

Shumei Okawa's anti/alternative-Western world order (tentative)

-One of the cases of homegrown non-Western IR theory?-

IDE-JETRO

Kohei IMAI

Introduction

Over the past decade, non-Western International Relations Theory (hereinafter NWIRT) has been one of the hottest topics in international relations. As Robert Cox's famous phrase, "theory is always for someone, for some purpose", the perspective from non-Western world is necessary for developing or enriching international relations theory. One of the key issue of NWIRT is "whose perspective". Hence, NWIRT is basically "homegrown" theory in non-Western regions or states, based on local knowledge that emerged or created in each region, religion, or ethnic culture.

As Cemil Aydin clarifies, several intellectuals in Ottoman Empire and Japan purchased non-Western / anti-Western / alternative-Western ways of world order during the 19 century and the early 20 century. One of the Japanese intellectuals who showed the anti/alternative-Western way of world order is Shumei Okawa. He was an A-class war criminal and his writings were taken on Japanese imperialism. However, on the other hand, he was the well-known expert of Asianism and Islamic studies. Recently, several Okawa's works have been re-evaluated in Japan from the anti-Orientalism perspective.

The aim of this presentation is to explore Shumei Okawa's anti- or alternative- Western

world order from the perspective of NWIRT. First part overviews four waves of NWIRT. Second part examines Okawa's civilizational approach, especially compare to Western civilizational approach in Inter-War period, and Okawa's Pan-Asianism including Muslim world.

1. The Emergence of NWIRT: Three Waves for NWIRT

Since the beginning of 2000s, NWIRT has had a spotlight. The backgrounds of this trend are the rising so-called "emerging countries" as represented by BRICs, and the revealing the limit of Western-oriented approach to explain several phenomena related to globalization. However, this is not the first time that NWIRT has become a controversial issue in academic circles in the field of international relations (IR). There seem to be at least three waves of NWIRT that have involved contemporary disputes.

(1) The First Wave of NWIRT: Dependence Theory

The first wave of NWIRT coincides with the rise of dependence theory, which focused on core and periphery structures in the global economy. Dependence theory was led by the Economic Commission on Latin America's (ECLA) school as represented by Raul Prebisch (Holsti, 1998, p.104; Tickner 2003)¹. Some other Latin American scholars including Fernando H. Cardoso, Theotonio Dos Santos, Celso Furtado, Osvaldo Sunkel, and Andre Gunder Frank

¹ Needless to say, the structure of core and periphery based on imperialism was mentioned by Western Marxists like Lenin and J.A. Hobson in early 1900s.

provided constructive criticism to Prebisch's ideas.² In this way, Prebisch's ideas are central to dependence theory approaches. Key concepts for the first wave of NWIRT are class conflict at a global level (North-South structure), fixed under-development, and Latin America. However, dependence theory seems to have contributed less to the development of NWIRT because its theoretical bases is founded on Marxism. Hence, dependence theory along with world system theory and structural violence, is called "Neo-Marxism." Also, for better or worse, dependence theory is strongly associated with North-South structure. Dependence theorists do not deal with South-South problem or conflicts between peripheral states at all (Holsti 1998, p.107). In addition, dependence theory cannot provide an effective answer to the emergence of NIES and NICS in the 1970s and 1980s.

(2) The Second Wave of NWIRT: Mainstream IR and the Third World

The second wave of NWIRT was triggered by the end of the Cold War. Some scholars of IR supposed that the importance of so-called "Third World" states had been inflated in the post-Cold War period. This is because the end of the Cold War opened up the necessity for research on the Third World to be incorporated IR. One example of this is *International Relations Theory and the Third World*, including Mohammed Ayoob, Amitav Acharya, Barry Buzan, Steven David, Donald Puchala, Carlos Escude, and Karl. J. Holsti, edited by Stephanie Neuman (Neuman, 1998). According to Neuman, this book especially focuses on the "gap" between mainstream (Western) IR like classical realism, neorealism (structural realism), and

² Samir Amin, from Egypt, is an exception.

neoliberalism and the realities of the Third World in terms of anarchy, the international system, rational choice, the state, sovereignty, and alliances (Neuman, 1998, pp. 2-12). The issue of “internal war,” which was raised by David and Holsti, is a typical example of the gap between Western IR and the Third World reality (David, 1991; Holsti 1998). David pointed out that the balance of threat theory suggested by Stephen Walt was not applicable to Third World states. Balance of threat is a theory of alliances, postulating that “states ally to balance against external threats rather than against power alone” (Walt 1987, p.5). According to David, however, Third World states have to consider alignment or alliance responses to not only external threats but also internal ones (David 1991, p.233). David described this Third World balancing pattern as “omni-balancing.”

The examination of how IR theory was ill-suited to the Third World was a courageous critical endeavor. However, there were several problems with the critiques in Neuman’s work. The first and biggest problem is the use of the term “Third World.” The concept of the Third World is traditionally confined to the period of the Cold War. Therefore it is doubtful that it uses valid and effective following the end of the Cold War. In short, the concept of the Third World seriously became outdated. The second problem with Neuman’s book is that it only focuses on incompatibility between mainstream and the Third World realities. In other word, this book does not provide an “alternative” vision or direction for the Third World in IR.

(3) The Third Wave of NWIRT: Multiple interpretations of Western IR

The third wave of NWIRT began with the 2004 International Studies Association (ISA)

annual convention. At this conference, the working group on “geocultural epistemologies and IR” project was established led by Tickner and Wæver. Until the 1990s, the Third World or the Non-Western World tended to be regarded as a homogeneous community. However, the non-Western world is not a monolithic group but is diverse in its social, economic, and political aspects, depending on the geographical (or geopolitical, geoeconomical, and geocultural) situation of the area being discussed. The project was launched in 2004 and its consequences, specifically, the book series, “Worlding Beyond the West” was a trigger for highlighting NWIRT again and exploring its content in detail. This time, the term “non-Western” was the main subject.

Let us look in a little more detail at the concept of “non-Western.” Inoguchi defines non-Western as “the regions that were not affected by modernity (combination of secularism, rationalism, individualism, and industrialism) during the 19 century to early 20 century” (Inoguchi 2007, p.158). According to Puchala, non-Western means “those states and societies culturally outside Europe and its cultural enclaves (immigrants) in North America, Australia, New Zealand and Israel” (Puchala, 1997, p.129). As Mayall points out, it is difficult to judge the contributions of a lot of authors who are from Africa, Asia or the Middle East (or Latin America) but have been trained in IR research in the West (Mayall, 2011, pp.331-332). This presentation considers NWIRT as a loose definition that includes not only “pure” ideas and thinking originating in non-Western states but also “hybrid” ideas and thinking developed in response to imported Western IR outside Europe and the United States.

Another important dimension of third wave of NWIRT is what its purpose is. Most

scholars who are participated to the project of “Worlding Beyond the West”, especially first two books (*International Relations Scholarship Around the World: Worlding Beyond the West* and *Thinking International Relations Differently*), probably consider that NWIRT is not an alternative to WIRT but complementary to it. In other words, WIRT and NWIRT could complement each other through discovery and recognition of NWIRT, or dialogue (Buzan and Acharya 2007; Tickner and Wæver, 2009; Bilgin 2008; Acharya 2011; Tickner and Blaney 2012). This presentation calls this purpose as the project of “beyond the West.”

(4) The Fourth Wave of NWIRT: An alternative vision against Western IR

In taking a step further, some scholars participated to “Worlding Beyond the West” are searching for an “alternative paradigm” through exploring NWIRT (Chen 2011; Shimizu 2011; Tickner and Blaney, 2013; Ikeda 2013). For example, *Claiming the International* (third outcome of the project of “Worlding Beyond the West”) introduces several indigenous concepts or knowledges related to IR. This presentation calls the project of pursuing an alternative paradigm as “post-Western”. Yet, ironically, IR originated in Europe after World War I, and is based on European experiences and knowledge. Hence, the thinking frames of IR are inseparable from the West and Western thinking. The “post-Western” IR project seems to be next step “beyond the West.”

Recent phase of NWIRT has been between “beyond the West” and “post-Western”. For example, Japanese IR is still struggle with “how Japanese academia has accepted Western IR.

2. Bringing the Okawa's idea back in Japanese IR

(1) Why this presentation focuses on Okawa?

This presentation deals with the ideas of Shumei Okawa (1886-1957). Why Okawa? He is an A-class war criminal and fanatic supporter of Japanese imperialism. The reasons why I focus on Okawa are (i) Okawa was a leading scholar of anti-Westernism/colonialism, (ii) Okawa is overlooked as a genealogy of Japanese IR, and (iii) Recently, Okawa's works are reassessed from Islamic studies and international political history.

Okawa was an imperialist, to be sure, but all of his works are not reflected into Japanese imperialism. For example, his concepts of nationalism and civilization in world politics were partly high quality.

Takashi Inoguchi classifies Japanese IR tides into state theory (Staatslehre), Marxism, Historicism, and methodological approach (Inoguchi, 2007, pp.162-167). According to Inoguchi's classification, Okawa's ideas are placed into state theory. Yet Inoguchi mentions that the law and economic approaches are more important than political and sociological approaches (*Ibid*, pp.62-163). Of course, Inoguchi does not mention Okawa's political and sociological approaches. Tetsuya Sakai argues that international law and politics, and colonial policy studies are two pillars of pre-war (World War II) period in Japan (Sakai, 2007, p.6). Furthermore, colonial policy studies are also roughly divided into functionalism (Royama Masamichi) and international political economy (Tadao Yanaihara) in Sakai's prominent work, *The Political Discourse of International Order in Modern Japan*. Like Inoguchi, Sakai does not deal with

Okawa's work as Japanese IR stream.

Recently, several scholars take Okawa's work as interesting research topic. For example, Cemil Aydın deals with Okawa's works and activities as a bridge between anti-colonialism, Pan-Asianism, and Pan-Islamism in his elaboration *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia* (Aydın, 2007). Aydın shows a large scale anti-Westernism over whole Asia with shedding light on activities of Japanese and Turkish nationalists. Akira Usuki attempts to clarify Okawa's thinking about Islam (Usuki, 2010). Okawa was a pioneer scholar about Islamic studies in Japan. He wrote *Kaikyo Gairon* (Introduction to Islam) in 1942 and translated Koran (Qur'an) into Japanese in 1950.

Like this, Okawa's works are reevaluated in the fields of international political history and Islamic studies. This presentation attempts to re-examine Okawa's contributions to International Relations Theory.

(2) Proto-type of Clash of Civilizations?

Okawa's particularity of ideas about world politics are civilizational approach and universal or wide-area Pan-Asianism. Kenichi Matsumoto insisted that Okawa prepared a proto-type of well-known Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilization" (Matsumoto, 1999). The characteristics of "Clash of Civilization" are two points: civilization is the main actor in world politics, and two dominant civilizations will finally clash for grasping hegemony.

Since around the World War I, civilization has been often regarded as actor or unit of International Relations. The works of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee spread this view.

Spengler regarded civilization as organisms. Using the analogy of human, Spengler explained civilization as following.

A culture is born in the moment when a great soul awakened out of the proto-spirituality of ever-childish humanity, and detaches itself, a form from the formless, a bounded and mortal thing from the boundless and enduring. It blooms on the soil of an exactly definable landscape, to which plant-wise it remains bound. It dies when this soul has actualized the full sum of its possibilities in the shape of peoples, languages, dogmas, arts, states, sciences, and reverts into the proto-soul...Every culture passes through the age-phases of the individual man. Each has its childhood, youth, manhood and old age (Spengler, 1970, p.9).

Spengler did not put on the superiority to any civilizations. Yet his evaluation toward Western civilization was quite negative. He gave a warning the decline of Western civilization. On the contrary, Toynbee specifically classified civilizations into twenty-one in his epic work, *A Study of History*.

Okawa looked civilization as a unit or actor in world politics like Spengler and Toynbee. Indian nationalists in Japan, especially Taraknath Das, strongly affected Okawa's civilization understanding (Aydın, 2007, 117-118). Okawa mention civilization in *Kunkoku no Shimei*, an article in his series of *Michi* (road) journal (No. 93). The characteristics of his civilization understandings are (i) civilization as a unit, (ii) historically, Asian civilization made greater contributions to

development in the world than Europe civilization, and (iii) Japan was a powerful civilization in Asia (Aydın, 2007, 119). In addition to this, Okawa insisted that most powerful state in each civilization would clash for taking hegemony in *Asia, Yoroppa, and Nihon* (Asia, Europe, and Japan) published in 1925 (Okawa Shumei Zenshu II, 1962, 872-873) .

To sum up, Okawa's thinking about civilization approach is similar to Huntington's *Clash of Civilization*. Okawa commented that his insistence became reality after 16 years in his *Beikokutoua Shinryakushi* (The history of American invasion toward East Asia) in 1941 (Okawa Shumei Zenshu II, 1962, 689). Aydın comments that Okawa aimed to not only rejection of colonialism but establishment of de-Westernizing Asia (Aydın 2007, 124). Yet Okawa was not a strategist. He was consistently scholar and political agitator. He could not show the roadmap for his goal, Japan centered Pan-Asianism. Hence Okawa was labeled romanticist.

(3) Okawa's Pan-nationalist network

Fukko Ajia no Shomondai (Problems of a resurgent Asia), probably Okawa's main work, examined Asian national movement against Western imperialism. This book mainly dealt with Indian national movement, Afghan situation, and Turkish independent war led by Mustafa Kemal (Okawa Shumei Zenshu II, 1962,4-247). Okawa also published *Asia Kensetsusha* (Asia builders) in 1940. This book was a sequel to *Fukko Ajia no Shomondai*. In this book, Okawa took up Ibin Saud, Mustafa Kemal, Reza Pahlavi, Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru (Okawa Shumei Zenshu II, 1962,4-254-504).

Okawa's approach to Asia is slight different from ordinal pan-Asianist. Okawa kept a

sympathetic attitude to Indian national movement. In addition, Okawa contained the Muslim world into his pan-Asian ideas. Rather, he supposed that Muslim world was strategic key for Japanese challenge to Western states.

Why Okawa focused on India and the Middle East or Islamic world? His awakening to Asianism was to know the reality of Indian colonialism through the book *New India or Indian Transition* written by Sir Henry Cotton in 1913 (Otsuka, 2009, pp.80-82). Okawa thought that Indian reality was not problem for someone. After reading that book, Okawa began to see World War I and World War II from anti- Westernism and anti-colonialism context. After the beginning of World War I, Okawa actively contacted with Indian activists or intellectuals who were against Western imperialism. Okawa met Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian Nobel Prize in literature, and Das (Aydin, 2007, pp. 116-118). Okawa accepted their petition and lobbied to Japanese government for rethinking alliance with England. Okawa's support toward Indian national movement continued to World War II.

On the one hand, Okawa is devoted nationalist. On the other hand, his nationalist movement was characterized by universalism or internationalism. As Indian national movement, several movements against Western imperialism occurred in Muslim world since late 19 century. There are three streams. First one is modernism plus political Islam. Modernism took in Western ideas and re-interpreted Islam adapted to the realities of the 19th century. Sultan Abdülhamid II was a typical modernism-oriented political Islamist. Later, modernism plus political Islam movement was taken over mainly Islamists in Soviet Union, especially in Central Asia. Second movement was Salafism-oriented political Islam. Salafism was used at the end of the 19th century to designate a

reform movement initiated by Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (Roy, 2004, p.233). His call for a return to the true tenets of Islam was a means of castigating the backwardness of the religious establishment. Third movement was modernism secularism. The reforms led by Mustafa Kemal and Reza Pahlavi were representative this trend.

Okawa was interested in (i) and (iii) movements. Okawa expanded its network with the universal Muslim movement. On the other hand, Okawa referred to strong secularist politicians like Mustafa Kemal. Okawa had longing to Muslim world. Therefore, he expected to strategic alliance for defeating the U.S. and other Western powers.

Conclusion

This presentation examines Shumei Okawa's ideas from the perspective of NWIRT. To sum up, Okawa's ideas and preference were deeply influenced from West. He always interpreted West from Japanese nationalist perspective. Yet his ideas were also affected by Indian national movement. This was a unique point. In addition to this, Okawa had longing to Muslim world because of its strategic asset and his personal academic interest. Of course, Okawa's final goal was Japan-centered Pan Asianism. However, Okawa personally deeply affected Indian national movement and Muslim world. He was not nationalist but international nationalist.

Okawa did not provide new concept or term about NWIRT. He struggled to Western idea for increasing Japanese and Asian position in world politics. Hence, Okawa's ideas are put in the project of "beyond the West" (third wave of NWIRT). He was a romanticist, however, his unique and international anti/alternative-Westernism are valuable to focus from Japanese IR stream.

References

- Acharya, Amitav, 2011. "Dialogue and Discovery: In Search of International Relations Theories Beyond the West", *Millennium*, Vol. 39, No.3: pp.619-637.
- Akira, Usuki, 2010, *Okawa Shumei*, Tokyo: Sodosha.
- Aydın, Cemil, 2007. *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought*, New York: Columbia University press.
- Bilgin, Pinar, 2008. "Thinking past 'Western' IR?", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.29, No.1, pp.5-23.
- Buzan, Barry and Amitav Acharya, 2007. "Why is there no non-Western international relations theory? An introduction", *International Relations of Asia-Pacific*, Vol.7, No.3: pp.287-312.
- Chen, Ching-Chang, 2011. "The absence of non-western IR theory in Asia reconsidered", *International Relations of Asia-Pacific*, Vol.11, No.1: pp.1-23.
- David, Steven, 1991. "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No.2: pp. 233-256.
- Holsti, Karl. J, 1998. "International Relations Theory and Domestic War in the Third World: The Limits of Relevance" in Stephanie Neuman. ed. *International Relations Theory and the Third World*, New York: St. Martin's Press: pp.103-132.
- Josuke, Ikeda, 2011. "The "Westfailure" Problem in International Relations Theory", *Kyoto Working Papers on Area Studies*, Vol. 116: pp.12-41.
- Kenichi, Matsumoto, 1999. "Huntington ha Okawa Shumei wo Koetaka (Could Huntington go over Shumei Okawa)", *Shokun*, August, pp. 140-155.
- Kosuke, Shimizu, 2011. "Nishida Kitaro and Japan's Interwar Foreign Policy: War Involvement and

Culturalist Political Discourse”, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 157-183.

-----, “Why There is no non-Western IR Theory in Japan?: Genealogy of Japan’s Cultural IR, and the Study of Regional History”, *Afrasian Research Center Working Paper Series Studies on Multicultural Societies*, No. 32, pp. 1-14.

Mayall, James, 2011. “Book Review: Non-Western International Relations Theory”, *International Relations of Asia-Pacific*, Vol.11, No.2: pp.331-338.

Neuman, Stephanie G. ed. 1998. *International Relations Theory and the Third World*, New York: St. Martin’s Press.

Puchala, Donald, 1997. “Some Non-Western Perspectives on International Relations”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.34, No.2: pp.129-134.

Roy, Olivier, 2004. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Seth, Sanjay, 2013. *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction*, New York: Routledge.

Shumei, Okawa, 1962. *Okawa Shumei Zenshu II*, Tokyo: Iwasakishoten.

Spengler, Oswald, 1970. “Clutures as Organisms” in Manfred P. Fleischer (ed), *The Decline of the West?*, New York: HOLT, RINEHART and WINSTON, INC.

Takashi, Inoguchi, 2007. *Kokusaikankeiron no Keihu* (Genealogy of International Relations), Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai.

Takehiro, Otsuka, 2009. *Okawa Shumei*, Tokyo: Kodansha.

Tetsuya, Sakai, 2007. *Kindai Nihon no Kokusai Chitsujo* (The Political Discourse of International Order in Modern Japan), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Tickner, Arlene, B, 2003. "Hearing Latin American Voices in International Relations Studies", *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol.4, No.4: pp. 325-350.

Tickner, Arlene, B. and David L. Blaney. eds. 2012. *Thinking International Relations Differently*, London: Routledge.

----- .eds. 2013. *Claiming the International*, London: Routledge.

Tickner, Arlene, B. and Ole Wæver. eds. 2009. *International Relations Scholarship Around the World*, London: Routledge.

Walt, Stephen, 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.