

C H A P T E R 2

Comparative Knowledge

Colonial Internationalism and the Education of 'Natives'

From Transimperial Trajectories: Colonialism and Anticolonialism across the British and Japanese Empires

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■ Roadmap for today

Opening

The puzzle of converging critiques

Why a Briton, a Frenchman, and a Japanese theorist all condemn 'English education' in India

Part I

Comparability & the analogical politics of comparison

From Kirkwood and Gotō to Tōgō's anti-assimilationism — Japan finds its own comparative voice

Part II

Colonial internationalism & its transimperial trajectory

Le Bon, Chailley, Cromer, Lugard — and the Institut Colonial International

Part III

The challenge of Pan-Asianist epistemology

Moriya, Mitsukawa, Ōkawa — exceptionalism rises after 1919

Close

The 'imperial cloud' and what it means

Colonial knowledge as a shared, modular, transimperial reservoir

■ 1835 — Macaulay's 'Minute on Education'

The seed of a transimperial anxiety

“A class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”

— Thomas Babington Macaulay, Minute on Education, 1835

A class engineered for empire

- Calcutta, Madras, Bombay universities founded in 1857 to mass-produce 'brown Englishmen' for the civil service.
- By the 1880s, the same class is recast as the 'Baboo' — discontented, unemployable, dangerous.
- Successive reforms tried to curb 'English education' — but the anxiety leaked far beyond India.

■ 1910 — Three voices, one critique

Why does a Briton, a Frenchman, and a Japanese theorist agree?

Lord Cromer

British (Egypt)

1910 — *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*

“European-language fluency in subject races 'in no way tends to inspire political sympathy.’”

Joseph Chailley

French (ICI co-founder)

1910 — *Administrative Problems of British India*

“The English-educated Indian 'lacked a past, and hereditary or acquired experience.’”

Minoru Tōgō

Japanese (Taiwan)

1911–1925 — citing both

“How poisonous it is to transplant the superior culture and institutions of a foreign nation into its colony.”

■ Minoru Tōgō (1881–1959)

A scholar-administrator at the centre of the chapter

Profile

- Senior civil servant, Governor-General's Office of Taiwan, 1906–1924
- Educated at Sapporo Agricultural College — research leave in Berlin, 1909–1912, under Max Sering on German internal colonialism
- Author of two 1911 manifestos: 'A Theory of Anti-assimilation' & 'On the Principle of Coexistence in Colonial Policy'
- Magnum opus: *Colonial Policy and Ethnopsychology* (1925)

Why he merits our attention

- Density of foreign citations — ±160 European-language works listed in his 1925 bibliography, none Japanese.
- Pronounced comparatism: he is publicly evangelising the value of comparative method to a Japanese audience.
- Anti-assimilationist throughout — Taiwanese should not be 'made into Japanese' through education.
- He invokes Lord Cromer, Chailley, Lugard, Le Bon — and reads Britain's experience in India as the cautionary tale.

■ The chapter's claim

Colonial knowledge had a transimperial dimension — and Japan was inside it

Late-emerging empires did not invent comparative knowledge — they ‘downloaded’ it.

A t w o - p a r t a r g u m e n t

Japan drew on others

Japanese theorists tapped a standardised, modular reservoir of comparative knowledge built across British, French, German, and other empires.

...and others drew on each other

This was not a one-way flow: even Britain, the most established power, was shaped by French and other comparative observations.

Part I.

Comparability and the Analogical Politics of Comparison

From hired foreigners to home-grown comparatists — how Japan came to make its own comparative case, and how Tōgō built a rhetoric of comparability with British India.

■ 1895 — Britain as Japan's first model

William Kirkwood and the Crown Colony template for Taiwan

ADOPTED: Kirkwood (British)

- Taiwan as British-style 'Crown Colony'
- Extensive legal autonomy, Governor-General rule
- No constitutional rights for local inhabitants
- Mild despotism rather than assimilation
- *Realised in the 31 March 1896 Law (Law No. 63)*

REJECTED: Revon (French)

- Taiwan as a Japanese prefecture, French-Algerian style
- Bring Taiwan under ordinary Japanese law
- Move toward parliamentary control in time
- *Pure assimilationist logic*

■ Towards epistemic self-sufficiency

Shinpei Gotō — learning from Britain without depending on Britons

“From the beginning, I have had nothing against the gathering and use of knowledge from both abroad and at home.” — Shinpei Gotō, 1915

1

**Dismiss the foreign
adviser**

Force Myers out; downgrade Kirkwood's vision as 'superficial and shallow'

2

**Translate the foreign
book**

Commission C. P. Lucas's Historical Geography of the British Colonies for Japanese officials

3

**Comparative study as
policy**

By the mid-1900s, Japanese officials produce their own comparative surveys (Egypt → Korea)

■ Tōgō's anti-assimilationist programme

Coexistence-cum-segregation as the proper logic of empire

The doctrine

Coexistence, not assimilation

- Two peoples belong to different social orders.
- Rule rests on mutually-isolated social spaces.
- Different career paths, different political expectations.
- Education is the centrepiece of this logic.

British India as ANTI-MODEL

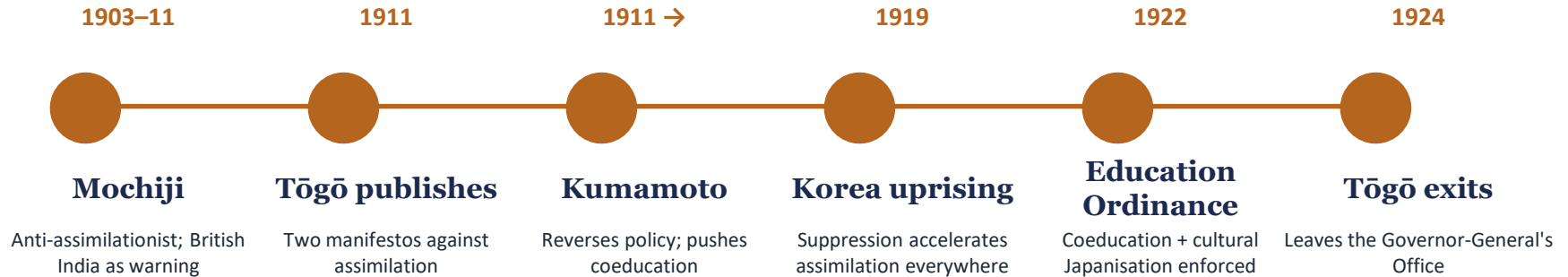
“Macaulayian education has effected a moral destruction of Indians... how poisonous it is to transplant the superior culture and institutions of a foreign nation into its colony.”

— Tōgō, 'A Theory of Anti-assimilation', 1911

Britain is no longer the model — its mistake is the lesson.

■ A policy reversal — and a personal defeat

Mochiji → Kumamoto: Taiwan slides from segregation to assimilation



“Tōgō was struggling against the assimilationist trend, using the example of British India as a warning.”

■ Building a rhetoric of comparability

Step 1 — Even white-on-white empires produced the same problem

Germany & the Poles

Bismarck's education policy

Tōgō studied this in Berlin (1909–12). Despite both being white and Christian, German policy failed to integrate the Poles — and unified them against the Germans. Racial similarity didn't help.

Britain & the Irish

Anglicisation despite shared race

Tōgō later extends the argument: Britain could not anglicise the Irish either. Ireland would still claim independence. Racial difference was never the decisive variable.

■ From race to ethnopsychology

Step 2 — Adopting (and willfully misreading) Gustave Le Bon

R e j e c t

**Race as the
explanatory variable**

Race (colour) is too
Eurocentric — and
contradicts Japan's claim to
be a fit non-white coloniser.

B o r r o w

**Le Bon's collective
psychology**

Mental constitution forms
over centuries. Education
cannot rewrite it.

R e f r a m e

**Minzoku as Japanese
'people'**

Folk + nation + ethnos. A
determinism without
explicit racial vocabulary.

R e s u l t

Ethnopsychology

A universal law: every
coloniser faces the same
dilemma. Japan is no
exception.

Part II.

Colonial Internationalism and Its Transimperial Trajectory

*Tracing the Baboo across empires — French anti-assimilationism,
British indirect rule, and the Brussels think-tank that wove them
together.*

■ 1886 — Le Bon's 'Modern India'

The Baboo is invented as a universal type

Gustave Le Bon

French physician, polymath, founder of mass psychology

Key works

'Modern India' (1886)

Les civilisations de l'Inde (1887)

Psychologie des foules (1895)

"There is not in history any example which can show so clearly the danger of giving a people an education which is badly adapted to its mental constitution."

'Modern India', 1886

"If European instruction becomes general in our Mediterranean colony, the unanimous cry of the natives will be 'Algeria for the Arabs!' — just as 'India for the Hindus!' is the password of all the natives of India who have received an English education."

International Colonial Conference, Paris, 1889

■ The 'Baboo' travels — Harmand and Chailley

From French anti-assimilationism to a standardised diagnosis

Jules Harmand

French consul in Calcutta; later associationist theorist

- Attended Le Bon's 1889 speech in Paris.
- 1892: preface to the French translation of Strachey's India.
- 1910: Domination et Colonisation — opposes French higher ed. in Vietnam, citing the Bengal Baboos.

Joseph Chailley

Co-founder of the Institut Colonial International (ICI)

- Wrote *L'Inde britannique* (1910) with British administrative cooperation.
- Translated the same year as Administrative Problems of British India.
- Cited directly by Mochiji and Tōgō — the Baboo reaches the Japanese Empire.

■ British ‘indirect rule’ as the new orthodoxy

Cromer, Lyall, Strachey, Lugard — and Tōgō's favourite Briton

Lord Cromer

Egypt 1883–1906

Kept education modest; haunted by 'Macaulay's children'.

Alfred Lyall

India administrator

Theorised the 'village community' tradition.

John Strachey

India; author

Adopted Harmand's anti-Baboo language into the 2nd ed. of India.

Frederick Lugard

British Africa

Made indirect rule public doctrine in *The Dual Mandate* (1922).

“The more I have lived in the East the more have I been convinced that... India furnishes rather an object lesson in what should be avoided.” — Cromer to Strachey, 1906

■ Anglo-French entanglement — the ICI

Brussels, 1894 — the think-tank that wove the threads together



Florian Wagner, *Colonial Internationalism and the Governmentality of Empire, 1893–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) : colonial internationalism is a Western story. My extension: read Japanese theorists as participants without ICI membership cards.

Part III.

The Challenge of Pan-Asianist Epistemology

Why Tōgō grew anxious in the 1920s — Moriya, Mitsukawa, Ōkawa, and the exceptionalist politics of comparison that would eventually dominate.

■ 1919 — the turning point

Korea's independence movement reshapes the field

1919

nationwide Korean independence movement

T o k y o ' s r e s p o n s e :

Tighten control. Send Home-Affairs elites. Treat colonies as the metropole.

T ō g ō ' s l a m e n t (1 9 2 5)

“Japan's present policy toward Korea tends towards assimilationism, and this course has served only to sharpen Korean national consciousness... kindling disturbances that must be seen as manifestations of an independence movement. By contrast, Taiwan has long avoided extreme assimilationist measures... In recent years, however, assimilationist tendencies have markedly intensified, and the principle of the 'extension of the homeland' has been strongly emphasised.”

— *Colonial Policy and Ethnopsychology*, 1925

■ Eifu Moriya — anti-British expansionism

Pan-Asianism within the imperial bureaucracy

Moriya's four-fold critique of Britain in Asia

Economic

British rule in Asia rests on a structurally exploitative economic order.

Racial

Profound racial discrimination underwrites that order.

Coercive

Britain readily resorts to force — the Rowlatt Act, the Amritsar Massacre.

Social

Near-prohibition of intermarriage exemplifies the racial character of the Raj.

BUT: critique of Britain → justification of JAPAN's own expansion, not anticolonial argument.

■ Mitsukawa — bending Cromer to a new purpose

The same author, two opposite readings

Tōgō reads Cromer as...

an exemplary indirect-rule administrator. Britain's mistake in India proved corrigible — the Egyptian model shows the lesson can be learned. JAPAN should emulate this comparative method.

Analogical politics of comparison

Mitsukawa reads Cromer as...

confessing Britain's helplessness before non-white peoples. Cromer cannot assimilate Egyptians; the British are 'overwhelmed.' JAPAN's racial affinity with other Asians supposedly fills the gap.

Exceptionalist politics of comparison

■ Shūmei Ōkawa — Indian nationalists as allies

Pan-Asianist sympathy with Indians, but assimilationism at home

“Japan's administration in Korea is the governance of a people who share with us a common script and common ancestry. By contrast, Britain's dominion over India is the rule of a people wholly different in language and race. These two forms of governance, resting upon such divergent foundations, must never be spoken of in the same breath.”

Ōkawa's sympathy with Indians

Collaborated with Lala Lajpat Rai and Rash Behari Bose. Indian nationalism = legitimate response to Western rule. Named historical actors, not anonymous 'Baboos'.

...but assimilationism at home

The very same logic that praises Indian agency against Britain rejects Korean agency against Japan. 'Asian affinity' justifies Japanese rule, not Korean independence.

■ Two paradigms in contest, mid-1920s

Colonial internationalism vs. Pan-Asianist exceptionalism

Colonial internationalism

- **ANALOGICAL politics of comparison**
- Japanese colonialism comparable with any other
- British indirect rule as model worth emulating
- Anti-assimilation: native distinctiveness preserved
- Experts: Tōgō, Mochiji (*early Uchida)

Pan-Asianist epistemology

- **EXCEPTIONALIST politics of comparison**
- Japanese rule incomparably unique
- British rule increasingly cast as unjust
- Assimilation justified by 'Asian' racial affinity
- Voices: Moriya, Mitsukawa, Ōkawa

■ The 'imperial cloud'

Colonial knowledge as a shared, modular, transimperial reservoir

the imperial cloud

a shared, modular, cloud-like reservoir of colonial knowledge — built and used across empires

Not Western-only

Japanese theorists were active participants — Pacific extensions of the same epistemic project.

Modular and downloadable

Le Bon's 'Baboo' was a ready-made comparative module Tōgō could plug into Taiwan.

Plural, not singular

The Pan-Asianist break suggests multiple clouds, not a single transimperial sky.

■ What to take away

Five propositions about Chapter 2

1

Colonial knowledge had a transimperial dimension.

Not just British, not just French, not just Japanese — modular pieces circulated and combined.

2

The ‘Baboo’ was the archetype that travelled.

Invented in India, theorised by Le Bon, standardised by Chailley, redeployed by Tōgō in Taiwan.

3

Tōgō embodies a non-Western colonial internationalism.

He was not an ICI member — but he internalised the spirit and is a window into Japan's place in the project.

4

Two politics of comparison, in tension.

Analogical (Japan as one empire among others) vs. exceptionalist (Japan as incomparable). Both lived together into the 1920s.

5

The ‘imperial cloud’ is plural.

The break between colonial internationalism and Pan-Asianism suggests multiple clouds — and re-opens what ‘colonial knowledge’ means.

Questions

F o r d i s c u s s i o n

1

If colonial knowledge was modular and 'downloadable', who decided what got 'uploaded' in the first place — and which comparative observations never made it into the cloud at all?

2

Does the analogical/exceptionalist distinction help us read transimperial debates today?

3

Where might the Korean and Indian receivers of this knowledge fit in — as readers, as targets?

4

If the analogical and exceptionalist politics of comparison were both available to Japanese theorists in the 1920s, why did exceptionalism eventually win?