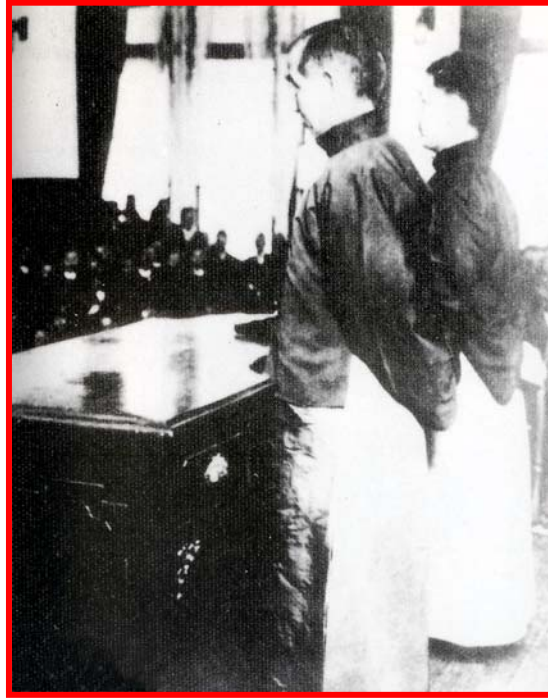


## PAN-ASIANISM

*This presentation was given by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in Kobe, Japan on November 28, 1924, at a reception organized by the Chamber of Commerce and five other public organizations at the Prefectural Girl's School. The photograph below is Dr. Sun delivering that speech.*



Gentlemen:— I highly appreciate this cordial reception with which you are honoring me to-day. The topic of the day is “Pan-Asianism,” but before we touch upon the subject, we must first have a clear conception of Asia’s place in the world. Asia, in my opinion, is the cradle of the world’s oldest civilization. Several thousand years ago, its peoples had already attained an advanced civilization; even the ancient civilizations of the West, of Greece and Rome, had their origins on Asiatic soil. In Ancient Asia we had a philosophic, religious, logical and industrial civilization. The origins of the various civilizations of the modern world can be traced back to Asia’s ancient civilization. It is only during the last few centuries that the countries and races of Asia have gradually degenerated and become weak, while the European countries have gradually developed their resources and become powerful. After the latter had fully developed their strength, they turned their attention to, and penetrated into, East Asia, where they either destroyed or pressed hard upon each and every one of the Asiatic nations, so that thirty years ago there existed, so to speak, no independent country in the whole of Asia. With this, we may say, the low water mark had been reached.

When Asia reached this point, the tide started to turn, and the turn meant the regeneration of Asia. It started thirty years ago when Japan abolished all the Unequal Treaties that she had entered into with the foreign countries. The day when the Unequal

Treaties were abolished by Japan was a day of regeneration for all Asiatic peoples. After the abolition of her Unequal Treaties, Japan became the first independent country in Asia. The remaining countries, such as China, India, Persia, Afghanistan, Arabia, and Turkey were not independent, that is to say, they were still dominated, and treated as colonies, by Europe. Thirty years ago, Japan was also a colony of the European countries. But the Japanese were far-sighted. They realized that the only way to power was to struggle with the Europeans and to abolish all Unequal Treaties, which they did, thus turning Japan into, an independent country. Since Japan has become an ' independent country in East Asia, the various nations in this part of the world have been buoyed up with a new hope. They realized that since Japan has been able to achieve her independence through the abolition of the Unequal Treaties, they could do the same. So once again they have mustered courage to conduct their various independent activities with the hope .of shaking off the yoke of European restriction and domination and regaining their own rightful position in Asia. This has been the prevailing thought in Asia during the past thirty years, which indeed gives ground for optimism.

Thirty years ago the idea was different. Men thought and believed that European civilization was a progressive one—in science, industry, manufacture, and armament—and that Asia had nothing to compare with it. Consequently, they assumed that Asia could never resist Europe, that European oppression could never be shaken off. Such was the idea prevailing thirty years ago. It was a pessimistic idea. Even after Japan abolished the Unequal Treaties and attained the status of an independent country, Asia, with the exception of a few countries situated near Japan, was little influenced. Ten years later, however, the Russo-Japanese war broke out and Russia was defeated by Japan. For the first time in the history of the last several hundred years, an Asiatic country has defeated a European Power. The effect of this victory immediately spread over the whole Asia, and gave a new hope to all Asiatic peoples. In the year of the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war I was in Europe. One day news came that Admiral Togo had defeated the Russian navy, annihilating in the Japan Sea the fleet newly dispatched from Europe to Vladivostok. The population of the whole continent was taken aback. Britain was Japan's Ally, yet most of the British people were painfully surprised, for in their eyes Japan's victory over Russia was certainly not a blessing for the White peoples. “Blood,” after all, “is thicker than water.” Later on I sailed for Asia. When the steamer passed the Suez Canal a number of natives came to see me. All of them wore smiling faces, and asked me whether I was a Japanese. I replied that I was a Chinese, and inquired what was in their minds, and why they were so happy. They said they had just heard the news that Japan had completely destroyed the Russian fleet recently dispatched from Europe, and were wondering how true the story was. Some of them, living on both banks of the Canal had witnessed Russian hospital ships, with wounded on boards, passing through the Canal from time to time. That was surely a proof of the Russian defeat, they added.

In former days, the colored races in Asia, suffering from the oppression of the Western peoples, thought that emancipation was impossible. We regarded that Russian defeat by Japan as the defeat of the West by the East. We regarded the Japanese victory as our own victory. It was indeed a happy event. Did not therefore this news of Russia's defeat by Japan affect the peoples of the whole of Asia? Was not its effect tremendous?

While it may not have seemed so important and consequently have had only a slight effect on the peoples living in East Asia, it had a great effect on the peoples living in West Asia and in the neighborhood of Europe who were in constant touch with Europeans and subject to their oppression daily. The suffering of these Asiatic peoples was naturally greater than that of those living in the further East, and they were therefore more quick to respond to the news of this great victory.

Since the day of Japan's victory over Russia, the peoples of Asia have cherished the hope of shaking off the yoke of European oppression, a hope which has given rise to a series of independence movements—in Egypt, Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan, and finally in India. Therefore, Japan's defeat of Russia gave rise to a great hope for the independence of Asia. From the inception of this hope to the present day only 20 years have elapsed. The Egyptian, Turkish, Persian, Afghan, and Arabian independence movements have already materialized, and even the independence movement in India has, with the passage of time, been gaining ground. Such facts are concrete proofs of the progress of the nationalist idea in Asia. Until this idea reaches its full maturity, no unification or independence movement of the Asiatic peoples as a whole is possible. In East Asia, China and Japan are the two greatest peoples. China and Japan are the driving force of this nationalist movement. What will be the consequences of this driving force still remains to be seen. The present tide of events seems to indicate that not only China and Japan but all the peoples in East Asia will unite together to restore the former status of Asia.

Such a tendency is clearly evident to the eyes of Europe and America. One American scholar, [Dr. Lothrop Stoddard: *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy* (1920); *Revolt against Civilization* (1922)] has written a book to discuss the rise of the colored peoples, where he maintains that Japan's defeat of Russia amounts to a victory of the Yellow race over the White race, and that such a tendency, if unchecked, will result in the unification of the entire Yellow race, which will be a calamity for the White peoples, and ways and means should therefore be devised to prevent it. Subsequently, he wrote another book in which he described all emancipation movements as Revolts against Civilization. In his view, emancipation movements in Europe should be regarded as revolts against civilization; even more so should such emancipation movements in Asia be regarded. Such views are common among the privileged classes of people in both Europe and America. A minority, they oppress the majority in their own continent or country. Now they wish to extend their evil practice to Asia, with a view to suppressing the nine hundred million people of Asia, and treating them as their slaves. This American scholar considers the awakening of the Asiatic peoples as a revolt against civilization. Thus, the Westerners consider themselves as the only ones possessed and worthy of true culture and civilization; other peoples with any culture or independent ideas are considered as Barbarians in revolt against Civilization. When comparing Occidental with Oriental civilization they only consider their own civilization logical and humanitarian.

From the aspect of cultural development during the last several hundred years, the material civilization of Europe has reached its height while Oriental civilization has

remained stagnant. Outwardly, Europe is superior to Asia. Fundamentally, European civilization during the last several hundred years is one of scientific materialism. Such a civilization, when applied to society, will mean the cult of force, with aeroplanes, bombs, and cannons as its outstanding features. Recently, this cult of force has been repeatedly employed by the Western peoples to oppress Asia, and as a consequence, there is no progress in Asia. To oppress others with the cult of force, in the language of the Ancients, is the rule of Might. Therefore, European Civilization is nothing but the rule of Might. The rule of Might has always been looked down upon by the Orient. There is another kind of civilization superior to the rule of Might. The fundamental characteristics of this civilization are benevolence, justice and morality. This civilization makes people respect, not fear, it. Such a civilization is, in the language of the Ancients, the rule of Right or the Kingly Way. One may say, therefore, that Oriental civilization is one of the rule of Right. Since the development of European materialistic civilization and the cult of Might, the morality of the world has been on the decline. Even in Asia, morality in several countries has degenerated. Of late, a number of European and American scholars have begun to study Oriental civilization and to realize that, while materially the Orient is far behind the Occident, morally the Orient is superior to the Occident.

Which civilization, the rule of Might or the rule of Right, will prove to be beneficial to justice and humanity, to nations and countries? You can give your own answer to this question. I may cite an example here to illustrate the point. For instance, between 500 and 2000 years ago, (there was a period of a thousand years when China was supreme in the world. Her status in the world then was similar to that of Great Britain and America today. What was the situation of the weaker nations toward China then? They respected China as their superior and sent annual tribute to China by their own will, regarding it as an honor to be allowed to do so. They wanted, of their own free will, to be dependencies of China. Those countries which sent tribute to China were not only situated in Asia but in distant Europe as well. But in what way did China maintain her prestige among so many small and weaker nations. Did she send her army or navy, i.e. use Might, to compel them to send their contributions? Not at all. It was not her rule of Might that forced the weaker nations to send tribute to China. It was the influence of her rule of Right. Once they were influenced by the “Kingly Way” of China they continued to send tribute, not merely once or twice, but the practice was carried on from generation to generation. This influence is felt even at the present moment; there are still traces and evidences of it.

There are two small countries situated to the north of India, namely, Bhutan and Nepal. These countries are small in size, but are inhabited by a brave, strong, and warlike people. During the present British rule of India, Britain often went to Nepal in search of soldiers in order to rule the Indians. A great deal of money by way of subsidies had to be spent before Britain was allowed to dispatch a political observer to Nepal. Even a great Power such as Great Britain had to respect her; Nepal was, in fact, a great Power in Asia. But what is the attitude of Nepal toward Great Britain during the past hundred years? Over hundred years ago India was conquered by Great Britain, and during this period Nepal was able to live peacefully on the border of the British colony. Although a hundred years have passed, Nepal has never sent tribute to Great Britain. Great Britain,

on the other hand, has to spend a large sum by way of subsidies to Nepal. But what is the attitude of Nepal toward China? The status of China has deteriorated to such an extent that it is now inferior even to that of a British colony. Though far away from China Proper and separated from her by Tibet, Nepal considered China as her suzerain State and up to 1911 Nepal sent annual tribute to China via Tibet. In that year, however, when the Nepal commissioners reached Szechuan and found communications interrupted, they returned to their country. The differential attitude of Nepal toward Great Britain and toward China is due to the difference between the Oriental and Occidental civilization. China has degenerated during the last several hundred years, yet Nepal still respects her as a superior State. Great Britain, on the other hand, is a powerful country, but Nepal has been influenced by Chinese civilization, which, in her eyes, is the true civilization, while that of Britain is nothing but the rule of Might.

Now, what is the problem that underlies Pan-Asianism, the Principle of Greater Asia, which we are discussing here today? Briefly, it is a cultural problem, a problem of comparison and conflict between the Oriental and Occidental culture and civilization. Oriental civilization is the rule of Right; Occidental civilization is the rule of Might. The rule of Right respects benevolence and virtue, while the rule of Might only respects force and utilitarianism. The rule of Right always influences people with justice and reason, while the rule of Might always oppresses people with brute force and military measures. People who are influenced by justice and virtue will never forget their superior State, even if that country has become weak. So Nepal even now willingly respects China as a superior State. People who are oppressed by force never submit entirely to the oppressor State. The relations of Great Britain with Egypt and India form a typical example. Although under British rule, Egypt and India have always entertained the thought of independence and separation from Great Britain. If Great Britain becomes weaker some day, Egypt and India will overthrow British rule and regain their independence within five years. You should now realize which is the superior civilization, the Oriental or the Occidental?

If we want to realize Pan-Asianism in this new world, what should be its foundation if not our ancient civilization and culture? Benevolence and virtue must be the foundations of Pan-Asianism. With this as a sound foundation we must then learn science from Europe for our industrial development and the improvement of our armaments, not, however, with a view to oppressing or destroying other countries and peoples as the Europeans have done, but purely for our self-defense.

Japan is the first nation in Asia to completely master the military civilization of Europe. Japan's military and naval forces are her own creation, independent of European aid or assistance. Therefore, Japan is the only completely independent country in East Asia. There is another country in Asia who joined with Central Powers during the European War and was partitioned after her final defeat. After the war, however, she was not only able to regain her territory, but to expel all Europeans from that territory. Thus she attained her status of complete independence. This is Turkey. At present Asia has only two independent countries, Japan in the East and Turkey in the West. In other words, Japan and Turkey are the Eastern and Western barricades of Asia. Now Persia,

Afghanistan and Arabia are also following the European example in arming themselves, with the result that the Western peoples dare not look down on them. China at present also possesses considerable armaments, and when her unification is accomplished she too will become a great Power. We advocate Pan-Asianism in order to restore the status of Asia. Only by the unification of all the peoples in Asia on the foundation of benevolence and virtue can they become strong and powerful.

But to rely on benevolence alone to influence the Europeans in Asia to relinquish the privileges they have acquired in China would be an impossible dream. If we want to regain our rights, we must resort to force. In the matter of armaments, Japan has already accomplished her aims, while Turkey has recently also completely armed herself. The other Asiatic races, such as the peoples of Persia, Afghanistan and Arabia are all war-like peoples. China has a population of four hundred millions, and although she needs to modernize her armament and other equipment, and her people are a peace-loving people, yet when the destiny of their country is at stake the Chinese people will also fight with courage and determination. Should all Asiatic peoples thus unite together and present a united front against the Occidentals, they will win the final victory. Compare the populations of Europe and Asia: China has a population of four hundred millions, India three hundred and fifty millions Japan several scores of millions, totaling, together with other peoples, no less than nine hundred millions. The population in Europe is somewhere around four hundred millions. For the four hundred millions to oppress the nine hundred millions is an intolerable injustice, and in the long run the latter will be defeated. What is more, among the four hundred millions some of them have already been influenced by us. Judging from the present tendency of civilization, even in Great Britain and America, there are people who advocate the principles of benevolence and justice. Such an advocacy also exists in some of the barbarian countries. Thus, we realize that the Western civilization of utilitarianism is submitting to the influence of Oriental civilization of benevolence and justice. That is to say the rule of Might gives way to the rule of Right, presaging a bright future for world civilization.

At present there is a new country in Europe which has been looked down upon and expelled from the Family of Nations by the White races of the whole of Europe. Europeans consider it as a poisonous snake or some brutal animal, and dare not approach it. Such a view is also shared by some countries in Asia. This country is Russia. At present, Russia is attempting to separate from the White peoples in Europe. Why? Because she insists on the rule of Right and denounces the rule of Might. She advocates the principle of benevolence and justice, and refuses to accept the principles of utilitarianism and force. She maintains Right and opposes the oppression of the majority by the minority. From this point of view, recent Russian civilization is similar to that of our ancient civilization. Therefore, she joins with the Orient and separates from the West. The new principles of Russia were considered as intolerable by Europeans. They are afraid that these principles, when put into effect, would overthrow their rule of Might. Therefore they do not accept the Russian way, which is in accord with the principles of benevolence and justice, but denounce it as contrary to world principles.

What problem does Pan-Asianism attempt to solve? The problem is how to terminate the sufferings of the Asiatic peoples and how to resist the aggression, of the powerful European countries. In a word, Pan-Asianism represents the cause of the oppressed Asiatic peoples. Oppressed peoples are found not only in Asia, but in Europe as well. Those countries that practice the rule of Might do not only oppress the weaker peoples outside their continent, but also those within their own continent. Pan-Asianism is based on the principle of the rule of Right, and justifies the avenging of the wrongs done to others. An American scholar considers all emancipation movements as revolts against civilization. Therefore now we advocate the avenging of the wrong done to those in revolt against the civilization of the rule of Might, with the aim of seeking a civilization of peace and equality and the emancipation of all races. Japan today has become acquainted with the Western civilization of the rule of Might, but retains the characteristics of the Oriental civilization of the rule of Right. Now the question remains whether Japan will be the hawk of the Western civilization of the rule of Might, or the tower of strength of the Orient. This is the choice which lies before the people of Japan.