

# Reflection of the Concept of Nation in Early Globalization: Tagore and Sun Yat-sen

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## 要旨

この論文は、ラビンドラナート・タゴールの『ナショナリズム』と孫文の『三民主義』という二つの著作を比較し、20世紀早期における二人のナショナリズムに対する観点の異同を考察するものである。タゴールは、「国民」の非人間性を強く批判し、ナショナリズムは「国民」の間の衝突や、「国民」の「非国民」に対する圧迫の根源だと指摘した。さらに、西洋のナショナリズムを学ばないよう、「非国民」に忠告した。一方、孫文は、西洋の帝国主義を強く批判したが、民族主義は西洋の国民国家の隆盛につながった要因であると高く評価した。さらに孫文は、中国は西洋のモデルを学び、民族主義的で強力な国民国家を創り出し、その後、国際関係において、正義や「王道」に従い弱小民族を助けるべきだと主張した。孫文とタゴールのナショナリズムに対する観点の違いは、二人の異なった社会理念に関わっていると思われる。タゴールは、人類の歴史は常に異なる人種の融合過程であり、人類の精神的な融合と自発的な社会文明を唱えた。孫文は、「社会進化論」を主張し、彼の社会理念とは人民の福祉を促進するための全能政府を創成することにある。「国民国家」は既に時代遅れのように思われる今日のグローバリゼーション時代において、孫文の教条的な社会進化論に比べ、タゴールの近代主義に対する批判的観点は、再評価に値する議論だと考えられる。

**Keywords :** Rabindranath Tagore, Sun Yat-sen, modern nation state, nationalism, globalization

## Introduction

This paper compares Rabindranath Tagore's *Nationalism* and Sun Yat-sen's *The Three Principles of the People* from the point of view of their different understanding of the modern nation state and of nationalism.<sup>1)</sup> During his visit to Japan and the US in 1916-1917, Tagore delivered a series of lectures strongly criticizing nationalism, which was later published under the title *Nationalism*. The text consists of three parts: 'nationalism in Japan,' 'nationalism in the West,' and 'nationalism in India.' Sun's *The Three Principles of the People* is based on a series of lectures to revolutionary soldiers and students in Canton, 1924. One of the purposes of Sun's lectures was to elaborate his main political theory 'the three principles of the people (三民主義),' which includes: 'the principle of nationalism (民族主義),' 'the principle of people's sovereignty (民権主義),' and 'the principle of people's livelihood (民生主義).'<sup>2)</sup>

Though Tagore's *Nationalism* was translated into Chinese under the title 民族主義, and the English translation of Sun's first principle 民族主義 is 'nationalism,' the meaning of the term nationalism for Tagore is somewhat different from that of the term 民族主義 for Sun.<sup>3)</sup> Generally speaking, in the modern history of East Asia, a large body of Western concepts and terms were at first translated with Chinese characters into Japanese, something which constituted an important aspect of Japan's successful nation state building. Very soon these translations were 'exported' to and widely used in other East Asian countries like Korea and China. According to Nishikawa Nagao, the term 国民 /kokumin corresponds more to the French concept 'nation,' while 民族 /minzoku is closer to the German term 'Volk.' In East Asian countries which shared the tradition of using Chinese characters (東アジア漢字文化圏), it was the term 民族主義 /minzokushugi that was employed as the motivating force of nationalist movements.<sup>4)</sup> Due to Japan's early success at modern nation state building and its rapidly turning to imperialism, the term 民族主義 /minzokushugi found most of its application in other East Asian countries than in Japan. The important role of Sun Yat-sen's principle of nationalism/ 民族主義 in the process of the Chinese revolution is one example of this situation. And though only Sun's first principle of 民族主義 was translated into nationalism, actually, the English term nationalism has a wider meaning than the Chinese term 民族主義, and nationalism in this broad sense is present throughout the whole of Sun's *The Three Principles of the People*.<sup>5)</sup> On the other hand, the meaning of Tagore's 'nationalism' is closer to, and perhaps even broader than, the way in which the term was generally understood. Tagore's nationalism was never translated into 民族主義 in Japan, where it was once translated as 國家主義 (the meaning of which is actually state-ism) and later on as ナショナリズム (the katakana reading of 'nationalism').<sup>6)</sup>

These two works came out roughly in the same historical period, that is, during or shortly after WWI, when the world had been almost completely 'globalized' by Western imperial powers and began to manifest severe problems. Though largely irrelevant to each other and dramatically different in writing style, these two works deal with the same subject, from the similar perspective of 'Eastern countries oppressed by the West' (India as a British colony and China as a 'half' colony of many Western powers), namely: the unjust world system, or more precisely, the West's oppression of the East. However, Tagore and Sun understand the world system differently. Tagore criticizes nationalism as responsible for all evils, while Sun highly praises nationalism and views imperialism as the cause of injustice. They correspondingly put forward very different solutions for the problem.

In today's era of globalization, the problem of nationalism is still of crucial relevance, though in a very different manner. To look at these two influential authors' clearly different interpretations of nationalism might help us develop a different view of the ongoing process of globalization. In the following, part 1 examines Tagore and Sun's different understanding of the modern nation state, nationalism, as well as the world system dominated by Western nation states; part 2 discusses their different social ideals and the solutions they propose to solve their own countries' problems; the

conclusion explores the implication of this comparison for the background of today's globalization.

## 1. Their different understandings of the modern nation state

Both Tagore and Sun see the world system in which strong Western nation states oppress and exploit weak Eastern countries as unjust. However, they interpret the source of this injustice differently, which is again related to their different understandings of the nature of Western modern nation states. Generally speaking, Tagore's attitude towards the state machines of Western nations is negative, while Sun's attitude is largely positive.

### 1.1 The modern nation state as a 'machine'

In *Nationalism*, Tagore uses the term 'Nation' to designate modern Western nation states, and the term 'No-nation' for Eastern countries which had not transformed into modern nation states. He gives a clear definition of this core concept 'Nation.' 'A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose.'<sup>7)</sup> 'What is the Nation? It is the aspect of a whole people as an organized power.'<sup>8)</sup>

According to Tagore, the modern nation state is a mechanical organization, the operation of which is based on science, and whose purpose is to pursue wealth and power. In modern 'Nations,' when the economic and political organizations have become all-powerful, personal and moral man gives way to political and economic man; human beings are reduced to 'war-making and money-making puppets.' 'Everything becomes a revolution of policy carried out by the human parts of the machines, with no twinge of pity or moral responsibility.'<sup>9)</sup> And the living bonds of human society are broken; social relations become utilitarian; as a result, conflicts arise between capital and labor, men and women, individual and state, etc. Thus for Tagore, the modern nation state gains its strength and power at the cost of humanity. He said, 'we live in a world of abnormality where our strength is not health and our liberty is not freedom.'<sup>10)</sup>

Unlike Tagore, Sun, in his *The Three Principles of the People*, does not resort to any special term to describe Western nation states. He employs, instead, then commonly used terms such as 'the Powers,' 'the Great Powers' etc. Unlike Tagore, who refers to them as 'No-nations', Sun depicts the oppressed Eastern countries as 'the small and weak nations.'

Sun also compares the modern Western nation state to a 'machine,' of which individuals constitute the parts.

'Western statesmen and students of jurisprudence now speak of government as machinery and of law as an instrument. A great many Chinese books on government and law are translations from the Japanese. The Japanese have given government organization the designation of Chi-kuan (organ, or bureau). Chi-kuan means the same thing as the common word "machinery" in

China; ... But what is the difference between political machinery and manufacturing machinery? Manufacturing machinery is made entirely of material things... political machinery is constructed of human beings ...<sup>11)</sup>

However, contrary to Tagore, who emphasizes the inhuman characteristics of modern 'Nations,' Sun admires the efficiency and strength of Western nation states. He argues that it is only when its state machine is efficient and all-powerful, that a nation can become strong and wealthy. When discussing the rise of the United States and the role of Bismark in the formation of modern Germany, Sun points out that the US and Germany became the world's wealthiest and most powerful countries through successfully uniting formerly separate regions into a single nation, and setting up a strong central government. Sun believes that the welfare of the people depends mostly on the strength of their nation.

## 1.2 science and nationalism

Both Tagore and Sun discover two major sources to the strength and power of modern nation states; one is science, the other nationalism.

Though both Tagore and Sun see the fundamental role of science in the functioning of modern state machinery, they have very different understandings of that role. Sun speaks highly of the role of science in the progress of modern Western nations. He insists that scientific methods can further improve the state machinery and even allow us to solve the problem of the state machine's possibly growing too powerful to be controlled by the people.

To the contrary, Tagore argues that scientific organizations can only strengthen our power, but cannot increase our humanity. According to Tagore, science can find the laws of things and put them to use, but science itself is not man's nature. 'We all know that intellect is impersonal. Our life and our heart are one with us, but our mind can be detached from the personal man and then only can it freely move in its world of thoughts.'<sup>12)</sup> In modern 'Nations,' science takes priority over the moral and spiritual dimensions of men, and individuals are losing their freedom and humanity in order to fit within the vast mechanical organizations. Moreover, science greatly facilitates the physical power of modern nation state to kill and to exploit.

Both authors argue that the ideas of nation and nationalism played an important ideological role in motivating and mobilizing the people in modern nation states. However, their attitudes toward nationalism are almost completely opposite. Sun lauds nationalism as the 'precious possession by which humanity maintains its existence.'<sup>13)</sup> He argues that the state-building process of the Great Powers was always backed by their nationalism, and thus that nationalism constitutes the spiritual fountain of their strength and power.

On the contrary, for Tagore, nationalism is a kind of evil passion which underlies modern nations' pursuit of power. Tagore describes the idea of 'Nation' as 'one of the most powerful anesthetics that man has invented.'<sup>14)</sup> For Tagore nationalism, under the name of patriotism is

poisoning the foundation of humanity and cultivates moral blindness. 'Where the spirit of Western nationalism prevails, the whole people is being taught from boyhood to foster hatreds and ambitions by all kinds of means... It is holding up gigantic selfishness as the one universal religion for all nations of the world.'<sup>15)</sup> According to Tagore, the spirit of conflict and conquest is at the core of nationalism, and nationalism is the culprit of conflicts among 'Nations' as well as of the Western Nations' oppression of Eastern 'No-nations.'

### 1.3 The unjust world system

Tagore and Sun both strongly criticize strong Western nations' oppression and exploitation of Eastern countries. However, they understand the nature and reason of this injustice differently. Tagore points out that 'Nations' always try to keep each others in check and fight for the colonial control of 'No-nations.' 'Each nation has its own history of thieving and lies and broken faith, therefore there can only flourish international suspicion and jealousy, and international moral shame becomes anaemic to a degree of ludicrousness.'<sup>16)</sup> Concerning the colonial rule of the 'Nation', Tagore points out, using the example of his home country India, that, since the 'Nations' feed on the resources of their colonies, their interest is to prevent those 'No-nations' from becoming 'Nations' and to keep them weak forever. 'What comes to us in the shape of a mere bloodless policy may pierce into the very core of our life, may threaten the whole future of our people with a perpetual helplessness of emasculation.'<sup>17)</sup>

For Tagore, the problematic world system that includes antagonistic international relations among Western 'Nations', as well as unequal relationships between Western 'Nations' and Eastern 'No-nations,' results from the nature of modern 'Nations' and their nationalism. The mechanical characteristic of modern nation states, and the combination of the selfishness of nationalism and the power of science, will not only lead to the sacrifice of moral and spiritual ideals inside modern 'Nations,' but also, necessarily, to mutual hostility among them and to the oppressive and inhuman treatment of 'No-nations.'

For Sun, modern nation state and nationalism are admirable, what should be criticized is imperialism, a term which Tagore does not even mention in *Nationalism*. Sun criticized the European Powers' oppression of weak and small Asian nations as going against the way of justice. He discusses in detail Western Powers' political and economic oppression of China. However, though both are against the Western colonial Powers' oppression of their own countries, Sun and Tagore's concerns are also clearly different on this point. Sun warns time and again that under the Great Powers' oppression, the main danger facing China is 'the loss of our country and the annihilation of our race.' He explains this danger in terms of population change. In the last hundred years, Sun says, the population of the Great Powers has increased several folds while that of China has not increased at all; if this tendency continues, he argues, the Chinese people will become a minority and may be destroyed or assimilated by other races. Contrary to Sun, Tagore does not have the least worry that the British might annihilate or assimilate the race of India, since he thinks

that it is in the interest of 'Nations' to keep their 'No-nation' colonies alive and weak forever.<sup>18)</sup> What Tagore is criticizing is the Nations' inhuman *way* of ruling 'No-nations'.

#### 1.4 The World War

Tagore and Sun wrote during and shortly after the First World War. Both have their opinions on the war, as well as on the future of the modern nation state.

Tagore completely rejects all justification of 'Nation' and nationalism, and predicts that the present situation where modern Nations' are competing for power cannot go on forever. He sees the European War (WWI) as the doom of 'Nations' and the beginning of further collisions. 'Western nations', he says, 'are following that path of suicide, where they are smothering their humanity under their immense weight of organization in order to keep themselves in power and hold others in subjection.'<sup>19)</sup> 'The lumbering structure of modern progress, riveted by the iron bolts of efficiency, which runs upon the wheels of ambition, cannot hold together for long. Collisions are certain to occur.'<sup>20)</sup>

Sun's view on WWI is quite different and is closely related to his criticism of imperialism. He argues that the Great War (WWI) was caused by imperial rivalry between Great Powers. 'The effect of the war was merely the overthrow of one imperialism by another imperialism, what survived was still imperialism.'<sup>21)</sup>

#### 1.5 Nationalism at home

Thus for Tagore, 'Nation' and nationalism constitute the origin of all evils: the transformation of personal beings into parts of the state machine within the 'Nation,' enmity among 'Nations,' as well as Nations' bloodless colonial control of 'No-nations.' Hence, according to Tagore, to solve those problems, it is 'Nation' as such that must be denied. Tagore is against not only nationalism in 'Nations,' but also against nationalist movements in 'No-nations,' which he regards as the imitation of the worst aspect of the West, and as acting 'to resist evil by assuming it ourselves.' He criticizes Indian nationalists as socially conservative and politically radical, and insists that resorting to nationalism cannot solve India's problem.

For Sun, the modern nation state and nationalism are wonderful, only their imperialism is an evil. Sun highly praises the strength and power of the Western state machine and the role of nationalism. Accordingly, he sees the lack of nationalism and the impotence of government in Eastern nations as the reason for their weakness and consequently as what destines them to be oppressed by powerful Western nations. Thus, according to Sun, in order to survive, China must follow the Western model. It must revive its nationalism and build a strong state machine; only then will China become strong and powerful, and able to fight against imperialism.

## 2. Their different social ideals

The difference between Tagore and Sun's attitudes toward the modern nation state and nationalism is closely related to their different social and political ideals and their understanding of their own countries' problems.

### 2.1 Tagore's social civilization of 'No-nations'

Tagore is strongly opposed to the domination of the people by the political organization of the 'Nation.' What is important, according to Tagore, is human beings' social life. According to Tagore, 'Society as such has no ulterior purpose. It is an end in itself. It is a spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationships, so that men can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another. It has also a political side, but this is only for a special purpose. It is for self-preservation. It is merely the side of power, not of human ideals.'<sup>22)</sup> As far as India is concerned, Tagore emphasizes that India was a No-nation; India's history is the history of its social life and of the attainment of spiritual ideals, not the history of the rise and fall of kingdoms. The thrones of the kings were not the real concern of the people; what truly belonged to them were their homes, fields, temples, schools, and their simple village governments.

In opposition to the political civilization of Western 'Nations,' Tagore advocates a kind of social civilization of 'No-nations.' The ultimate end of social civilization is not the limitless accumulation of wealth and power for the political entity, but the harmonious growth of life and the completeness of humanity. The problem in society, according to Tagore, is that social habits and ideals can become too entrenched and outdated, obstructing further development of humanity. He explains that the origin of this problem lies in the inertia of mind. 'The tendency of mind is economical; it loves to form habits and move in grooves which save it the trouble of thinking anew at each of its steps. Ideals once formed make the mind lazy. It becomes afraid to risk its acquisitions in fresh endeavors. It tries to enjoy complete security by shutting up its belongings behind fortifications of habits.'<sup>23)</sup> Tagore argues that, to solve the problem, human beings must have the courage to break through the confinements of ossified social habits, developing social relations and ideals together with the growing and changing of life. Real freedom, he says, 'is not within the boundaries of security, but on the high-road of adventures, full of the risk of new experiences.'<sup>24)</sup>

Tagore sees human history as the process of ever increasing human integration, and defines the problem that India and the whole world have been facing as the 'race problem.' Tagore argues that India is 'many countries packed in one geographical receptacle.' With the spirit of toleration, India accepted this racial diversity from the beginning of its history and tried to reach social and spiritual unity. However, adds Tagore, India has not achieved a full measure of success in dealing with this problem. The caste system, which recognized differences but failed to realize the law of change, had become an obstacle to the further integration of Indian society. The rigid class classification and tyrannical social restrictions are not only imposing a 'galling yoke of inferiority' on

lower castes, but also paralyze the 'living nature' of those who are educated, making them insensitive to the real problems of their society. Tagore argues that this social weakness constitutes the fundamental reason why India could not cope with the invasion of Western 'Nations.' In order to escape this situation, India must first abandon its outdated social customs and ideals.

Furthermore, since India was made a colony by a 'Nation,' in order to solve India's problem, the world's problem must also be taken into account. 'Now the time has come when we must make the world problem our own problem; we must bring the spirit of civilization into harmony with the history of all nations of the earth.'<sup>25)</sup> Tagore argues that India's problem is the problem of the world in miniature. 'What India has been, the whole world is now. The whole world is becoming one country through scientific facility. And the moment is arriving when you must also find a basis of unity which is not political.'

Rather than a relation among 'gigantic organizations,' Tagore advocates for the world a new era of moral and spiritual unity of all human beings. He proposes to bring about the real reconciliations between the East and the West through assimilating what is universal and permanent in each. On the one hand, he urges India and other Eastern countries to keep their faith in humanity and to strengthen their moral and spiritual power which can allow them to keep the control of the modern weapons and machines. On the other hand, though he is against Western 'Nations,' Tagore is not against the West as such. He says, countries in the East must learn from the West the spirit of law and the ideal of freedom, which are 'the living mind of the West.' 'Europe has been teaching us the higher obligations of public good above those of family and clan, the sacredness of law, which makes society independent of individual caprice, and secures the continuity of progress, and guarantees justice to men of all positions in life. Above all, Europe has held high before our minds the banner of liberty...'<sup>26)</sup> And though he strongly criticizes the role of science in facilitating the mechanical organization of the modern 'Nations,' Tagore is not against science as such. In his lectures delivered in China in 1924, Tagore argued that Eastern people should learn science from the West. Science is truth in healing the sick, in providing more food and leisure, etc. Furthermore, 'Science gives us the power of reason, enabling us to be actively conscious of the worth of our own ideals.'<sup>27)</sup>

Finally, Tagore urges 'every individual' to strive for the spiritual unity of the world. 'Therefore man will have to exert all his power of love and clarity of vision to make another great moral adjustment which will comprehend the whole world of men and not merely the fractional groups of nationality. The call has come to every individual in the present age to prepare himself and his surroundings for this dawn of a new era, when man shall discover his soul in the spiritual unity of all human beings.'<sup>28)</sup>

## 2.2 Sun's political platform

Unlike Tagore who advocates a social civilization, Sun proposes a political platform for China and the world. Sun holds a kind of social evolutionary theory, according to which human history

has gone through various ages, 'the age of wilderness,' 'the age of theocracy,' 'the age of autocracy,' and has finally arrived the age of democracy.<sup>29)</sup> It seems that, for Sun, the Western style democratic nation state constitutes the 'end' of history, and all countries have to follow this road. Sun emphasizes that the principle of democracy (or people's sovereignty) is similar to the utopian 'Great Commonwealth' (大同社会) advocated by Confucianism in ancient China. He says, 'Confucius and Mencius two thousand years ago spoke for people's rights. Confucius said "when the Great Doctrine prevails, all under heaven will work for the common goal (大道之行也, 天下為公)". He was pleading for a free and fraternal world in which the people would rule.'<sup>30)</sup>

Sun points out that, if Confucianism's political ideal is to have a sage king who will seek the happiness of the people, most emperors in Chinese history lacked in both capability and morality. They cared only about their own power and made no effort to promote people's welfare. It is due to the corruption and impotence of its autocratic government that China, in modern history, was subjugated by Western Powers and that the lives of Chinese people fell into a miserable situation. Thus, according to Sun, the goal of the Chinese revolution is to remove the autocratic emperor and to establish an all-powerful government that serves the welfare of the people.

Again, unlike Tagore, who says India must learn from the West the spirit of law and freedom, Sun argues that China needs not to learn the Western ideal of freedom and equality. According to him, in Europe before the modern revolutions a feudal system still prevailed and people suffered from inequality and lack of freedom. That is why Europeans fought for liberty and equality and why they are cherished highly now that they have been acquired. The case of China, however, is different. China abolished feudalism two thousand years ago. As long as their power was safe, Chinese emperors were relatively liberal towards the common people. Apart from paying taxes, Chinese people had little direct relation with the government and they did not really care who the emperor was. Hence, the problem in China is not that the people had too little freedom, but that they had too much. Thus the aim of the Chinese revolution is in a sense opposite to that of European revolutions. It is not individual freedom, but the freedom of the nation. Chinese must sacrifice their personal freedom for the sake of national freedom.

While Tagore viewed India's problem as the 'race problem', Sun largely ignored the 'race problem' in China. He believed that the majority of Chinese belong to the same race, and that the minority groups should be assimilated by the majority of Han Chinese. The problem of China, according to Sun, is that the Chinese lack adequate political consciousness. They have 'family-ism' and 'clan-ism', but not nationalism. This makes the nation 'a sheet of loose sand' that could not resist the invasion of strong Western nations. In order to survive and to catch up with Western Powers, argues Sun, China must promote nationalism, and inspire the people to fight for the nation's independence and to fulfill their duties to the nation.

As a complement to his ideal democratic nation state, Sun calls for 'a world political unity,' in which justice reigns in international relations. According to him, after becoming a wealthy and strong *nation state*, China should pursue 'the royal way' (or the way of right) in its relations to other

*nations*, checking the strong and helping the weak, uniting the oppressed and fighting against the oppressors. This, as we can see, is in clear contrast to Tagore's criticism of the world dominated by political organizations.

Finally, unlike Tagore who calls on every individual to strive towards the spiritual unity of the world, Sun urges those who 'know and perceive first' to take the responsibility of designing and putting forward for the people an all-powerful government and a sound world political order.<sup>31)</sup>

### 2.3 Sun and Tagore's attitude toward Japan

Japan, an Eastern country which had followed the way of the West with success, was of special concern to both Sun and Tagore. Like their different social/political ideals and their different opinions on modern nation states and nationalism, their attitudes towards modern Japan are also different.

Sun's attitude towards Japan is ambivalent. On the one hand, he applauds Japan's successfully catching up with the Western Powers through promoting its own nationalism, 'the Yamato spirit', and its transformation into a powerful nation state. He offers Japan as a model for China and other Asian countries to follow. Sun says, 'The genius of the Yamato race has shown no decay; riding upon the advance of European civilization, and acclimatizing themselves to the culture of the West, they have employed the new methods of science to further their state, and have become so modernized in half a century that they are now the strongest nation in the East, on a par with the nations of Europe and America.'<sup>32)</sup>

On the other hand he urges Japan not to follow the imperial route of the West and not to invade and oppress weak and small Eastern nations. In late 1924, Sun gave the speech 'Great Asianism' in Kobe, Japan, towards the end of which he said, 'Japan has learned the culture of 'the way of might' from Europe and America, and still has the Asian culture of 'the royal way.' As for the coming future, whether Japan will ultimately become the warrior in the Western way of might or the defender of the Eastern royal way is a choice that depends on you Japanese people to make.'<sup>33)</sup>

Tagore's attitude towards Japan is also ambivalent, but in a different way. On the one hand, he praises Japan for being the first Eastern country to become self-conscious of its own social ideals and to have successfully broken through the confinement of the old habits. This, he says, has given hope to the rest of Asia. On the other hand, Tagore urges Japan to remain truthful to its ideals of humanity and not to accept Western civilization with all its methods, structures, and tendencies, and not to accept the organized selfishness of nationalism as its religion. 'Japan cannot altogether lose and merge herself in the scientific paraphernalia she has acquired from the West and be turned into a mere borrowed machine.'<sup>34)</sup>

For Tagore, to become a 'Nation' and to adopt nationalism will not only destroy the moral and spiritual ideals of the people, but also will definitely lead to invading others. Tagore seems have realized that this was what was happening in Japan. 'I have seen in Japan the voluntary submission of the whole people to the trimming of their minds and clipping of their freedom by their

government... The people accept their pervading mental slavery with cheerfulness and pride because of their nervous desire to turn themselves into a machine of power, called the Nation, and emulate other machines in their collective worldliness.<sup>35)</sup> In his speech *On Oriental Culture and Japan's Mission* delivered in Japan 1929, Tagore urges Japan not to follow the Western way of colonialism. He says,

'...[H]aven't I seen in the West manifestations of the national pride which gloats on the humiliation of its neighbors and fellow-beings without knowing that such humiliation comes back to itself? I have seen in the West the immense, monstrous pride in some glory that they exclusively claim and want to preserve for their own nation. Unfortunately in the wake of some other evils these germs from the diseased hearts of the nation have come to us floating from the West and our treatment of alien races in the East is beginning to show signs of that supercilious contempt and want of consideration which in the West is justified in the name of patriotism.'<sup>36)</sup>

## Conclusion

Thus, notwithstanding their to some extent similar standpoints, Tagore and Sun understand the world problem of their times very differently. Tagore sees the mechanical organization of the 'Nation' and the 'huge selfishness' of nationalism as the origin of all problems: the reduction of the human beings into parts of the state machine, the loss of their moral and spiritual ideals, the Nations' oppression of 'No-nations,' as well as conflicts among 'Nations.' Having denounced the political civilization of 'Nations,' Tagore advocates a social civilization of 'No-nations.' Tagore presents India and the world's problem as the 'race problem', which, he argues, can be solved through the social and spiritual unity of all human beings.

For Sun, Western nation states and nationalism are admirable, while imperialism is evil. He highly praises the efficiency and strength of the Western state machine and the role of nationalism in modern-nation-state-building. His social evolutionary theory presents becoming a modern democratic nation state as an inescapable world trend, and Sun argues that China should follow the Western model. It should promote nationalism and build a strong nation state to serve the welfare of the people. After becoming a powerful nation, argues Sun, China should pursue 'the royal way' to promote a moral international system.

Contrary to Tagore's expectation, as history demonstrated later, almost all 'No-nations' have become 'Nations.' Ironically, in spite of his polemics against nationalism, Tagore's writings played an important role in the nationalist movements of India, both before and after his death.<sup>37)</sup> Thus, compared to Tagore's complete refusal of 'Nation' and nationalism, Sun's platform of nation-building seems more 'pragmatic and realistic.' However, contrary to Sun's wish, turning to nationalism and becoming a nation state did not (at least until recently) make China and other weak

nations as strong as Western Powers. In the new world system of the Cold War, China and most other newly independent nations became 'the third world,' which was still situated at the periphery of a world regime dominated by strong Nations. And Sun's deterministic theory of human history as well as his heritage of traditional authoritarian political ideals found its application in the Communist regime of China. The authoritarian state did play a role in making China strong and powerful. However, it has also hindered China's democratization process. Furthermore, the reformed regime's pursuit of economic growth signals its final giving up of the ideal of social equality and amounts to the triumph of rampant corruption. In many ways, the dilemmas of China's modern-nation-state-building reflect the inner incoherence of Sun's political theory.

With the progress of globalization since the end of the Cold War, the political constitution of the world has come to be under dramatic change. 'Nations' are no longer as 'whole' and homogeneous as before; people are increasingly moving across national borders. However, nation states are still alive, together with the injustice of this new form of globalization. The free movement of capital, backed up by neo-liberal ideology, exposes labor, in both developed and developing nations, to a great danger of unemployment and leads to the reduction of social welfare. On the other hand, the movements of migrant workers from developing to developed countries are never really free due to the strict restriction of nationality. Thus, compared to Sun's dogmatic claim to espouse a world trend, Tagore's criticism of 'Nation' and nationalism and his view of history as the progress of human integration suddenly seem more enlightening in the context of the recent process of globalization. However, given his anti-political tendency, Tagore rejected the political structure of the modern nation state, without proposing any alternative. It seems that in Tagore's social civilization, there is little place for real politics, which makes his theory appear both 'post-modern' and, at the same time, too idealist. Thus to deal with the problem of global injustice we are facing today, we also need to go beyond Tagore's deep anti-political sentiment.

## Notes

1) Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), a major Indian literary and intellectual figure, was also the first Asian writer to become a Nobel Laureate. Tagore was awarded the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature, mainly due to his own translation from Bengali to English of his poem *Gitanjali* (or Songs of Offerings).

Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) is the founding father of the Republic of China and the Chinese Nationalist Party (or Kuomintang). He has been highly honored by both the Kuomintang and the Communist. He is lauded as 'the forerunner of the Chinese revolution' in mainland China; and in Taiwan, he is called 'the Father of Nation' by Kuomintang government.

2) Sun's lectures on 'the three principles of the people' were never finished, due to his death in early 1925. Actually, 'the three principles of the people,' as a catchphrase of Sun's revolutionary theory, was proposed as early as 1905; however, the content of this theory was constantly revised in the following two decades.

3) Tagore, Rabindranath. *Nationalism*. With an introduction by E. P. Thompson. New Delhi: Rupa Paperback, 1992.

泰戈尔 / Tagore R: 『民族主义』; 谭仁侠译; 北京: 商务印书馆, 1982

孙中山 / 孙文: 『国父全書』第一冊 『三民主義』中国国民党中央党史史料編纂委员会編, 台北: 中央人物

供給社, 1965

Sun Yat-sen. *San Min Chu I: The Three Principles of the People*, translated by Frank W. Price. Shanghai: the Commercial Press, Ltd, 1929.

- 4) 『国民国家論の射程 : あるいは「国民」という怪物について』 西川長夫著 柏書房 . 1998. p. 79.
- 5) For example, the term modern nation state is translated into Japanese as 現代国民国家 which in Japan is widely used to describe the nature of the modern Western state and Japan itself. While the term is translated in Chinese as 現代民族国家 which is not the word used to describe China itself. In China the term 現代国家 (modern nation) is more commonly accepted.
- 6) 『タゴール著作集』 第八巻 : 『ナショナルイズム』 蠟山芳郎 訳 ; 第三文明社 1981. p. 404.
- 7) *Nationalism*, p. 51.
- 8) Ibid. p. 86.
- 9) Ibid. p. 53.
- 10) Ibid. p. 93.
- 11) *The Three Principles of the People*, pp. 320-321. Chi-kuan in Japanese is 機關 /kikan.
- 12) *Nationalism*, pp. 67-68.
- 13) *The Three Principles of the People*. p. 70.
- 14) *Nationalism*. p. 73.
- 15) Ibid. p. 37.
- 16) Ibid. p. 70.
- 17) Ibid. p. 54.
- 18) Moreover, as we will discuss later on, Tagore does not think that there is a unity of race in India, which again is different from Sun, who believes that most of Chinese people belong to the same race.
- 19) Ibid. p. 36.
- 20) Ibid. p. 45.
- 21) Ibid. p. 84.
- 22) *Nationalism*. p. 51.
- 23) Ibid. pp. 18-19.
- 24) Ibid. p. 19.
- 25) Ibid. p. 29.
- 26) Ibid. p. 44.
- 27) Rabindranath Tagore. *Talks in China: Lectures Delivered in April and May, 1924*. - New Delhi : Rupa , 2002. p. 53.
- 28) *Nationalism*. pp. 80-81.
- 29) It seems that Sun's idea of history was strongly influenced by the nineteenth century social evolutionary theory in the West, but I think it also had its origin in traditional Chinese political thinking, like that of Legalist Han Feizi.
- 30) *The Three Principles of the People*. p. 169.
- 31) Sun's concept of equality is equality of political status. Sun believes that there is no natural equality between individuals' natural endowments and gifts.. He inherited the Confucian idea that there are three groups of man according to their natural endowments, those who "know and perceive first", those who "know and perceive later", and finally those who "neither see nor perceive". The third group is said to constitute the majority in a society.
- 32) *The Three Principles of the People*, pp. 14-15.
- 33) This is a translation by the author. 『孫文・講演「大アジア主義」資料集』 陳徳仁・安井三吉 編 法

律文化社 . 1989. p.

34) *Nationalism*. p. 21.

35) *Nationalism*. pp. 62-63. Due to this criticism, Tagore's lectures on nationalism were received coldly in Japan. His speech was criticized as 'the poetry of a defeated people.' And later on the book *Nationalism* was banned. 竹内好：『日本とアジア』；「タゴールと中国」；ちくま学芸文庫 1993

36) Rabindranath Tagore. *The English Writings of Tagore- Vol. 3 - A Miscellany. Sahitya Akademi*. 1996/2002. p.608

37) The reason for this might be explained by Anderson's thesis on the role of literature in the origin of nationalism. See Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1995).

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