


ARTICLE

J. R. Seeley in Japan, 1880s–1940s

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Abstract

This article explores how the late nineteenth-century British historian J. R. Seeley was ‘used’ in Japan. The focal points are three translations of his *The expansion of England*, published in 1899, 1918, and 1942. By placing each translation in context, I attempt to clarify the ideological moves made by those who produced the translations. In the context of the first translation, Seeley was a historian who offered a vision of Japan’s future. In the second context, however, he became a lens through which present-day British policy could be understood. In the third context, he became an unintentional detractor of Britain’s past colonial policies in India. Through a comparative examination of these three translations, this article uncovers both the ‘potential’ of Seeley’s imperial history, which anglophone reception of his work had not exhausted, and the ‘creative’ aspect of translation, thus contributing to intellectual history on both the local and global levels.

I

Translation and ‘modernization’ were inseparable in Meiji Japan (1868–1912).¹ A dazzling cornucopia of Western books on a wide range of subjects, from history to science and technology, were quickly translated into Japanese. As early as 1883, faced with ‘so vast a number of translations as to be counted by thousands’, Yano Fumio felt it necessary to write a book serving as a guide to the existing translations.² Translated works continued to proliferate; no one dared to (or simply could not) repeat Yano’s feat at the end of the Meiji era. Great works, including

¹ Katō Shūichi, ‘Meiji shoki no hon’yaku: Naze, nani o, ikani yakushita ka’ (‘Translation in the early Meiji era: why, what, and how’), in *Nihon kindai shisō taikēi ix: hon’yaku no shisō (Japanese modern ideas series ix: ideas of translation)* (Tokyo, 1991), p. 342. In referring to Japanese authors, this article follows the convention of placing the last name before the first name, except when the authors have chosen the reverse. Owing to spatial constraints, it was necessary to omit the original Japanese scripts. For the convenience of those who read Japanese, a list of original spellings of the books, articles, and names mentioned in this article can be found at <https://independent.academia.edu/%E6%8B%93%E4%B9%9F%E5%8F%A4%E7%94%B0>.

² Yano Fumio, ‘Yakusho dokuhō’ (‘An instruction for reading translations’), in *Nihon kindai shisō taikēi ix*, p. 281.

Mill's *On liberty* and Rousseau's *The social contract*, were translated repeatedly. Among the books translated several times was John Robert Seeley's celebrated work *The expansion of England*. Its Japanese version appeared three times, in 1899, 1918, and 1942.³ Today, in Japanese literature, Seeley is rarely mentioned except in history books, but in earlier times his name appeared on various occasions: Itō Hirobumi, the first prime minister of Japan, made a speech in which he quoted Seeley; and the young Hirota Kōki, who became prime minister in 1936, discussed Japan's development by referring to Seeley.⁴

The *Expansion's* translation and publication were not made 'in a fit of absence of mind' (to appropriate Seeley's description of Britain's conquests⁵); rather, they were a conscious act. In this article, I demonstrate how Seeley's view of expansion was employed to justify various political purposes in Japan, focusing on the three translations and their context. As we shall see, Seeley's emphasis was on the inseparability between commerce and war in Britain's expansion. Japanese readers generally accepted this insight, with some notable exceptions, as a secret revealing the British empire's success. However, political messages derived from this same maxim changed with the generations: Seeley moved from being seen as the teacher of successful British expansion to the observer of Britain's past atrocious deeds in the colonies, especially in India.

Martin Dusinberre's 'J. R. Seeley and Japan's Pacific expansion' contributed significantly to revealing the ideological dimensions of Seeley's receptions.⁶ Dusinberre explores how the Japanese intellectual Inagaki Manjirō, who studied history at Cambridge, employed Seeley's *Expansion* to produce his vision of Japan's Pacific expansion. Dusinberre's article, alongside other Japanese works, helps reveal Seeley's profile in Japan. Moreover, he rightly suggests that Inagaki and some of his contemporaries reconfigured Seeley's history of Greater Britain to sketch Japan's future development.

However, Dusinberre's examination is limited to the first translation's discursive context. He assumes that the second translation had the same significance as the first, and makes no exploration of the context of the third, thus leaving a gap for further research on the transformation of ideological meaning across the three renditions.⁷ He reasonably argues that the first translation

³ The bibliographic details of the three translations are as follows: Shirē, *Eikoku bōchō shiron: zenpen*, trans. Sekigushi Ichirō and Toki Kōtarō, published by Nihon Shōgyō sha, Tokyo, 17 July 1899; Shirē, *Eikoku bōchō shiron*, trans. Katō Seishirō, published by Kōbōshi kankō kai, Tokyo, 28 Mar. 1918; Shirī, *Eikoku hatten shiron*, trans. Furuta Tamotsu, published by Daiichi shobō, Tokyo, 20 Oct. 1942.

⁴ Hirose Reiko, *Kokusui shugi sha no kokka nin'shiki to kokka kōsō (Nationalists' view of international affairs and their visions of the state)* (Tokyo, 2004), pp. 335–6; Nakagawa Mirai, *Meiji nihon no kokusui shugi shisō to ajia (Meiji Japan's nationalistic thought and Asia)* (Tokyo, 2016), pp. 249–50.

⁵ J. R. Seeley, *The expansion of England: two courses of lectures* (London, 1914; orig. edn 1883), p. 10.

⁶ Martin Dusinberre, 'J. R. Seeley and Japan's Pacific expansion', *Historical Journal*, 64 (2021), pp. 70–97.

⁷ By using the term 'ideological', I mean the discourse that legitimizes or delegitimizes particular political principles or actions. See Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1978), 1, pp. xii–xiii.

offered a vision of the *future*. However, one can best understand the significance of the translations of Seeley's work when the changing political intentions and 'timeline' of each are traced. Unlike the first translation, the second offered material with which to analyse Britain's *present* state. The third translation provided a picture of the British empire in the *past* – a waning power that was being undermined by a new, emerging empire. The 'timeline' embodied in Seeley's history was successively revised as new translations appeared and as the relationship between Japan and Britain changed. Moreover, in accordance with this change, attention to Seeley in Japan shifted from the first part of the *Expansion* to the second.

In exploring Seeley's changing profile in Japan, I aim to clarify the 'creative' aspects of translations that Leigh Jenco and Jonathan Chappell emphasized in their manifesto of 'history from between' when introducing the *Historical Journal's* special issue. Rejecting traditional one-way 'models of meaning-diffusion', they argued that 'historical translation required continued and dynamic negotiations within and between linguistic, social, and epistemic communities'.⁸ By investigating what ideological meanings each translation of the *Expansion* contained and how they changed, this article will show that acts of translation may have a political dimension and that tracing that dimension constitutes a significant part of both local and global intellectual histories. As we shall see, this single book took on highly different 'meanings' when translated within particular contexts.

The remaining sections contextualize the three versions of the *Expansion* and explicate their ideological aspects. To prevent confusion, however, I note here the limit of my aims. First, I do not provide a comprehensive reception history, but attempt to clarify only some aspects of it with regard to the three translations of Seeley's *Expansion*. Second, I do not explore the translators' struggles with the linguistic and conceptual dimensions, and will therefore provide neither investigation nor comparative analysis of the terms and concepts that the translators employed.

II

John Robert Seeley was a nineteenth-century British historian. Although he began his career as a classical scholar, he became the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge in 1869. As a historian, Seeley had two convictions. First, history must be useful. Professional historians must not be content with merely cultivating their readers. History should link to political science, capable of providing politicians with valid lessons: 'The history of England ought to end with something that might be called a moral.'⁹ Second, British history should adhere to *Das Primat der Außenpolitik*, a perspective that foreign policy, rather than domestic freedom or democracy, is the key factor of national history. Traditional British history exclusively focused on domestic

⁸ Leigh K. Jenco and Jonathan Chappell, 'Introduction: history from between and the global circulations of the past in Asia and Europe, 1600–1950', *Historical Journal*, 64 (2021), pp. 1–16, at p. 6.

⁹ Seeley, *Expansion of England*, p. 1.

politics and parliament, which kept British people ignorant of external expansion processes, as if they obtained half of the world 'in a fit of absence of mind'.¹⁰ Seeley's main aim in the *Expansion* was the elimination of this distortion. The book consisted of two parts, the first of which discussed the expansion of Britain while the second explored the relationship between 'Greater Britain' and India.

The 'lesson' that Seeley drew from his celebrated British history was the maxim that a combination of commerce and war drove British expansion. He dismissed the liberal dream that the spirit of commerce leads to world peace because it contradicted historical facts: 'A good specimen of the *a priori* method of reasoning in politics!'¹¹ This harsh remark echoed Thomas Macaulay's categorical objection to James Mill's '*a priori* method', which was 'altogether unfit for investigations of this kind', despite Seeley's contempt for Macaulay.¹² Mill's relationship to Macaulay paralleled that between Richard Cobden and other free trade theorists and Seeley. An 'eternal truth', Cobden declared, was that 'the more any nation traffics abroad upon free and honest principles, the less it will be in danger of wars'.¹³ Against this, Seeley counterposed the opposite trend in history: throughout the previous two centuries it could be seen that 'trade leads naturally to war, and war fosters trade'.¹⁴

This triad of commerce-war-expansion originated in the age of the 'old colonial system'. Seeley argued that, under this system, a home country regards its colonies merely as 'possessions', targets for exploitation. On the one hand, this view leads a colonial power to see other countries' pursuit of commercial opportunities as an encroachment on its 'property', which in turn generates conflicts and wars. Thus, commerce, war, and expansion are inseparable. On the other hand, since the home country exploits its colonies, a conflict of interest arises between them.¹⁵ This conflict (and religious conflict) made the American people choose independence. Seeley therefore contended that the British should abandon this old, unprofitable vision and instead adopt the new perspective of colonies not as possessions but as extensions of the home country. Britain and those colonies that shared race, religion, and interests – the three crucial bonds of a nation as identified by Seeley – with Britain, such as Australia and Canada, should be brought together into a truly integrated nation ('Greater Britain').¹⁶ Despite his objection to the old colonial system, however, Seeley never abandoned the triad of commerce-war-expansion itself. Rather, it seems to have been the foundation

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹² T. B. Macaulay, 'Mill's essay on government' (1829), in *The miscellaneous writings and speeches of Lord Macaulay* (London, 1871), p. 162. John Kenyon, *The history men: the historical profession in England since the Renaissance* (London, 1983), p. 172.

¹³ Richard Cobden, *The political writings of Richard Cobden* (2 vols., London, 1903), 1, p. 222.

¹⁴ Seeley, *Expansion of England*, p. 128.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 73–9.

¹⁶ Deborah Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the use of history* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 156, 160.

on which he built his proposal of 'Greater Britain', even in the age of the new colonial system.

Seeley's idea of an integrated 'Greater Britain' based on race, religion, and interests resulted in his ambivalent attitude towards India: India did not constitute 'Greater Britain'.¹⁷ This was the main thrust of the *Expansion's* second part. British rule in India brought great commercial benefits to the British empire and to that extent Seeley defended the Anglo-Indian bond. Nevertheless, this tie was not 'organic', and would be loosened in the future.¹⁸ He explicitly stated that British rule in India would end when India awoke to nationality because Britain had established its rule in the absence of a sense of nationality.¹⁹ 'It appears that India was not a political name, but only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa.'²⁰ The *Expansion* may therefore be read as a recommendation to build a more stable and natural 'Greater Britain' before the unnatural Anglo-Indian tie disappeared. Thus, while Seeley may not have been anti-imperialist, he was not a blind imperialist dreaming that 'I would annex the planets if I could.'²¹

Seeley's ambivalent attitude has produced divergent interpretations of the implications of his British history: some derived an anti-imperialist message while others found a fierce defence of imperialism.²² One of his students, G. P. Gooch, observed in 1901 that if Seeley had lived, he would have been called a 'little Englander', insisting that Seeley never suggested adding new countries, including India, to 'Greater Britain'. J. A. Hobson, when arguing against 'unnatural' imperialism, explicitly cited Seeley in defending 'colonialism' as 'a natural overflow of nationality'. Thus, Seeley's view, which emphasizes the organic link between Britain and its colonies, could be employed to reject imperialist expansions.

At the same time, representative imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain praised the *Expansion*, and the book's commercial success probably came from its wide acceptance as a pure celebration of the empire's expansion. In 1940, A. P. Newton deplored the fact that the *Expansion* 'gave the false impression that the British Empire had largely been founded by war and conquest'.²³ This negative legacy is particularly problematic because that false impression 'was unfortunately planted firmly in the public mind, not only in Great Britain but also in foreign countries'. Newton's diagnosis was probably more correct than he imagined. Many of Seeley's Japanese readers took 'war and conquest' as the secret to the British empire's expansion. However, as

¹⁷ Seeley, *Expansion of England*, p. 13; Wormell, *Sir John Seeley*, p. 158.

¹⁸ Duncan Bell, *Reordering the world* (Princeton, NJ, 2016), pp. 291–2.

¹⁹ Seeley, *Expansion of England*, pp. 262–4, 270.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

²¹ W. R. Stead, ed., *The last will and testament of Cecil John Rhodes* (London, 1902), p. 190.

²² For the following description, I am drawing on David J. Worsley, 'Sir John Robert Seeley and his intellectual legacy: religion, imperialism, and nationalism in Victorian and post-Victorian Britain' (PhD thesis, Manchester, 2001), pp. 226–7.

²³ A. P. Newton, *A hundred years of the British empire* (London, 1940), pp. 240–1, cited in Worsley, 'Sir John Robert Seeley', p. 225.

we shall see, the political conclusions they derived from Seeley had not remained constant by the time of Newton's remark.

III

From the late nineteenth century, Japan's modern nation-building coincided with its empire's construction.²⁴ The country's borders rapidly expanded, as did the numbers of emigrants, through, for example, the acquisition of Taiwan and emigration to Brazil. Sidney Xu Lu sees 'Malthusian expansionism' as the driving force behind such expansion through emigration.²⁵ While the larger population was desirable in that it boosted the workforce and national power, rapid population growth was perceived as threatening social stability as a result of the poverty and other social problems that accompanied it. Therefore, many intellectuals encouraged emigration to various regions, sometimes even through armed territorial expansion. To the north, many people from the main province (Honshū) migrated first to Hokkaido and then, especially after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), to the newly acquired South Sakhalin. To the east, people left for Hawai'i, the west coast of the US (until the Immigration Act of 1924 passed, which banned Japanese immigration), and Brazil. To the west, Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910 and even founded the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. Last but not least, to the south, Japan annexed the Ryukyu kingdom in 1879, acquired Taiwan after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–5), became a protectorate of the former German-governed South Sea Islands after the First World War, and attempted to expand its sphere of influence into Southeast Asia in search of resources, which ultimately led to the suicidal war with the US.

Seeley's first readers were perhaps those engaged in empire-building through writing, speech, and practice and those who paid serious attention to Japan's expansion and international relations. Many of Seeley's first-generation readers – many of the intellectuals discussed in this section – were associates of the Oriental Society (Tohō (or Tōbō) Kyōkai) and their close friends. The Oriental Society was founded in 1891 and aimed to 'bring to light the state of affairs in the countries of the Orient, the South Seas, and all the neighbouring countries of our empire, and familiarize the Japanese

²⁴ Japanese imperialism itself is a classic research topic: see, for example, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese colonial empire, 1895–1945* (Princeton, NJ, 1984); W. G. Beasley, *Japanese imperialism 1894–1945* (Oxford, 1987). Recently, however, several excellent works on Japanese expansion have been written from the perspective of settler colonialism. See Shiode Hiroyuki, *Ekkyōsha no seijishi: Ajia taiheiyō ni okeru nihonjin no imin to shokumin* (A political history of cross-border people: Japanese immigration and colonization in the Asia-Pacific) (Nagoya, 2015); Jun Uchida, 'From island nation to oceanic empire: a vision of Japanese expansion from the periphery', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 42 (2016), pp. 57–90; Sidney Xu Lu, *The making of Japanese settler colonialism: Malthusianism and trans-Pacific migration, 1868–1961* (Cambridge, 2019); Eiichiro Azuma, *In search of our frontier: Japanese America and settler colonialism in the construction of Japan's borderless empire* (Oakland, CA, 2019).

²⁵ Lu, *Making of Japanese settler colonialism*, pp. 3–7.

people with their information'.²⁶ The intellectuals who shared this vision did not necessarily hold a unanimous political outlook. However, they must all have concurred with 'Seeley's view', as Gotō Shinpei noted in his *The expansion of Japan*, that 'history is not a pure science but an applied science'.²⁷ As we shall see, Japanese intellectuals, in general, derived a maxim from Seeley: the importance of combining commercial, military, and colonial expansion in the interest of Japan's future development.

This section focuses on the reception of the commercial–military–expansion triad in the period during which the first translation appeared, in 1899. First, however, we should note that not only Seeley's expansionist arguments but also his 'political theology' were well received.²⁸ Soyeda (or Soeda) Juichi, who studied economics at Cambridge University in the late 1880s (Seeley was one of his teachers), detected the importance of 'political theology' in Seeley's vision.²⁹ The *Expansion* and *Ecce homo*, he said, were 'closely related to each other as if one were the other's shadow': for Seeley, religion, morality, and politics were inextricable from one another.³⁰ Soyeda developed this theme in his articles, arguing for the unity of religion to advance Japan's development.³¹ Although religion's role in politics had been fiercely discussed in the Meiji era independently of Seeley, his theory of the unity of religion could contribute to the debate.³²

However, the main thrust of Seeley's reception was the discourse of 'expansion'. Ukita Kazutami, an advocate of 'ethical imperialism' in the early twentieth century, provides valuable insight into how the *Expansion* was read in Japan. Ukita noted in 1905 that his era featured imperialism, making it 'inevitable for self-defence' to 'plant one's own [economic and political] power outside the country'.³³ As a model for this situation, Britain was *not* adequate. It had seized a miraculous opportunity to advance into areas outside Europe when other European nations were not yet interested in these areas, and this opportunity had been lost forever.³⁴ In fact, it was Seeley who brought this sense of resignation to Ukita. He later published the translation of Heinrich von Treitschke's *Politik* and recounted in his preface that the

²⁶ 'Tōhō kyōkai setsuritsu shui' ('The purpose of establishing the Oriental Society'), *Tōhō kyōkai hōkoku*, 1, cited in Asai Sachiko, 'Nissin sensō kaisen zenya no tōhō kyōkai' ('The Oriental Society before the First Sino-Japanese War') (PhD thesis, Aichi Shukutoku, 2013), p. 17.

²⁷ Gotō Shinpei, *Nihon bōchō ron (The expansion of Japan)* (Tokyo, 1916), p. 5.

²⁸ On Seeley's political theology, see Bell, *Reordering the world*, ch. 11.

²⁹ Hirowatari Shirō, *Soyeda Juichi-kun shōden (A short biography of Mr Soyeda Juichi)* (Tokyo, 1924), p. 10.

³⁰ Soyeda Juichi, 'Shīri sensei no seikyo o oshimu' ('Mourning for Professor Seeley'), *Kokka gakkai zasshi (Journal of the Association of Political and Social Sciences)*, 9 (1895), pp. 270–8, at p. 273.

³¹ See Soyeda Juichi, 'Kokka to shūkyō' ('The state and religion'), *Kokka gakkai zasshi* 8 (1894), pp. 13–24, at p. 17; Soyeda Juichi, 'Kokka no shōchō seisui' ('The rise and fall of the state'), *Kokka gakkai zasshi* 13 (1899), pp. 20–34, at p. 25.

³² Watanabe Hiroshi, *Meiji kakumei, sei, bunmei: seiji sisou shi no boken (The Meiji revolution, gender, and civilization)* (Tokyo, 2021), ch. 8.

³³ Ukita Kazutami, 'Teikoku shugi no seisaku to dōtoku' ('The policy and morality of imperialism') (1905), in *Rinri teikoku shugi (Ethical imperialism)* (Tokyo, 1909), p. 129.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 129–31.

Expansion made him realize the impossibility of similar expansion and turn to Treitschke.³⁵

Ukita's sense of resignation indicates that those who (ostensibly) advocated expansion through commerce and trade by employing Seeley's arguments either implicitly assumed a military-territorial expansion or read the *Expansion* idiosyncratically. The liberal anti-war journalist Kiyosawa Kiyoshi (1890–1945) is worth mentioning as representing this second type of reader. In his diary entry for 17 November 1943, he praised Seeley's insight that 'the expansion of England took place because it was not built upon war'.³⁶ If this were Kiyosawa's argument, it would not be surprising. However, it was unusual for a reader to find in Seeley the message that Britain expanded independently of wars. Indeed, many Japanese readers discerned the inseparability of commerce, war, and expansion in the *Expansion*.

The Seeleyan triad of commerce-war-expansion was accepted by two outstanding journalists, Tokutomi Sohō (1861–1957) and Yamaji Aizan (1865–1917). Although both men had been advocates of the Manchester School, by the outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894), Sohō inclined increasingly toward military expansionism.³⁷ He later wrote, quoting Seeley, that commerce without military power was simply impossible.³⁸ Seeley's thesis on commerce and war likewise urged Yamaji to reconsider his prior views. He had previously insisted on 'Little Japanism' or anti-expansionism.³⁹ In the late 1890s, however, he perceived a new phase of Western imperialism. Reading Seeley against this new international background, Aizan began to view the role of states more approvingly and concluded that they should promote the mercantile system rather than free trade. 'D. Seeley also said', he noted, 'that when the very existence of the state is at stake, individual liberty could be sacrificed to consolidate it.'⁴⁰

However, it was Inagaki Manjirō (1861–1908) who most clearly inherited Seeley's legacy. Inagaki studied at Cambridge and attended Seeley's lectures; he received his bachelor's degree in 1889.⁴¹ After graduating from university, he read about Japan's negotiations for treaty revision in a newspaper. This

³⁵ Ukita Kazutami, 'Yakusha jo' ('Translator's preface'), in Toraiichike, *Gunkoku shugi seiji gaku* [Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politik*] (Tokyo, 1920), p. 4.

³⁶ Eugene Sowiak, ed. and trans., and Tamie Kamiyama, trans., *A diary of darkness: the wartime diary of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi* (Princeton, NJ, 1999), p. 108. This entry is cited in Dusinberre, 'J. R. Seeley', p. 96.

³⁷ Yonehara Ken, *Kindai nihon no aidentiyiti to seiji* (*Identity and politics in modern Japan*) (Kyoto, 2002), p. 173. Christopher L. Hill argues that Sohō never 'converted' from internationalism to nationalism, though he does not deny that Sohō 'renounced laissez-faire commonerism for social intervention and imperialism' (Christopher L. Hill, *National history and the world of nations: capital, state, and the rhetoric of history in Japan, France, and the United States* (Durham, NC, 2008), pp. 171–2).

³⁸ Tokutomi Sohō, 'Jimu ikkagen' ('My opinion for contemporary issues') (1913–14), in Uete Michiari, ed., *Tokutomi Sohō shū* (Tokyo, 1974), p. 290.

³⁹ Yushi Ito, *Yamaji Aizan and his time: nationalism and debating Japanese history* (Folkestone, 2007), p. 123; Sakamoto Takao, *Yamaji Aizan* (Tokyo, 1988), p. 131.

⁴⁰ Yamaji Aizan, 'Yo ga iwayuru teikoku shugi' ('My idea of so-called imperialism') (1903), in Oka Toshirō, ed., *Min'yūsha shisō bungaku sōsho: Yamaji Aizan shū (2)* (*The ideas and literature of Min'yūsha series: the collected works of Yamaji Aizan (2)*) (Tokyo, 1985), p. 325.

⁴¹ Nakagawa, *Meiji nihon*, pp. 41–4.

opportunity led him to consider Japan's diplomacy. He recognized that 'the Pacific Ocean in the future must be the centre of competition between European powers' and decided to 'investigate this topic'.⁴² The result of that research was his English work *Japan and the Pacific, and a Japanese view of the Eastern question*, completed under Seeley's extensive personal tutelage – one hour of supervision every evening, starting at 6 o'clock, for several months.⁴³

After publishing *Japan and the Pacific*, Inagaki prepared its Japanese version, and it was soon published (titled *Eastern policy: part 1*), with extensive additions.⁴⁴ What is striking throughout the book is the close connection between the commercial and military discussions. While Inagaki predicted that commerce and industry would prosper greatly and that Asia and the Pacific region 'would become the world's great marketplace, and Japan would indeed be the centre of it', he also believed that commercial prosperity necessarily accompanied military competition.⁴⁵ His view appeared most clearly when emphasizing the necessity of taking possession of Taiwan.⁴⁶ If Japan acquired Taiwan, Inagaki observed, it could hold the crucial casting vote militarily in the Anglo-Russian confrontation and commercially in the Anglo-American confrontation. True to Seeley, Inagaki regarded commerce and the military as inseparable.

Inagaki also employed some of Seeley's arguments to legitimize Japan's expansion into other territories: the Spanish-administered Philippines and mainland China. The first was the 'old colonial system' that regarded colonies as objects of deprivation. Inagaki insisted that running colonies according to this view betrayed the duty of civilization, since colonizers kept them ineluctably underdeveloped under this system. Therefore, it was legitimate for Japan to rule over colonies like the Philippines to civilize them.⁴⁷

The second argument was Seeley's description of India not as a unity but as a 'geographical expression'. Inagaki noted that the relationship between Britain and India was similar to that of Japan and China, as China remained merely a 'geographical expression'. According to Seeley, Britain had so far successfully ruled India because the latter had not yet achieved national unity. Although Inagaki avoided deriving a direct message from his comparison, he clearly implied that Japan could establish its rule in China, just as Britain had done in India.⁴⁸

⁴² Inagaki Manjirō, 'Senshi Shirē no gakuha oyobi sono shincho eikoku gaikō seiryakushi o yomu' ('The late Professor Seeley and his school, and reading his new book *The growth of British policy*'), *Waseda gakuhō*, 1 (1897), pp. 12–32, at p. 15.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16–18.

⁴⁴ Inagaki Manjirō, *Tōhōsaku dai ippen (Eastern policy: part 1)* (Tokyo, 1891).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 90–1, 125.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁴⁷ Inagaki Manjirō, *Nan'yo chōsei dan (A talk on the long march to the South Sea)* (Tokyo, 1893), pp. 11–19, 31.

⁴⁸ Inagaki Manjirō, 'Senshi Shirē no gakuha oyobi sono shincho eikoku gaikō seiryakushi o yomu (shōzen)' ('The late Professor Seeley and his school and reading his new book *The growth of British policy* (part 2)'), *Waseda gakuhō*, 2 (1897), pp. 15–31, at pp. 26–7.

It was Inagaki who wrote the 'preface' to the first translation of the *Expansion* in 1899 (only the first part was published).⁴⁹ The exact reason and circumstances for its publication were unclear. However, since Inagaki was asked to write the preface, we may assume that this translation was intended to disseminate the expansionist argument described above. Inagaki's preface explained the *Expansion's* significance: this book defeated the 'little England' movement, which had been in full swing in Britain before it appeared. The laissez-faire doctrine was gaining strength; democracy and liberalism were spreading. These ideas led the British people to belittle the colonies. The *Expansion*, however, irretrievably shattered this trend.⁵⁰ Without Seeley, Britain would have lost all its colonies and been 'an isolated island'. When Inagaki wrote this passage, he must have pondered not only the fate that Britain had escaped but also Japan's future. He asserted that 'our Japanese empire' had much to 'learn from British history, in particular, from the history of British expansion'.⁵¹

Thus, Seeley became a teacher of Japan's future expansion. 'Professor Seeley's depiction of the development of the Anglo-Saxon race', Aizan wrote, 'is immediately of value in teaching about the future of the Japanese race.' He continued, that '*The Japanese people need ... their own Professor Seeley.*'⁵² Soyeda mourned Seeley's passing in early 1895, declaring that the Japanese people 'needed a monumental work of *The expansion of Japan*'.⁵³ In another essay, he encouraged Japanese people to abandon their old 'inward' habits and pursue outward expansion: 'From now on, if a nation does not expand, it must shrink; once it shrinks, it never expands.'⁵⁴

Not everyone, though, favoured a simple expansionist policy. In fact, Sekiguchi Ichirō, one of the translators of the *Expansion*, soberly pointed out a few years later that, although the Japanese people were in a vortex of 'expansionism fever', they should consider the balance between expansionism and economic limits.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, even he saw the slogan and ideology of 'Greater Japan' as indispensable: 'Greater Japan is the ideal of Japan's future, the ultimate consequence which its history is to reach.'⁵⁶ Even if he were to use this slogan as mere rhetoric to postpone Japan's expansion policy into the distant future, he felt compelled to present the expansion as Japan's

⁴⁹ Shirē, *Eikoku bōchō shiron: zenpen*, trans. Sekigushi Ichirō and Toki Kōtarō (1899, Tokyo). The term *zenpen* in the title of this first translation means 'the first half' or 'part 1', implying that the publisher and translators originally intended to publish the *Expansion's* second part. However, the second part does not appear to have ever been published.

⁵⁰ Inagaki Manjirō, 'Eikoku bōchō shiron jo' ('Preface to *The expansion of England*'), in Shirē, *Eikoku bōchō shiron*, unpaginated [pp. 1–3]. The copy of this translation in the National Diet Library (accessible online) lacks Inagaki's preface. I used the copy in Keio University Library.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, unpaginated [p. 4].

⁵² Yamaji Aizan, 'Shosai no seiji ron' ('Politics in studies') (1903), in *Yamaji Aizan shū* (2), p. 340, emphasis in original, translated in Dusinberre, 'J. R. Seeley', p. 96.

⁵³ Soyeda, 'Shirī sensei', p. 271.

⁵⁴ Soyeda, 'Kokka no shōchō seisui', p. 34.

⁵⁵ Sekiguchi Ichirō, *Risō no daigishi* (*The ideal representatives*) (Tokyo, 1902), pp. 17–19.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

telos and express it using the Seeleyan language of ‘Greater Japan’. Indeed, before the Asia-Pacific War, any principled opposition to expansionism remained a minority report.

IV

Yoshino Sakuzō, a renowned liberal public intellectual, recounted that, after the Russo-Japanese War, the public became committed to developing domestic democracy and were fascinated by the expansion of their empire.⁵⁷ In the early 1910s, a great debate arose about whether or not the constitution of the empire of Japan, which stipulated the emperor as ‘the head of the empire’, was compatible with party democracy, resulting in the prevailing view that it would not impede party democracy. Yoshino himself promoted this trend, enhancing his reputation as a champion of democracy. After the First World War, the first full-fledged party cabinet was formed, and universal male suffrage was established in 1925. At the same time, as Yoshino said, this was an era of imperialism. As a result of the Russo-Japanese War, Russia ceded South Sakhalin and recognized Japan’s hegemony in Korea. Japan then formally annexed Korea in 1910. When the First World War broke out, Japan took part in the war under the pretext of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, seizing German territory in Asia. During the war, it forced the Yuan Shikai regime in China to accept unabashed imperialist demands, including the appointment of Japanese advisers, generating distrust in Britain and the US.

Against this background, in 1918, the second translation of *The expansion of England* was published as a part of ‘the rise and fall history series’. This series contained a wide range of books by European writers, including Leopold von Ranke, Heinrich von Treitschke, Vasily Klyuchevsky, and Niccolò Machiavelli. Its coordinator, Matsumiya Shun’ichiro, seemingly consulted various intellectuals in Japan to decide what to translate.⁵⁸ Among those to whom he expressed his gratitude for helping him in the selection and editing process was Soejima Michimasa (1871–1948).⁵⁹ Like Inagaki, Soejima had studied at Cambridge and attended Seeley’s private seminars. Given that he wrote the preface to the second translation of the *Expansion*, it was probably he who advised Matsumiya to add Seeley to the line-up.

This section investigates the discrepancy in reception between the *Expansion*’s first and second translations, focusing on those engaged in the second translation, particularly Soejima. This second translation, like other works in ‘the rise and fall history series’, aimed to provide an ‘infinite national lesson’.⁶⁰ The derived lessons from Seeley were almost identical to those

⁵⁷ Yoshino Sakuzō, ‘Min’pon shugi kosui jidai no kaisko’ (‘Reminiscences of the time of the propagation of democracy’), in Matsuo Takayoshi, ed., *Kindai nihon shisō taikai 17: Yoshino Sakuzō shū* (Modern Japanese ideas series 17: the collected works of Yoshino Sakuzō) (Tokyo, 1976), p. 434.

⁵⁸ Murakawa Kengo, ‘Jo’ (‘Preface’), in Reoporudo Fon Ranke, *Sekai shiron shinkō roku*, trans. Murakawa Kengo (Leopold von Ranke, *Über die Epochen der neueren Geschichte*) (Tokyo, 1918), p. 9.

⁵⁹ Matsumiya Shun’ichiro, ‘Kobōshi kankō no shusi’ (‘The aim of publishing “the rise and fall history series”’). This is attached to the last few pages of every book in this series.

⁶⁰ *Asahi Shimbun Morning Edition* (Tokyo), 16 Sept. 1917, p. 1.

presented in the previous section; the crucial difference, however, was the imagined temporal distance between Britain and Japan. In the first translation, Seeley's British empire symbolized a far-off future. By the time of the second translation, some twenty-five years had passed since Japan had acquired Taiwan and nearly ten years since its formal annexation of Korea. Moreover, the Japanese had seized Kiautschou (Jiaozhou) Bay, a German-leased territory in China, in the early part of the First World War. The country was building a colonial empire. As a result, Seeley's version of the British empire appeared to be much closer to the 'present'.

In the second translation context, Seeley continued to be a statist. According to the translator, Katō Seishirō, Seeley underscored national expansion and development rather than the advancement of democracy in his narrative of the British empire.⁶¹ Soejima's preface to the translation put greater emphasis on this point. He observed that, unlike the German empire's deep immersion in militarism, Britain was a federal, democratic empire.⁶² Nevertheless, Greater Britain was not a pacifist empire. Seeley's readers would soon realize that 'the development of liberty, rights, and constitutionalism should all be discussed on the stability of the state'.⁶³ Even if Britain defeated the German empire, which Soejima hoped would occur, armaments would continue to be indispensable. Furthermore, after the ongoing European war, 'the world continues to be an incessant battlefield of great military and commercial competition' and, for the time being, 'disarmament is only a delusion'.⁶⁴ The Seeleyan inseparability of commerce and war, which we have seen in previous sections, thus reappears here.

In other words, Seeley's *Expansion* showed a new form of national identity against liberal individualism. Soejima recounted a seminar at Seeley's residence where Seeley examined the concept of liberty, analysing the arguments of Shelley, Coleridge, and Mill. According to Soejima, he merrily said, 'Liberty and politics are the exact opposite. If a nation came to hold absolute freedom, there would be no room for government or state.' Soejima noted that this statement was a serious warning to those who disseminated 'a wrong liberalism and constitutionalism' – the synonym for 'selfishness'.⁶⁵ At the end of the preface, he warned that the 'decadence of social and personal morality' might hinder further national development.

Although there was continuity between the interpretations in the first and second translations, a significant difference also existed: the 'timeline' that the *Expansion* symbolized. The *Expansion*'s first rendition represented a guide to future development. Those engaged in the second translation did not completely abandon this view. Indeed, the translator Katō said that 'the present

⁶¹ Kato Seishirō, 'Hanrei' ('A general note'), in Shirē, *Eikoku bōchō shiron*, trans. Kato Seishirō (Seeley, *The expansion of England*) (Tokyo, 1918), p. 1.

⁶² Soejima Michimasa, 'Jo' ('Preface'), in *ibid.*, p. 6. On this preface, see also Cho Seunggu, *Chōsen minzoku undō to soejima michimasa (The Korean national independent movement and Soejima Michimasa)* (Tokyo, 1998), pp. 21–5.

⁶³ Soejima, 'Jo', p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

situation of our Japanese empire ... is very much like the situation of the British empire at the time of its expansion'. At the same time, he wrote that 'it is necessary to read this book to appreciate the present and future of Britain and its international relations with other great powers'.⁶⁶ Thus, the *Expansion* became indispensable in understanding Britain's 'present' state. Soejima shared this interpretation. Seeley was a 'historical interpreter' of imperialism, just as Joseph Chamberlain was its 'political interpreter'. Britain's victory over Germany would fully realize their imperial ideal.⁶⁷

Seeley provided that generation's Japanese readers with an indispensable resource for understanding current British policy. Onozuka Kiheiji (1871–1944), a pioneer of political science in Japan and a professor at Tokyo Imperial University, was an exemplary case. He seems to have read Seeley during his university years.⁶⁸ He included Seeley's *Introduction to political science* in the bibliography in his *A grammar of politics*, and a student's notebook indicates his frequent reference to Seeley in lectures.⁶⁹ In 1915, during the First World War, Onozuka published the essay 'Imperialism in Britain and Seeley's theory', in which he examined Seeley more closely than Soejima did, revealing the principles behind the then current British policy.⁷⁰ For Onozuka, the relationship between Seeley and British imperialism paralleled that between Treitschke and German militarism. Onozuka continued to believe that much could be learned from Britain. Nevertheless, he did not rely on Seeley to envisage Japan's future or to recommend an expansionist policy.

The *Expansion* began to appear as a resource in analyses of Britain's present rather than visions of Japan's future perhaps because of pride in Japan's new-found status as a major power in international politics and no longer an imitator of Britain. This confidence is particularly evident in Soejima: Japan had become 'the harmonizer of the Eastern and Western civilizations, the defender of peace in the East, and the leader of the Eastern nations'.⁷¹ For him, Britain represented Western civilization, and Japan represented Eastern civilization. Such confidence emerged from Japan's colonial rule in Taiwan and Korea, which he thought his country executed perfectly and successfully.

Therefore, Soejima chose to 'advise' the British on their colonial policy rather than to encourage Japanese to learn colonial policy from Seeley. If Britain was to become 'a world-Venice', as Seeley described it, there remained

⁶⁶ Katō, 'Hanrei', p. 1.

⁶⁷ Soejima, 'Jo', p. 6.

⁶⁸ Nanbara Shigeru, Rōyama Masamichi, and Yabe Teiji, *Onozuka Kiheiji: hito to gakumon (Onozuka Kiheiji: his life and work)* (Tokyo, 1963), p. 48.

⁶⁹ Onozuka Kiheiji, *Seijigaku taikō (A grammar of politics)* (2 vols., Tokyo, 1903), 1, unpaginated [last few pages]. Yanaihara Tadao, 'Jūkō nōto: Onozuka hakase seijigaku' ('A note of lectures: Dr Onozuka's political science'), in Tadao Yanaihara's colonial materials collection, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12000/38520>, pp. 9, 10, 17, 33, 42 (PDF page number) (accessed 24 Sept. 2022).

⁷⁰ Onozuka Kiheiji, 'Eikoku ni okeru teikoku shugi to Shiri no gakusetsu' ('Imperialism in Britain and Seeley's theory') (1915), in *Ōshū gendai seiji oyobi gakusetsu ronshū (Collected papers on contemporary European politics and theory)* (Tokyo, 1916), pp. 250–1.

⁷¹ Soejima, 'Jo', p. 18.

two crucial problems to be solved.⁷² The first related to Ireland: a continuation of Britain's Irish policy would betray the ideal of democracy, for which Britain fought the First World War. The second issue concerned India. The British government had mismanaged India's education and public health policy. Instead of improving the condition of the Indian people, Britain employed its notorious 'divide-and-rule' policy and military oppression, a permanent stain in British colonial history. However, despite these shortcomings, Soejima asserted that British rule *per se* had benefited the Indian people. He insisted not on the abolition of that rule but on its improvement for the sake of Britain and the harmony of 'the Eastern and Western civilizations'.⁷³ His advice may have been timely for, since the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, many British intellectuals had begun to see Japan as an alternative mode of civilization of admirable patriotism, collective mind, and 'efficiency'.⁷⁴

The first translation of the *Expansion* offered a roadmap to future advancement. The second conveyed a different message: it explained Britain's 'present'. Although Dusinger argues that the 'desire to read Britain's past into Japan's future may also explain why the [second] translation was reissued in 1931, another pregnant moment in Japanese expansionism', this assessment involves a double oversimplification.⁷⁵ First, as we have seen, when the second translation appeared in 1918, the *Expansion* did not simply represent Japan's future. Second, as we will see in the next section, the new circumstances in the 1930s attached another meaning to this book: as an internal informer of the British empire's 'past' deeds. As a result, the *Expansion's* third translation emerged as part of a delegitimizing ideology undermining British rule in Asia, and thereby buttressing the legitimacy of the devastating war.

V

The third and, thus far, final translation of the *Expansion* appeared in 1942, during the Second World War. As the British-Japanese relationship deteriorated throughout the 1930s, interpretations of Seeley underwent a profound change. This section delineates the ideological shift that surrounded – and was reflected in – the third translation. Seeley no longer represented a leading light for Japan's future. Instead, he became a historian of Britain's 'past' and its imperialism against Asia, including India. It does not follow, however, that a new generation of readers came to interpret Seeley differently. He remained a narrator of British expansion driven by commerce and war. Rather, precisely because the conventional interpretation had not changed, Seeley assumed a newly divergent ideological role, exposing Britain's 'illegal' imperialism.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 12. This expression appears in Seeley, *Expansion of England*, p. 334.

⁷³ Soejima, 'Jo', pp. 12–17.

⁷⁴ Chika Tonooka, 'Reverse emulation and the cult of Japanese efficiency in Edwardian Britain', *Historical Journal*, 60 (2017), pp. 95–119.

⁷⁵ Dusinger, 'J. R. Seeley', p. 95.

Behind this ideological transition lay a substantial change in the political situation. In the mid-1920s, the Japanese government basically pursued a liberal foreign policy. In the late 1920s and 1930s, particularly after the Manchurian Incident, this foreign policy gradually but irrecoverably lost its appeal, and checks and controls on an expansionist policy sequentially ceased to function. In the context of this new diplomatic situation, Asianism or Pan-Asianism, with such slogans as ‘Construction of Asia’ or ‘Asian Alliance Leader’, rose to the forefront.⁷⁶ The Asian Monroe doctrine, anti-British sentiments, and various Asianisms were already pronounced at the turn of the twentieth century. However, Asianism was not yet the mainstream government policy. It could have created unnecessary tension with Western countries, particularly Britain, which dominated India as a part of its empire. After the Manchurian Incident, however, the movement toward Asianism became prominent not merely in private associations but also in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁷⁷ Thus, Asianism became part of the ideological foundation of the prolonged wars.

In the context of Pan-Asianism, perceptions of Britain had to change. Britain became an ‘old’ empire that had illegitimately dominated Asia. The alleged purpose of Japan’s current military expansion was to overthrow Britain’s illegal domination, thus liberating Asian countries. Using a fatalistic tone, some writers propagated ‘the Greater East Asia War’. A bellicose pamphlet, *Defeating the British*, argued that world history had been ‘the history of Britain’s plunder’. Japan, in redressing Britain’s wrongs, would therefore create a new world: ‘The new world history is nothing but the other name for Japanese history.’⁷⁸ At the beginning of *The history of British colonial policy*, we are told that ‘the nineteenth century conceivably lasted until 1940 and the true twentieth century ... is finally about to open’.⁷⁹ The fall of the British empire had brought the long nineteenth century to a close; the rise of the Japanese empire raised the curtain of the short twentieth century.

Accusations of Britain’s behaviour in India accompanied the propagation of this allegedly historic Japanese mission. As ‘the jewel in the crown’, India constituted a crucial part of the British empire in Asia and, as such, symbolized Western imperialism.⁸⁰ Therefore, denunciations of the injustice in India delegitimized British imperialism, boosting Japan’s sacred ‘mission’ to defeat it. The wrongdoings against the people in India perpetrated by the British were showcased: they had caused mass starvation, implemented an inadequate

⁷⁶ Eri Hotta, *Pan-Asianism and Japan’s war, 1931–1945* (New York, NY, 2007), pp. 24, 105–6, 231; Saga Takashi, *Ajia shugi zenshi* (A whole history of Asianism) (Tokyo, 2020), p. 192.

⁷⁷ Yukawa Hayato, ‘Higashi ajia o meguru nichibei kankei: 1930 Nendai no gaimushō ni yoru tōa shin chitsujo no mosaku’ (‘US–Japan relations in the 1930s: the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the pursuit of a new world order in East Asia’) (PhD thesis, Kobe, 2005), ch. 1.

⁷⁸ Matsui, Ken’ichi, *Datō eikoku* (*Defeating the British*) (Hamamatsu, 1939), preface.

⁷⁹ Kageyama Tetsuo, *Eikoku shokumin seisaku shi* (*The history of British colonial policy*), ed. Kokusai Keizai Gakkai (Tokyo, 1940), p. 1.

⁸⁰ Matsuura Masataka, ‘*Dai tōa sensō wa naze okita no ka: han-ajia shugi no seiji keizai shi* (Why did the ‘Greater East Asia War’ break out? A political economic history of Pan-Asianism) (Nagoya, 2010), pp. 236–7.

public health system, and promoted a divide-and-rule policy, the result of which was the animosity between Hindus and Muslims.⁸¹ A pugnacious book, *Britain destroying India: Britain's invasion of India and its sins*, exhibited 'Britain's ravenous greed and heinous brutality in India'.⁸²

British historians were often exploited to demonstrate effectively the suffering that India's people had incurred. The author of *A prisoner in Asia: a history of the British invasion of India* willingly admitted that the source of its descriptions was P. E. Roberts's *History of British India* because he wanted to 'make a British person tell the truth about the British exploitation of India'.⁸³ *The history of British colonial policy* included a section entitled 'Britain described by British historians' that wielded the work of eminent historians such as W. E. H. Lecky and J. R. Green to expose British foreign and colonial policy. Its crucial implication was that Britain 'has no right to condemn ... the policies of other countries'.⁸⁴

Among the British historians conscripted into this ideological battle was J. R. Seeley, often cited as an informant on British expansion's covert intention: the pursuit of economic interest. The *Expansion* powerfully testified to Britain's fight not to liberate oppressed peoples but to strengthen its economy.⁸⁵ The surprisingly robust Tokutomi Sohō then reiterated this interpretation. He continued to advocate for the 'Greater Japan', as he had done almost half a century previously, but he now embellished it with the ideal of 'Imperial Japan'. Seeley had been one of Sohō's inspirations, but in this new context he became the historian who revealed the origin of British empire, which emerged from its avaricious desire for 'nothing but profit'.⁸⁶ The triad of commerce-war-expansion thus reappears again but now used to condemn Britain's foreign policy. Seeley, once a guide for Japan's future expansion, became an unintentional accuser of Britain's past.

Significantly, anti-British writers found in the second part of the *Expansion* a horrendous history of the British expansion in general and its rule in India. One denounced the British rule in India, appealing to Seeley's depiction of the history of British imperialism. Britain's rule in India represented its enduring oppression and exploitation, and Seeley was a storyteller of its abhorrent domination.⁸⁷ Another writer sarcastically noted that the British empire could have maintained and justified that domination because, as Seeley wrote, the

⁸¹ Tsuruhashi Monten, *Rōkai eikoku o abaku (Exposing cunning Britain)* (Tokyo, 1938), p. 13; Momo Minosuke, *Indo wa uttaeru (India complains)* (Tokyo, 1941), pp. 26–34.

⁸² Nihon seinen gaikō kyōkai, ed., *Indo o horobosu eikoku: igirisu no indo shihai to sono tsumi (Britain destroying India: Britain's invasion of India and its sins)* (Tokyo, 1939), p. 3.

⁸³ Kawabata Fukuichi, *Ajia no shūjin: eikoku no indo shinryaku shi (A prisoner in Asia: a history of the British invasion of India)* (Tokyo, 1941), unpaginated [page between 'Introduction' and table of contents].

⁸⁴ Kageyama, *Eikoku shokumin*, pp. 300–1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁸⁶ Tokutomi, Iichiro (Sohō), *Kōkoku hisshō ron (The unfailling victory of our empire)* (Tokyo, 1944), p. 107.

⁸⁷ Shinjō Fūtei, *'Kokoro no kuni' nihon to 'mono no kuni' eikoku! (The 'spiritualist' Japan and the 'materialist' Britain!)* (Kyoto, 1938), pp. 274, 283–4.

Indian people had no national consciousness. However, he continued, 'a national consciousness of India, through the indefatigable endeavour of Gandhi and others, has become much stronger'. Hence, 'Seeley's predictions and hopes have been largely betrayed.'⁸⁸ In 1942, a digest of several chapters in the second part of the *Expansion* (on British rule in India) was published under the revealing title 'The conquest of India'. Its translator (or editor) observed: 'Considering the present state of India, and the present state of the British empire on the verge of its downfall, I feel deeply moved' by the second part of the *Expansion*.⁸⁹

All the aforementioned elements were integrated in the works of Ōkawa Shūmei (1886–1957), a leading Asianist intellectual later charged with crimes against peace after the Second World War.⁹⁰ Ōkawa was a hardcore anti-British writer deeply shocked and enraged by Henry Cotton's depiction of Britain's conduct in *New India: or India in transition*, which he read a few years after graduating from university.⁹¹ Thereafter, he ceaselessly attacked British foreign policy. Ōkawa's indictment of British expansionism often deployed historical works as ideological weapons, and many historical writings were available for this purpose – for example, the 'England ohne Maske' series that emerged in Germany. Ōkawa, however, declared that his criticism of British policy relied on histories written by the British and not 'by the Indians or the Germans, who were hostile to Britain', claiming that British-authored history would convey the reality of the British rule more effectively and objectively.⁹² He especially recommended Macaulay's essay on Lord Clive, James Mill's *History of British India*, William McCullagh Torrens's *Empire in Asia*, and Evans Bell's *Annexation of the Punjab*, claiming that these works demonstrated that British imperialism and its divide-and-rule policy had been tyrannical and inhumane.⁹³

Alongside these works, Seeley's history underpinned Ōkawa's denunciation of Britain. He was one of the earliest writers to invent the new view of Seeley as an unconscious accuser of British rule in India. As early as 1922, he noted that Seeley had remarked, in defence of British expansion, that the empire was the natural product of the nation's growth. But in so doing, Seeley unintentionally 'confessed, with perfect candour, that the establishment of its

⁸⁸ Ishida Kenji, *Kindai eikoku no shodanmen (Aspects of modern Britain)* (Kyoto, 1944), pp. 389, 390. This author seems to refer to the last few pages of ch. 4, 'How we govern India', in the *Expansion of England*, where Seeley argued, 'if, by any process, the population should be welded into a single nationality ... [then at] that moment all hope is at an end ... of preserving our Empire' (pp. 270–1).

⁸⁹ J. R. Shirē, 'Indo seihuku ron' ('The conquest of India'), anonymous translation, *Naiqai keizai gaikan (Survey of Domestic and Foreign Economy)*, 138 (1942), pp. 51–6, at p. 51.

⁹⁰ For a general introduction to Ōkawa, see Ōtsuka Takehiro, *Ōkawa Shūmei: aru fukko kakushin shugisha no shisō (Ōkawa Shūmei: a conservative innovationist's vision)* (Tokyo, 2009; orig. edn 1995), p. 106.

⁹¹ Christopher W. A. Szpilman, 'The dream of one Asia: Okawa Shūmei and Japanese pan-Asianism', in H. Fuess, ed., *The Japanese empire in East Asia and its post-war legacy* (Munich, 1998), pp. 52–3.

⁹² Ōkawa Shūmei, *Beiei tōa shinryaku shi (A history of Anglo-American aggression in East Asia)* (Tokyo, 1942), p. 123.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

dominance was the result of self-interest without any principles or reflections'.⁹⁴ He restated this interpretation in 1941 in his *The history of modern European colonization*.⁹⁵ Elsewhere, Ōkawa argued that what Seeley had feared most was India's awakening of national consciousness – misgivings that were now turning into reality through Gandhi's political and spiritual movements.⁹⁶ This statement, made in 1924, reappeared in *The builders of Asia* in 1941.⁹⁷ Furthermore, *A history of Anglo-American aggression in East Asia* cited the *Expansion* as 'one of the must-read books to understand the political tendency of modern Britain'. Ōkawa added, 'you must know your enemy to defeat it'.⁹⁹

Against this background, the third translation of the *Expansion* was published in 1942 by the publisher Daiichi Shobō. The translator of this new version, the journalist Furuta Tamotsu, was no less willing to disseminate its ideological message. He endeavoured to make Seeley's narrative more accessible to readers by adding maps of the British colonies. This step also helped readers visualize the contemporaneous situation, where 'the first step has been already taken toward the complete disintegration of this vast colonial territory'. A key place was India. According to Furuta, India had suffered from domination by white people, but this situation was now changing with Japan's march.¹⁰⁰ Seeley, though defending the British rule in India, nevertheless 'indicated the shortcomings of British colonial policy by referring to historical facts'.¹⁰¹ When Furuta finished 'the translator's preface', he was in Nanking, away from Japan, 'looking at the remarkable progress of our empire with astonishment, and every time I received the new victory news from the southern sea, I am reminded that my humble effort devoted to the translation was not in vain'.¹⁰²

⁹⁴ Ōkawa Shūmei, *Fukkō ajia no shomondai (Issues of reconstructed Asia)* (Tokyo, 1922), p. 12.

⁹⁵ Ōkawa Shūmei, *Kinsei yōroppa shokumin shi (The history of modern European colonization)*, in Ōkawa Shūmei zenshū kankōkai, ed., *Ōkawa Shūmei zenshū (Collected works of Ōkawa Shūmei)* (7 vols., Tokyo, 1961–74), v, pp. 349–50.

⁹⁶ Ōkawa Shūmei, *Fukkō indo no seishinteki konkyo (The moral basis of resurrected India)* (Tokyo, 1924), pp. 10–11, 66.

⁹⁷ Ōkawa Shūmei, *Ajia kensetsu sha (The builders of Asia)* (Tokyo, 1941), p. 281.

⁹⁸ Ōkawa, *Beiei tōa*, p. 128.

⁹⁹ Ōkawa Shūmei, 'Siri no eikoku hatten shiron to sono jidai haikei' ('Seeley's *Expansion of England* and its historical background'), in *Ōkawa Shūmei zenshū*, iv, pp. 532, 531. This essay is classified under the category of his Gyōchisha period (1925–32), but as the editors did not indicate where and when the essay first appeared, the details are unclear.

¹⁰⁰ Furuta Tamotsu, 'Yakujo' ('Translator's preface'), in Shirī, *Eikoku hatten shiron*, trans. Furuta Tamotsu (Tokyo, 1942), p. 1. Only Furuta's version translates the term 'expansion' as *hatten* (development) rather than *bochō* (expansion). The reason for this change is unclear. However, as far as I can find, Ōkawa was the only writer who, before Furuta, referred to the title of Seeley's book as 'hatten'. Therefore, the choice of this term, or the translation itself, may have been influenced by Ōkawa's works or Furuta's interaction with him. Dusinger discusses the distinction between *kakuchō* (expansion) and *bochō* (Dusinger, 'J. R. Seeley', pp. 92–3).

¹⁰¹ Furuta, 'Yakujo', pp. 3–4.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

The fact that Daiichi Shobō published this new translation further illustrates its political intentions. The publishing house's president was the editor Hasegawa Minokichi, a renowned connoisseur of literature, who published poems, novels, and plays. However, after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45), he declared his active support for the war and began putting out anti-British and anti-American writings, such as digests of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Ōkawa's aforementioned works, *The builder of Asia* and *A history of Anglo-American aggression*.¹⁰³ An advertisement for these two books appeared on the last page of the third translation of the *Expansion*. Nothing could more clearly indicate the context in which the publisher wanted readers to interpret Seeley's new translation than the very fact that *this* publisher released it at *this* time with *this* advertisement. It epitomized a war effort to delegitimize the British empire.

Here, the transition of ideological meaning of Seeley's translations becomes apparent: the *Expansion* had become a narrative of a waning empire's past. A newspaper advertisement for the new translation described it as 'a stinging exposure of the true nature of the British empire, now on the edge of collapse'.¹⁰⁴ In one of the last works to promote Japan's colonial policy, the author, Nagao Sakurō, 'constantly drew on as well as criticized Seeley's *Expansion of England*' to reveal the British empire's serious flaw. 'Whatever argument Seeley made for the British colonial empire', he vehemently insisted, 'the empire must have contained fundamental weak points ... We should not allow our Japanese colonial empire to follow in its wake.'¹⁰⁵ Thus, the British empire, alongside Seeley's description, became outdated and eventually symbolized illegal rule in Asia.

VI

By exploring the three translations of the *Expansion* and their respective contexts, I have clarified each one's ideological meaning. When the first translation appeared at the end of the nineteenth century, Seeley was an eminent teacher who showed Japan a direction towards the future. The second translation came out in 1918. By this time, the *Expansion* had ceased to be a direct guide to the future; instead it offered clues that revealed Britain's 'present' policy behind the devastating war in Europe. However, it was not until the third translation, published in 1942, that a far clearer shift in meaning occurred. At that point, Seeley emerged as an unconscious accuser who exposed Britain's dishonourable past. Hence, the *Expansion* exemplifies a single book whose multiple translations deliver substantially distinct meanings.

¹⁰³ Hasegawa Ikuo, *Bishu to kawabukuro: Daiichi Shobō Hasegawa Minokichi (Good wine and a leather bag: Daiichi Shobō Hasegawa Minokichi)* (Tokyo, 2006), pp. 333–6.

¹⁰⁴ *Asahi Shimbun Morning Edition* (Tokyo), 26 Oct. 1942, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Nagao Sakurō, *Nihon shokumin seisaku no dōkō (Trends in Japanese colonial policy)* (Tokyo, 1944), pp. 4, 455–6. On Nagao's argument, see also Mark R. Peattie, 'Japanese attitudes toward colonialism, 1895–1945', in Myers and Peattie, eds., *Japanese colonial empire*, pp. 124–5.

This interpretative transition illustrates the *Expansion's* 'potential'. Firstly, we can describe it as a shift of attention from the book's first part to its second. In the first part, Seeley discusses Britain's history and colonies such as Australia and Canada. In contrast, the second part treats India as a conceptually different territory. When the first translation appeared, Japanese intellectuals, with notable exceptions such as Inagaki, were generally interested in Britain's development, rather than its domination of India. Soejima's preface to the second translation exhibited some interest in India but not in Seeley's description of India itself. However, as we have seen, the third translation highlighted the book's second part; one reviewer observed that 'the second part about the British empire in India contains many practical and academic insights that, even today, represent bad examples'.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the distinction between the book's first and second parts was useful, albeit in a different way from Seeley's original intention, for wartime ideological purposes.

Secondly, we can portray this interpretative transition as shifting from the *Expansion* as a resource for legitimization to one of delegitimization. As we have seen, the first generation wielded Seeley's work to legitimize Japan's future expansion, while later generations cited him to delegitimize the British empire during the Asia-Pacific War. The 'Asianist' principle often appears as a legitimizing principle of that war, yet delegitimization often accompanies legitimization.¹⁰⁷ The author of *The battle against Britain and the emancipation of the oppressed peoples* wrote that, although Japan and Britain adopted similar foreign policies in Asia, 'Britain did so for the purpose of exploitation, whereas Japan did so for the liberation of nations and the creation of a new world culture under the ideal of the Imperial Way'.¹⁰⁸ Here, the author legitimizes Japan's policy by citing its 'liberation of nations', and delegitimizes Britain's by underscoring its 'exploitation'. This article has delineated how Seeley was caught in and conscripted into this delegitimization process.

The discussion in this article has highlighted the necessity of including translations of historical writings in the pursuit of ideological battles. Anti-Western writers in Japan were not necessarily ignorant of Western humanities and social sciences. Indeed, some were loyal to Ōkawa's declaration that 'you must know our enemy to defeat it'. Therefore, they invoked various Western philosophers, including Hobbes and Bentham, as representatives of Western materialism, confirming 'a reverse orientalist notion of a morally superior East and a materialist West'.¹⁰⁹ This article, however, has exposed the possibility that ideologues can conscript not just philosophers but also historians such as Seeley for the same purpose. As John Pocock has brilliantly

¹⁰⁶ Nakamura Hidekatsu, 'Eikoku hatten Shiron, Shīri gencho, Furuta Tamotsu yaku' ('Seeley, *The expansion of England*, translated by Furuta Tamotsu'), *Rekishigaku kenkyū* (*Journal of Historical Studies*), 106 (1943), p. 70.

¹⁰⁷ Matsuura, 'Dai tōa' sensō, p. 5; Hotta, *Pan-Asianism*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁸ Ogura Toraji, *Taiei sen to hi-appaku minzoku no kaihō* (*The battle against Britain and the emancipation of the oppressed peoples*) (Tokyo, 1939), p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ Cemil Aydin, *The politics of anti-Westernism in Asia: visions of world order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian thought* (New York, NY, 2007), p. 196.

demonstrated, in many contexts, history writing constitutes a political act.¹¹⁰ Seeley's trajectory in Japan further demonstrates that not only writing but also *translating* history can constitute a political act that warrants attention from the perspectives of both local and global intellectual histories.

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¹¹⁰ J. G. A. Pocock, *Political thought and history: essays on theory and method* (Cambridge, 2009), ch. 9.

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