

「アジアの中の日本」への外交戦略

新 里 孝 一

Shifting its Focus:

The Groundwork for Japan to play a bigger role in Asian Affairs

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Japan is the world's, not the world Japan's. This is a higher common sense, whether believed by us or not. "No part is greater than the whole." The greatest of nations is but a part, and Japan only a part of "grand Humanity." No cause of inordinate pride for us, therefore. Rather, let us know our own selves, and be humble and contented.¹

True, Diplomacy requires skill, as all human intercourse does. We shall not be worsted by hypocrites or led astray by political mirages. We shall build upon the good and true, upon the rock that endures for ever. But such a power of discrimination between the false and the true, the transient and the eternal, is a gift to the True and Brave only. The coward resorts himself to artifice and means, and the hypocrite is a profuse framer of expedencies. Diplomacy on the principle of simple honesty is yet to be tried.²

Introduction

A Gloomy Situation

In a noted article for a Japanese journal, a senior political leader expressed gloom about Japan's future. After referring to the important and productiveness of relations between Japan and the US, he went on to say:

One thing, however, is certain: seen from the geopolitical viewpoint, Japan can only survive in the future as an Asian country. 'Asianism', a diplomatic principle emphasizing greater cooperation with Asian nations as against the US and European countries, has been much used as a superficial

¹ Uchimura, Kanzo, 'THE WORLD'S JAPAN (1897)', *"Uchimura Kanzo Zenshu"*, vol.4, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981, p.42.

² Uchimura, Kanzo, 'DIPLOMACY (1897)', *ibid.*, pp.45-46.a

expression of Japanese diplomacy, but it is questionable whether the government and people of Japan actually appreciate that Asia is a region of vital importance to Japan. What is worse, people in Asia are reluctant to trust Japan's 'Asianism' because they have always suspected that this much touted principle is only a perfunctory statement of a policy subordinate to Japan's alliance with the US.... Japan could be isolated from international society unless it chooses to move away from its current status as friendless economic power belonging neither to Asia, nor to the West. ³

This pessimism was validated by recent events in Asia. Soon after India conducted two rounds of nuclear tests on May 11 and 13, Pakistan responded with its own test on May 28. Japan as a matter of course condemned the aspirations of these two countries to join the nuclear club. They replied by emphasizing their weapons were for self defense, and then unexpectedly added "If Japan had had nuclear weapons, the United States would never have dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki," and "By what right does Japan criticize our nuclear tests while sheltering under the US nuclear umbrella?" Japanese people were greatly disappointed to hear such views repeated frequently on TV.

Re-examination of Japan's 'US-first' policy

It is easy to scoff at the shortsightedness of those two nations. But we have to admit that their words suggest that Japan's diplomatic outreach towards Asian nations has not built the sort of solid partnerships in psychological and cultural terms that we had hoped for. In fact, our contacts with them have been almost exclusively economic.

Despite upholding the principle of 'Japan as a member of Asia' since 1957, Japan has continued to see itself as a non-Asian country.⁴ This tendency, needless to say, is rooted in the Cold War alignment, which fostered in the Japanese a strong sense of Japan being a member of the Western alliance, under the patronage of the United States. This has left no room for such concepts as 'Japan in Asia' and 'Japan's role in Asia' in the public perception. And the countries of Asia may be only too well aware of Japan's feelings on this.

So it's time that we Japanese rebuild our relations with Asian nations. Since the end of the Cold War, and the transition in national politics away from the 1955 system, that followed soon after, the Japanese have experienced a succession of shocks, such as economic stagnation, and ongoing 'Japan-bashing' on the part of the US. The result of this is that many people are now beginning to question the

³ Kajiyama, Seiroku '21-Seiki ni muketa Nihon no Zahyojiku' (Japan's Coordinate Axis Toward Twenty-First Century: Kajiyama Vision), *BUNGEISHUNJU*, July, 1955, pp.120-121.

⁴ Kawabe, Ichiro *Kokuren to Nihon* (the United Nations and Japan) Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996, pp.53-54.

relevance of the so-called 'Yoshida Doctrine', whose core premise was that Japan should concentrate on economic growth and rely totally on the US for national security. This doctrine provided not only the political and economic framework for Japan's postwar development, but also its psychological underpinning.

There are two possible alternatives to the Yoshida Doctrine: to change Japan's exclusive relations with the US into a Japan-US alliance that allows participation in the UN collective security system; or to shift Japan's diplomatic stance from 'US-first' to 'Asia-first'.

If Japan wants to build up its own leadership role on the basis of a partnership with other Asian countries, we will have no option but to re-examine our relations with the US, all the more because Asian leaders have always seen Japan as a subject state of the US, unable to seek solidarity with Asian nations if it means splitting with the US. This is not only my view: it is also held by a number of Japanese political leaders, although they do not push assertively for an 'Asia-first' policy.⁵ Others emphasize the need for the US presence in Asia on the grounds of US unrivalled power, but we should remember that such comments are made in the belief that without the presence of the US, Japan and other Asian nations could not ensure peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region by themselves. Clearly, Japan's 'US-first' policy is based on passive perceptions such as these. But it seems likely that international relations in Asia will bring about a change to Japan's 'US first' policy. Here, we will look at this possibility: that is to say, the trend in Japan to work towards closer cooperation with Asian nations, which would like to see a 'Japan in Asia', in order to change Japan's diplomacy of dependence on the US.

The purpose of this paper is to consider Japan's strategies under the Hashimoto/Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) administration towards becoming 'Japan in Asia'. This study focuses on the implications of the 'Singapore Lecture' delivered by Prime Minister Hashimoto on January 14, 1997, and the follow-up to it, which it suggests signals a shift towards 'Japan in Asia' in Japan's diplomatic stance.⁶ We are not concerned here with problems such as the monetary and economic crisis in Asia.

It is, of course, true that a 'role' is of value only if it is accepted by all the parties concerned. In other words, ideals assumed complacently by one party cannot lead to a 'role' in the exact sense of the word. It should be noted that a prescriptive debate on a role for Japan in Asia, without any investigation of the possibility of its assumption, is quite meaningless. For this reason the sort of discussion that follows is essential to any consideration of Japan's role in Asia.

⁵ See, for example, Gotoda, Masaharu *Jyo to Ri* (Emotion and Reason) vol.2, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1998, pp.319-323.

⁶ Some articles refer to this lecture: Shiraishi, Takashi 'Nihon wa Tonanajia de Nani ga Dekiruka' (What Can Japan Do in Southeast Asia?), *CHUOKORON*, January, 1998, Aoki, Tamotsu 'Ima koso Takokukan Bunka Gaikou o' (Now Multinational Cultural Diplomacy!), *CHUOKORON*, August 1998, and Chino, Kyoko 'Hashimoto Dokutorin no Shinka o' (Deepen Hashimoto Doctrine), *SANKEI SHINBUN*, December 28, 1997.

1 Factors involved in Japan's role in Asia

The Ideological base of Japan's diplomacy

There seem to be three ideological factors guiding Japan's foreign policy. First and foremost is the 'US-first' policy that has formed the keystone of the nation's postwar diplomatic stance. Its central tenet is, obviously, the preservation and enhancement of the Japan-US alliance. The 'US-first' policy is supported to a greater or lesser extent by most LDP politicians, especially the 'bureaucratic faction' that inherited the 'Yoshida Doctrine'. However there are now some on the political scene trying to further strengthen the Japan-US alliance from the standpoint of a revised 'Yoshida Doctrine'.

The second factor is Asianism, or the 'Asia-first' policy, whose principal objective is to redirect a foreign policy whose primary emphasis has been on the Japan-US alliance, to one in which cooperation with Asian nations is on a par to that with the US. 'Asianism' here, however, is different from the Asianism of pre-war Japan aimed at a 'Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' in that it is not expected to conflict with Japan's cooperation with the US. In this sense the interpretation of 'Asianism' may be ambiguous, allowing a range of variations according to the degree of priority given to Japan's cooperation with the US. 'Asianism' will have to be elevated from the status of political slogan to a diplomatic principle comparable to the 'US-first' policy of recent years.

Thirdly there is the 'United Nations-first' policy, under which Japan places its commitment to the United Nations as one of the central pillars of its foreign policy. Although lip service has been paid to this principle ever since Japan was admitted to the United Nations in 1956, the former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hisashi Owada, has suggested that its implications have differed over three specific periods since 1956.⁷ The first period was twenty years following 1956, during which it represented Japan's endeavors for reacceptance by the international community. In the second period of unprecedented high economic growth during the 70s and 80s, it became little more than a hollow expression. But in the third period beginning with the end of the Cold War, Japan has actively participated in seeking reform of the UN and made moves towards gaining a permanent seat on the Security Council.⁸

It should be added that, during this latter period, the 'UN-first' policy can be seen as a pragmatic middle path between the 'US-first' policy and Asianism. Its underlying aim is to separate Japan's

⁷ Owada, Hisashi 'Kokuren no Kaikaku to Nihon no Yakuwari' (Reform of the United Nations and Role of Japan), *HOGAKU KYOSHITSU*, No.214, July 1998, pp.22-23.

⁸ On September 24, 1996, at the Fifty-first Session of the General Assembly, Prime Minister Hashimoto stated that Japan, with the endorsement of many countries, was prepared to discharge its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council in accordance with its basic philosophy of non-resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution (*BLUEBOOK* 1997, p.55)

diplomatic activities from ideological disputes within national politics, in order that Japan may better focus on its national self-interest. This factor may become increasingly influential in next few years because of the likely conflict between 'US-first' policy and Asianism. However it should be remembered that this special emphasis on the UN does not so much reflect the end of ideologically directed policy as a growing antagonism between these ideologies, and so we should continue to pay careful attention to how this antagonism develops under the current dominant 'US-first' policy.

This study intends to emphasize that Asianism as an ideological factor is likely to become relatively more important at the end of the 90s than before, when 'US-first' and 'UN-first' policies dominated.

International Leadership roles⁹

The concept of 'international leadership' can be defined as a nation's role in exercising significant influence on the organization, collective objectives and activities, or prevailing mood in the international community as a whole or in specific regions. From the organizational point of view there are three different styles of international leadership. They are influenced not only by organizational capacity to exploit economic or technological resources and military strength, but also psychological factors such as national image or stereotypes that have built up as the result of historical circumstances.

The first is the 'controller' style of international leadership. This is based on a hegemonic structure backed by overwhelming military power, and those following are forced to fill roles allotted arbitrarily by the controller.

The second is the 'proposer' style, a more creative form of leadership in which potential problems are identified in their situational context and an agenda is proposed that, with the endorsement and cooperation of the various countries concerned, will lead to a solution. The efficacy of this style of leadership largely depends on problem-solving (agenda-setting) skills, and therefore the strength needed to ensure compliance seen in the 'controller' style is not required.

The third is the 'mediator' style, in which the objective is to keep order through coordination among countries whose national objectives or diplomatic policies may clash. This differs from the 'proposer' style in that it is reactive rather than creative, but two share certain similarities in that they both require radical thinking to hammer out conciliatory ideas and a negotiating ability that will encourage confidence among the parties involved. 'Mediator' style leadership relies only on building mutual trust, and is not based on national strength or military power.

We can say with fair certainty that Japan lacks the capacity in both organizational and psychological ways to exert hegemonic control over the Asian region, and it seems reasonable to suppose that this

⁹ Mushanokoji Kinhide *Takyokukajidai no Nihon Gaiko* (Japanese Diplomacy in Multipolar Age) Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1971, pp.44-45.

view is held by the vast majority of the Japanese people.

Enhancement of the Japan-US alliance

A renunciation of 'controller' style leadership in the Asian region does not automatically point to one of the alternative 'proposer' or 'mediator' styles. Separate from this analysis of leadership roles, some Japanese political figures are bent on preserving Japan's self-interest within a framework of cooperation with the US. But cooperation in this context differs from that of the Cold War era, which exempted Japan from all responsibility for its own security. In this new cooperative framework Japan is seen coordinating with the US and discharging responsibilities not only in the economic arena but also in peace-keeping operations worldwide. A characteristic feature of this scenario, moreover, is the optimistic view that any strengthening of the alliance between Japan and the US will stabilize international relations in the Asian region. Clearly, no hint of a specific role for Japan as an Asian country is to be found here.

A leading proponent of views of this sort is Ichiro Ozawa, the head of the Liberal Party. The core concepts of his political and diplomatic philosophy are a 'US-first policy leaving no room for other options' and the belief that 'Japan could not survive without the US'. His arguments are illustrated in the following extract from an interview.¹⁰

Q: Some criticize you for being an uncompromising nationalist, others for being excessively pro-US

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Ozawa: I am convinced Japan cannot survive without cooperation with the United States.

Q: Is the current weak-kneed diplomacy of total reliance on the US likely to continue?

Ozawa: No, it isn't.

Q: Then what needs to be done to allow cooperation with the US without us coming completely under its sway?

Ozawa: We should undertake responsibilities that accord with our status quo.

Q: In the case of a country invaded by another, what action should Japan take?

Ozawa: Japan should of course take part in peace-keeping operations with the United States and other nations.

Q: Aren't you afraid that Asian countries will condemn Japan for taking such military action?

Ozawa: That idea is a myth. It's an absolute falsehood!

Q: But most Japanese people seem to be concerned about this.

¹⁰ Ozawa, Ichiro 'Beikoku Nakushite Nihon wa Ikirarenai' (Japan can not survive without the United States), *CHUOKORON*, Jun 1998, pp.69-70.

Ozawa: I don't think so. It's only a pretext. Most Japanese people, if the truth were told, hope to evade joining peace-keeping operations on the pretext of an expected condemnation from Asian countries.

Q: Would you assert that Asian countries would be glad to see Japan participating in PKO activities?

Ozawa: As long as Japan acts on the basis of a UN resolution, the Asian countries are sure to recognize the validity of Japan's PKO contribution.

In its 'Manifesto for National Renewal' the Liberal Party emphasizes that Japan must take a permanent seat on the UN Security Council in the near future and take part in peace-keeping operations mandated by the UN General Assembly or the Security Council. However, the Manifesto contains little speculation about Japan's diplomatic stance towards Asian countries. The Party appears to believe that Japan's participation in the UN collective security system will guarantee the Asian nations' confidence in Japan.¹¹

Under present circumstances in which US-Japan relations are at something of a crossroads, due to the friction caused by the US military bases in Japan, no-one can predict for certain the destiny of such a clear-cut vision in the near future. Judging from the weakening political influence of Ozawa and his party, it is unlikely that his ideology will meet with widespread favor among Japanese people, who have turned in their search for national identity away from what they perceive as standards set by the US for the whole world.

Between the Japan-US alliance and Asianism

No region in the world is as critical to Japan's future as the Asia-Pacific... If the Asia-Pacific region is at peace, Japan will be at peace; if the region prospers, so, too, will Japan... We must therefore ask ourselves what Japan can do to ensure continued peace and prosperity... and vibrant cultural development in this region throughout the future. In the past, Japanese foreign policy has followed a reactive model, observing world events from the sidelines and responding only when necessary, but this strategy can no longer adequately serve Japan's needs. To look at the Asia-Pacific region in particular, unless Japan begins to play a more active leadership role that is commensurate with the economic and political stature it has attained, the entire region could begin drifting in an undesirable direction. Japan, in a word, must begin pursuing a more assertive foreign policy. Greater assertiveness, however, is not enough; our policies must also be inspired by truly creative

¹¹ Ozawa, Ichiro *Nihon Saikochiku Sengen* (Manifesto of National Renewal), Tokyo, 1997, pp.73-79.

and innovative thinking.¹²

On the basis of this sort of forward-looking realization, the LDP's *Japan's Strategy Towards the Asia-Pacific Region: The Challenges of Transformation* outlines the specific principles that must guide the formulation of Japan's policies towards Russia, the Korean peninsula, China, Southeast Asia, Oceania, South Asia, Central Asia and Mongolia.

Compared with the Liberal Party's diplomatic vision, the strategy of the ruling LDP now seems to take more account of the Asian region in spite of its frequent reference to the Japan-US alliance. While the Liberal Party sees the alliance as the immutable diplomatic axis that can govern other bilateral relations in the Asia-Pacific region, the LDP thinks of it more as an interim framework for multilateral confidence building in the region.

At least the LDP, unlike the Liberal Party, appears not to accept that further strengthening of the Japan-US alliance will necessarily develop better cooperation between Japan and Asian nations. So let us now examine what the LDP thinks about Japan's leadership role in the Asian region.

2 A Strategy for 'Japan in Asia'

A shift towards 'Japan in Asia'¹³

During his visit to Singapore in January 1997, the Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto delivered a policy speech entitled 'Reforms for the New Era of Japan and ASEAN, for a Broader and Deeper Partnership'. The following three concrete steps were proposed in it: closer dialogue at top levels, multilateral cooperation for the preservation of unique traditions and cultures, and joint endeavor to tackle universal concerns such as terrorism and environmental issues.¹⁴

This speech differed from the 1977 'Fukuda Doctrine', the 1987 'Takeshita Doctrine', and the 1993

¹² LDP Research Commission on Foreign Affairs ed., *FOFREIGN POLICY: PART I*, 1997, p.5

¹³ In examining the changes of Japan's strategies towards Asian region, needless to say, it is all the more important to consider the implication of the summit talks between President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Hashimoto, on a bilateral peace treaty, for LDP's analysis of Russian foreign policy. LDP's estimation of Russian foreign policy is as follows: "regardless of who becomes Russia's next leader, it seems likely that Russian politics will maintain its present course toward greater conservatism and nationalism. Russian foreign policy, too, is shifting from an idealistic foundation based on mutual cooperation with the United States and Europe to a pragmatic one focused on national self-interest. This shift represents a change from policies that have primarily emphasized the United States and Europe to a stance that emphasizes Asia and the Middle East as well". (*Ibid.*, pp.12-13).

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi appointed his predecessor, Ryutaro Hashimoto, to be his top foreign policy adviser on August 15, 1998. Accordingly Hashimoto will visit Russia in mid-September (*THE JAPAN TIMES*, August 16, 1998).

¹⁴ *BLUEBOOK* 1998, pp.186-193.

'Miyazawa Doctrine' in that it not only emphasized equal partnership, but also appealed to ASEAN for dialogue with Japan on a reciprocal basis in political, economic and especially, cultural affairs, beginning with the words: "In the four years left before the 21st century I would like to deliberate with you on how Japan and ASEAN should reform their cooperative relationship in a manner suited to the new era."¹⁵ Since then his Singapore speech has become known as the 'Hashimoto Doctrine' and the follow-up work is now underway.

I would like to characterize the Hashimoto Doctrine as the signal for a shift in Japan's diplomatic stance. It seems to me to be suggesting that the Japanese government is setting about shifting its diplomatic focus from the 'US-first' policy to one that emphasizes partnership with Asia, in order for Japan to become 'Japan in Asia'. Although the phrase 'Japan in Asia' has been in wide circulation in Japanese society since the late 80s, it has never until now directed foreign policy in practice.

The Japanese Prime Minister Started the 1997 implementation of this policy line with visits to five ASEAN nations in January, and finished the year by participating in the informal ASEAN summit meeting in December. Evidently, the Hashimoto Doctrine was the manifesto of Japan's new diplomatic overtures towards Asia.

Using ASEAN as a stepping stone towards 'Japan in Asia'

Of most significance in this shift in Japan's relations with ASEAN in the post Cold War era¹⁶ is the fact that the Japanese government has high expectations of ASEAN's ability to shape the Asia-Pacific order, as well as the potential of the region's market economies, as shown in the following quotation:

With the end of the Cold War, in the context not only of building a new Southeast Asian order, but also of building a new Asia-Pacific order, ASEAN has stepped forward with new economic initiatives as well as initiatives in political and security matters ... As it has worked toward the creation of a new regional order, ASEAN has taken care that its broad experience, much of it acquired in the process of organizing and strengthening ASEAN itself, in negotiating multinational agreements... Furthermore... the strong economic performance of its member states has drawn a great deal of attention to the region... In all these senses, it is clear that ASEAN's power to shape the new regional order is considerable.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.186.

¹⁶ As for ASEAN in Japanese foreign policy, see Sudo, Sueo 'Nihon Gaiko niokeru ASEAN no Ichi' (ASEAN in Japanese Foreign Policy) in the Japan Association of International Relations ed., *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*, vol.116 (ASEAN at 30: Between Myth and Reality) October, 1997, pp.147-164.

¹⁷ LDP, *op.cit.*, p.26.

Clearly, the LDP regards ASEAN not just as an overseas market, but as a region critical to Japan itself, a region Japan is seeking to use as a first stepping stone in its move to become 'Japan in Asia' through partnership with all Asian nations. We might say that Japan's dialogue with ASEAN aims for a partnership not so much between Japan and the ASEAN nations as among all the Asian nations.

If that is so, why ASEAN? This begs the question why Japan has not called for dialogue with East Asian nations before approaching ASEAN. There appear to be three historical reasons for this. Firstly, after the war Japan expanded its markets in the Southeast Asian region at such a furious pace that the derogatory expressions 'economic animal' and 'economic aggression' came to symbolize Japan's activities there. It is well known that the 1977 Fukuda Doctrine was aimed at improving economic relations, as they were so remarkably out of balance compared with political and cultural ties. No other region in Asia has developed such strong economic relations with Japan, and the fact that Southeast Asia has long been the number one recipient of Japan's ODA (overseas development assistance)¹⁸, for good or ill, reflects this historical association. Secondly, despite its military occupation, Japan's relations with Southeast Asia have not been so severely affected by the 'negative legacy' of the 'Great East Asia War', compared with East Asian nations such as China and South Korea. It is often said that for many years after the war most Japanese associated the word 'Asia' with Southeast Asia.¹⁹ This sort of postwar background has allowed the development of a sense of 'equal partnership' between Japan and ASEAN today. Thirdly, ASEAN has guarded against economic and political intervention from the US, as seen in the EEC plan advocated in December 1990 by Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia. It is unlikely that Japan and ASEAN will reach any consensus on this sort of regionalism in the near future. However they share certain similarities in that both have no intention of further strengthening a 'US-first' policy. Interestingly, Taro Nakayama, chairman of the LDP Research Commission on Foreign Affairs, said in his book, "we should pay attention to the US reaction to the recent changes in the region".²⁰

Here let us spell out the three overall aims of Japan-ASEAN dialogue: the first is the building of bilateral confidence for Japan to become 'Japan in Asia', the second is the improvement by cooperation of the rigid yet delicate state of relations between the East Asian nations. The third is the enhancement of negotiating capacity to cope with the power play between China, India, Russia and the US in the Asian region. It is for these purposes that Japan should make ASEAN its first step in moving to become 'Japan in Asia'.

¹⁸ Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs ed., *Japan's ODA: Annual Report 1997*, p.135.

¹⁹ 'Nihon wa Dokomade Ajia ka' (To what Extent Is Japan Asia?), *CHUOKORON*, July 1998, p.91 and 'Ajia no Chishikijin wa Nihon o Dou Miru' (What do Intellectuals in Asia expect from Japan?), *CHUOKORON*, May 1998.

²⁰ Nakayama, *Taro Ajia wa 21-seiki ni Dou Ugokuka* (How Will Asia Change in the 21st Century?), Tokyo: TBS Britannica, 1997, p.29.

Japan's leadership role in ASEAN

Considering that Japan describes itself as 'a nation committed to building frameworks for multinational cooperation and dialogue'²¹, the sort of leadership Japan seeks in the Asian region is likely to be the 'mediator' style defined earlier. What kind of 'mediator' role can Japan perform in the Asian region? Two passages in the LDP report seem to point out a direction. The first says:

Japan should avoid being drawn into the emotional and unproductive debates over the nature of freedom and democracy that periodically erupt between Western nations and the countries of Asia. In disagreements, Japan should aim to be a mediator between the two parties; in action, Japan should concentrate on suggesting concrete remedies. As a case in point, in developing a policy towards Myanmar²², Japan must take a neutral view while it seeks to gain an accurate understanding of the situation. It should then actively seek a third path toward resolution by offering its own set of democratization recommendations for Myanmar to consider.²³

Several phrases characterizing Japan's role can be identified here, such as a 'mediator' between Asia and Western nations, taking a 'neutral view' and seeking a 'third path'. Most importantly, in my opinion, they imply not that Japan should literally take a neutral viewpoint on international affairs, nor that Japan should not think of itself as an Asian nation, or act as such, but only that Japan should review its diplomatic principles that have up to now been excessively overshadowed by the Japan-US alliance. It must also be said that ODA has far greater significance for Japan as a means to play a 'mediator' role in Asia, as the central premise of Japan's diplomacy is that it will not become a military power.²⁴

The second passage is on the paragraph "To strive for 'an open regionalism'", which is the fourth of six principles established to guide Japan's policy towards Southeast Asia. Emphasizing again the need

²¹ LDP, *op.cit.*, p.27.

²² In principle, assistance to Myanmar was suspended, with the exception of certain sectors, after the political unrest accompanied by calls for democracy in 1988, and the subsequent civilian coup d'état. Some revision was made to the above policy on the basis of progress in conditions within Myanmar, including the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest in July 1995. Japan, therefore, determined to monitor future improvement towards democratization and of human rights in Myanmar, and to provide assistance on a case by case basis, mainly for continuing projects, and projects involving basic human rights, which directly benefit the population as a whole. Consequently, in October 1995, Japan provided grant aid of ¥1,625 billion for a project for expansion of the Institute of Nursing. Subsequently, tension has heightened between the government of Myanmar and the National League for Democracy (NLD), and thus assistance to Myanmar has not been expanded. Moreover, most grant aid to Myanmar is in the form of debt relief as part of an international program to write off the obligations of LLDCs. This differs in its nature from providing new assistance to Myanmar. (*Japan's ODA*, P.71).

²³ LDP, *op.cit.*, p.28.

²⁴ As for 'The New Development Strategy: A Global Framework for Development Assistance for the 21st Century' and 'The ODA Charter: Japan's Comprehensive Assistance Guidelines', see *Japan's ODA*, pp.60-72.

to take a 'neutral standpoint' between the US and Asian countries, the report goes on to state, "since the voices of Asia's small and medium-sized countries tend to go unheard on the international stage, Japan should support the establishment of forums where they can come together and express their views."²⁵

As we have seen, the LDP appears likely to seek a 'mediator' role for Japan between the Asian nations and the US as well as among the countries of Asia. Of course, these two roles should complement each other, but it cannot be emphasized too much that of the two, Japan should chiefly pursue the latter, of mediating between Asian countries, because only then can the role of mediator between Asia and the US be attempted. In truth, post-war Japan has tended to believe the opposite: that a mediator role among the countries of Asia follows on from mediating between Asia and the US, on the grounds of the existence of the Japan-US alliance.

A 'mediator in Asia' requires that Japan enter into partnership face to face with Asian nations independently of the Japan-US alliance; that is to say, Japan should become 'Japan in Asia', not 'Japan representing the US in Asia' or 'Japan representing Europe in Asia'. In the case of 'mediator-style' leadership, therefore, it must be noted once again that its only resort is to mutual trust and understanding between the countries concerned, and not to military might.

There now follows a concrete strategy for Japan to become 'Japan in Asia'.

A Strategy for becoming 'Japan in Asia'

A novel proposal in the Hashimoto Doctrine

The three concrete steps proposed in the Hashimoto Doctrine seem worthy of being called a strategy for Japan to become 'Japan in Asia'. The first proposal, of closer dialogue at the highest levels, stresses the building of 'personal ties of trust' through every possible opportunity, such as formal and informal ASEAN summit meetings (ARFs), revitalized Japan-ASEAN forums, and frequent consultations at the United Nations. The aim of this proposal, needless to say, is to form strong bonds in political leadership, in order to tackle jointly the many difficult tasks referred to in the third proposal: terrorism, environmental issues, improvements to health and welfare, managing food and energy shortages, and population growth and controlling the spread of AIDS and narcotics.

From the viewpoint of 'Japan in Asia', however, the most important would seem to be the second proposal, which emphasizes the fostering of a 'sense of community' through greater understanding of each other's attitudes and cultures. Although Hashimoto modestly used the phrase "we have often stressed", this can be regarded as a new proposal for the very fact that it was included in the core topic in the Prime Minister's policy speech abroad, as well as in its concrete measures towards 'Japan in Asia',

²⁵ LDP, *op.cit.*, p.28.

as shown in the following:

To enhance mutual understanding regarding traditions and cultures among neighbors is also important. In coordination with private initiatives, I would like to expand cultural exchanges, particularly among the youth who will lead the future world, and to strengthen cultural cooperation on a multilateral basis so that diverse cultures can live in harmony. As a concrete measure I would like to propose to create a multinational cultural mission comprising experts from Japan and ASEAN countries, which would make recommendations for future cultural exchanges and cooperations. I hope that through these exchanges and cooperations, a sense of community will be fostered throughout the Asia Pacific.²⁶

Follow-up to the second proposal

The 'multinational cultural mission' (MCM) that Hashimoto proposed was subsequently endorsed by all the ASEAN members at the 32nd ASEAN-COCI meeting at Langkawi. Its inaugural meeting was held in Singapore on November 4-6 1997, where Part I of the Action Agenda, comprising the objectives, general policy orientations, and priority areas for cultural exchange and cooperation, were agreed. The leaders of the ASEAN countries and Japan recognized the work so far achieved, and anticipated its continuation, at the summit meeting in Kuala Lumpur on December 16 1997. After meetings in February and March 1998, Part II of the Action Agenda was adopted by MCM on April 17.²⁷ The following first recommendation from Action Agenda II indicates the main thrust behind MCM:

The cultural dialogue and interaction among the ASEAN countries and Japan should have a 'people-to-people' dimension that transcends political and economic concerns and embraces people at the grassroots level. Such exchange should be firmly supported by governments but not be confined to modalities delineated by them. Community-based exchange programs with local participants such as farmers or traditional artists should be explored. Cultural tourism programs could be enriched by providing more opportunities for visitors to understand local cultures first-hand. These efforts to communicate at various levels of society should foster a sense of community that is non-elitist and broadly based.²⁸

It is important to note that in order to support a 'sense of community that is non-elitist and broadly

²⁶ *BLUEBOOK* 1998, p.190.

²⁷ ASEAN-JAPAN MULTINATIONAL CULTURAL MISSION: ACTION AGENDA (PART II), P.1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3.

based', more effective measures were agreed at the Kuala Lumpur summit meeting in December 1997, based on the first proposal of Hashimoto Doctrine. A Joint Statement issued at the meeting, titled 'ASEAN-Japan Cooperation Towards the 21st Century', announced that Japan is offering a program of comprehensive human resources development to benefit 20,000 people in ASEAN countries over a period of five years.²⁹ The importance of the concrete figure cannot be overemphasized. Clearly, this offer is a substantive follow-up to the recommendation of MCM set out above, although its announcement had little impact amid the ongoing drama of the monetary crisis.

An interesting detail was reported by the press concerning this offer. It claimed that it was the ASEAN side that had requested that this offer from Japan be incorporated into the Joint Statement. The ASEAN leaders all praised Japan's offer, and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore added the suggestion that human resource development activities and student exchanges should be reciprocal rather than unilateral.³⁰ So it seems that a Japan-ASEAN joint project aiming towards 'Japan in Asia' has already started.

Finally, I'd like to mention two proposals made by Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi on 4 May 1998 in Singapore. He first announced that Japan will contribute an additional \$20 million to the ASEAN Fund to support the weakest members of society who are suffering the most as a result of the Asian economic turmoil.³¹ Secondly he proposed a meeting to be held in Japan later in 1998 to launch a dialogue among intellectuals in the Asia-Pacific region. He pointed out that "intellectual interaction... is to mobilize the diverse intellectual assets and resourcefulness of the region, to respond to the challenges threatening the peace and prosperity of the region."³² Needless to say, these proposals, too, are follow-ups to the Hashimoto Doctrine.

Just after making this speech, Obuchi had talks with the prime ministers of Malaysia and Singapore in succession. The Malaysian prime minister expressed the expectation that Japan propose regulations on speculative currency dealing as the spokesman of Asia at the Birmingham Summit of 15-17 May, while Goh Chok Tong called for Japan to start a dialogue in the near future on Japan-ASEAN relations after the financial crisis.

²⁹ *BLUEBOOK* 1998, p.190.

³⁰ Chino, Kyoko, *op.cit.*

³¹ *SANKEI SHINBUN*, May 5, 1998.

³² *THE JAPAN TIMES*, May 5, 1998.

Conclusion

The relationship between Japan and the ASEAN nations is currently overshadowed by the Asian financial crisis. Since 1997 ASEAN has called for Japan's assistance in dealing with the crisis, in statements such as "The ASEAN countries have high expectations of Japan as a 'big brother' in promoting measures to deal with the crisis."³³ It is also true that Japan, as the largest economy in Asia, feels a responsibility to other Asian nations in crisis. The Minister of Foreign Affairs recently announced that the first priority in the allocation of Japan's ODA for 1999 would be assistance designed to help overcome the Asian economic crisis.³⁴

It is reasonable to include such measures as part of Japan's role in Asia in the short term. This paper, however, has not dealt with these issues because it has considered Japan's role in Asia over the long term. My argument has essentially two points. Firstly, Japan lacks the capacity to control Asian region as a hegemonic power, either in organizational or psychological terms; nor can it play a 'mediator' style leadership role without strengthening its partnerships with Asian nations. Secondly, the so-called 'Hashimoto Doctrine' can be interpreted as the signal for a shift in Japan's diplomatic stance from 'US-first' to 'Japan in Asia', and subsequent follow-up measures seem to confirm this shift.

Here, I will suggest a 'prescriptive guideline' on 'Japan's role in Asia'. Most importantly, Japan must not flatter itself that it can take a 'controller' role under the auspices of the US. Nor should it be too eager for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Japan should first attend to the tasks that suggest little profit but which are crucial to Asian community.³⁵ In a word, Japan's role in Asia is perhaps expressed best in the Japanese proverb 'En no shita no chikara mochi', which means doing unrewarded drudgery willingly. This can be the royal road to 'Japan in Asia'.

It now looks as though Japan is finally making serious efforts to paint itself onto the Asian canvas, although for so long Japan has been regarded in the region as a country with an unseen face.

³³ *THE JAPAN TIMES*, July 24, 1998.

³⁴ *SANKEI SHINBUN*, August 25, 1998.

³⁵ On Japan's role in Asia, Professor T.J.Pempel pointed out that: "Japan seems destined to play a major role, economically and (perhaps) politically and militarily, in Asia. But the country can do so successfully only to the extent that it does not ignore the far more compelling pull for it to be a major world player – with clear interests well beyond the Asian region. Although Japan will clearly remain extremely critical to the countries of Asia, they in turn will continue to diminish in their inherent value to Japan." ('Unsteady Anticipation: Reflections on the Future of Japan's Changing Political Economy', paper prepared for the ISA-JAIR conference at Makuhari, Japan; September 20-22, 1996, p.45).

Rather, in my opinion, it can be said that the future of Japan depends on to what extent Japan can resist 'the temptation' to be 'a major world player'.

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