Summary of Symposium,
Traversing The Socio-Economic Frontiers of The Empire of Japan
And The Pacific World"
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During Japan's Edo period, the nation was under a policy often referred to as *sakoku* (isolationist foreign policy). However, the reality of this isolation was more complex than a simple complete closure. Initially, restrictions on the arrival of foreign ships were relatively flexible. While these regulations became stricter in the latter half of the Edo period, they often saw periods of relaxation, indicating a less rigid application than commonly perceived.

In stark contrast, the prohibition on Japanese citizens traveling overseas remained consistently strict throughout the entire period. This stringent control over outbound travel was likely driven by the authorities' deep concern about the potential for Christian missionary activities in areas beyond their direct surveillance and management. The fear was that Japanese individuals abroad might convert to Christianity and then return to propagate the religion, which was seen as a threat to the established social and political order.

The mid-nineteenth century saw Japan's opening to the world, leading to a rapid expansion of cultural exchange. However, even then, the primary focus remained on the monumental decision to accept the arrival of foreigners. While the lifting of the ban on Japanese citizens traveling overseas was an associated development, it did not carry the same dramatic policy shift as the influx of foreigners into Japan. Consequently, societal perceptions were slow to change, and for many Japanese, overseas travel remained a distant and unfamiliar concept.

Stimulated by the rapid increase in overseas exchange, Japan quickly developed into a nation-state. Societies undergoing such a swift nationalistic transformation often develop a heightened sense of ethnic consciousness. This sharpened awareness, in turn, decisively shaped two major diplomatic issues during the Meiji era.

One of these was the treaty revision. Japanese society became increasingly intolerant of the privileged status held by foreigners residing in Japan, which led to sustained negotiations aimed at revising the so-called unequal treaties. This was a direct manifestation of the burgeoning national pride and the desire for sovereign equality.

The second major issue was emigration. The inability to tolerate the persecution of their compatriots overseas became a powerful driver of foreign policy. The emerging nation-state felt a strong responsibility to protect its citizens, even those who had ventured beyond its borders.

Indeed, one might point to another significant foreign policy challenge: Japan's relationship with China and Korea, often referred to as its continental policy. Understanding Meiji diplomacy indeed requires grasping these three major issues: treaty revision, emigration, and continental policy. However, the continental policy is particularly challenging to comprehend.

This third foreign policy issue, the continental policy, subdivides into three further, intricately intertwined aspects.

Firstly, there was the aspect of adjusting or leveraging treaty relations with China and Korea to improve Japan's treaty relations with Western powers. This involved exerting pressure on its Asian neighbors, essentially making continental policy a practical issue in the first primary diplomatic concern: treaty revision.

Secondly, pressure was exerted to protect Japanese citizens who had settled in China and Korea. This means that continental policy also served as a practical solution to the second major diplomatic issue: emigration.

It is only with the third aspect that security concerns and territorial ambitions emerge. Surprisingly, if this had been the sole driver, Japan might have been able to exercise restraint or postpone action longer than it did. Therefore, it is crucial to have a deep and broad understanding of the first diplomatic issue, treaty revision, and the second, emigration, to truly grasp the complexities of Japan's continental policy.

Regarding the characteristics of treaty revision, there was almost no dissent within Japan against the desire to amend the existing treaties. This widespread consensus meant that if

the government failed to achieve satisfactory results, it faced an outpouring of criticism. Consequently, the government found itself caught between the demands of foreign powers and the expectations of its own populace, often becoming a tool in political power struggles.

Similar dynamics were at play with emigration, though with crucial differences. Given the relatively short history of Japanese overseas travel, the development of large-scale emigration was slow. Debates arose questioning whether true Japanese identity didn't lie in contributing to their homeland within Japan's borders. Furthermore, self-responsibility arguments emerged, suggesting that those who chose to emigrate were irresponsible vagrants or that their misconduct abroad was the very source of emigration-related problems. Even when a brief boom in emigration occurred, it quickly lost momentum if conditions in the destination countries were unfavorable, often leaving a few dedicated volunteers and the local Japanese emigrants themselves in a state of confusion and constant struggle.

As a sense of Japanese national identity rapidly grew stronger, there was a clear sentiment that compatriots suffering abroad could not be left to suffer. However, simultaneously, there was also a desire to avoid such emigration problems altogether. This often led to a complicity between the government and private entities. Unlike the treaty revision issue, which eventually concluded, the emigration problem persisted. Even today, Japanese society as a whole must grapple with shaping the historical memory of overseas Japanese communities and determining its stance towards them.

The insights gained from the symposium will now be presented.

Rephrasing the overview of modern Japanese diplomacy discussed earlier into the question of "What did Japan aim to achieve?" allows us to frame it as follows:

1. Did Japan seek to regain its sovereignty? (Treaty Revision)
2. Did it aim to alleviate population pressure by sending people overseas? (Emigration)
3. Did it intend to dominate the regions where its people settled? (Continental Policy)

To adequately answer these questions, it is necessary to undertake an analysis that bridges

various fields, including diplomatic history, emigration history, and economic history.

In conclusion, it can be argued that treaty revision held a preeminent position.

Even after the treaty revision was achieved at the end of the nineteenth century, its underlying structure was continuously supported by the financial system, as suggested by Maeda's presentation. The pursuit of an equal relationship with Western powers, which the treaty revision aimed for, manifested in the operations of the Yokohama Specie Bank (YSB) as an international finance institution working with developed nations. Its branches in London and New York handled these activities. Financial services for emigrants, on the other hand, were managed by branches on the West Coast of the United States and other locations. As a consequence of the continental policy, the bank also conducted business operations in China and Korea.

Thus, the bank's activities encompassed the following domains: international finance, emigration, and imperialism.

In the areas of emigration and imperialism, the YSB tended to absorb capital from local Japanese communities rather than investing in them, channeling this capital back into international finance. This practice, Maeda argues, led to significant dissatisfaction among emigrants.

It's important to note, however, that the observations above represent general tendencies. Kimura's paper provides detailed insights about Korea, Brazil, and Manchuria, highlighting significant regional diversity. These findings are crucial because they help explain the trajectory in which Japan, having lost equal footing with receiving nations for its emigrants, ultimately pushed forward with colonization, internalizing both nationalistic and imperialistic narratives.

Next, this symposium raised important insights regarding what Japanese individuals aimed to achieve. As already mentioned, Japan did not succeed in establishing a clear-cut emigration policy, limiting our ability to explain the lives of individual emigrants solely through the lens of Japanese politics and diplomacy. Here, one should probably refrain from overly simplistic bridging of academic disciplines to address this question.

The trajectory of Jiro (pseudonym), an emigrant from Mikata County, Fukui Prefecture,

as depicted in Yanagida's presentation, initially appears to prioritize his life in the destination country (the United States). His remittances to his elder brother, Taro (pseudonym), were limited. However, as can be understood from Jiro's communication expressing his desire to build a house for his own family on Taro's land and have his household, Jiro had not forgotten his family in his hometown. Instead, it suggests that being abroad clarified for him the precise scope of the family he truly needed to protect.

According to the records of remittances from the US West Coast in 1938, analyzed in Tsukuda's presentation, emigrants sent money for various purposes: comfort money (imonkin) for the Japanese army and Red Cross, magazine subscriptions, insurance premiums, and education for Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) in Japan. The remittance records also demonstrate that the economic network extended to China and Korea as a result of the Japanese diaspora. This reveals that emigrants' interest and sense of responsibility towards various matters extend beyond their immediate destination.

Shepherd's presentation, focusing on individuals from Fukuoka Prefecture who settled in Busan, includes comparisons with similar cases in Britain and China. Given that Japanese prefectures were somewhat artificial entities, having undergone repeated mergers and divisions since the Meiji Restoration, the very fact that such comparisons can be made is striking. This suggests that the local identity of Japanese individuals within Japan may have been strengthened by their experiences abroad.

Studying emigration sheds light on the perspectives of minorities, while also holding the potential to provide a high-resolution understanding of what the average Japanese person sought to achieve.

Even within this insightful symposium, some questions remain open, awaiting future clarification. If a deep chasm exists, making it challenging to bridge Japan's national emigration policy with the individual lives of emigrants, then what kind of feedback did emigrants provide to their home country? This is a particularly challenging question, as raised in Maeda's presentation.

Did their voices remain unheard, falling silent in the home country? Were there emigrants who worried about the deteriorating foreign relations of their homeland? Did emigrants' dissatisfaction with their home country become an undercurrent, eventually flowing back to Japan and encouraging its aggressive policy toward the outside world? Or did the

difficult circumstances of emigrants, in turn, become a pretext for Japan to interfere in other nations?

In this regard, Shiode's report offered significant insights. While ethnic Chinese generally understood only Chinese, educated Japanese individuals understood both Japanese and Classical Chinese. This meant that Japan, as an emerging nation, had a greater command of languages. Furthermore, by relentlessly suppressing foreign-language newspapers that were protected by extraterritoriality, Japan enjoyed a faster circulation of information in East Asia than others. This might have been advantageous for Japan. However, it might also have accelerated feedback from emigration destinations, thereby increasing the burden on diplomacy.

Further examination of feedback from pre-war emigrants is essential. If we delay, the history of the post-war period will take precedence. Indeed, Azuma's paper has already presented an example of how post-war Japan and the United States, in an effort to facilitate Japan's rearmament, reversed the negative image of emigrants and lauded the military contributions of Nisei.