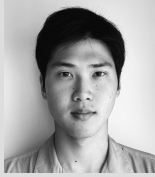


# Towards Global Confucianism: The Political Moral Philosophy of Yokoi Shōnan



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遠い昔に中国で生まれた孔子の思想(儒学)に対する関心は今なお強い。本稿では江戸時代末期の儒学者・横井小楠の著書『国是三論』に焦点をあて、その説くところの時代背景と現代的意義を探った。

## Abstract

How do we define Asian values, that are considered intrinsic as well as universal? To answer, this paper explores the value of Confucian thought through Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠 (1809-1869), a politician and Confucian thinker from the end of the Edo period. His major work, '*Kokuze sanron* 国是三論', showed excellent insights into trade, politics, and economics that remain relevant to the present day. Rejecting the national seclusion policy, as it was concerned only with Japan's interests, Shōnan instead advocated the opening of Japan to the world in order to seek a universal common good. According to him, opening the country through trade was not only for the pursuit of economic profit, but also for the expansion of society and individual mindset. He also believed politics were inseparable from individual morality, and that righteous politics could be achieved by learning and discussion. In these ideas, we can find two insights. The first condemns excessive capitalism in the name of fairness, and the second proposes morality as the quintessence of international order, rather than following the rule of power.

**Keywords** political morality, open society, Confucianism

## Introduction

To understand Asian values, first we must understand what Asia is. The idea of 'Asia' is an image projected from Europe, and thus it is possible to say that 'Asia' as we know it is an exonym. Empires, states, and tribes of this region maintained their own strongholds, without recognising their shared identity as viewed by those from outside the region. As such, there was no autochthonous appellation for the region as a whole, and so no 'Asia' existed before Europe called it so. This raises the question: is Asia one?<sup>1</sup> The idea has been explored on several occasions. For instance, Samuel Huntington's

contentious argument, which divided the world into multiple civilisations according to cultural and religious differences, indicates the ambiguity of the notion of 'Asia'.<sup>2</sup> In light of the cultural, religious, and political differences within Asia, can there be Asian values that transcend strategic expediency? To answer this question, I will examine the works of Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠 (1809-1869), a nineteenth-century Confucian philosopher of Japan. In this paper, his major essay '*Kokuze sanron* 国是三論' (*The Three Major Problems of the State*) and its significance is discussed. Through this

<sup>1</sup> Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三 (1862-1913), also known as Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心, a literati and art critic, wrote *The Ideals of the East* in 1903. This book begins with the phrase, 'Asia is one.' Okakura, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Though his argument can be criticised for essentialising and simplifying the differences amongst world regions, his comparative civilisational approach, which aptly shows significant differences within the regions that are collectively referred to as Asia, seems convincing. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.

attempt, I would like to uncover his Confucian insights, which will reveal the foundation of ‘Asian’ values.<sup>3</sup>

## Who is Yokoi Shōnan?

Yokoi Shōnan was born in 1809 in Kumamoto, a central part of Kyushu, as the second son of a samurai family.<sup>4</sup> A philosopher and politician, he studied Confucianism extensively. In his early years, he was especially focused on the works of Zhu Xi 朱子 (1130-1200), but by the end Shōnan had branched out to form his own unique views, becoming critical of Xi’s Neo-Confucianism. Towards the end of the Tokugawa shogunate period (1603-1867), he was invited to the Fukui domain as a political advisor. He actively engaged in politics during the systemic crisis in Japan that ensued from the arrival of Western countries. Though he initially viewed Westerners as barbarians, he came to realise that the Western parliamentary system was superior to Japanese and Chinese politics in terms of enriching the people. He also showed some respect for Christianity as a moral code. However, this did not result in an unconditional admiration of the Western powers; he denounced their egoistic politics, which contributed to colonialism and sanguinary wars. He firmly believed in the equality of individuals and states under Heaven (*Tian* 天 in Ch. *Ten* in Jp.). At the start of the Meiji Restoration, he participated in the new government, but unfortunately, in 1869, he was assassinated by fanatic nationalists.

## The Three Major Problems of the State

*The Three Major Problems of the State*, herein referred to as ‘Three Major Problems’ is Shōnan’s monologue, which was recorded by a retainer of the Fukui domain in 1860. Although its English translation uses ‘state’, the essay was written for the reform of the Fukui

domain.<sup>5</sup> As such, Shōnan’s writing is primarily focused on Fukui’s politics.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, Shōnan himself wrote that his essay ‘aimed to put Japan and even the entire world into analysis’. Thus, the intended range goes far beyond one domain in Japan. Shōnan’s broad vision partly came from his background in Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucian way of thinking, which considers oneself, the state, and the universe as a sort of continuum.

‘Three Major Problems’ is tripartite. The first part is called *Fukoku-ron*, namely, ‘Enriching the State’. The second part is *Kyōhei-ron*, ‘Strengthening the Military’, and the third part is *Shi-dō*, ‘The Samurai Way’. Amongst those three parts, Shōnan’s cardinal argument was in *Fukoku-ron*. Hereafter, each of these three arguments is analysed, with an emphasis on *Fukoku-ron*.

## Fukoku-ron, Enriching the State

The main argument of *Fukoku-ron* is that the government should establish quasi-public industries and gain profits by opening the country to foreign trade. The Fukui domain at that time had accumulated debts, and Shōnan was fully aware of the need for drastic reform to restore the domain. The conventional politics of the Tokugawa shogunate at that time did not help the people, and the demand for reform led bold critics to stand against such policies.

Shōnan began by analysing the situation in Japan at that time, explaining how it had changed from ancient times. He then dismissed the shogunate’s national seclusion policy as decrepit. Rather, he argued that the government should foster domestic industries and focus on foreign trade. His view on foreign trade may have been overly optimistic, as he speculated that commerce would always bring Japan profit. Nevertheless, his strong support for opening the country was not only driven by economic purposes, but also involved political and moral objectives. He severely criticised the shogunate for

3 The theme of this essay is not related to the political discourse of ‘Asian values’ that emerged after 1980 to counter the human rights diplomacy of Western countries.

4 Regarding Shōnan’s biography, see Matsuura, *Yokoi Shōnan; Okita, Yokoi Shōnan — Michi wa yō ni tsukumo ze narazu —*.

5 There is a complete translation of *Kokuze sanron* by D. Y. Miyauchi. In citing the translated version of *Kokuze sanron*, I have modified some parts of the translation or provided new translations from the original text in Japanese.

6 Takagi, pp. 73-74.

conducting politics solely for ‘the private interests of the Tokugawa family,’<sup>7</sup> neglecting the duty of enriching the people. From Shōnan’s viewpoint, politics must serve the people.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, enriching the state should lead to enriching the people, not just the government.

## Is Enriching the State an Imitation of the West?

Facing the deplorable reality of the shogunate, Shōnan admitted that Western politics was closer to a Confucian political ideal compared with the status quo of Japan and China. In particular, he extolled George Washington (1732-1799). According to Shōnan, Washington strove to ‘end wars in the world by following the will of Heaven’, ‘seek knowledge around the world to improve politics and education’, and ‘to take charge of conducting politics in a public and harmonious way by abolishing the system of vassalage and entrusting the power of president (of the country) to the wisest person instead of making it hereditary.’<sup>9</sup> For Shōnan, such political achievement was outstanding, and so Washington seemed equivalent to Yao and Shun, two of the great kings in Confucianism.

Then, ‘should we consider all Western ways desirable and render them the principle of the state?’<sup>10</sup> By no means did Shōnan consider this the solution. Ideal politics in his mind consisted of ‘the way of the three sage kings’, namely Yao, Shun, and Yu. They were reckoned as great sages, due to their moral perfection and ability to conduct politics impeccably by adhering to the *juste milieu*. Shōnan expounded on his view of politics by explaining how these great sages assumed the reins of government.

Shōnan asserted that trade had already been conducted

during the ‘governance of the three sage kings. During that time, the ‘three ministries’ namely, the rectification of virtue, the acquisition of things that supply the conveniences of life, and the securing of abundant means of sustenance, were established.’<sup>11</sup> The three sages engaged in improving infrastructure by ‘cutting the nine rivers and having them flow into all the four seas.’<sup>12</sup> These works also constituted a part of ‘trade’. This indicates that Shōnan’s conception of trade comprehended a much broader sense than today’s vocabulary; trade not only referred to commercial intercourse, but also the political system itself.

Therefore, Shōnan believed that the quintessence of politics consisted of enriching the people, as the three sage kings had so benevolently done, and so the politics of the West as represented by Washington, which achieved such enrichment was even more remarkable to this Confucian thinker. We see by Shōnan’s writings that it was not the West, but the politics of the three sage kings that was his ideal criterion for judgement, and that Western politics was highly regarded *inasmuch as* it was in sync with those politics; if Western politics deviated from this perceived ideal, it too was subject to criticism. In fact, at a later date Shōnan condemned Western country’s egoistic attitudes, since they played no role in contributing to world peace. He also disapproved of Western countries’ habits of taking colonies, as he presumed that they would not free them, because the West was concerned only with itself and did not possess a sincere mindset.<sup>13</sup>

Considering Japan’s past starting from the Restoration, both the government and many Japan’s citizens longed to be regarded as a civilised country by the Western powers. As a result, Japan succeeded in its modernisation exceptionally when compared with the other parts of Asia. However, this process transformed Japan from a self-isolating country into an aggressive empire that colonised neighbouring countries under the guise of a

7 Yokoi Shōnan *ikō*, p. 39; Miyauchi, p. 168.

8 Here it is possible to observe the influence of Mencius (372-289 BC) on his understanding of politics. The distinctive feature of Mencius’ thought is that he insisted that the people were of essential importance in a state. He wrote ‘The people are of greatest importance, the altars of the soil and grain are next, and the ruler is of least importance’. *Mencius*, p. 159. (7B:14).

9 Yokoi Shōnan *ikō*, pp. 39-40; Miyauchi, p. 168.

10 Yokoi Shōnan *ikō*, p. 38; Miyauchi, p. 166.

11 Yokoi Shōnan *ikō*, p. 38; Miyauchi, p. 166.

12 Yokoi Shōnan *ikō*, p. 38; Miyauchi, p. 167.

13 Yokoi Shōnan *ikō*, p. 906.

civilised nation's right. This was not the path of Japan that Shōnan envisaged for Japan; he consistently prioritised morality in his political philosophy. For this reason, Shōnan appeared to be one of the few Japanese leaders envisioning an alternative path to modernity, avoiding violent imperialism and colonialism.

## Opening the Country, Opening the Mind

Shōnan's emphasis on opening the country for foreign trade in *Fukoku-ron* was considerably crucial at that time. As Nishioka Mikio exemplified, one feature of *Fukoku-ron* was its orientation towards a shift from Japan's traditional closed economic system to an open system by way of foreign trade.<sup>14</sup> Although there were certain trade routes with foreign countries that were already established, they were extremely limited. Such being the case, demanding to open the country was equivalent to overthrowing two hundred years of lasting national policy. As such, its significance was beyond the economic dimension, leading to a shift in individual and social mindset.

Shōnan was aware that opening the country for foreign trade would be meaningless if done with the conventional closed mindset. He wrote:

Since the forces of heaven and earth and the situations of the various countries cannot be changed through human actions, Japan alone to keep isolated with its private will is of course not right. Even if the trade should begin, as long as the closed view remains, there are disadvantages to both opening and closing and thus long-term security is difficult to attain. Then, if we work in harmony with the forces of heaven and earth and follow the practices of the various countries and if we administer the world following the public Way, there will be no obstacle anywhere and the distressful situation of the present will no longer be a problem at all.<sup>15</sup>

This passage shows a clear contrast between the idea of public and private, as well as that of open and closed: Trading with other countries was in line with 'the forces of heaven and earth' since it was in pursuit of public interests, rather than for private profits. For open trade to truly benefit Japan it required abandoning the traditional closed view that was solely concerned with Japan's interests. In other words, Japan needed to become economically and socially open to the world.

## The Role of Women

There is one more noteworthy remark in *Fukoku-ron*: the social role of women. Shōnan insisted all people, including women, should have a voice in choosing their profession. He felt this would enrich the country and empower the people. Quote:

Women should be taught sericulture, or, if they prefer, spinning or weaving. They should be given materials and should be paid according to their labour. Even though the families are not large, if the women of the domain take up sericulture, not only will they be able to earn something for themselves, but they will be contributing to national prosperity.<sup>16</sup>

Here, Shōnan asserted the importance of enhancing women's capacity to earn money. At this point, his egalitarian view on humanity overcame the distinction between men and women. In the same vein, he insisted that second or third sons of samurai families should be able to choose their professions as well. During the Edo period, these sons were often socially alienated, unable to marry or receive stipend. According to Shōnan — the second son of a samurai family himself — they were 'in extremely pitiful circumstances'.<sup>17</sup> As such, he claimed that they should be able to choose their professions in accordance with their wishes.

These claims were unusual considering the historical background of the Edo period. Class was systemically and rigorously divided, although not as absolute as

<sup>14</sup> Nishioka, pp. 78-83.

<sup>15</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, p. 32; Miyauchi, p. 160.

<sup>16</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, pp. 35-36; Miyauchi, pp. 163-164.

<sup>17</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, p. 35; Miyauchi, p. 163.

imagined today. This class system was outdated in Shōnan's eyes. In the present context his idea is commensurable to freedom of choice in employment. Nonetheless, this idea can potentially fall into the trap of exploitation of people's labour force by the state or the general mobilisation, since Shōnan identified the profits of the people with that of the country for better or worse. Regarding this issue, he did not leave a detailed remark. It is fair to say that the intended point here was that the government should respect the people's will for their profession, and that the government should make profits not for itself, but for the people.

### Kyōhei-ron, Strengthening the Military

When it comes to *Kyōhei-ron*, Shōnan began by explaining the ongoing change in the international situation, which showed his political acumen. Overseas explorations of the Western countries had become so active that Japan's seclusion policy was no longer valid. He wrote, 'With the overseas situation like this, developing day by day, how can Japan arouse the martial vigour, when it alone basks in peace and drills the indolent troops as though it were child's play? As such, there is no defence, without a navy.'<sup>18</sup> Based on the understanding of the harsh international situation encompassing Japan, he argued that an immediate military reform was necessary, by strengthening the military capability of the navy to fortify the state's security.

Yet, enhancing the navy was not for the purpose of defending the country or invading others in Shōnan's eyes. According to a note from one of his disciples, Shōnan claimed:

Japan must develop the great Way of humanity and justice and be a strong country. Where there are the strong, there are also the weak. Japan must clarify this Way and make a positive contribution to the world. We must stop war, which kills ten or twenty thousand people at one time. We will either be a colony like India or a first-class power of humanity and justice. Those are the only options and

nothing more.<sup>19</sup>

This writing clearly shows his sense of dread that Japan might be colonised like India, and that was not acceptable. Hence, strengthening the military was the *sine qua non* prerequisite for the independence of Japan. With this strong military, Japan would then have a duty to stop war around the world. As it is oft said, with great power comes great responsibility. This writing indicates Shōnan's pacifistic thought, in which pacifism is founded upon realpolitik rather than utopianism.

There was yet another intention in forming a navy; according to Shōnan, a navy would broaden and cultivate the spirit of samurai. He thought, 'the samurai will widen their knowledge and broaden their mind by going back and forth to foreign countries. Moreover, encountering violent winds and angry waves, the whole ship's crew will learn to combine their utmost efforts and help each other through those trials.'<sup>20</sup> It is clear that Shōnan considered samurai would gain a mind of fellowship and acquire an international perspective thanks to navy training. As above, Shōnan consistently emphasised the importance of the mind. In this, we can understand the reasoning with which he devoted the last part of the *Kokuze sanron* to explaining the ideal of samurai.

### Shi-dō, the Samurai Way

In *Shi-dō*, Shōnan compares the Samurai Way of the present time with that of the past. According to him, samurai originally excelled in both letters and military arts as complementary skills. At present not only have the two been separated, but the samurai way as a whole had been compromised. The concepts and teachings had lost their true foundation and devolved into nothing but rote skills. What caused this loss of significance?

According to Shōnan, the cause was a failure of education. Consequently, his demand for the ideal of samurai led to the improvement of Confucian *school*, an educational and administrative institution to learn, discuss, and conduct politics. Here, he again idealised the

<sup>18</sup> Yokoi *Shōnan ikō*, p. 44; Miyauchi, p. 174.

<sup>19</sup> Murata, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> Yokoi *Shōnan ikō*, p. 47; Miyauchi, p. 177.

legendary epoque of the three sage kings. He wrote, 'The schools have the same name as those of the three ancient kings, but the methods of teaching are poles apart. If the present schools were like the ancient ones, they would have no defects to be criticised for.'<sup>21</sup> This raises the question of what schools were like in ancient times. Though these contents are explained in *Shi-dō*, there is a more detailed explanation in Shōnan's *Gakkō mondōsho* 学校問答書, *Dialogue on School*. There, he wrote on school in the time of the three sage kings, as follows:

It was not only in the court, but also between father and son, brothers, and husband and wife that they mutually rewarded good, relieved themselves from mistakes, and discussed the advisability of the politics of the world. Hence, the way towards learning and discussion was realised in family life. When people of high rank thus engage in learning and discussion, they influence those in lower ranks, and people in the land, and eventually the whole world, will engage in learning and discussion, and eventually everyone will be capable of ruling over the land.<sup>22</sup>

Here, the phrase 'everyone will be capable of ruling over the land' alludes to the Book of Han, where it states, where it states, 'In the epoque of Yao and Shun, everyone was capable of ruling over the land'.<sup>23</sup> This passage shows an equality between people in school, rendering the distinction between the ruler and the ruled blurred. In addition, this egalitarian view was not limited to Shōnan. Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830-1859), a political thinker and activist, coeval with him, had a similar image of *school*. He claimed the necessity to establish 'a great school with letters and military arts', in which all people could learn, 'from children and grandchildren of the emperor to the commoner, everyone without

distinction of the aristocrat and plebeian boards'.<sup>24</sup> Although Shōin revered the emperor as an absolute power, his egalitarian idea of *school* otherwise resembles that of Shōnan.

Shōnan's vision of schooling hints at a political system akin to democracy. Indeed, Shōnan did not give any privilege to the samurai in and of themselves. In *Fukoku-ron*, he wrote, 'Ruling a country means to rule the people, and the samurai are a means of ruling the people.'<sup>25</sup> Hence, samurai were replaceable if the people could govern themselves, or if the great ruler could directly govern them, namely democracy or despotism.

## Democracy or Despotism?

In fact, Confucianism and democracy share a complex relationship, and may even conflict in certain aspects, partly because the former presupposes a benevolent monarch: If democracy is understood as a political system with liberty, rather than the Schmittian one which consists of the ruler's decisions and the applause of the people, *acclamatio*, Shōnan's interpretation of Confucianism occupies a rather ambiguous position between liberal democracy and despotism.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, there seems to be *prima facie*, a danger that Shōnan's demand for morality in politics may allow the government to interfere with an individual's personal beliefs, or for the state to force certain value principles on society. For him, politics and morality were not to be separated. However, one does not need to be a historical scholar to name several examples of leaders weaponising moral values to denounce an opponent or justify unimaginable acts. Accordingly, Shōnan's thought can be criticised as naively optimistic. Despite this, his claim is understandable considering that even today politicians are often expected to be prudent in conduct, and moral turpitude can be a strong reason to demand their resignation. Furthermore, given the rise of communitarianism, which emphasises the function of

<sup>21</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, p. 54; Miyauchi, p. 183.

<sup>22</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Watanabe Kazan, Takano Chōei, Sakuma Shōzan, Yokoi Shōnan, Hashimoto Sanai, p. 430.

<sup>24</sup> Yoshida Shōin *zenshū*. Vol. 4, p. 118.

<sup>25</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, p. 35; Miyauchi, p. 163.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*.

the common good in society, associating certain moral virtues with politics and society is admissible. The real challenge lies in discerning universal moral values amid diverse cultural, regional, and historical moral codes. In other words, how to identify a ‘core’ set of moral values applicable and acceptable to all humankind.

Inherent in Shōnan’s moral philosophy was the danger of falling into dictatorship, as his moral values principally stem from his reverence for the great sages. Considering his idea of *school*, he sought to realise politics by learning and discussion, inspired by the politics of those sages and the Western parliamentary system. Nevertheless, even within that system, people of high rank were expected to take initiative, which leaves open a certain risk of monarchism.

The central problem of Shōnan’s thought is the ambiguous role assigned to the common people. He strove for the common good of the people in the world. However, his emphasis on the role of the rulers renders it uncertain whether he believed the people could be independent, possessing political liberty, or remain merely as objects of instruction by the benevolent rulers. This problem is not limited to him, but is an inexorable issue when considering the relationship between Confucianism and democracy. In order for the people to obtain sovereignty, it is necessary to relativise Confucianism rather than remain within its framework.<sup>27</sup> Shōnan remained a Confucian until his assassination. As such, his ideal political system balances upon the tense relationship between democracy and despotism.

## Confucian Humanism

However, this belief system was the driving force behind Shōnan’s idea that everyone in this world was equal under Heaven. In Confucianism, there is a philanthropic aspect and a distinction according to the degree of intimacy. For Shōnan’s case, his thought was heavily coloured by the former. As a result, he held an

egalitarian view of the world, including the West. The following text written in 1866, a few years before his death, clearly shows this view:

When the land and sea are far away, the mountains, rivers, grasses, trees, and everything else will be different. However, everyone has the same disposition, and so it is a natural truth that you feel fraternity and have close friends. Foreign people are perhaps kinder than the Japanese. It is the sincere mind that can even move trees and stones, so even when you are in a predicament and even when you are happy, I want you to improve your sincere mind. This attitude is not only for the time when you are studying abroad. If you train your mind like this, you will acquire the sageness which will help your whole life, and this is more auspicious than becoming the greatest navigation officer in the world.<sup>28</sup>

Here we understand that with the ‘sincere mind’, people around the world could share a sense of ‘fraternity’. It is noteworthy that Shōnan stated, ‘foreign people are perhaps kinder than the Japanese’, considering that at the time Japan was still strongly entrenched in the ideology of expelling Western barbarians, while in China sino-centrism was firmly rooted, and in the West social Darwinism and racism were rampant.

Shōnan’s humanistic thought was, nonetheless, not a result of a naïve idealism, as evinced by his other writings. He was keenly aware of the Hobbesian state of international society. To survive in this situation, Japan needed to be equipped with a strong military. That said, what was of cardinal importance was not military techniques. Morality preceded technique. He wrote: ‘Wars of Western countries will never finish, if solely with the study of technology and without the study of moral virtues. As long as we acquire the study of moral virtue and understand human feelings, wars should cease in the present day’.<sup>29</sup> Every political affair in the world had

<sup>27</sup> In Japan, it was Nakae Chōmin 中江兆民 (1847-1901) who was keenly aware of this problem. He had an in-depth understanding of both Confucianism and Western thought, especially the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Thus, he could relativise the role of the ruler while advocating for morality in politics as Shōnan did.

<sup>28</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, p. 492.

<sup>29</sup> *Yokoi Shōnan ikō*, p. 926.

to be addressed with a humane mind, and every advancement of the country had to be for the pursuit of larger goal, whether world peace or international solidarity. In this humanistic mindset, we can find the description for Shōnan as a global Confucian.

## Conclusion

“Three Major Problems” comes at an interesting time in history. In the wake of the arrival of the Western powers, Shōnan had to reexamine his understanding of Confucianism by going back to its origin. This thinker then created a framework that incorporated Western politics, pushing the scope of Confucianism to its limit. From his thought, the following two points can be considered as core Asian as well as global values that we should seek after.

The first is the pursuit of morality, especially fairness, in economic activities. Today, excessive capitalism is widening the gap between rich and poor around the world. Yet, under no circumstances must economic activities be allowed to deprive people of their dignity. To protect equally individual freedoms from economic power, a morally normative economic order needs to be established. The ideal economic and moral order for Shōnan ought to not only enable people to become mutually materially wealthy through commerce, but should also lead to the formulation of individuals with open minds and of a society based on fairness. The key role of politics here is to create and maintain such an order, and politics must also be opened through commerce.

The second point is the pursuit of righteous politics, free from the rule of might in international relations. Power politics is still rampant in the world today. The reason a small country is powerless to the high-handed demands of a large country is simply military and or economic might. As a matter of course, what is reasonable cannot be decided by a single opinion. However, it is possible to correct structural inequalities in international relations by ameliorating the function of the United Nations towards a more egalitarian direction.<sup>30</sup>

The idealism of building peace by creating reason together, which was seen in Shōnan’s thought, can be considered to provide a model for thinking about the ideal form of an international society. It is also clear that his idea holds certain similarities with Jürgen Habermas’ theory of the public sphere in that both strive to create an agreement among people with different interests through communication, though Shōnan put more emphasis on education, and the idea of public and private is different between them.<sup>31</sup>

Given the fact that Shōnan rationalised and recorded these ideas in the middle of the 19th century, he was significantly ahead of his time. Furthermore, his thought has not lost its validity. Quite the contrary, his ideal of politics and economy based upon morality seems more relevant to us than ever. It is now up to those of us living today to expand upon his ideas in order to come closer to the achievement of a global humanism.

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Nations Security Council can be an example.

31 Cf. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

30 Abolishing the system of the permanent members of the United



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