu Arc’ in regional and international discourse is coming under renewed scrutiny, the history of ‘Japanesia’ provides a useful mechanism for the interrogation of geopolitical issues and ideas.³⁹

3 ROOTS AND FRONTIERS

The crucial difference, one writer argues, between Shimao Toshio’s Japanesia discourse and the *Nanto-ron* of those like Yanagida Kunio is that Japanesia is inextricably linked to the ‘dream of the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, and the despair at its eventual failure’ (Hanada 1997:34). There is no doubt that in Shimao’s writing lies the fantasy of an underlying or nascent Asia-Pacific cultural community.⁴⁰ There are a number of links between the popularity of ‘Japanesia’ and the popularity of pre-War geopolitics. For example, the following is description of the shape of Japan from a school geography textbook published by the education department in 1943.

The Kuril islands in the North, Honshu (the main island) in the centre and the Ryukyu islands (Okinawa) in the south all together form the shape of a bow or arc which protrudes into the Pacific Ocean. (...) This shape of the Japanese islands is not an ordinary one. It represents the way that Japan stands before the Asian continent, advancing bravely in the direction of the Pacific.⁴¹

The similarities between this passage and Shimao’s descriptions of Japanesia are not easy to miss. The geopolitical nature of this discourse is perhaps yet more evident in the writing of others on the subject. The proposal by the philosopher Yamada Munemutsu (1925-) for the an ‘Indo-Japanesia’ regional community, for example, has something very 1930s about it.

I say that we shouldn’t just compare Indonesia and Japanesia. Rather we should join them up in a single word: Indo-Japanesia. (...) The Pacific has hitherto been divided into Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia. To this we should add one more term: Indo-Japanesia, spanning the western fringe of the ocean from Japan,

through the Ryukyu Arc, Taiwan and the Philippines as far as Indonesia' (1977:150).

At the same time however, as Murai Osamu notes, Japanesia shares with folklore research part of its impetus as a reaction against the sudden economic growth and modernisation of the 1960s (2002:43). Japanesia is also a return to 'roots'. In a 1962 essay entitled '*Furusato wo kataru*' ('Narrating my Home'), Shimao writes of the Amami islands:

The roots of these islands are intertwined with those of the rest of Japan at an unimaginably deep level. I believe that it is soon to cast off the barren disguise it has worn for so long, and, with its combination of Northern sterility and Southern abundance, it will represent an essential base for the investigation of the Southern Islands (1982:16:195).

Japanesia presents a problematisation of the position of national and regional 'frontiers'. It is associated not only with the excavation of latent or unconscious cultural identity, but also, conversely, with the framing of alternative identities. In Shimao's discourse, the 'South' of Japanesia, as a direction, a quality (exotic abundance) and a proper name (the Ryukyu Arc), also presents an extreme: an edge or a frontier. It is however a dynamic frontier and an uncertain extreme. "The South" didn't always fit my expectations' Shimao writes, 'Rather, the image that I had of "The South" just kept slipping away from me, escaping further and further South' (1982:16:98).

¹ I refer here to the 'Critical Commentary' shown at the conclusion of each episode of *The Age of Uncertainty* aired on KCET Los Angeles, and gathered in book form under the title *The Galbraith Viewpoint in Perspective* (Stanford: Hoover University Press, 1977). Among the contributors were such luminaries as William F. Buckley Jr., Peter Duignan and Ronald Reagan.

² From 'The Japanese Race and the South – from the point of linguistics in particular –' (「南方と日本民族 – 特に言語上から –」), in Shinmura. 1971, volume 2, page 441.

³ 'Japanesia' is written 'ヤポネシア'. The 'Ja' in here is pronounced 'Ya', as in Slavic languages. In Philip Gabriel's *Mad Wives and Island Dreams* (1999), Japanesia appears in a phonetic approximation as 'Yaponesia', but here I have chosen to follow the Romanised spelling on the cover of the Japanese first-edition *Introduction to Japanesia* (1977).

⁴ These terms are written in Japanese as ‘南島論’ and ‘地政学’ respectively.

⁵ This idea (日琉同素論) however, is at least as old as the 1880s. In 1885, the English linguist Basil Hall Chamberlain published an article called ‘The Luchu Islands and their Inhabitants’ in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, in which he proposed that both Okinawans and mainland Japanese were descendents of mongoloid settlers who had entered Kyushu from the Korean peninsula in around the third century BC.

⁶ It is vital to note the political overtones of Iha’s comment. He lived at a time when Okinawa was still struggling to find a place to fit within the structure of the Japanese nation. Characterising Okinawa as a museum of ancient Japanese culture also had the function of emphasising Okinawa’s importance as a part of Japanese national identity.

⁷ Murai Osamu (1992, 1993) and Yakobi Osamu (1999) give detailed critical analyses of the political position of folklore research in relation to Southern Island research.

⁸ Gearóid Ó Tuathail is one of a number of Anglo-American academics including Simon Dalby and Marcus Doel who, from the early 1990s, have advanced the case for a ‘Critical Geopolitics’. In general, ‘Critical Geopolitics’, as it appears in the work of these writers, works to question the assumptions behind Geopolitical discourse associated with imperialism, the Cold War and post-Cold War globalism. It denotes one attempt to bear witness to the deconstruction of the schematic representations of political and cultural borders, of the concepts of ‘in’ and ‘out’, ‘them’ and ‘us’, under the conditions of philosophical post-modernity. According to Ó Tuathail and Dalby, Critical Geopolitics is an attempt to focus ‘on the conditions of possibility of geopolitical truth, knowledge and power’ (‘Introduction’ to *Rethinking Geopolitics*, 1998).

⁹ The use of the expression *takamanohara* here is an obvious reference to Japanese myth, and an indirect reference to the Imperial Governance (kodo) which was (as an historical necessity) positioned at the centre of his geopolitics.

¹⁰ In his 1942 Geopolitical *Manifesto*, Komaki Saneshige distinguishes the Japanese geopolitics of the future from both ‘that brand of (Euro-American) Geography which only serves to justify the status quo’, and ‘the Geography of Marxist consolidation’ (1942:57). Interestingly, this is precisely the same opinion expressed almost forty years later in a pair of geopolitical blockbusters by Kuramae Morimichi. In the first: his wonderfully entertaining *Aku no Ronri* (1980), Kuramae, looking back on the Pacific War, makes the surprising accusation that American communists, in collaboration with Stalin, Mao Zedong and left-wing elements elsewhere conspired to motivate the colonial and militaristic tendencies in Japan. ‘In the Second World War, Japan and Germany were made to work as icebreakers. After the icebreakers sunk, the Soviet Union, Maoist China and America moved in to claim the spoils.’(1980:59) America, through its (however not notably communist) government, is held largely responsible for, among other things, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. ‘It was, by large, disguised Marxists who were responsible for instilling ideas like long-term war and the East Asian Community into the heads of the Japanese military authorities’ (1980:68-9).

¹¹ See for example Takeuchi Keiichi (1994), pages 195-204.

¹² For example, Komaki praised the ‘World Governance Theory’ (「世界経綸論」) of the pre-Meiji agitator Yoshida Shoin (1830-1859) as the precursor to his own geopolitics. Yoshida had argued for the occupation of Okhotsk, the assimilation of Okinawa and the Korean peninsula, northern China, Taiwan and the Philippines, in preparation for a Japanese advance into Oceania (Komaki 1943:3-9).

¹³ This enthusiasm was helped by Japan's entry into a treaty with the Germany-Italy Axis in September 1940, and the strengthening of the treaty in December 1941 to pledge 'total cooperation in the war against England and America' (transcripts of the treaty documents, *The Significance of the Construction of the New Greater East Asian Order*, page 220).

¹⁴ In particular, Kjellén's 1916 work *Der Staat als Lebensform* (The State as a Living Form). Although the English geographer Halford Mackinder wrote in 'The Geographical Pivot of History' (*Geographical Journal*, 1904) that the aim of Geopolitics was 'to exhibit human history as part of the life of the world organism', the idea of the organic state is stronger in the German tradition (see Ó Tuathail 1998a, page 28).

¹⁵ In Japan, the organic model of the state and the Social Darwinist model of 'survival of the fittest' (the fittest individual, group, thought, society etc.) came together initially in the work of the philosopher Kato Hiroyuki (1836-1916). Kato was the Secretary of the Education Department from 1872, Chancellor of Tokyo University from 1879, and introduced in Lanman's *Leading Men of Japan* as a famous 'German scholar' (1883:81). In 1892, Kato published *The Struggle for the Rights of the Strong* (『強者の権利の競争』), which was translated into German the following year as *Kampf ums Recht des Starkeren*. In *Reason in the Evolution of Morality Laws* (1903) and *Conflict and Evolution in the Natural World* (1906) he argued that self-interest was the fundamental and identical motive for the action of individual organisms, groups, species and nation-states. Note: 'Social Darwinism' in this sense refers primarily to the theories of the English social philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and the German zoologist Ernst Heinrich Haeckel (1834-1919).

¹⁶ *Dai Nihon: Betrachtungen über Gross-Japans Wehrkraft, Weltstellung und Zukunft*. (Berlin: Mittler & Sohn, 1913). Haushofer had stayed in Japan as a military instructor/observer from 1908 to 1910, and his books on the geopolitics of the Pacific consciously encouraged Japanese imperialism. Komaki Saneshige writes that during his stay in Japan, Haushofer slept in a temple beside the Imperial Tomb in Kyoto, a location that allowed him to 'communicate directly with the Japanese spirit'. This did not, incidentally, prevent Komaki from criticising the Geopolitik that Haushofer represented as overly 'political'. In fact, he expressed profound dissatisfaction with German 'Geopolitik', sometimes even to the extent of abandoning the term 'geopolitics' (*chiseigaku*) altogether, in favour of the term 'geography' (*chirigaku*). In two 1940 essays entitled 'The Japanese Geography of the Future' and 'From Geography to Geopolitics', for example, Komaki deliberately opposes his 'Geography' to the German 'Geopolitik', as well as Anglo-American Geopolitics (see the Geopolitical Manifesto, pages 55-79). A harsher critic of German-style Japan Geopolitik was Ozuka Koji (1906-1970). In his 1942-3 essay 'The Fundamental Character of Geopolitik' (『ゲオポリティックの基本的性格』 in *Ozuka Koji Zenshu* volume 6, pages 181-221), Ozuka describes Japanese Geopolitics as, among other things, 'just a bastard child of the Germanic idea of the organic nation-state and geographical determinism' (for a detailed discussion, see Hatano Sumio. 1981. 'Geopolitics and "The New East-Asian Order"', pages 15-16).

¹⁷ The famous comic-strip *Dankichi the Adventurer* (『冒険ダン吉』) by Shimada Keizo is an example of this. *Dankichi the Adventurer* was published in a popular children's magazine (『少年倶楽部』) for six years from 1933 to 1939. It tells the story of how the little boy Dankichi becomes the king of a fantastic South Pacific island, complete with lions, elephants and giraffes. Most of Dankichi's time is spent 'educating' the natives (who look remarkably like 19th Century European caricatures of Africans) on the manners and morals of civilisation.

¹⁸ See the discussion in Oguma Eiji *The Boundaries of the Japanese*, pages 20-23 in particular.

¹⁹ See for example his discussion in *The Birth of Nanto Ideology* (1992).

²⁰ 「ヤポネシアの根っこ」(平凡社刊『世界教養全集 21』). The authority for all of Shimao's writing is the Shobunsha *Shimao Toshio Zenshu* (1980-82). All translations are mine unless otherwise specified. Shimao wrote at least 27 essays and commentaries, as well as many fictional works related to the concept of Japanesia during the ten years from 1961 to 1971.

²¹ In other words, the Ryukyu Arc represents all of the present-day Prefecture of Okinawa, plus the Amami islands of Kagoshima Prefecture: see the description in 'My sisters in Amami' (「奄美の妹たち」), *Asahi Shimbun*, 23rd May, 1961.

²² 'Ancestors Erased' (「消された先祖」, 1964) in *Shimao Toshio Zenshu* volume 14, page 162.

²³ For Philip Gabriel, Shimao's 'proto-postmodernism' consists in 'the chaotic, fragmentary, and non-linear nature of his fictional world, its "anti-structure" stance, its irrationality, its challenge to conventional literary genres, and the juxtaposition of two or multiple worlds – the way normality and abnormality are unstable, shifting concepts, the subtle overlap of dream and reality' as well as the fact that the 'appeal and power' of Shimao's writing are found 'in the discovery of the Other' (1999:3). Another book worth noting is Phillippe Pelletier's *La Japonésie: Géopolitique et géographie historique de la surinsularité au Japon* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1997), although this is less an analysis of the Japanesia discourse itself than a study of the 'super-insularity' and the concept of the 'island nation' that Pelletier claims lies at the root of 'Japanesian' consciousness.

²⁴ The line of control was moved gradually south, to 29° in 1951 and 27° in 1953. The Amami island group came back under Japanese control in 1953. Okinawa, the Miyako and Yaeyama Islands finally reverted to Japan in 1972.

²⁵ Arakawa used this expression in discussion with Shimao Toshio, Okamoto Keitoku, Kawamura Shin'ichi. A record of the discussion was published in the magazine *Shin Okinawa Bungaku* in 1987, under the title 「琉球弧とヤポネシア」('The Ryukyu Arc and Japanesia'). See Higashi Takuma (1998) for a detailed review.

²⁶ Okamoto also describes Shimao's writing on Japanesia as fundamentally 'non-political' and 'non-circumstantial' (see below). Philip Gabriel's strangely titled *Mad Wives and Island Dreams* (1999) deals with Japanesia almost entirely in terms of literary biography.

²⁷ Shimao's writing is often divided into three styles or genres: writing on dreams, writing on Japanesia and the Southern Islands (Amami and Okinawa), and writing on the mental illness of his wife (see below). The vast majority of works in each of these genres is autobiographical or semi-autobiographical. For alternative taxonomies, see Higashi Takuma 1998 (war novels, fantasy and I-novels), or Oshiro Tatsuhiko 1987 (sick-wife novels, war novels, diaries and writing on dreams).

²⁸ The islands had reverted to Japan only two years before. The clearest reason for the move was Miho's psychological health. The revelation of Shimao's affair with a fan in 1953 had sparked mental illness in his wife, first diagnosed as schizophrenia, and then as a psychogenic reaction due to environmental maladjustment. Shimao used these events as the basis for a string of autobiographical 'sick wife stories' (byosai-mono), the most famous of which is *The Sting of Death* (*Shi no Toge*, 1960-76).

²⁹ The reference to the discourse of Orientalism, here based upon the work of Edward Said, form one of the

major themes in discussions of *Nanato-ron* by Murai Osamu (1992 and 1993), Fukazawa Toru (1995) and Ogura Mushitaro (1998), among others.

³⁰ See, for example, *The Appeal of Japanese Archaeology* (1976), edited by the famous ethnologist Egami Namio and the author Matsumoto Seicho.

³¹ The parallel with the discourse of social psychology is not accidental: psychology – particularly the work by Carl Gustav Jung on archetypes and the collective unconscious – had a profound effect on the language of Japanese cultural discourse throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

³² Japanesia, Murai notes, ‘in short, places Okinawa and Amami in the position of the “root” or “archetypal” Japan. Structurally, it has not surmounted the discourse of the Southern Islands (Nanto-ron)’ (2002:44).

³³ Italics added. In the original, 「沖縄では日本人は自分が日本人であることを、換言すれば自己との同一化体験を意識する」.

³⁴ The anti-nationalistic tone of Tanikawa’s discourse is stronger in the work of other writers like Okuno Takeo and Yoshimoto Taka’aki, who present Japanesia as a mechanism for overcoming Japanese modernity.

³⁵ Okinawa reverted to Japan on the Fifteenth of May. The Conference was held for five weeks starting on the Thirteenth of April.

³⁶ For example, a special edition of the *Chu-o Koron* magazine published in that year, entitled ‘The Transfiguration of the Third World’ records the overlap between these two scales or points of view.

³⁷ *The Ryukyu Arc* (『琉球弧』) was doomed never to run an issue: the debate that was to head the first number was eventually published in 1987 in the magazine *Shin-Okinawa Bungaku* (see Higashi Takuma 1998, page 195). ‘Okinesia’ (オキネシア) and ‘Ryukyunesia’ (りゅうきゅうねしあ) are terms coined by Miki Ken and Takara Ben respectively.

³⁸ For example, Nakasone Genwa of the Okinawan Democratic Alliance and Ogimi Chotoku of the Ryukyu National Party. As Higashi Takuma points out, by the start of the 1970s, the idea of ‘anti-Reversion’ had become distinct from the independence movement. “Anti-Reversion” refers to the will to resist assimilation into the <nation> at all costs. (...) Anti-Reversion means Anti-Nationalism and Anti-Citizenship, where citizenship implies membership of a national community’ (1998:203).

³⁹ I refer here in particular to the debate surrounding the ‘Okinawa Initiative’ proposed by three prominent Okinawan academics: Takara Kurayoshi, Oshiro Tsuneo and Maeshiro Morisada. In ‘Towards an “Okinawa Initiative” – A Possible Role for Okinawa in Asia Pacific’, a paper given in March 2000 at the Asia Pacific Agenda Project Okinawa Forum in Naha, the three indicated Okinawa’s continuing responsibility as a station for American military bases in the Asia-Pacific region. Such bases, it was argued, provide a vital source of stability in the region. ‘If we think along these lines, the current problem of the U.S. bases is not about the rightness or wrongness of their existence. Instead, the problem is how to make adjustments so as to reconcile the need to operate the bases effectively and the stability of the lives of local residents’ (Oshiro et al. 2000:180). The ‘Initiative’ suggested Okinawa’s future role as a ‘soft power’ and a ‘base for intellectual exchange’ in the Asia-Pacific region. The argument for retention of U.S. military bases was, however, severely criticised by many in Okinawa, among them Arakawa Akira and Kawamura Shin’ichi (see in particular Arakawa Akira “‘Okinawa Initiative’ wo yomu’ in the *Okinawa Times*, 16-17 May, 2000).

⁴⁰ Or maybe even, as Ozasahara Masaru argues, ‘it was the hypothesis of a pre-historic pan-Pacific cultural sphere that triggered the idea of Japanesia’ (1977:106).

⁴¹ Elementary Geography (『初等科地理』), volume 1, chapter 1. In *Fukoku Kokutei Kyokasho: Kokumin Gakko-ki* (1982).

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Note: translated titles correspond to the translations given in the Japanese original, wherever an English title is indicated. All other translations are my own.

Geopolitics and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Backgrounders - July 4, 2019. By Jose Miguel Alonso-Trabanco. In June 2015, the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was agreed to by representatives of 50 countries in Beijing, China. The Bank started operating in January 2016 and its first four loans “ totaling USD 509 million “ were approved for Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. For instance, some economists foresee the AIIB becoming a formidable competitor of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, entities established within the framework of the Bretton Woods system during the aftermath of World War Two, and whose governance has been historically controlled by Atlanticist powers ever since.