



Takeuchi Yoshimi, Japan and Asia

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What is Asia's own modernity? Is that even achievable, especially in Japan? — These are the underlying questions in Takeuchi Yoshimi's *Japan and Asia*. While tackling these questions, Takeuchi argues in favor of modern China's ideological attempt to create a language that surpasses tradition from within its own tradition. He sympathizes with how China, despite being crushed by the weight of its own tradition, tackles that reality head on. It is through this sympathy that Takeuchi raises alert to the deterioration of Japan's intellectuals, who made the transition from exclusionism to cultural enlightenment, from Europeanism to ultranationalism, and from militarism to postwar democracy, without experiencing a major moral conflict.

To begin with, what is "one's own modernity"? Is that even a necessity? In order to savor these arguments, I also recommend reading Umesao Tadao's *An Ecological View of History* and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, which may serve as catalysts for the discussion. The former takes a completely opposite stand from Takeuchi's work to the difference between Japan and other Asian countries in the context of history of civilization, but nonetheless arrives at a very similar conclusion. The latter compares Japan (and Thailand) to neighboring countries and highlights them as anomalistic cases in the context of modern nation-building.



Source:

- Takeuchi Yoshimi, *Japan and Asia* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1993)

Related Keywords

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*