

# The World of Thai Literature on Japan : A Preliminary Study

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## 1. Introduction

**Statement of the Problem.** The need for Thai people to learn more about Japan is perhaps greater than the need to learn about other countries. As an economic power, a financial power, and science & technology, including its future as the leader in several international organizations, Japan is undoubtedly a country for us to learn about. Japan is Thailand's largest source of imports, second largest in export, the largest aid donor country, the largest investor and Thailand's most important partner working towards a peace settlement in Kampuchea. Thai people also have a long history of relations with Japan, said to be 600 years history. Japanese economic development, social structure, government-business relationships patterns of culture, expressions in literature, and the consequences of its rapid industrialization and urbanization have been a focus of our interest. But writings on Japan do not seem to adequately respond to the growing demand. Those who feel this inadequacy include students, businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats, mass media personnel and scholars in the various disciplines. It seems that as the Japanese-Thai inter-dependence deepens and the mutual contacts increase, the world of Japanese studies in Thailand is under greater pressure to

produce. There are many reasons that accountable for this unsatisfactory state of knowledge.

The most important factor is the language. Japanese language is an extremely complex language from the viewpoint of the Thai language. Language problems hinder us from having communication with the Japanese and access to much of the writings of the Japanese. Even though English may help, but it is not enough. It is a fact that only the Thai who have received education overseas master the English language. Students and most of the Thai businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats, and a great majority of Thai public do not master the language. Also, Japanese society and people are quite difficult for outsider to understand. Professor Chie Nakane confessed it herself, "If I were looking at Japan from outside, I am sure that I would find this country quite inscrutable."<sup>1</sup> She quoted Henry Kissinger's remark that the Chinese are easier to communicate with than the Japanese. She also commented that the Chinese, whose civilization Japan inherited, may be able to understand Japan, but probably not able to fathom.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Japan is difficult to learn about and understand in the sense that it is a rapidly changing society. To take one example, the Japan Incorporated concept and the MITI's roles in guiding the Japanese

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business community may explain well government-business relationships during the postwar period, but not Japan in the 1980's. Any characterization of Japanese society and economy is thus always bound to be commented on by the Japanese as, "you don't seem to understand Japan." The above problems are the external factors and the general problems, but there are a number of specific problems on the part of Thailand.

We may start our discussion by asking a question here: What are the things one is supposed to look into in making a survey of the state of Japanese studies in any countries? A survey of the writings on Japan, or a literature survey, is one thing. This means an evaluative comment on these works in terms of quality, approach, theory and others. Beyond this, one is also supposed to make a survey of the curriculum, the administrative organization, the lecturers or the professors, and other related factors. The future of Japanese studies in Thailand will depend on how the above problems are managed.

This paper attempts to present and discuss some of the problems of Japanese studies in Thailand. We shall first make a brief survey of the curriculum, the administration organization, the lectures and the new generation of scholars on Japan. The next discussion will be about the translation works which may give us some ideas about the state of Japanese studies in Thailand. We shall then discuss the problem of approaches in the study and analysis about problems of Japanese-Thai relations. Finally, this paper will discuss certain issues and problems of literature on Japan in Thailand.

## 2. A General Survey

**1. Curriculum.** The study of Japan in Thailand, with the exception of Japanese language and literature, has a tradition of being part of a bigger area or a general theme in a certain discipline. For example, Japanese history has long been treated as a part of a course on East Asian history, Japanese government as part of a course on democratic governments in Asia, Japanese economics as part of a course on economic development, Japanese foreign

policy as part of a course on international politics in East Asia, and Japanese culture & society as a part of a course on Asian culture & society. Exceptions exist but only a few. Efforts to deviate from such a tradition have been seen but the tradition is still strong especially in certain disciplines like economics, sociology & anthropology and history. In order to respond to a greater need to learn more about Japan, it is expected that these efforts will become more successful in the future.

**2. Administrative Organizations.** Apart from the disciplines (departments or faculties), research centers or institutes are an important factor for the development of Japanese studies. Four expectations are placed on these centers or institutes. First is a good library as a true center of collections of dissertations, books, government gazettes, journals, weeklies and dailies on Japan, in both English and Thai languages, and if possible Japanese. Second is the publication activity in the form of monographs, journals proceedings and books. Third is the active organizing of seminars, symposia, public lectures and workshops. And fourth is a good information service system to facilitate the utilization of the materials kept in the library, including the copy service system.

Two universities in Thailand have established research institutes: Institute of Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University and Institute of East Asian Studies at Thammasat University. The former was established in late 1960's as an organ under the Faculty of Political Science before being up-graded to a status equivalent to a faculty (or department) in 1985. The latter, established in 1984, developed from the Japanese Studies Program which was organized in the early 1980's, the Japanese Studies Center, and the Japanese Studies Institute. In 1984, the Japanese Government decided to offer a grant aid project, the Center for Japanese Studies, to Thammasat University. The project includes a very good library on Japan and also seminar facilities. At other universities, Japanese studies programs are being organized at Chiangmai University and Kasetsart University. Two journals which carry articles on Japan in Thailand are the Thai-Japanese

Studies Journal of Thammasat University and the Asian Review of Chulalongkorn University. The former is exclusively on Japan and Thai-Japanese relations.

The organization of Japanese studies is an important factor to promote studies and research on Japan. The agenda item to consider is how the organizations mentioned above can be centers of information and data on Japan, and provide greater academic services to the students, scholars, businessmen, government agencies and the general public.

**3. Lecturers** The beginning of Japanese studies in Thailand in the early 1960's at Chulalongkorn University owed a great deal to the academic works of Professor Khien Theeravit. He laid the groundwork for the study of Japanese politics and government by publishing three text books : Japanese Political History, 1965, Japanese Political System 1968, and Japanese Foreign Policy 1968. Among his research works are the following four : Pattern of Thai-Japanese Economic Relations, 1974, the Thai Attitudes towards China and Japan, 1975, the Assurances to the Agricultural Development of Thailand from Denmark, Germany and Japan, 1984, and Japanese Construction Business in Thailand : A Study of Its Impacts on Thailand's National Development, 1988. The second generation lecturers at the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University further developed and activated Japanese studies to another stage of academic advancement. Among them, Surichai Wan' geo opened debates on the evaluation of Meiji modernization and the problem of approach to the study of Japan, including the purpose and meaning of Japanese Studies in the context of Thai social science. Chaiwat Khamchoo greatly contributed to the study of Japanese postwar foreign policy and he is the first Thai scholar to write a Ph.D. dissertation on Japanese politics after an extensive field work research in Japan.

At Thammasat University, a program on Japanese studies came into existence rather late, around 1980's. Japanese language department at Thammasat was the first to offer Japanese language courses as a minor, in 1965. First generation lecturers who produced academic works on Japanese history, society and politics

included Likhit Dhiravekin, Saneh Jamarick and Phannee Srungboonmee. Likhit contributed an important basic work : The Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) and the Chakri Reformation (1868-1910) : A Comparative Perspective, 1984, The second generation lecturer who hoped develop and activate the studies of Japanese economy, society and politics in great numbers during the late 1970's and early 1980's. At the Faculty of Political Science, those who lectured on Japanese politics included Patcharee Siroros, Nanthawadee Chantrathip and Prasert Chittiwatana-pong. At the Faculty of Economics, it included Banyat Surakarnvit, Anong Rajvanit and Suvinai Pornnavalai. At the Japanese Language and Literature Department, Artorn Fungtammasan and Pakatip Sakulkru pioneered the studies of modern Japanese literature and Japanese language.

Lecturers are certainly an important factor in the development of Japanese studies.<sup>3</sup> It is important to see them well trained, well organized, and work together in joint research projects in an interdisciplinary manner. An association of Japanese studies in Thailand is not yet formed, but such an organization could help the lecturers survey the state of the art and debate among themselves on certain critical issues.

**4. The New Generation.** Since the late 1980's first generation scholars have found themselves engaged in administrative responsibilities or in other wider areas of academic interest. Second generation scholars, now in their late thirties or early forties, have more time for research and still find the studies on Japan interesting and challenging. But after some ten years, they will perhaps find themselves engaged in administrative functions or they may expand their interest into the wider area of the Asia-Pacific or Thai studies. It remains to be seen how the young generation scholars can be successful in leaving behind longlasting research projects. Apart from the scholars, the younger generation also included the journalist, editors, and free lance writers or translators. Some of them have produced good articles and books. A journalist, Kavi Chongkithavorn, of the Nation Newspaper, writes good essays and commen-

taries on problems of Japan's foreign relations. In the field of literature, free-lance translators are active in introducing Japanese literature to Thai readers. Wattana Pattanaphong, for example, translated Kawabata Yasunari's *Senbazuru* and *Yukiguni*. As the mass media becomes more developed and enjoys more freedom of expression, it is possible that the journalist and writers might be able to rival the academics in the quality of analysis and they may play bigger roles in influencing Thai public opinion. But it will take a long time before they can influence the public with high-quality works such as the writings of James Fallows, Karl von Wolferen, Clyde Prestowitz and other journalists, said to belong to the "revisionist school". The works of the first generation scholars seem to be able to survive the criticism from the second generation scholars. It remains to be seen how the second generation lecturers will manage to produce good works to impress the coming third generation lecturers. The challenges from the media people and free lance writers are also great.

From the above general survey on curriculum, administration organization, lecturers and the new generation of Japanese studies scholars, we have a rough and general picture of the state of Japanese studies in Thailand. One point worth emphasizing here is that the history of our Japanese studies is only about 25 years old. Japanese language courses began to be taught at the university level by Thai instructors who were trained in Japan only after 1974 at Chulalongkorn, and a few years later at Thammasat.

### 3. Translation Works

The choice of the translations of books or articles on Japan written in Japanese, English or other languages probably has several meanings. They may indicate levels of academic maturity, ideological inclination, or selected interest in things Japanese, including English language proficiency of readers in different countries. In English speaking countries in Asia, which includes the Philippines, India and Singapore, translation of introductory books on Japan are hardly necessary. In Kanji writing countries, which includes China, Taiwan, North

and South Korea, translation of introductory books from Japanese language is in less demand than in other countries like Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. In the advanced industrialized countries in the West, it is the translation of the classic and primary sources that will be necessary. In the socialist countries, attention may be placed on the classic rather than popular and introductory works.

Thailand is a developing country with a large majority of the population that does not read English. The Thai people do not learn the Chinese writing system at school. Among ASEAN countries, with the exception of Indonesia, Thai students are the lowest in the ability to read English materials. Rate of school advancement in Thailand is also extremely low among ASEAN members, an indication that the level of higher education development is not high. These conditions partly explain the situation of the translation works on Japan in Thailand. It is interesting to note that even **Zenko Suzuki : Profile of Prime Minister of Japan**, published by Japan Times, a simple introductory book, was translated into Thai in 1981. We shall now make a brief survey, starting from the field of history.

### Japanese History

In the field of Japanese history, there are numerous translations of books written by American and British historians. Most of the work of leading American historians' works on Japan were translated into Thai. Translation of Japanese books were limited. All of the books were introductory, none of them was a translation of a classic work. Only two or three of them used the conflict theory in their approach. Below are the translations :

- Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig, **East Asia : the Modern Transformation**, published in 4 volumes during 1977-1978.
- Edwin O. Reischauer, **Japan : The Story of a Nation**, 1982.
- Edwin O. Reischauer, **The Japanese**, 1988.
- Marius B. Jansen, **Japan and Its World**, 1983.

- Richard Storry, **A History of Modern Japan**, 1977.
- Richard Storry, **Japan and the Decline of Western Imperialism in Asia (1984-1983)**, 1982.
- Kenneth B. Pyle, **The Making of Modern Japan**, 1985.
- E.H. Norman, **The Emergence of Modern Japanese State**, 1983.
- William de Bary (ed.) **Sources of Japanese Tradition**, 1969.
- Arthur E. Tiedemann, **An Introduction to Japanese Civilization**, 1979.
- Toranosuke Nishioka, **Koko Nihonshi** (Japanese History for High School), 1987.
- Ienaga Saburo, **Kentei Fugogaku Koko Nihon-shi**, (High School History: A Text That Was Not Approved), 1984.

Apart from the translations of the works of historians on Japanese history, there was also one translation of a work by Japanese scholars on Thai history: Yoneo Ishii and Toshiharu Yoshikawa, **Six-hundred Years of Thai-Japanese Relations**, 1987.

### Japanese Government and Politics

Only a few books on Japanese politics and government were translated into Thai. Japanese political scientists do not usually write introductory books about the Japanese political system. If they do, like the work by Professor Jun'ichi Kyogoku, they do not intend them for non-Japanese readers. Books on introduction to Japanese politics, written in the form of textbooks, that are not translated include the works of Richardson-Flanagan, J.A.A. Stockwin, Ardash Burke, Nobutaka Ike, etc. Gerald Curtis's **The Way of Japanese Politics** is being translated at present. Below are the translations:

- Robert E. Ward, Japanese Politics, a chapter in Robert E. Ward and Roy C. Macridis (editors), **Modern Political System**, 1967.
- Nobutaka Ike, **Japan : The New Superstate**, 1980.
- Edwin O. Reischauer, **The Japanese**, 1988.

- Jon Halliday and Gavan McCormack, **Japanese Imperialism Today**, 1975.

### Japanese Society and Culture

To understand the Japanese behavior, value system and problems in their relations with other peoples, translations of books on Japanese society and culture are vitally important. There are quite a few translations, but more are needed. Not only the classics, but also works on social change and social problems should be translated in order that post-industrialization problems in Japan can be fully understood. Below are the translations:

- Ruth Benedict, **The Chrysanthemum and the Sword**, 1982.
- Chie Nakane, **Japanese Society**, 1982.
- Ezra Vogel, **Japan as No.1**, 1985.
- Issiah Bendeson, **The Japanese and the Jew**, 1977.
- The Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language, **Japanese and Their Passing Rites**, 1985.
- Japan Travel Bureau, **A Look into Japan**, 1989.
- Daisetsu Suzuki, **Zen and Japanese Culture**, 1976.
- Tich Nat Han, **Zen Key**, 1977.
- Senkai Shibayama, **A Flower Does Not Talk**, 1979.
- Ichiro Kawasaki, **Japan Unmasked**, 1980.
- Robert C. Christopher, **The Japanese Mind**, 1987.
- Nitobe, **Bushido**, 1986.
- Junichiro Tanizaki, **In Praise of Shadows**, 1985.
- Michihiko Hajiya, **Hiroshima Nikki**, 1984.
- Yutaka Tazawa, **Japan's Cultural History**, 1986.

### Japanese Economy

Despite the fact that economic development is the most outstanding aspect of Japan's roles in the world, there are only a few translations of works on Japanese economy. Classic

works like those written by William Lockwood and Chalmers Johnson have not been translated. There was one translation from the Japanese language. Below are the literature :

- Tsutomu Ohuchi, **Nihon Nogyo-ron** (Japanese Agriculture), 1987.
- Kunio Yoshihara, **Japanese Economic Development**, 1988.
- Takafusa Nakamura, **Economic Development of Modern Japan**, 1987.
- Yoshio Suzuki, **Money and Banking in Japan**, 1988.
- Jun Nishikawa, **Problems of Japanese Foreign Aid**, 1982.

## Science and Technology

The development of science and technology in Japan has long been in the interest of the Thai intellectual so far but there has been no translation of books explaining the history, process, strategy, policy and administration of this outstanding aspect of the Japanese economic miracle. As Thailand is becoming a newly industrialized country, interest in the Japanese experience has been increasing. Translation of mechanical manuals may be quite a few, but on the policies of science and technology and on basic information almost no attempts have been made. Below is one such translation :

- **White Paper on Science and Technology** (1981), published in 1983.

## Japanese Business Management

Japanese business management is the field where we find most translations. They were, however, translations of popular works to satisfy the demand of businessmen and the general public rather than to give a stable groundwork for academic research. Typical translations include, for example : Richard J. Shconberger, **Japanese Manufacturing Techniques**, 1970 ; John L. Graham and Yoshiro Sano, **Smart Bargaining : Doing Business with the Japanese**, 1989 ; Demonte Boyde, **The Japanese Way of Doing Business**, 1986 ; and Konosuke Matsushita's book on the seventy-one teachings published in 1985. Below are the translations of the more scholarly works :

- Kiyonari Takao, **Chusho Kigyo** (Small and Medium Enterprise), 1989.
- Kiyonari Takao, **Chosen Suru Chusho Kigyo** (The Challenging Small and Medium Enterprise), 1989.

## Japanese Literature

The richest area of translation of Japanese works was the field of popular literature. Similar to Japanese business management, translation of academic works, or works written by scholars in the field of Japanese literature, could hardly be found. Books explaining the development of and the style of Japanese literature by leading scholars like Donald Keene, Edward Seidensticker and others were virtually not translated. There were, however, only partial translations of the works of Donald Keene, Edward Seidensticker, and Omote Akira. Surprisingly, only one full translation in a book from was Daisaku Ikeda and Makoto Nemoto, **On the Japanese Classics : Conversations and Appreciations**, published in 1990.

Why was there such a large number of translations of Japanese literature into Thai? It seems that interest in Western literature has been on the decline. Surely, interest in Japanese literature has been on the increase since the 1970's. Markets for it is equally as big as books on a Japanese business management. According to one survey, the first three Thai translators were Amarawadee (pen name) who translated Namiko in 1954, Shun Praphavat who translated **Rashomon**,<sup>4</sup> **The Sound of Waves**, and **Harp of Burma**, and Kukrit Pramoj who translated Rashomon in 1965. The above survey of translation of Japanese literature has the following findings : 22 novels, 60-70 short stories, and 20 plays. There were also some 59 articles and books discussing Japanese literature of which 9 were translated works.<sup>5</sup>

## 4. The Problem of Approach

It is interesting to ask what were the main approaches in the Thai writings about Japan. We may discuss this problem in the context of the categorization of the vast literature. In his brief talk on Thai studies in Japan in 1987, Profes-

sor Yoneo Ishii roughly devided it into two categories: basic study and action-oriented study. His view was that basic study was important for the understanding of the people of that area and it was also an important base for a sound accumulation of the body of knowlesge of the area.<sup>6</sup> A Thai scholar put forward three categories: the extremist views that thoroughly praised Japan or thoroughly criticized Japan, and the well-balanced view. Surchai Wan'geo was not happy with the first two approaches believing that they were not historically correct and were theoretically biased. He called for more studies using the third approach, learning from both success and failure, evaluating both the positive and the negative, and looking at both the beautiful output and the costly process.<sup>7</sup>

It is meaningful to make a survey of the influential approaches, theories, concepts or perspectives popular among Thai writers on Japan. Looking into the vast literature on Japan written by the Thai, we may say that there were seven major contending approaches or perspectives. They were the wartime-experience critical approach, the economic exploitation-domination approach, the neo-Marxist approach, the dependency approach, the modernization-political development approach, the learn-from-Japan approach and the two-way criticism approach. The first two perspectives were derived from historical experiences during the Pacific War and the 1960's and 1970's. The next two were academic attempts to explain the Thai-Japanese economic relations and Japan's economic roles in Thailand and Asia. The fifth and sixth placed emphasis on Japan's economic miracle and the positive roles played by Japan. The last approach was a reflection of the past tradition of putting blame on Japan without adequate self-criticism. We shall make a brief survey of these seven approaches and introduce some of their representative writings.

### 1. The Wartime-Experience Approach

During the Pacific War, Thailand was forced by Japan to become Japan's ally and declare war against the Allied Powers. Against this very decision by the Phibun government, a group of Thai elite organized the Free Thai Movement to expel Japanese troops from Thai territory by

working underground to sabotage the Japanese aggressors. After the War the Free Thai Movement managed to save the country's independence from the Allied Powers. The Movement's leaders became heroes and one of them became the Prime Minister in 1946. Up till now, memoirs and autobiographies written by members of the Free Thai Movement carrying anti-Japan sentiments are still influential in telling Thai people about the aggressive acts, the brutal use of force and the atrocities of the Japanese Imperial soldiers.

The intellectual groundwork laid down by these writings has helped remind some Thai people who have recently cultivated intimate relationship with Japan, that Japan has both positive and nagative aspects. More than the Marxist writings on Japan, these writings wield a deeper influence on the Thai perception of Japan. In contrast to the declining Marxist influence, writings by members of the Free Thai Movement have firmly established their place in the perception of Thais (especially among the older generation) of possible future Japanese expansionism and aggression. The immortal fact was that on December 7, 1941 at 8.00 p.m. the Thai government was handed an ultimatum from the Japanese Ambassador to Thailand that the Imperial army would be attacking the territory of the Allied Powers in Southeast Asia at one o'clock the following day, and that the decision to cooperate with Japan from the Thai government must be obtained by two o'clock. Such a use of force to demand Thailand becoming Japan's ally constantly reminds Thai nationalists of an image of aggressive Japan.

Literature on Japan written with this approach has never disappeared from the bookstores. Former Foreign Minister Direk Chaiyanam, who received the ultimatum letter from Ambassador Tsubokami, published **Thailand and the Second World War**, 1970. The work of the leader of the Free Thai Movement and Prime Minister in 1946, Preedee Phanomyong, who also founded Thammasat University in 1934, entitled **Some Evidences About the Situation of Thailand During the Second World War**, was published by his son in 1978. A member of the Free Thai

Movement and later the Rector of Thammasat University, Puay Ungphakorn published **The Living of the Free Thai Soldiers Who Served In the British Civil Engineering Corps**, 1966. Other members have recently published their memoirs apparently realizing they had reached the age where they were too old to be criticized for being anti-Japan and it would be too late if they did not start writing something. Among them were the following members and their works: prayoon Phamornmontri, **My Life Under Five Reigns**, 1975; Netra Khemayothin, **Colonel Yothin's Under-ground Assignments**, 1957, etc. There were also many seminars on this theme, some organized almost every year. In 1990, a street was named "August 16" to mark the sacrifice of those Free Thai Movement members.

The Thai encounter with the Japanese during the Second World War was also a popular topic among historians. Professor Thaemsuk Numnonda Published **Thailand and the Second World War** in 1978 and "Thailand and Japan during the Second World War" in 1979. This topic has been extremely popular among new generation researcher in the last 2-3 years.

**2. The Economic Exploitation-Domination Approach.** Japanese economic expansion into Southeast Asia under the principle of one-dimensional pursuit of economic gains during the 1960's was a tragic story. Writings criticizing Japan for taking advantage of Thailand, especially in its "greedy economic exploitation", were too many to count. It was a particularly popular theme during the early 1970's, appearing noticeably in the magazines, newspapers and to a lesser extent in academic journals. **The Social Science Review**, the most popular journal among intellectual readers, devoted one special issue on the "Yellow Peril" with all the articles criticizing Japan's economic exploitation and domination of Thailand and other "perils." This special issue of April 1972 decisively set the tone for the Japanese-Goods-Boycott Campaign during November 20-30, 1972 under the leadership of the National Students Center of Thailand. During November 25 to 30, there were demonstrations in Bangkok with placards denouncing Japan with words like "Japan Go

Home." Mock Japanese goods were burnt while the crowd cheered with utmost satisfaction.

In that issue there were sixteen articles criticizing Japan. Some of these articles were: Japanese Investment in Thailand, A View on Yellow Peril; Japanese Self Defense Force; Japanese Industrial-Military Complex; New Jewish Economic Monster's Expansion; Japan Unmasked; Okniwa: Japanese Youth Film; The Wind Wall: Honda parade in the Countryside; Man and Environment: The Game of Japan etc. The yellow peril here also referred to the cultural peril. The introductory article of the special issue commented that Japan "bombed Thailand with its culture" in order to promote the popularity of Japanese goods and the acceptance of Japan's economic roles in Thailand. The editorial mentioned that the new Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Fujisaki, should consider seriously the views expressed in the articles.<sup>8</sup> In 1975, the Social Sciences Review devoted another special issue on Japan regarding the Special Issue of the Yellow Peril Phase II. Critical writings on Japan's economic roles in Thailand were again published with a number of more academic articles with deeper analysis of the structure of Japanese domination of Thai economy.<sup>9</sup> Other writings using this approach included, for example, Isara Suwannabol, **Tsumetal Jap** (Cold Blooded Jap), **Dark Japan**, and **Polluted Japan**, etc. Until the late 1980's this approach had been the most influential theme in the intellectuals' writings, the Thai government's negotiations with the Japanese government, and the students' views on Japan. In fact, the Thai students had staged 5 demonstrations protesting against Japan from 1972 to 1986.

A group of Thai elite who were more spiritually oriented in their outlook of comprising the leading cultural critics was also critical of Japan's strategy of one-dimensional pursuit of economic gains. This group viewed Japan's "economic animal" image as a problem of insensitivity to the importance of cultural exchange with Asian peoples, rather than a structural problem of monopolistic capitalism. The journal in which this intellectual group published their writings was the **Pajarayasarn** (The Teachers' Teachers Journal). The leader-

ship of this group was provided by one of the most vocal social-cultural critics in Thailand, Mr. Sulaksa Sivarak, an independent thinker and writer. During the late 1960's and early 1970's, Sulaksa Sivarak's views on Japan were extremely critical and his writings and speeches greatly influenced the students' thinking and attitudes towards Japan and the corrupted Thai regime at that time. For Sulaksa the postwar economy-comes-first-principle resulted in a number of Japan's problems at home: pollution, destruction of nature, urban congestion, etc. and Japan's foreign relations problems: trade friction, cultural and racial superiority complex, foreign investment and foreign assistance that created environment destruction problems, and the insensitivity to local culture and feelings, etc.

The influence of this approach was quite remarkable. It gave rise to the formation of the Thailand-Japan Study Program at Kasetsart University in 1974. This program organized the first conference on Thai-Japanese relations in Thailand, The Emergence of Modern States: Thailand and Japan, in 1976. Later conferences included Issues and Methodology in the Comparative Study of Thai-Japanese Social Developments, 1980; The Development of Comparative Study on Thailand and Japan: Theoretical Implications, 1982, and Issues for Research in Contemporary Thai-Japanese Studies, 1984. The Thailand-Japan Study program moved from Kasetsart to be a part of the Institute of Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University in the late 1970's and since then has disappeared.

The economic exploitation-domination approach in the Thai writings, compared to the so-called "revisionist school" in the United States, was less subtle in the analysis of the Japanese political and economic structures. None of these writings went far enough in analyzing the decision-making process and the problem of the lack of political leadership at the center of Japanese politics as we found in the works of Karl von Walferen and James Fallows. It was the neo-Marxist approach that produced writings with more academic rigor.

**3. Neo-Marxist Approach.** It is ironic that, despite the fact that the world of Japan's social sciences during the postwar period was

under the influence of Marxist analysis, and that the mainstream Japanese scholars were the Marxist, there were only a few pieces of such literature on Japan in Thailand. There were many reasons for this. One of them was that original writings were published in Japanese. Very few of them appeared in English. Also, most of these writings were highly complex analysis which demanded serious academic interest to translate them. Professor Masao Maruyama's work on Japanese modern politics, a complex analysis of Japanese fascism, has not been translated into Thai. The reason was perhaps less a problem of ideological implications, since Maruyama's Thought and Behavior of Japanese Politics was a non-Marxist classic for students of modern Japanese history and politics.

The only book on Japan in Thai employing the class analysis approach was **Japanese Imperialism Today**, 1973, translated into Thai in 1975 by a senior professor of political philosophy, Saneh Jamarik. It is interesting to note that while Jon Halliday and Gavan McCormack followed the Marxist class struggle approach, the translator himself has never subscribed to such an analytical framework. Writings on Japan using this approach included a small number of articles which appeared in the Social Sciences Review in the early 1970's and later in the Journal of Political Economy.

Marxist writings on Thai economic history and politics by Thai intellectuals were greater in number, but only a few could be found on the Japanese situation. However, when it comes to other schools of political-economy analysis, the dependency analysis and the world system analysis, we find a greater number of such writings.

**4. Dependency Analysis and World System Analysis.** Both of these two schools analyze the problem of capitalism in the unequal relationship between nations. They pay little attention to the class analysis and more to the mechanism and structure of domination and exploitation between the advanced capitalist countries and the under-developed countries, or between the "core" and the "periphery". Scholarly works analyzing problems of Japanese capitalism and its relations with Thailand included the

following : Narong Petchprasert, "The Japanese Monopoly of Thai Foreign Trade," **The Social Sciences Review** (Aug.-Dec. 1975); Suthy Prasartset, "Thailand-Japan Trade : A Case of Third World Dependency," **The Asian Review** (Vol. 1. No. 2. 1980); Suvinai Poranavalia, **A Political-Economy Analysis on Japanese Economic Structure and the Development of Postwar System of World Capitalism**, 1980 ; and Suvinai Poranavalai, **Japanese Economy and System of World Capitalism**, 1980. In the 1980's this approach had lost its influence and we found fewer and fewer writings using such an approach.

**5. Modernization-Political Development Approach** The modernization concept and the political development concept were used in the comparative studies of Thai-Japanese social change and political problems. In comparing social transformations in the two countries in the mineteenth century, Likhit Dhiravegin believed the modernization concept was useful in serving as a conceptual framework and that no other concept could fare better. Pholasak Chirakraisiri employed the concept of political development which was developed by Lucian Pye and other members of the Committee on Comparative Politics to explain political institutionalization in contemporary Thai and Japanese politics. In his article, "Political parties and Political Development : Comparing Thai and Japanese Cases" Chirasak believed Japanese politics was more "developed" than Thai politics due to the factor of political institutionalization. A book written under these two closely related concepts, **Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey**, was translated into Thai under the editorship of Pholasak Chirakraisiri and Phornsak Phongpaew in 1981. More than conflict theory, the above two concepts and their analysis have enjoyed a comfortable mainstream status in Thai social sciences. This is in sharp contrast to the comparatively lower status of such an approach in Japanese social sciences. Quite surely, Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey would be much less attractive to Japanese readers.

**6. Learn-From-Japan Approach.** Traditionally, writings on Japan that attempt to search

for the strength and good aspects of Japan and suggest that Thailand should learn from Japan have not been in the mainstream, but are now gaining a wider audience. As Thailand is becoming a newly industrialized country (NIC), Japan's roles in assisting Thailand's efforts have been appreciated. With the decline of the US economy, greater expectations from Japan's contributions have been expressed by the Thai business community and the Thai government. Writings on Japan have since the second half of 1980's been using a new approach that we will call the "learn-from-Japan approach" here.

Literature under the influence of this approach found its clearest expression in the translation of **Japan As No. 1** by Ezra Vogel, 1985. One best seller was Khunthong Intharathai, **Why Japan Prospered More Rapidly Than Thailand**, a popular pocket book edition published in 1985. Suvinai Poranavalai's **Japanese Companies and the Industrialization of Thailand**, a voluminous research work published in 1989, became the symbol of the positive evaluation of Japan's economic roles in Thailand. Suvinai's shift of emphasis from the critical analysis of Japan's capitalist expansionism to the constructive, recommendations that Thailand could not achieve the status of NIC without cooperation from Japan has attracted attention from both Thai intellectuals and the business community. A book review on his work appeared in a journal, after a very long absence of any book reviews on Japanese writings.

Much of the literature on learn-from-Japan was in the field of business management. Books on Japanese marketing techniques, management system, business competition strategy, and the biography of successful Japanese entrepreneurs flooded bookstores all over the country. At large book stores, a special corner for books on Japanese business management can be found with at least a dozen items.

One interesting question is whether it is possible to learn from Japan's negative aspects. Also, is it wise to criticize Japan? Those who know well the Japanese "face culture" and who receive funding from Japan believe that this is difficult, particularly when it comes to the publication of such findings. But Saneh Jamarik

argued that this is exactly the *raison d'être* of any area studies if they are to have their effect in the social sciences. In a short interview article, he suggested that we should "learn about their past experiences, both successes and failures, both economics and politics."

**7. Two-way Criticism Approach** The tradition of writing critically about Japan has been one of the mainstreams of Thai literature on Japan for half a century. However, recently Thai writers have begun to realize that the Thai side also contributes to the problem. Many research works and commentaries on Japan while maintaining a tradition of the critical approach have tended to look at the problems of both the Japanese and the Thai sides. These writers now believe that a spirit of balanced criticism, not one-way criticism, was not only fair to Japan, but also, without such an approach the solving of the existing problems in Thai-Japanese relations would be impossible. Also this new philosophy has been the recent position of the Thai government in negotiating with Japan on the problem of the trade deficit. In contrast to the past tendency to put the blame on Japan for the continued trade deficit problem, the new Thai government position is to "restructure" the problematic structure of unequal Thai-Japanese economic relations by working together in the spirit of partnership.

Writings using this approach have been gaining momentum recently. Among them we may include Khien Theeravit, **Japanese Construction Business in Thailand : A Study of Its Impact on Thailand's National Development and Thai-Japanese Relations**, 1988 and Prasert Chittiwatanapong, **Japanese Official Development Assistance to Thailand : Impact on Thai Construction Industry**, 1985.

## 5. Conclusion

We have so far made a general survey about Japanese studies in Thailand, introduced the world of translated works on Japan in Thailand, and analyzed the writings on Japan by categorizing them into several approaches. Truly, the world of the literature on Japan in Thai Language is perhaps the largest among all area studies. One

bibliographical survey listed as many as 765 pieces literature published during the period of 1907-1980. Among these writings, 304 were books (266 in Thai, 38 in English) and 452 were articles (437 in Thai, 15 in English). From the point of view of intellectual influences over the perception and opinion of the general Thai public and the new generation, it is those written in the Thai language, rather than those in English, that wield the greater influence. The total of Thai literature on Japan during that period was 703 items, and after the year 1980, a lot more writings have been published.

An exhaustive literature survey is indeed a colossal task. Nobody can easily read all of the 703 items. If another seven hundred were published during 1980-1990, it would be extremely difficult to read all of these 1,400 pieces of literature on Japan. One way to make them available is to categorize them as we have attempted earlier. Writings on Japan will fall into one of the seven categories : the wartime-experience critical approach, the economic exploitation-domination approach, the neo-Marxist approach, the dependency approach, the modernization-political development approach, the learn-from-Japan approach, or the two-way criticism approach.

Each approach has had its historical context. During 1960-1985, we found a great number of writings criticizing Japan for its aggressive economic expansion and its exploitative domination of Thai economy. Such inequality in the two economic systems and other negative consequences gave rise to the second, third and fourth approaches. During the same period, admiration of Japanese economic success and Meiji nation-building had always been in the minds of the Thai public and writers. This psychology found its expression in many writings belonging to the fifth and sixth approaches. The first and last approach had special roles to play. Throughout the 1960-1980's and up until now, the wartime-experience critical approach had constantly served as a reminder of the danger in taking Japan uncritically. There were numerous writings by Japanese intellectuals reminding the Thai of the contemporary version of Japanese problems : the way the pollution victims

were treated at the initial stage, the efforts to rewrite the wartime history among the conservative politicians and bureaucrats, the high-handed attitude of Japanese business and bureaucratic leaders in giving foreign aid, and the way the Asians living in Japan were treated by their Japanese neighbors.

The last approach, the two-way criticism approach is perhaps the trend of the time. Many Thai writers have begun to accept the shortcomings of the Thai side in their writings about Thai-Japanese relations, at least since the late 1980's when Thailand was about to become a newly industrialized country. Academic maturity in our studies of Japan has reached a higher point after one generation of extremism: thoroughly criticizing Japan or thoroughly praising Japan, without adequate analysis of the structure of the problems on the Thai side. Yet appreciation had brought to Thailand a good opportunity to achieve industrial development, but there were too many problems on the Thai side: shortage of engineers, inadequate infra-structure, inefficient bureaucracy, untrained labor force, corrupted police system, money politics and the problem of policy coordination. Recently Thai intellectuals have become convinced that there were more problems in Thailand than in Japan: pollution, environment destruction, unhumanitarian foreign policy (towards Burma), exploitation of foreign cheap labor (along the Thai-Burmese border), and the "economic animal" type of foreign economic policy. Thai-Japanese relations have now become closer, as a partnership in joint efforts towards export promotion, human resource development, technology transfer, and peace-settlement of the Kampuchean problem. At the same time Japan was still as difficult as before to deal with. Technology transfer was slow, market opening was only step-by-step, foreign aid was commercialized, and non-tariff barriers existed. Compared to the United States, the Japanese market was by far more difficult to penetrate. The trend of Thai literature on Japan will thus likely to be a presentation of the problems from both sides. Thai intellectuals will produce more works along this balanced approach rather than on one of the other six mentioned earlier. The learn-from-

Japan approach will persist, but since it lacks academic rigor in the analysis, it will not enjoy an influential place in Thai academia.

Academic works on Japan in Thailand have not been able to contribute much to the Thai social sciences. One criticism often heard is that it is "atheoretical". But what is the meaning of theory? According to Professor Chalmers Johnson, it can be in three forms. He called them style analysis, scientific theory and critical analysis.<sup>10</sup> The first form "seeks to discover the typical patterns of political behavior, the procedures, and the formal organization of diverse social groups or movements, and it ignores the idiosyncratic in favor of generalizations and typologies." The next form, scientific theory, seeks to "go beyond descriptive or statistical norms to the simplest explanation which takes the form of a general principle." The third form, critical analysis, "seeks to understand and explain what is idiosyncratic about a particular composition: how is this piece different from all other pieces—even those in the same style and of the same genre? ....Criticism tries to discover the secret of the singular to explain in what ways the pattern and the process peculiar to a particular work are related to one another and to the hierarchic structure of which they form a part."<sup>11</sup>

If we define "theory" as the above three forms of analysis, the question will now be specific: Are there any academic works by Thai scholars in the form of style analysis, scientific theory and critical analysis? It seems to me that original research and high quality theoretical analysis require a great deal of devoted and continued efforts. To have theoretical contributions and to get the works published in international journals is a big challenge for Thai scholars on Japan. The first and third form of analysis, in particular, require tremendous continued research before such "style" and "uniqueness" could be explained.

The world of translation of books on Japan in Thailand was quite large. There are translations covering all fields of Japanese studies. The interest in things Japanese in Thailand has increased despite the fact that the Look East Policy and the Learn-From-Japan Policy were

not articulated by the Thai government as they were in the cases of Malaysia and Singapore. The translations ranged from Kojiki (simplified one though) to **Japanese Manufacturing Techniques**, from **Japanese Imperialism Today** to **Japan As No. 1**, and from the work of E.H.Norman to those of Reischauer.

A question to be asked is, however, whether the reality of Japanese history, society and foreign relations was adequately reflected in these translations in terms of the selection of books on Japan in English or Japanese.<sup>12</sup> In the field of history, there were very few translations of books describing the cost of late-comer modernization, the conflict nature of social transformation, the growth of fascism in prewar Japan, and the suppression of anti-war intellectuals and writers. Secondly, there were much less translations of basic works than introductory ones. Also, academic works of rigorous analytical value were not translated. Thirdly, there were almost no translations of books in the political-economy field explaining the complexity of Japanese political and economy in an integrated manner. In postwar Japan, politic and economic factors were so interwoven and interconnected that we probably could not understand Japan without such an approach. Finally, works by Japanese writers, in English or Japanese, were not given adequate attention, particularly in the field of sociology and anthropology.<sup>13</sup>

The suggestion here is that for a better balanced understanding of Japanese history and society, for the sake of a firmer foundation for the accumulation of knowledge on Japan, and for a fuller understanding of the complex interplay between politics and the economy, the following books deserve consideration for translation (only English books):

- Krauss, Rohlen and Steinhoff, **Conflict in Japan**
- Masao Maruyama, **Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics**
- Taketsugu Tsurutani, **Political Change**

### **in Japan**

- Chitoshi Yanage, **Big Business in Japanese Politics**.
- Chalmers Johnson, **MITI and the Japanese Miracle**
- Yasusuke Murakami and Hugh Patrick (general editors), **The Political Economy of Japan**, 3 volumes.
- Takeo Doi, **Amae No Kozo** (The Anatomy of Dependency)

Literature was widely believed to be the best means to understand the society. It also attracts many readers. The translations of Japanese literary works have contributed a great deal to the Thai's balanced understanding of Japan. Translation of non-mainstream works included Kobayashi Takiji's **Kani Kosen**. Natsume Soseki's **Wagahai Wa Neko Dearu** helped Thai readers to understand the other side of Japan's industrialization during the Meiji era. Takeyama Michio's **Biruma No Tatekoto** also contributed to our understanding of the natural human feelings of Japanese Imperial soldiers. Some of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's work was translated and drama on this was once performed by students. If some of the complex feelings of the Japanese people could not be easily understood by academic works, translation of Japanese literature helped filling the gap.

One problem is, however, the inadequate translation of classic literature. Kojiki (the simplified one) was translated, but by the undergraduate students minoring Japanese. Genji Mono Gatari, Magura No Soshi, and many classics were not translated. Compared to the translations of Chinese literature, the situation was just an opposite. Chinese classics, for example, The three Kingdoms had been translated almost two hundred years ago and some of these classics were used as high school students' readers, as examples of good literary writing in Thai. It will take perhaps one or two centuries before Japanese literature could rival Chinese literature in terms of the good translation of the classic works.<sup>14</sup>

## Footnotes

1. Nakane Chie, "Japan in the Context of Asia," **The Japan Foundation Newsletter** (Feb. 1988), p. 6.
2. **Ibid.**, p. 3.
3. To compare the number of lecturers and researchers in Thailand with that in the United States at the early stage, please see Shimbori Michiya, "From Japanology to Japanese Studies," **Japan Quarterly** (Winter 1985), p. 389 ; George Akita, "A Sketch of Japan Studies in the United States," **Nichibunken Newsletter** (Oct. 1989), p. 6. and Marius B. Jansen, "Japanese Studies in the United States," **The Japan Foundation Newsletter** (Oct. 1988), p. 2.
4. Artorn Fungtammasan, **The Study of Japanese Literature in Thailand**, a paper presented at a conference on Japanese Studies in Thailand, organized by the Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University, January 18, 1981, at Thammasat University, Bangkok, p. 2.
5. **Ibid.**, p. 3, 6, 12, 15.
6. Prasert Chittiwatanapong, "Japanese Studies in Thailand : Echo from a Japanese Academic," (May 1987), pp. 44-48.
7. Surichai Wun'geo, **Japanese Studies in Thailand**, a paper presented at an international conference on Japanese Studies organized by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, March 9-12, 1988, Kyoto, Japan, pp. 8-9.
8. Prasert Chittiwatanapong, "The History of Anti-Japanese Movement in Thailand," **Proceeding of the Joint Symposium in Thai Japanese Relations : Development and Future Prospect**, Core University Committee between Thammasat University and Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1988, pp. 38-39.
9. See **ibid.**, p. 39.
10. Chalmers Johnson, "Political Science and East Asian Studies," **World politics** (July 1974), pp. 568-571.
11. **Ibid.**
12. See Masao Maruyama, "Politics as a Science in Japan : Retrospect and Prospect," **Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics**, edited by Ivan Morris, Oxford University Press, 1969.
13. See Benjamin I. Schwartz, **Area Study As a Critical Discipline**, an address at annual meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, March 22. 1980, at the Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington D.C.
14. Other related writings by this paper's writer, please see Prasert Chittiwatanapong, "Learning from Japan : What Shall We Learn," **Thai-Japanese Studies Journal** (Oct. - Dec. 1985), pp. 78-83 ; Prasert Chittiwatanapong, **Japanese Studies in Thailand : Political Science**, a paper presented at an international conference on Japanese Studies in ASEAN, organized by Japanese Studies Center, Thammasat University, at Pattaya, Thailand, January 14-15, 1984 ; and Prasert Chittiwatanapong, "Japanese Studies in Thailand," **Rattasart-sarn** (May-August 1988) pp. 161-181.