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Introduction by Peter H. Hoffenberg, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

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Seeking the creators of “modernity?” What could be more modern than that quest? And what quest could more poignantly remind us of individual and collective “limits?”

Jon Thares Davidann’s latest scholarly monograph reminds us how elusive, yet inevitable and enduring, that pilgrimage and its consequences have been, regardless of whether the authors we read are in ‘The West,’ or ‘The East.’ *The Limits of Westernization: American and East Asian Intellectuals Create Modernity, 1860-1960*, published in the “Routledge Series in Modern History,” embraces those intellectual pilgrims on both sides of the Pacific Ocean to suggest that the multiple sources of that philosophical DNA strand. Like Don Quixote, Dr. Davidann’s key historical figures gird themselves with intellectual, political, cultural and sometimes avowedly nationalist armor, only to find the windmills continuing to turn and turn and turn, the tilting at them nearly endless. In this case, the windmills continue to move.

Who ever said that modernity was fair? Just as Miguel de Cervantes’s most famous character seems baked into our collective social psyche, the same might be said about those in China, Japan and the United States who have pursued since the middle of the Victorian era what it means to be modern and the very powerful, dangerous, seductive and uplifting consequences of that modernity. Be wary of that Pandora’s Box, those who rediscovered the Latin authors during the Renaissance well realized, at least five centuries before Davidann wrote his book.<sup>1</sup>

Davidann is well-positioned to swim in these choppy waters. His long-term scholarship, teaching, and archival research have brought to the fore profound questions of international intellectual history and what is now called ‘cultural diplomacy.’<sup>2</sup> His books and articles have generally focused on those matters in light of the United States and East Asia, Japan as well as China, but primarily in terms of Japanese-American connections. Casting his nets a bit wider this time, Davidann re-crossed the Rubicon of the year 1900 to delve into developments after the middle of the nineteenth century. His extensive bibliography represents time and labor in key archives with manuscript collections, as well as an exhaustive foray into secondary sources. As a true intellectual historian, he in many cases read secondary sources as primary ones, generating an argument in the wider intellectual strand. That undoubtedly holds true also for the texts which were popular, university textbooks, and part of a more general discussion in the United States about “modern” Japan and China. In the course of writing this book, Davidann read widely, learned widely, and those admirable characteristics are clear and present.

This bold and well-written book asks its readers to rethink some of the assumptions shaping common claims about the chronology, unequal partnerships, and political relations in the modernization of East Asia and the United States. All of those terms are used rather broadly; East Asia does not include Korea, and the work

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Among the helpful studies of “cultural diplomacy” are Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, new edition (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005) and Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, eds., *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy (Explorations in Culture and International History)*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

cannot but be selective about which American thinkers to emphasize.<sup>3</sup> Davidann stretches the calendar so that we can better understand the impact of the nineteenth-century discussions of being modern on the post-1945 story with which many are familiar. This is a helpful history of the history of “modernity,” and how that term has always meant different things, sometimes at the same time and place.<sup>4</sup> The earlier years provide an important pre-history to the twentieth-century history of Westernization and modernization, as sets of ideas and public policies, and an important gesture towards the role of industrialization in those movements. This longer-view provokes the powerful argument that those discussions were often not solely in terms of ‘the West,’ or ‘Westernization,’ but in terms of China’s or Japan’s own past, or at least how those pasts were understood by Chinese and Japanese *philosophes*. Here we have an explosion of the chronological and temporal “limits.”

Although those are bold enough claims and well worthy of serious engagement, Davidann also argues that the network of intellectual influences went both ways: ideas and philosophers from the West picked up important concepts and developments from the East, again using those clumsy terms in the ways that orthodox Orientalists and Occidentalists would use them. Not only are there significant non-American ideas about modernity, but those East Asian ideas might have actually influenced some American thinkers, John Dewey and W. E. B. Dubois among them. “[I]deas flowed in both directions” (55) and between Japan and China, as well. As noted by the scholars below, that thesis about “transpacific dialogues” (in the words of Sarah Griffith) is not only of great interest, but also one calling out for further study. “East Asian concepts” (x) shaped national, regional and, for want of a better term, pan-Pacific modernities. These were not always peaceful interactions, and global historians might discern a potential clash of modernities, rather than the infamous ‘clash of civilizations.’ The “distinctive power and dynamism of East Asian modernity” (1) can be separated from civilizational references, which more often than not shut down discussion and obscure historical and contemporary realities.

Comparing modernities opens up transnational and global conversations. As Davidann points out, this comparison as such allows scholars to unlink or rethink terms and processes commonly known as ‘Westernization’ and ‘modernization,’ which had been and continue to be inter-changeable in many discussions. They are not synonyms in Davidann’s view. He challenges the easy and automatic “conflation of westernization and modernity,” (16) as he does the equally easy and automatic “conflation” of American influence, if not dominance, of the path to modernity. It was not solely surveyed, paved or travelled upon by the Americans or those who listened to them. There is a lesson for today’s modernizers here, whether they come from the West, or the East, are active in Beijing, or Washington, or Moscow: do not think you are playing alone and do not be too arrogant about your influence.

There is a lot in this book, in part because it is intended for both generalists and specialists, as will be noted below in the solicited scholarly reviews. Some readers will be introduced to figures of whom they have never

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<sup>3</sup> Korean modernization would make a fascinating comparison with the subjects covered in this book, as it offers a rather unusual synthesis: indigenous, Asian via Japanese colonialism, and Western via Protestant Christianity. That was quite an explosive cocktail.

<sup>4</sup> “The word modernity is now [early 2000’s] used to make so many different points that continued deployment of it may contribute more to confusion than to clarity.” Frederick Cooper, “Modernity,” *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 113.

heard; others might find some of the introductory material knowledge already well known. Some participants find this topic right up their proverbial intellectual alley, while others admit interest in the topic, but come at it from a different type of history or region. This diversity helps us better understand the book and the questions it raises, and also helps us generate a conversation across occasionally rigid academic walls. I think that this is the case because this is not only a study of the intellectual creation of what we term ‘modernity,’ but also a study in more general terms about how powerful ideas and discourses are created and develop not only legitimacy, but enduring traction. Global ideas and discourses rarely, if ever, gain that traction if they are only generated from the social and political outside, or inside. That misunderstanding was at the heart of the intellectual tragedy of the Cold War.

To these ends, Davidann finds significant evidence of what we might term ‘indigenous’ Chinese and Japanese concepts of what it means to be modern and of the ‘limitations’ of American efforts to define, if not impose, modernity upon China and Japan, not only in terms of governmental policies, but also in terms of how those societies and their histories were understood. One might add that in doing so, and much more, Davidann also stakes a claim for philosophies of the modern which can contain contradictions and inconsistencies, both across and within borders. All that was solid did not melt into air, but often seemed fractured and reconstituted. Whereas those matters can be seen in geo-political terms, they can also be understood in the context of intellectual networks, both social and phenomenological, as much as political. The limitations of Westernization is not only an assertion about political weakness, it is also one about the specificity of ideas rooted in particular societies, with the creators and disseminators of such ideas located within the social structure, as much if not more than in the polity, their positioning vis-à-vis the West part of their positioning within their own social orders.

Whereas those issues have clear political and economic characteristics, they also have as part of Davidann’s text a particular view of the public intellectual. After all, the key Chinese, Japanese and American thinkers in his study were all to one degree or another what we now easily call ‘public intellectuals,’ a term born of the Dreyfus Affair in *fin-de-siècle* France.<sup>5</sup> In other words, what jumps out at one is not only the competition of ideas among these thinkers, and their collaboration or cross-fertilization, but also their claims to be speaking for the public, or the nation. The “search for modernity” (6) makes a strong suggestion about the roles of such intellectuals in that search, a role reminiscent of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s early nineteenth-century nationalist “clerisy.”<sup>6</sup> What was the role of the intellectual in Japan, China, the United States, or, more accurately, the roles of individuals and their institutional affiliations for those we could label “intellectuals?” Reflections upon those queries might help address the interest of one of the reviewers in the influence and dissemination of the ideas about modernity discussed by Davidann. How would we as historians define the roles and position of Fukuzawa Yukichi? Was his position in light of Japanese society at the time one that warrants the title, ‘intellectual?’ Most certainly Davidann’s pair of Ivy League East Asianist scholars warrants that title, among others. The duo of John K. Fairbank and Edwin O. Reischauer—with the addition of their disciples—comes immediately to mind, even to the mind of the non-specialist.

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<sup>5</sup> One could also explore the French past and find precedents in *politiques*, such as Montaigne, and *philosophes*, including Voltaire.

<sup>6</sup> Coleridge discussed the “clerisy” and its role in *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, published in 1830 as part of the general debate about Catholic Emancipation in Great Britain.

It has been an honor and pleasure to not only read and reflect upon Davidann's book, but to read the scholarly reviews posted below. They are thoughtful, honest and while generally favorable, do raise points for Davidann and his readers.

Connie Shemo notes the big tent of the intended audience, and thus the need to inform and keep engaged a range of readers who sit at various points along the spectrum of expertise and knowledge. The structure of "a series of analyses of specific historical figures, both East Asian and American," and how they "wrestled" with modernity means that there will be too much background information for some readers. Shemo likens the author to "a person hosting a very diverse dinner party," who must ensure that "his varied guests find common ground." It is not easy to keep all guests satisfied. Some will leave before the entrée and some will overstay their welcome. But all will indulge in at least some food and drink.

What about the intriguing point that key American thinkers visiting and studying 'the East' then returned home using their travels and observations to critique American society and modernity? Dewey and DuBois are among those. What do we make of that "reverse influence," in Shemo's term. Was it part of a larger "Occidentalism," or "Orientalist" discourse and narrative. How significant to Dewey's and DuBois's contributions were those Eastern passages?<sup>7</sup> We think of that American pair as essentially secularists, but what about the influence of American Protestant missionaries? How did their efforts help develop the American views on modernization in East Asia?

Perhaps one of the limits to the American influence was the powerful influence of other creators or sources of modernization? Westernization was spoken in many different tongues, both then and now. Tomoko Akami asks about the influence of German thinking about modernity and the second-wave Liberalism of T. H. Green, a welfare-Liberalism influenced by English and Continental experiences. Westernization might have been limited by some of its own characteristics: inconsistencies and fundamental changes, and the competing political and cultural sources of the definers of modernity. Here, Akami would like to reconstruct the important connection between later nineteenth-century liberalism and modernity, or modernization, and, in doing so, reminds us that liberalism itself as a body of ideas and policies fundamentally changed by the turn of the twentieth century. There was no hegemonic, unchanging Western modernity. One could make a claim that German thinkers have had a disproportionate influence on how we think about modernity as a philosophical and intellectual enterprise and problem, although they did not do so as their English, French and American colleagues did.

Akami also probes a bit more deeply into the body of Westernization and modernization scholarship to remind us of its Cold War context, or, more specifically, its anti-Marxist and anti-Communist leanings. Where is the influential Marxist framework in Davidann's study? Where are the scholarly works on "modern" Japan written from that self-conscious Radical Western point of view? Akami pushes Davidann to consider the larger "political background" of the twentieth-century creation of modernity—in both the United States and East Asia. Why was modernization developed within an internationalist framework of nation-states and not a more egalitarian global one?

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit's *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005) considers the use of 'Eastern' ideas and values to critique and attack the 'West.'

Cyrus Veese asks about the relationships between ideas and materiality, and between the Asian past and its present. Is Davidann retroactively correcting Asian intellectual history “in order to reframe” the contemporary Asian material accomplishments? Is this intellectual tradition “more a question of reverse engineering than organic development?” Veese suggests that Davidann is doing what his subjects did: inventing a tradition, “retrofitting ideas to things,” rather than showing how ideas “emerged from evolving facts on the ground.” Is it fair and truthful to work backwards from contemporary material prosperity to the less prosperous crucibles of intellectual modernity? In doing so, and in comparing different crucibles, do we find that key concepts and terms such as “civic virtue” share definitions across temporal space? Was there “a common framework and vocabulary,” which allowed for a legitimate dialogue in both directions?

Davidann’s reluctance to address the common Marxist framework and vocabulary might be a corollary here, as Marx and those subsequently linking capitalism, technology, and modernity often did share a common language. These questions matter not only for the doing of intellectual history, or the heated conference chats about Hegelian and Marxist base and superstructure, but it also matters when thinking about the world today. Is Davidann finding in East Asian modernity the sources of material wealth in China and Japan which are the envy of some in Latin America and Africa? By articulating that question, Veese suggests the potential significance of this study in the continuing debate about ‘the wealth of nations,’ or why some nations are rich, and others not so.

Sarah M. Griffith’s comments underscore the fluid, if not contingent, definition of modernism; at the very least, it is a contextual definition, one that requires for our appreciation “the nimbleness of East Asian intellectual thought” and acceptance that modernity was not and will never be “a static unchanging collection of ideas.” Her response recognizes those and other contributions at the core of Davidann’s book and she concludes with the eternal question for intellectual historians: how much did these ideas matter and to whom? In a world of East Asian and Western modernities, how can we evaluate the audiences and impacts of Davidann’s authors? Are the only distinctions those between American and East Asian modernities? Why not have generational modernities, or modernities tied to class, or social identity? Did any of this matter to “the folks on the ground?” Griffith reminds us that we do not know how the “average” East Asian “perceived” the flurry of philosophical debates and texts. One might very well ask that of the “average” American, as well. This vital point circles back in part to the roles that these thinkers played in their societies, and thus how much public authority they and their ideas enjoyed.

Davidann did not set out to study popular or mass ideas, but Griffith asks a fair question if we are pursuing their traction and influence. Of course, modernity need not be democratic, or from the bottom up, but perhaps that trajectory was also part of the migration and dialogue alongside the more traditional geopolitical ones, a vertical conversation complementing the horizontal one. The “limits” of Westernization might very well include internal social and economic ones, as well as the external cultural and political ones considered by Davidann. By pushing his vision back into the nineteenth century, Davidann encourages Griffith to remind all of us that becoming modern answered not only the ‘National Question,’ but also the century’s ‘Social Question,’ neither of which were commonly answered in democratic and egalitarian ways.

These are serious historical and historiographical questions, asked of a serious scholarly attempt to join Don Quixote and others on the quest for the origins of modernity or modernities. Davidann’s quest has asked us to rethink fundamental assumptions about American power and influence, the equation of modernization and Westernization, and how powerful and influential ideas move along at least two-way intellectual superhighways. Not a bad day’s work!

**Participants:**

**Jon Thares Davidann** is Professor of History at Hawai'i Pacific University. He has published six books on U.S.-East Asian relations and world history. He is currently working on three projects: a book called "The Dissenter's Guide to American History," a book on American internationalism and isolationism in the twentieth century, and a volume on global modernities in intellectual history. Dr. Davidann has received numerous grants and fellowships to undertake his research projects and has given invited lectures internationally. *History Lens*, a video podcast that examines current issues and puts them in historical perspective, is his brainchild.

**Peter H. Hoffenberg** is Associate Professor of History at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, where he teaches courses in the histories of Modern Britain, the British Empire, The World (since 1450), Modern Europe, and Economic Thought. He is the author of *An Empire on Display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (2001) and *'A Science of our Own': Exhibitions and the Rise of Australian Public Science, 1851-1888* (forthcoming in 2019). Among his interests are the social and economic aspects of modernity, since the later eighteenth century.

**Tomoko Akami** is Associate Professor (Reader) at the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific. She is the author of *Internationalizing the Pacific* (2002), *Japan's News Propaganda and Reuters' News Empire* (2012), and *Soft Power of Japan's Total War State* (2014). Her recent publications on empires and the League of National Health Organization in Asia include articles in *Journal of Global History* and *International History Review*, and she is now working on expert networks and international knowledge in Asia.

**Sarah Griffith** (Ph.D. University of California, Santa Barbara) is the author of *Asian American Civil Rights: Liberal Protestant Activism, 1900-1950* (University of Illinois Press, March 2018). An Associate Professor at Queens University in Charlotte, NC, Griffith teaches courses on mid to late-nineteenth and twentieth-century United States history with specializations in comparative race and ethnic studies, Asian American studies, and Pacific Rim transnationalisms.

**Connie Shemo** is an associate professor of history at Plattsburgh State University, the author of *The Chinese Medical Ministries of Kang Cheng and Shi Meiyu: On a Cross-Cultural Frontier of Gender, Race, and Nation* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), and the co-editor of *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation and the American Protestant Empire* (Duke University Press, 2010). Her articles have appeared in *Diplomatic History*, *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, and *Journal of Women's History*, among others. She has also been a Fulbright Scholar at Shanghai University. Her current project is a study of American missionary medical education for women in China as an important point of cultural contact

**Cyrus Veaser** is professor of history at Bentley University in Waltham, Massachusetts. He is author of *A World Safe for Capitalism: Dollar Diplomacy and America's Rise to Global Power* (Columbia University Press, 2002) and *Great Leaps Forward: Modernizers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (Prentice Hall, 2009).

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When one works on modern Japanese history in a global context in the English language medium, one constantly encounters descriptions, such as Japan's 'imitation' or 'mimicking' and 'Western tutelage.' These works often stress 'Western influence' with little attention to the roles of the Japanese actors, the historical contexts of Japan, or the rich Japanese-language scholarships in the given fields. A recently acclaimed work, *The Internationalists*,<sup>1</sup> is one such example, despite the fact that it is significant in drawing the people's attention to the Pact of Paris of 1928.

I therefore fully endorse the main argument of Jon Thares Davidann's *The Limits of Westernization*: scholars had overstated "Western" influence in East Asia, and especially "[American] histories [of East Asia] gave the United States too much credit in shaping East Asian modernity" (1, 2-3, 225). Building on the same theme pursued by Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen,<sup>2</sup> and their realization of the need to examine more "East Asia's role in the creation of the modern world" (1), *The Limits of Westernization* "explores the boundaries of American influences on East Asia." It especially examines "the origins and development of modern thoughts in the United States, Japan and China" in 1860–1960, and "gives greater voices to East Asians in the development of their own ideas of modernity" (2).

In the following chapters, *The Limits of Westernization* surveys a significant number of American intellectuals' direct and indirect encounters with Japan, China, and Korea, as well as, if to a lesser extent, the ideas and experiences of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean intellectuals in the United States. The coherence of these intellectuals as 'modernists' is not as clear as it is intended to be, partly because it is hard to dissociate 'modernists' from the 'modernism' of the specific art/architecture/literature movements, and partly because the book's definition of the term may make it harder not to cover most intellectuals of the period, including communists, socialists, reactionaries, fascists, or total war advocates.

*The Limits of Westernization* nonetheless succeeds in introducing key ideas of these prominent intellectuals across the Pacific, without resorting to academic jargon, and it will be a good read for not only scholars and university students, but also for general readers. It is also useful for those who specialize in American histories or East Asian histories so that they can come to understand less familiar fields. Furthermore, it draws out the diverse meanings of the American-East Asian encounters of certain prominent intellectuals, which may otherwise escape notice. One such case discussed in *The Limits of Westernization* is the journey of W. E. B. Du Bois to the Japanese empire in 1936. The case demonstrates that his anti-white dominance stance made him more prone to imperial Japan's propaganda of anti-Euro-American rhetoric to an extent that he became almost blind to Japan's own imperial brutality in China and their exploitation of China (175–8).

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<sup>1</sup> Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro, *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017. Similar descriptions are evident in broader histories, such as Niall Ferguson's *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).



As the scope of *The Limits of Westernization* is geographically and intellectually vast, in the limited space below, I will focus on two discussion points, which I see as important for the main theme of *The Limits of Westernization*, and on which I have some background: North American historiography of modern Japanese history, modernization theory, and Marxism; and liberalism and German influence on it.

*North American historiography of modern Japanese history, the modernization theory, and Marxism*

*The Limits of Westernization* argues that the post-war (post 1945) modernization-theory-framed histories of East Asia by American scholars were largely responsible for a popular view which overstated ‘Western’ (which equates with American) influence in East Asian histories. This is a valid and significant point. It reminds me of a rather ‘odd’ feeling I had, when I started to teach modern Japanese history in an Australian university almost two decades ago. I studied Japanese History in Japan, and for my Ph.D. thesis, I read primary and secondary sources on interwar and wartime Japan, and the large bulk of scholarly works was in Japanese. This meant that for teaching modern Japanese history in a university in Australia, I had to survey much more broadly scholarly works in English in this field, and here I encountered the modernization-theory-framed ‘orthodox’ modern Japanese history.

There were a few reasons why I felt ‘odd’ with this orthodoxy. First, it was vastly different from the ‘orthodox’ scholarship of modern Japanese history I learned in Japan, which had been dominated by a Marxist framework at least until the late 1970s. Second, its notion of the ‘West’ as an agency of liberal democracy for Japan was largely silent on an aspect of empire and international power structure. Third, associated with this problematic notion of the ‘West’ were embedded Orientalist stereotypes of ‘Japanese culture’ and ‘Japanese society.’ I still have a vivid memory of a comment made by a student watching a video on Japanese students’ *Anpo* demonstration (against the conclusion of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan) that I showed at a class. The student refuted the footage claiming that unlike the ‘Westerners,’ the Japanese were collectivist and obedient, and would not do such a demonstration. I became very reluctant to use the terms of the ‘West’ and ‘Westernization’ in teaching and researching modern Japanese history.

In order to understand this ‘orthodoxy,’ it was crucial to learn its political background. I am grateful to Judith Snodgrass who alerted me to read John Dower’s piece in his edited *Emergence of Modern Japan*.<sup>3</sup> I then read Sheldon Garon’s insightful piece on the modernization theory in Japanese history.<sup>4</sup>

This brings me to the first discussion point for *The Limits of Westernization*. How should Marxism be located in our understanding of the limits of American intellectual influence in Japan in the period under examination? As *The Limits of Westernization* also makes it clear, the modernization theory of Walt W. Rostow, American economist who was influential in US policy to Southeast Asia in the 1960s, was a counter-Communist Manifesto, and the ‘orthodoxy’ of modern Japanese history in English was a counter-Marxist interpretation. In the 1970s, Dower had to re-discover and re-evaluate Egerton Herbert (E. H.) Norman’s

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<sup>3</sup> John Dower, “E.H. Norman, Japan and the Use of history,” in John Dower, ed., *Origin of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E.H. Norman* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Sheldon Garon, “Rethinking Modernization and Modernity in Japanese history: A Focus on State-Society Relations,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53:2 (1994): 346-366.

works, which were marginalized by this dominant orthodox scholarship. More importantly, this was also an exercise of bringing the pre-war works of Japanese Marxist historians, which Norman's works engaged with and drew from, into the English-language historiography of modern Japan. Norman was of course not an American, but a Canadian, which may fall outside the scope of *The Limits of Westernization*. Yet, Norman's engagement with Japanese intellectuals before the war, his connections with pioneering scholars of Asian Studies in the U.S. through his associations with Harvard and the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), his involvement in the U.S.-led occupation in postwar Japan, and his post-war engagements with Japanese intellectual giants, such as Maruyama Masao and other "progressive" (many Marxist) scholars, all seem to justify the inclusion of Norman and his works in the book. Furthermore, this is a significant and unique case of the reverse impact of Japanese Marxist intellectuals on English-language scholarship. Locating Norman and his works in the framework of *The Limits of Westernization* may have been intellectually fruitful in further deepening the understanding of American-East Asian intellectual engagements, and the notion of modernity in East Asia.

*Liberalism, kakushin (statist-reformism), liberal internationalism, and German influence in inter-war Japan and beyond*

The second discussion point is the nature of liberalism and the significance of German intellectual influence in inter-war Japan for understanding the main theme of *The Limits of Westernization*, the limits of American intellectual influence. In my earlier work on the IPR, I drew attention to the need to distinguish "New Liberalism" from *laissez faire* liberalism, and stressed the influence of German idealism and the works of Thomas H. Green, which were inspired by German idealism, in his "New Liberalism". The distinction of this strand of "New Liberalism," which could also be understood as "welfare liberalism," was important for grasping the nature of inter-war liberalism in international politics for two main reasons. First, "liberalism" was often associated with economic *laissez faire* liberalism and the "freer" trade principle in an international arena. Second, there was a significant shift in the younger generation of "liberals" and so-called "liberal" (or non-communist/socialist) internationalists at the Japanese Council of the IPR (JCIPR) to this welfare liberalism. It was a global, and interactive intellectual paradigm shift, one which was paralleled among IPR members and their associates in other countries.<sup>5</sup>

In my view, rather than modernity, as *The Limits of Modernization* suggests, this strand of welfare liberalism holds the key to understanding the connections between nationalism, internationalism, and imperialism, which have puzzled many. To start with, most interwar 'liberal' internationalists were not anarchists or cosmopolitans. Rather, their internationalism was firmly based on the national units, and this was also the case for IPR members across the countries. As for Nitobe Inazō, one of the most prominent 'liberal' internationalists in inter-war Japan, nationalism and internationalism, therefore, coexisted, or more precisely, the former was constitutive for the latter for most IPR members not only in Japan, but also in other countries. It became a problem for Japanese IPR members only when their own state challenged the international status quo in 1931. Furthermore, while the defeated Axis empires lost their colonies in 1919, and a new norm of self-determination was applied to new nation-states in Europe in the aftermath of these empires, the victorious empires, including the U.S. and Japan, maintained their own colonies. As Akira Iriye argued, there

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<sup>5</sup> Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

was a search for a new order after 1919 in Asia, which was still dominated by empires and their colonies.<sup>6</sup> Not only nationalism, but also existing empires (and their colonies), therefore, remained constitutive factors within “liberal internationalism” throughout the inter-war period.

In this context, on the domestic front a new strand of liberalism, welfare liberalism, was increasingly seeing the ‘modern’ state as the provider of the welfare of the society as a whole, including newly enfranchised male working-class voters. This was a significantly different role of the state understood in classic liberalism (or laissez faire liberalism) as an oppressor of the political and civil rights of its people. The more the intellectuals and activists became aware of the need for greater welfare measures, therefore, the more they felt the need for a stronger and bigger state. This thinking was evident already in Yoshino Sakuzō, the proponent of Taisho democracy, who was influential among younger JCIPR members, and was more manifest in these younger JCIPR members, such as Tsurumi Yūzuke, but more in Rōyama Masamichi, Matsumoto Shigeharu, and Matsukata Saburō. This shift explains why some of these younger JCIPR members became close to Konoe Fumimaro, Prime Minister in the crucial period of 1937–1939 and 1940–1941, involved themselves in his think tank, Shōwa kenkyūkai (1933-1940), and could align with *kakushin* (statist-reformist) bureaucrats in the 1930s and during the war. Furthermore, for some, it was not a major intellectual leap to expand a sphere of ‘social’ measures of the Japanese state beyond Japan proper to its colonies and then its military-occupied areas, or use such welfare rhetoric to justify Japan’s military expansion. One can see a similar leap in the social imperialism of some Fabians, or Carl Schmitt, German jurist and political theorist, whose works contributed to theorizing the policies of Nazi Germany.

This strand of “welfare liberalism,” which was dominant in inter-war Japan,<sup>7</sup> therefore, is crucial to understand the nature of ‘liberals’ and ‘liberal internationalists’ in inter-war Japan, which inevitably challenges the neat dichotomy of liberals versus nationalists, or liberals versus imperialists. To be sure, diverse sources shaped inter-war welfare liberalism, including the British guild socialism which inspired Rōyama.<sup>8</sup> Yet, German intellectual influence was strong among statist-oriented reformists in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s, many of whom were educated at male elite institutions with a strong German learning tradition. Last, it is worth noting that such German influence was not confined to Japan, as a recent work stresses this influence on “American” classical “realists,” such as Hans Morgenthau.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, demarcating lines of what were

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<sup>6</sup> Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

<sup>7</sup> Tomoko Akami, “Nation, State, Empire and War: Problems of Liberalism in Modern Japanese History and Beyond,” *Japanese Studies* 25:2 (2005): 119-140.

<sup>8</sup> The legacy of this inter-war “welfare liberalism” in post-war Japan also could be seen in Rōyama’s involvement in the establishment of Minshatō (Democratic Socialist Party) in 1960, stemming from the right wing faction of the Japan Socialist Party. On this post-war legacy, the works by Sakai Tetsuya are most illuminating. See, for example, Sakai Tetsuya, “Shakai minshu shugi ha kokkyō o koeruka: Kokusai kankeiron ni okeru shakai minshu shugi saikō” [Could Social Democracy Cross National Borders?: Re-consideration of Social Democracy in IR Theories], *Shiso* 1020 (2009): 133-151.

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Japanese, American, or German thoughts and influences is a complex task in the context of globalized modernity

### Review by Sarah M. Griffith, Queens University of Charlotte

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In his newest book, Jon Thares Davidann explores the origins and development of modern thought in the United States, Japan, and China from the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries (2). There has been a tendency among scholars to see modernity as something created in the West and bestowed upon non-western nations and cultures. As the book's title suggests, Davidann doesn't deny that American intellectual thought impacted East Asian intellectuals. Instead, he tests the boundaries of that influence by exploring the voices of well-known intellectuals from both sides of the Pacific and puts them in conversation with one another. In doing so, he outlines a more nuanced telling of the origins and evolution of modern thought in the region.

The first many chapters explore the rich transpacific dialogues that emerged among and between American and East Asian intellectuals during the turn of the twentieth century. Davidann shows that the transmission of modernist thought was not limited to Atlantic circles but flowed as well from the United States to East Asia and in the opposite direction from East Asia to the United States (55). American intellectuals responded to capitalist industrialization, immigration, and racism by emphasizing liberation, scientific rationality, progress, civic duty, and democracy. East Asian intellectuals believed a virtuous citizenry, self-sacrifice, and the greater good were necessary components to establishing modern nations (4). Only by creating national strength and cohesion could East Asian nations combat imperialism. Although working toward different ends, these concepts were significant and gave modernists on both sides of the Pacific a shared sense of purpose (4).

Davidann shows how the migrations of people and ideas back and forth across the Pacific encouraged the blending of intellectual traditions. Eastern mysticism shaped William James' lectures and writings on pluralism; W.E.B. Du Bois looked to Japan's defeat of a major Western power in the 1904-5 Russo-Japanese War as a model for challenging white supremacy. Although he rejected nationalism and debated whether China was prepared for modernity, John Dewey was impressed by the groundswell of revolutionary activity unleashed during China's May Fourth Movement. After travelling to the United States, Japanese scholar Fukuzawa Yukichi advocated certain aspects of westernization including national sovereignty, the development of national wealth, military strength, and civic virtue. Inspired by Japan's ability to overturn its feudal past, Chinese reformer Liang Qichao advocated civic virtue and citizens' duty to community and state as crucial to the development of a strong nation. Two decades later, Sun Yat-sen witnessed the dynamism of western culture and Japan's modernization and yearned for the same sort of transformation in China.

As likely as they were to embrace Western modernist thought, East Asian intellectuals frequently diverged from, and in some cases rejected outright, Westernization. This was especially the case as modernism collided with emerging nationalist movements in Japan, China, and Korea. When Fukuzawa Yukichi and Sun Yat-sen spoke of building civic virtue, they rooted their thinking not in western philosophies but, rather, in the fifteenth-century writings of Chinese Confucian scholar Wang Yangming who encouraged citizens to possess strong moral courage and dedicate themselves to the protection of the nation against internal and external threats (21-22). As Western powers expanded their political and economic influence across East Asia Wang provided the inspiration Chinese and Japanese intellectuals needed to encourage unselfish civic virtue capable of warding off foreign imperialists. Although Korean intellectuals receive less comprehensive treatment in the book, Davidann indicates similar efforts to draw on tradition as a means to defend the nation against colonialism in that country. After Japan and China went to war over the Korean peninsula in 1898, Korean intellectual Yun Chi Ho pushed for educational reform and representative government while also encouraging

the promotion of indigenous language and Confucian traditions that emphasized ethical rules for public safety and order (47).

As the Darwinistic struggle for survival and dominance in the Pacific continued unabated across the early 1900s, East Asian intellectuals increasingly rejected the notion that the United States, and American progressive reformers in particular, had the answers needed to build strong and sovereign nations. American YWCA administrators praised Japanese secretary Michi Kawai for her success in building the organization, but when she called for indigenization, the same administrators chastised her for being “anti-foreign.” (141) During his two year travels in East Asia, Chinese intellectuals flocked to the lectures of John Dewey. However, the most influential author at the time, Lu Xun, rejected Dewey’s pragmatism along with humanism and western cosmopolitanism, calling instead for the renewal of revolutionary vigor in the Chinese people. Chinese reformers rejected the internationalism espoused by American progressive reformers like Jane Addams as inadequate for meeting the challenges the nation faced in the aftermath of war. Japanese intellectuals lamented municipal reforms proposed by historian Charles Beard as little more than imperialism bottled in new vessels. Over the post-World War I era, American intellectuals were increasingly marginalized in East Asian intellectual circles as being out of touch or simply negligent of the challenges, and potential opportunities, East Asia nations faced.

The Great Depression only tarnished further the United States’ image, and the influence of American modernists, in East Asia. The 1929 stock market crash and global depression that followed revealed the weaknesses of industrial capitalism. Over the course of the 1930s, East Asian intellectuals, and Japanese in particular, responded to the crisis by departing further from their American counterparts. Japanese scholar Royama Masamichi rejected western liberal internationalism, embracing instead Japanese regionalism, the economic exploitation of neighboring countries, and empire building through military force (183). Younger intellectuals like Takeuchi Yoshimi followed Masamachi’s lead in advocating for imperialism with even fewer constraints. In their telling, it was only right that Japan stood at the center of an Asian-centered modernity given its status as the pre-eminent social, economic, and military force in the region (186).

Following the United States’ victory in the Pacific War, American intellectuals again returned to American-centric notions of modernity. Leading intellectuals John King Fairbank, Talcott Parsons, and Edwin O. Reischauer embraced modernization theory and the belief that East Asian nations would only survive in the post-war world order with the guiding hand of the United States. According to Fairbank, China’s ancient and traditional roots remained static, unchanged, and destined to contribute to authoritarianism. In Reischauer’s telling, Japan’s militarism during the 1930s and 1940s represented little more than “a dark valley” (14, 219), a momentary digression away from what had been a steady path to Westernization and modernization in the pre and post-WWII period. In his thinking, the American Occupation of Japan served to right the ship once again.

Japanese scholars like Maruyama Masao likewise looked to Europe and the United States for models on which to base modern progress in the post-World War II era. Yet, as had been the case before the war, Masao did not simply write off East Asians as active agents in the process. Rather, he returned to the writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi to make sense of the militarism that drove Japanese politics and society during the Second World War. As before the war, East Asian intellectuals could acknowledge the significance the West played in shaping the modern world, but refused to disavow completely the central role East Asian intellectuals had played in shaping modernity in their home countries.

The research here is refreshing for a number of reasons. Too often modernism is seen as something hatched in the Western world and bestowed upon non-western nations. This simply was not the case. Japanese and Chinese intellectuals blended western and eastern traditions into new amalgams that worked for the conditions in which they found themselves and their nations. As those conditions changed, so too did their thinking about what modernism was and how it might be applied to the political, social, and economic worlds in which they lived. In exploring these shifts and divergences in intellectual thought Davidann also challenges the notion that modernity was a static, unchanging collection of ideas.

Davidann's willingness to engage with and understand East Asian intellectuals on their own terms is also refreshing. When we take the time to analyze the writing of these authors in the time and space in which they were created, formerly contradictory trends make more sense. American, Japanese, and Chinese intellectuals all favored the building of civic culture but East Asians as often found their inspirations in centuries old, indigenous traditions as they did in recent Western philosophies. The research reveals the nimbleness of East Asian intellectual thought as well. While American intellectuals like Charles Beard lamented the decline of western civilization in the aftermath of World War I, East Asian intellectuals saw new inroads to power. Japanese author Royama Masamichi envisioned a cooperative East Asian community in the 1930s led by the Japanese government and military. Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement blended Confucian and Christian ideologies and positioned Han Chinese at the center of a new national order in China. This continuous adaptation, blending, and indigenization persisted in the post-World War II era, even if American intellectuals failed to recognize as much.

As for questions, I was left wondering how otherwise 'average' East Asians perceived all this activity. Davidann emphasizes that his focus rests squarely on the published works of "well-known" American and East Asian authors (6). But what about the folks on the ground? By World War I Japanese people were among the most educated in the world. How did students, progressive reformers, union workers, and others respond to modernity? The 1911 Republican Revolution and the First World War birthed a new generation of youth activists in China. What did these young people make of the diverse and divergent intellectual trends forming around them? Did they embrace, reject, and/or blend these lines of thought into their own evolving sense of modernity? Given the increasingly important role American, Japanese, and Chinese women played in the progressive movement of the nineteen teens and twenties I would have liked to hear more of their voices in this story as well. We learn a great deal about Jane Addams, and early social scientists like Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Mead. We are also introduced to progressives like Michi Kawai and Communist Party member Ding Ling. But weren't there other women writing and thinking about modernity?

Overall, Davidann succeeds in disrupting the notion that the West was the pre-eminent fount of modernist thinking in the years leading up to World War II. Here, American intellectuals come across at best as self-absorbed, and at worst as oblivious outsiders, to the revolutionary movements re-shaping East Asia. This persisted into the post-Second World War era when the older generation of 'China' and 'Japan hands' returned to and embraced American-centric modernization theory. In fact, the success of various Communist movements in East Asia proved that the United States had failed to convince millions of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean citizens that America had the answers they needed to overturn the past, challenge imperialist control, or create and engage in global economies. Despite the primacy of modernization theory in the early Cold War, it would seem that the radical historians in the 1970s and post-modernists in the 1990s were on to something when they critiqued the United States for being out of touch, its leaders blinded by their own telling of the past and future. As U.S.-East Asia relations continue to fluctuate under the current administration, politicians and diplomats would be wise to open their ears to the voices on the ground and

acknowledge, as they failed to do in the past, that the United States offers but one model upon which to build stability and power in the Pacific.



Review by Connie Shemo, SUNY Plattsburgh

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In the introduction to *The Limits of Westernization*, Jon Davidann points out a key similarity between American scholarship on East Asia from the 1940s to 1960, which tended to portray the United States as providing a relatively benevolent “guiding hand” to a “positive modernization,” (exemplified by John King Fairbank and Edward Reischauer), and scholarship in the 1960s which “castigated” Western involvement in East Asia as destructive imperialism (5). In spite of the differences between these two scholarly trends, both took for granted “the immense influence of the United States.” Davidann proposes a “third turn in the writing of American-East Asian relations,” one which challenges the centrality of American influence in East Asian modernity (5-6). In essence, Davidann is challenging the “conflation of westernization with modernity” (16) which has dominated scholarship produced both in the West and in Asia.

As have many scholars, Davidann discusses the influence of the particular historical moment in which the above mentioned scholarly trends were produced. In the introduction, and then in more detail, in Chapter 6, he argues that the power of the United States immediately following the Second World War caused both Fairbank and Reischauer to emphasize the influence of the United States in Chinese and Japanese pursuits of “modernity” (10-15, Chapter 6). In particular, he shows how Reischauer’s scholarship on Japan grew to emphasize the role of the United States in the Meiji era more and more as the United States’ occupation of Japan progressed in the period after World War II (221-225). The enormous influence of these scholars led to an emphasis on Western power in China and Japan even among scholars who argue with many of their points.

What I found even more interesting were Davidann’s reflections on how the current historical moment influenced his own scholarship. He opens the book with a vignette about wandering through the Beijing airport, noting its “immense size, efficiency and luxury,” and then comments on the “high efficiency transportation networks (much more efficient than the United States)” in East Asian countries (1). Having lived in Shanghai from September 2017 to January 2018, I can add to this list the advances in China in moving to a cashless economy, with the ability to use a phone for all payments more developed than is currently the case in the United States, even when buying from street vendors. Of course, even in Shanghai and Beijing, one does not have to go far from the gleaming centers of the cities to find areas that do not exemplify ‘modernity’ as it is described in this opening, and in China there is a strong urban/rural divide. Nonetheless, Davidann’s question of “how on earth Westerners could claim East Asian modernity as their invention” (1) must occur to many Americans who visit East Asian countries. Later in the book, he quotes Charles Beard’s statement in his 1933 Presidential address to the American Historical Association that “each historian who writes history is a product of his age,” pointing out that this statement has “become an object of both praise and ridicule” (157). Regardless of where one stands on this particular statement, it is clear that even when historical data remains the same, historians of different periods will come to this data with questions shaped by the world in which they live.

The book is structured as a series of analyses of specific historical figures, both East Asian and American, who wrestled with issues of ‘modernity.’ Rather than discuss Americans first, and then East Asian interpretation of American ideology, Davidann begins with a chapter on East Asian figures who addressed issues of modernity: the Japanese modernizer Fukuzawa Yukichi, a kind of founding father of modern Japan, the Chinese reformer Liang Qichao and Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat-sen, and the Korean modernist Yun Chi Ho. For all of these figures, Davidann rejects the label of ‘Westernizers’ sometimes given by other scholars (particularly in the case of Fukuzawa), emphasizing instead a synthesis of Confucian scholarship, particularly the thought of

Wang Yang-ming, with ideas coming from the West, as they attempted to build strong nations able to resist Western imperialism (and in the case of Japan, become imperialist themselves). One especially interesting observation is that Fukuzawa explored concepts of ‘cultural relativism’ (without using that label) almost a half century before the anthropologist Franz Boas. This insight influences the next chapter, which opens with a discussion of Boas. While Davidann emphasizes the importance of Boas to the development of ideas of cultural relativism and critiques of theories of racial hierarchy in the West, he has already established that intellectuals in East Asia had been exploring some of these same ideas, thus, as he suggests, complicating the notion that “Americans were the driving force in East Asian modernity” (53).

Davidann takes great care in bringing to life all the people he treats. In all honesty I was at first a bit nonplussed by the vivid and almost invariably complimentary physical descriptions of each historical actor. As I read on, however, I came to see the descriptions as part of a broader project. Davidann is writing for a variety of scholars—Asianists, Americanists, and scholars interested in questions of ‘westernization’ and ‘modernization’ more broadly. In some ways he is like a person hosting a very diverse dinner party, trying to help his varied guests find common ground. Any scholar of not only Japanese, but of Chinese or Korean history, for example, would be very familiar with Fukuzawa Yukichi, as would any Japanese citizen (as Davidann points out, Fukuzawa’s portrait is on Japanese banknotes, 48). Many Americanists, however, need more of an introduction. Conversely, while figures such as Jane Addams and W.E.B. Du Bois loom large in American history, some Asianists might need more background. Because the stories of the different figures are intertwined in this book, it is important that each figure be clear in the minds of his readers.

In this same vein, Davidann makes sure to clarify the different meanings that terms can have in particular cultural contexts. In discussing Charles Beard’s visit to Japan to study urban planning, for example, he explains that in the 1920s ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ meant different things in a Japanese than an American setting. Even a “conservative nationalist” in Japan could support “progressive reform” in the cities, seen as a “liberal” cause in the United States, while “liberal” politicians often supported Japanese empire (116-117). Davidann’s ability to act as kind of a tour guide for scholars venturing into new fields is a valuable component of this book.

Throughout the book, Davidann argues both that Westerners who are thought to have been influential in Asia (most notably the well-known educator John Dewey in China, also historian Charles Beard in Japanese urban planning) were not nearly as important as has been suggested by other scholars, and that East Asian figures who are popularly viewed as Westernizers, not only Fukuzawa and Liang Qichao, but also, for example, Hu Shih, a major figure in the May Fourth movement and Dewey’s interpreter, were in fact synthesizers of East Asian thought. He presents compelling evidence for both arguments. In Dewey’s and Beard’s cases, he can cite their own words which minimized their influence. In the case of East Asian intellectuals, he points to the variety of influences found in their writing. By the end of the book Davidann has built a convincing case for the “limits of Westernization” in East Asian modernity.

There is another argument running throughout the book which I found equally interesting, although it is more difficult to prove. Davidann argues that “ideas flowed in both directions, from the United States to East Asia but also in the opposite direction, from the United States to East Asia” (55). Exploring East Asian influence on American historical figures in particular leads to a fascinating and poignant analysis of Du Bois, who is undoubtedly an important figure in American historical scholarship. His visit to Japan and support for the Japanese empire, however, have not received nearly as much scholarly attention as other aspects of his thought, such as his writings on African-Americans in the United States and his pan-Africanism. Davidann

ties Du Bois's interest in Japan to these better known aspects of his career, providing a clear understanding of why Du Bois would support the Japanese Empire to the point of turning a blind eye to its growing human rights abuses. Yet in other cases, there are only tantalizing hints of influence, such as a brief mention that John Dewey later drew on Confucianism "in an attempt to construct an ideal community" (55). As the main point of the book is to prove the "limits of Westernization" rather than to argue for this reverse influence, it is not surprising that there was not more discussion of these points. It is, however, an interesting question for future scholarship. A particularly interesting question to explore would be how this reverse influence differed from the 'Orientalism' that Davidann references throughout the book.

Finally, *Limits of Westernization* makes valuable companion reading to another recent book, David Hollinger's *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America*.<sup>1</sup> Like Davidann, Hollinger extensively treats both Fairbank and Reischauer, although his purpose is to explore the influence of missionaries on the creation of Chinese and Japanese Studies (this is more straightforward with Reischauer, the son of missionaries.) Hollinger argues that after the First World War, American "mainline" Protestant missionaries became an important force in promoting "multiculturalism" and anti-racist ideas in the United States, suggesting that they were changed by the people they were trying to convert (1-2). Davidann provides a better understanding of complex syntheses of ideas in East Asia that missionaries would have encountered, providing insight into why so many Protestant missionaries became committed to an anti-racist world view while on the mission field.

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<sup>1</sup> David Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

### Review by Cyrus Veaser, Bentley University

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Jon Thares Davidann has given us a welcome, extraordinarily well researched, multinational intellectual history of Asian modernity that will be of interest to historians in a number of fields. To this specialist in U.S. policy toward Latin America, Davidann's painstaking illumination of the Asian intellectuals who theorized modernity, and in particular the lines of filiation and descent among them, is impressive indeed. His goal, stated clearly, is to "unwind Westernization"—the tendency of Europeans and Americans to attribute everything modern in Asia to the influence of the West. Through World War II westerners saw Asian modernity as "fake," a thin, imported crust pasted over a pre-modern core. Davidann's ambitious study challenges us to accept two distinct demystifications of this Eurocentrism: first, that "western and American ideas of modernity played a less substantial role than we have assumed" in the achievement of Asian modernity, and that "East Asian concepts . . . played a more important role in shaping modernity in East Asia" (x).

One striking example of how the Western gaze regularly reassured itself that even the most advanced Eastern societies could not achieve modernity on their own is provided by revered missionary Sydney Gulick, who in 1905 ticked off the negative traits of Oriental civilization: it was autocratic, hierarchical, hostile to women's rights and representative government, and devoted to militarism (8). Gulick essentialized these characteristics as the bone structure of Asian feudalism, yet two decades later those identical traits would appear in *Mein Kampf*, the bible of a new departure in European modernity.

Because my own research areas are distant from Davidann's, my contributions to this roundtable are very much those of an interested outsider. This is a groundbreaking work, and many of the points I raise are attempts to clarify the challenging arguments Davidann sets forth. My questions are likely to have more to do with my own tentative grasp of the internal dynamic of Asian modernity than any faults in the study itself. This is a heartfelt, not a pro forma, disclaimer, as I will now demonstrate.

Perhaps in the spirit of the pragmatists that make up the core group of Americans he examines, Davidann makes do with working definitions rather than engaging in heavily footnoted interrogations of such terms as *orientalist*, *modernist*, *pragmatism*, *progressivism*, and *modernity* itself. Presumably he assumed that the book's myriad concrete examples give meaning to those terms and obviate the need to toil over definitional perfection. The strategy leaves room for genuine confusion, however. In the Western context, there is not much overlap between modernists and modernizers, and the American modernists who are most prominent here are critics of American culture and capitalism, not disciples of modernization. Yet that distinction is at times elided in the narrative, with pacifist reformer Jane Addams and Vietnam War hawk Walter Rostow seeming to inhabit the same category. The modernist versus modernizer question can also be posed about the Asian intellectuals featured here, from the influential Meiji Era intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi to People's Republic founder Mao Zedong.

Given the double-edged project that Davidann sets out for himself, it comes as something of a surprise when he declares that "for all its diversity, modern thought retained a laudable, common framework . . . Modernists developed quite similar ideas in both the East and the West [:] the goals of liberation, progress, scientific rationality, relativism, individualism, civic duty and democracy drove modernists forward" (4). Davidann quickly clarifies that while these common concepts "gave modernists a shared sense of purpose," there were "essential distinctions" between American and East Asian intellectuals. Two of the themes that *Limits of Westernization* explores in detail are the priority given by Asian intellectuals to the notion of "civic virtue,"

which Davidann traces back to the Neo-Confucian Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529); another is the critical correlation between individualism and national independence proposed by Fukuzawa Yukichi (1868-1912). Civic virtue and individualism certainly resonated with American pragmatists, yet did modernists a world apart really share a common framework and vocabulary as they worked out their critiques of the very different states and polities they inhabited?

*The Limits of Westernization* is unabashedly intellectual history, yet it is noteworthy that the author's inspiration for the study came from an encounter with things, not ideas. Stuck for several hours at Beijing's Capital International airport, Davidann drank in the awesome efficiency and luxury around him, "a tremendous display of the distinctive power and dynamism of East Asian modernity." The stunning, recent material progress he witnessed led him to question "how on earth westerners could claim East Asian modernity as their invention, when it is undoubtedly the creation of East Asians themselves" (1). Thus Davidann's study of ideas began not, for example, with an echo of Wang Yang-ming's thought in President Xi Jinping's report to the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, but in the awesome physical modernity of contemporary China.

Given that point of origin, the search for the Asian origins of Asian modernity becomes something like a retroactive correction of Asian intellectual history in order to reframe the material accomplishments of the Asian present. To a significant degree, Davidann's project recapitulates the process that he describes unfolding among Asian intellectuals themselves. "In the pre-war period," he notes, "East Asians plunged into their own history to find indigenous sources for modernity" (16). One Asian intellectual who plunged deeply into the past was Hu Shih (1891-1962), whose 1917 Ph.D. dissertation at Columbia, titled "Development of Logical Method in Ancient China," asked "How can we best assimilate modern civilization in such a manner as to make it congenial and congruous and continuous with the civilization of our own making?" (93-94). Davidann notes approvingly that "Hu understood as a young man that China needed to have a basis for modernity in its own traditions."

That undertaking, for Davidann as much as for Hu Shih, involved retooling Confucian doctrines to provide a basis for the shared goals of modernists: "liberation, progress, scientific rationality, relativism, individualism, civic duty and democracy." Interestingly, Davidann suggests that at times the Asian intellectuals were not even aware of the indigenous origins of their own thought. Thus at the important conference on "Overcoming Modernity," held in Tokyo in 1942, Japanese intellectuals "overstated their Europeanization" since "unwittingly, they were more hybrid modernists" (191). Similarly, Davidann notes that "whether Hu Shi realized or not, Wang Yang-ming, in his emphasis on the connection between knowledge and action, was, in fact, an early pragmatist" (95).

The relationship between ideas and things, modernity and modernization, is not one that Davidann ignores. Violent encounters with the West after 1800 were for East Asians a demystifying collision with both ideas and hard realities. In China and Japan, that encounter with Western power convinced intellectuals of the self-interest and racism that underlay Euro-American pretensions of universality. As a consequence East Asians "deconstructed the universalism of modernity" (244). Yet China and Japan had different starting points in their movement toward modernity that had everything to do with their material conditions. "Chinese intellectuals attempting to engage in reform could not connect with nationalism like Japanese intellectuals because the Chinese nation didn't exist," Davidann states, a puzzling assertion in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion and the 1905 boycott of American products to protest the Chinese Exclusion Act (44-45). Davidann mentions the Boxer Rebellion briefly but not the boycott, the latter of which is widely taken as a

sign that China's public was awakening to national identity and the nation's place in the geopolitical order of the time. The May 4 Movement gets a great deal of attention, in part because educational reformer John Dewey arrived in China on May 1, 1919, but the launch of the Chinese republic is passed over with scant notice. Scholars of Chinese history will have more to say about this timeline of Chinese nationalism.

The modernity of Japan looks more familiar to a historian of U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean: "Like two sides of a coin, Japanese modernity consisted of universal ideas of liberation and progress on one side and on the other side the particularism of Japanese nationalism" (36). The fact that Japanese intellectuals grounded modernity in their country's exceptionalism, justifying the annexation of Manchuria and Korea as necessary to jumpstart modernity there, has many echoes in the rationalizations of U.S. policy toward the Caribbean and Central America. If it is indeed *sui generis*, it is remarkably parallel to Western justifications for taking control of less-developed regions.

So, cutting to the chase, does Davidann succeed in upholding the epiphany he experienced at Beijing airport? Do the antecedents he carefully traces out, from Yang Ming-ling to Fukuzawa Yukichi to Liang Qichao, explain why modernization has come so spectacularly to East Asia but not to all parts of the postcolonial world? As noted above, the intellectual tradition Davidann describes can appear to be more a question of reverse engineering than organic development. Does it matter that, by working backward to build these intellectual antecedents, Davidann, like Fukuzawa and Hu before him, is essentially inventing tradition, retrofitting ideas to things, rather than demonstrating that ideas emerged from evolving facts on the ground? To state the question baldly, is there an essential difference between the genesis of intellectual modernity in the East and West? Is it ultimately convincing that both American and East Asian intellectuals "created modernity," as the book's subtitle states?

One way to answer that question would be to interrogate a single concept, civic virtue, which Davidann says intellectuals East and West both endorsed. In the West, as Joyce Appleby has shown, the idea of republican virtue, "the capacity to put the interests of the whole before one's self-interest," has a very different relationship to modernity than does that concept in the East.<sup>1</sup> In Europe and the United States, the notion of civic virtue lost ground to rival ideas of human nature intruding from the economic realm, by which the desire of ordinary people to better their condition came to be seen as the engine of economic progress and the foundation of democracy. That lineage runs from political economist Bernard Mandeville's celebration of 'private vices' giving 'public benefits'<sup>2</sup> and Adam Smith's possessive individualism to the corporate raider Gordon Gekko's assertion that 'greed is good' in the film *Wall Street*. In the Western case, ideas chased material reality.

The doctrines Davidann describes do not seem to play the same role of explaining, justifying, and thus advancing new sorts of human relations that follow from new material conditions. Appleby notes that Thomas Jefferson's proposition about equality piggy-backed on "a hundred-year old transformation of basic ideas about human nature and social order" which ultimately rested on the belief that "the economy rather than the

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce Appleby, "The Intellectual Underpinnings of American Democracy," *Daedalus* 136:3 (Summer, 2007): 14-23, 15.

<sup>2</sup> From Bernard Mandeville's eighteenth century satire, *The Fable of the Bees: Or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*.

polity serves as the effective organizer of society.”<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx famously described this process less gently when he wrote that the “fettters” of feudal society could not contain the emerging dynamic of capitalism: “They had to burst asunder; they were burst asunder.”<sup>4</sup> Despite the exceptional work Davidann has produced in *The Limits of Westernization*, this hidebound occidental is still not totally convinced that East Asians ‘burst asunder’ their own fetters.

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<sup>3</sup> Appleby, 14, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Co., 1906),

Author's Response by Jon Thares Davidann, Hawai'i Pacific University

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First, a hearty thanks is due. I am deeply grateful to the four reviewers of *The Limits of Westernization* for their keen insights and to Dr. Peter Hoffenberg for introducing the forum. I learned a great deal from them, and I am delighted to be able to respond to their comments. But first a diversion.

I am currently teaching an Honors course called Pacific Worlds, one that is apropos here in Hawai'i at the center of the Pacific Ocean. My students and I have been exploring the concept of the 'Noble Savage.' It is of course worlds away from United States-East Asian relations in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Or is it? The Europeans' romantic, mostly unrealistic view of Pacific Islanders, tinged with no little sense of superiority, a hope for civilization of those peoples balanced by skepticism that it could ever be accomplished, and a certainty that they would soon overtake these natives, dominated western thought. By comparison, in European and American views of late-nineteenth century East Asia, one can find plenty of romantics looking to the 'Orient' as an antidote to the cold wind of industrial life blowing through the West. The western attitude of racial superiority is well-documented in *The Limits of Westernization* as it is in many other books. Orientalists mourned the end of the Orient, just as modernists looked at East Asia and saw nations that must Occidentalize or die.

Historians have relentlessly critiqued these assumptions since the 1960s, and yet, only in the most recent scholarship have they begun to explore what contact with westerners meant for Pacific Islanders. What we now know is that Pacific Islanders were no innocents; as bent on violence and destruction as any human civilization, they excelled the Europeans at mapping and navigation, they were exceedingly bright and knowledgeable about the Pacific Ocean (after all they thrived out in the middle of it for centuries), and Cook and others would not have survived without their help. Europeans and later Americans labored under these false assumptions into the twentieth century, all along the way misunderstanding and underestimating not just Pacific Islanders but also the peoples of the Pacific Rim in East Asia, assuming superiority and modern righteousness. As with Pacific Islanders, historians have begun to pull aside the veil obscuring the assumptions behind westernization in East Asia and to see East Asians more authentically. My hope is that *The Limits of Westernization* contributes to this process.

The reviewers agree that we should study the limits of westernization and highlight the agency of East Asians, with the exception of Cyrus Veese who admits as a non-specialist he might not be fully tuned in to the issues inhabiting East Asian studies. But it must be said that I am especially grateful for his insightful review; much knowledge can be obtained by looking outside one's own specialty, and Veese's unique perspective among the reviewers offers fresh ideas. Beyond support for the book's thesis, the reviews range widely over the landscape of United States-East Asian studies.

Sarah Griffith's review emphasizes the disruption by East Asians of the perceived trajectory of modernity as envisioned by American intellectuals. And yet I think she is a little too hard on them. Charles Beard, John Dewey, William James and many others struggled for modernity in their own spheres, many times with no or little achievement. Their lack of success and influence stemmed not so much from ignorance or arrogance as from the stubborn assumptions deeply imbedded in American thought, which they themselves fought to change. Griffith's review also scans beyond influential intellectuals, wondering about East Asians other than intellectuals. *The Limits of Westernization* focuses on thought leaders and therefore spends little time on second-tier intellectuals or others. This approach has the advantage of answering the question of significance. The influence of these transnational intellectuals abounded. Fukuzawa Yukichi's books were read aloud to



Japanese villagers, Dewey was the most celebrated philosopher of his generation, and Beard's books were best sellers. My hope is that the book will stimulate research on broader societies through the lens created by *The Limits of Westernization*. I think we are at the front edge of this project.

Connie Shemo's effervescent review of *The Limits of Westernization*—I love the metaphor of a banquet with a host, attended by scholars from the various fields the book traverses—grasps the implications of my argument even in the organization of the book's chapters. She notes the dialogic nature of American-East Asian intellectual exchange and ponders the process of "Easternization," the obverse of Westernization. Shemo acknowledges that the focus of the book prevented me from undertaking a deeper study of East Asian influence in the West. Hopefully there is enough evidence in the book to tantalize scholars to undertake more research in this vein. The very thought of it excites me. It should be noted that Shemo's own research has shown that Chinese female staff members at missionary hospitals took control of the institutions in the absence of steady missionary leadership. The limits of westernization were on display in this instance, but we simply did not care to notice until Shemo called our attention to them.<sup>1</sup>

Tomoko Akami's towering review reminds me of the heights one must climb in order to fully see the complex interaction of United States and East Asian intellectuals. Akami is an acute critic (and a long-time collaborator), and her endorsement is highly valued. I do think *The Limits of Westernization* establishes the various trajectories of modernity more clearly than she claims, as other reviewers in this forum point out. On her point that a number of East Asian intellectuals are not mentioned in the book, I can but restate my goal, which was to study major intellectuals whose influence would be relatively easy to establish and who deeply shaped American and East Asian modernities. The book strives for synthesis and makes no claims to cover every intellectual.

Akami's analysis of E.H Norman's impact is most interesting. Norman's book, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State* (1940), first published by the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), was considered authoritative in the World War II period. After the book's publication, he quickly fell out of grace, as did his volume during the postwar Red Scares in the United States and Canada. Accused of Communist connections, Norman committed suicide in Cairo by jumping out of his eighth-floor apartment building. The anti-Communist juggernaut also destroyed the IPR. American academics sought to rehabilitate Norman's reputation in the 1970s-1990s with studies of his life and work. It remains an open question, however, as to how much influence Norman exerted beyond academic historians. In the course of writing *The Limits of Westernization*, I had to disabuse myself of the notion that what academics said or wrote within their communities was automatically worthy of study. This reflexive and isolating sensibility has plagued academic scholarship in recent decades. I took my marching orders from the great narrative historian Charles Beard in deliberately writing *The Limits of Westernization* for as large an audience as possible in order to overcome this insularity.

The other issue of the influence of prewar Japanese Marxists is a complicated one which I do address in the book. Most Marxists sat out the 1930s in jail, arrested for proposing that the imperial institution be eliminated from the Japanese political system. But there was another route to radicalism in Japan, one which was much more successful. Pan-Asianists such as intellectual Kita Ikki blended Marxism into their analysis of

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<sup>1</sup> Connie Shemo, "Her Chinese Attended to Almost Everything": Relationships of Power in the Hackett Medical College for Women, Guangzhou, China, 1901-1915." *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 24:4 (2017), 321-346.

Asians for Asia. Kita Ikki was hounded by the government, his books banned, and eventually he was executed for his efforts. But those who read his works (before they were banned) and others became very influential supporters of Japanese empire as a source of liberation for all Asians. In Kita's vision, absolute control by the Emperor (and the militarists who spoke in his name) would extend to industrial capitalism in Japan. Successful imperial expansion led eventually to the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. At home, the most extreme militarists were arrested and executed (alongside Kita Ikki) after the February 1936 failed coup. Capitalists survived by cooperating with the government and the military, building the tools of the lethal Japanese war machine. The book also spends much space covering Marxists in China, including Li Dazhao, Lu Xun (with Marxist leanings), and Mao Zedong. It should be noted that all of these intellectuals actively adapted Marxism to the Chinese context.

I am in almost complete agreement with Akami on her other point that Japan's "welfare liberalism," as she refers to it—along with thought leaders in Japan—can explain the complex position of these Japanese intellectuals vis-à-vis the Japanese state. These actors have been previously studied by both Akami and myself, in addition to many others, to unlock the mystery of why liberals in prewar Japan seemed to blithely support emperor and empire.<sup>2</sup> But the real puzzle here is why Akami in her review cordons these intellectuals off from modernity. They actively sought modernity; their modern thought, reworked again and again, pursued an alternate liberation, away from the stifling influence of western political hegemony, although one that was in favor of a benign regional Japanese hegemony which would ultimately liberate all of East Asia. They were in favor of social amelioration and political engagement for the Japanese masses, and, during World War II, a few of them condemned the very concept of westernization as slavery. Westerners at the time argued these views demonstrated Japanese modernity was nothing but a façade; it became proof positive that Japan was not modern after all, because it had turned away from westernization. *The Limits of Westernization* recovers these Japanese intellectuals' modernity, despite denials from prewar American experts on East Asia. Akami articulates as well a related point that this position was not unique to Japan. Throughout the world in the 1930s, liberal intellectuals made their peace with national power and trekked over hill and vale to come closer to the state.

In spite of its reticence about *The Limits of Westernization's* thesis, Cyrus Veese's review delights. It is so well-written with superb insights that I am tempted to stop typing, close my computer, and declare it a 'job well-done.' But Veese brings up some crucial issues that deserve a thoughtful response. To Veese's assertion that I am inventing tradition, like Fukuzawa and Chinese intellectual Hu Shih, I am in complete agreement, at least to the extent that all historians are interpreters, not fact-givers. We interrogate the past to see what it can offer us, and do not simply compile and accumulate facts and ideas. But it is also true that I did not intend to write a book about the limits of westernization when I started researching the topic of modernity in United States-East Asian relations. It came to me through the research. I actually resisted it for some time; it was too controversial, it would cause trouble, I would be cast out as a crank.

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<sup>2</sup> See Tomoko Akami. *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States and Japan, and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace* (London: Routledge Press, 2002); Jon Thares Davidann, *Cultural Diplomacy in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Sheldon Garon. *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Jung-Sun N. Han, *An Imperial Path to Modernity: Yoshino Sakuzō and a New Liberal Order in East Asia, 1905-1937*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 346. (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012).

Veesser challenges the notion that East Asians were the authors of their own modern destiny. Instead he proposes that they confronted an intellectual world made material by the overwhelming influence of western industrialization in which it became impossible to construct civic duty outside of the influence of capitalist ideas. This daunting assertion has so much relevance for our politics and culture today that the possibility that Veesser is right makes me shiver with fright. Interestingly, both Japanese and Chinese intellectuals attempted to establish in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a distinction between the rampant materialism of the West and the spiritual emphasis of the East. Other Asians, including the Indian intellectual Rabindranath Tagore, did the same. The distinction proved to be problematic, but it was on the minds of East Asians as they confronted the “dynamic of capitalism” as Veesser (and Karl Marx) described it. There can be no doubt the West exerted a powerful pull. But the West also produced a repugnance and fear that motivated many Asian intellectuals to construct an alternate to westernized modernity. The influence of westernization is undeniable, but it was not as totalizing as we have assumed. For this reason, the book is entitled *The Limits of Westernization*, not ‘The Myth of Westernization’ or some similar name.

When considering the western threat, East Asian intellectuals grappled with their own intellectual traditions. As much as some intellectuals attempted to jettison Confucianism and its variants, its attractions, especially in a world given over to industrial infrastructure and profit margins, became very clear indeed. The exposition of the ethical good and the definition of civic duty in Confucianism allowed East Asians to construct a response and build a nationalist modernity in which capitalists such as Shibusawa Eiichi had a duty to the state and his fellow Japanese, not just to his bottom line. In retirement, Shibusawa supported literally hundreds of charities and gave generously of his time, serving on boards and committees. He committed substantial resources to the rebuilding of Tokyo after the Kanto Earthquake. It did not always work this way; certainly there were selfish capitalists, but the expectation of civic duty was powerful. East Asian thought leaders confronted western capitalism, but their responses helped to shape a distinctive modernity in East Asia. There were also American capitalists who became quite civic-minded. Andrew Carnegie, the ruthless robber baron, build libraries and took up the cause of anti-imperialism in his retirement. It could be that the historian Joyce Appleby sees the divide between acquisitive, self-seeking capitalism and civic duty in terms too stark.

To conclude, I offer a story. I gave a keynote lecture in Istanbul last summer just before the book appeared in print. The audience, composed of local Turkish scholars and graduate students from around the world, responded in a bifurcated manner to the main ideas of *The Limits of Westernization*, which in turn reaffirmed the need for the argument of the book. Several graduate students argued the very word ‘westernization’ should be expunged from the English language. On the other hand, a Turkish scholar stood to rebut this assertion with the argument that westernization was ‘the story’ of Turkish modernity. I stood in between, arguing the term westernization had to stay because the process is an historical reality and at the same time pointing out historians’ exaggeration of its power.